

Why Phosphate

Facts about the importance of Phosphate as a key ingredient in fertilizer that is vital to modern agriculture.

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WHY IS PHOSPHATE IMPORTANT?

- Phosphate is an essential soil nutrient. Phosphate, a key ingredient in fertilizer, is necessary for modern agriculture to feed the world. The basic ingredients in fertilizers are N-P-K. N stands for Nitrogen, P stands for Phosphate, and K stands for Potash.
- Fertilizers like nitrogen, phosphate and potash are produced from naturally occurring materials – they are not man-made. For example, N comes from the air we breathe. P is an essential plant nutrient that is required by every plant and even within every living plant cell. Without adequate P fertilizers, plants would not grow, food would become scarce and there could be no modern agriculture.
- Phosphate fertilizers come from the earth that was originally ancient sea beds. These oceans occurred in the present Wyoming/Idaho border areas. The J.R. Simplot Company removes the phosphate rock, grinds it, and ships it to a manufacturing plant where it is made into phosphate fertilizer granules that are sold to farmers, home gardeners and park and recreation staff to help beautify our homes and communities as well as provide food for our families to eat.
- Farmers are not adding fertilizers to the ground. They are replacing nutrients that are lost when growing each crop. The modern farmer believes in only using the right nutrients applied at the right time and in the right place. Phosphorus is an essential nutrient for their success. Without adequate phosphorus nutrition crops would fail. Farmers apply fertilizer to replace the nutrients that a plant utilizes so that the plants grown the following year can be productive, healthy and provide adequate food to help feed a hungry world.
- Commercial fertilizers are not the only plant nutrients that are available for growing plants. However, by using commercial fertilizer we reduce the waste associated with too much fertilizer as well as reduce the land that it takes to grow food. Consequently, fertilizer helps to conserve land by producing as much food as possible within the farmer's fields which in turn allows more open space for wild lands and recreational areas.
- As the world's population continues to increase, there is more and more pressure on the earth's resources for housing, recreation areas and communities. The food production areas are becoming more limited and with out commercial fertilizer application there would not be enough land to sustain that many people. It has been estimated that we would need 30% more land to have an adequate food supply without commercial fertilizers.

[http://www.ipni.net/ppiweb/usawest.nsf/\\$webindex/4D144AB24EF50BDA852569AE00496931?opendocument&navigator=Feeding+the+World](http://www.ipni.net/ppiweb/usawest.nsf/$webindex/4D144AB24EF50BDA852569AE00496931?opendocument&navigator=Feeding+the+World)

- Without phosphate mining in southeastern Idaho, phosphate fertilizer would likely be imported from a foreign country, such as China or Russia.
- Phosphate is a finite resource that is only found in very limited supplies within the world. We are fortunate as a community that we have this valuable resource on a very small amount of land. The J.R. Simplot Company appreciates the resource that we share and continues to be a steward of that resource and an important part of the community in southeast ID.
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