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together in the community is what stands out to me as the special ingredient in Subang Jaya. Although residents are busy with their own lives and work, the community somehow manages to give back and care for one another. Subang Jaya is special and leads the way on how

**Is it the place or is it the community? Tell us.**

I will miss Subang Jaya when I move on to Bukit Aman. Having spent seven years and 75% of my time in Subang Jaya makes it tough for me to move on. The communities here have become family to me. I have gotten to know many in

## Plants & Gardens Subang Jaya



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Everyone's got a Secret Garden somewhere in the little corner of their home. Gardening has opened up new horizons for those who want to put their green fingers to good use. Starting this month, SJ Echo will be featuring useful tips on Plants & Gardens for you. You can also follow our Facebook Group: SJGardens and share your photos and stories.

## How Much Fertilisers Should I Put?

by Christopher Teh Boon Sung, Fac. of Agriculture, Uni. Putra Malaysia, Serdang  
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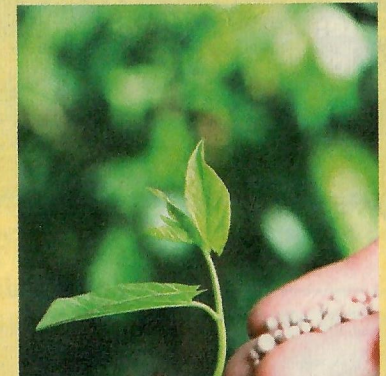
One of the most common questions I am asked by gardeners is how much fertilizers do they need to apply for their plants. My short answer is to advise them to read the fertilizer bag label and to follow exactly its fertilizing recommendations. No, I am not trying to be cavalier.

are available.

Second, you need to determine exactly the nutrient demand for your specific plants. This information can easily be found online, preferably the information from university sources (like their agriculture extension departments).

There is no universal, a one-size-fits-all fertilizer application rate for all plants. For such a universal rule to exist requires two conditions: all plants must "eat" the same nutrients, as well as "eat" them in the same amount and same time. Second, all fertilizers, be they organic- or mineral-based, must contain the same type of nutrients and in the same amount.

But we know these two conditions cannot exist. We know the nutrient demand by plants depends on several factors, two of which are the plant type and age. A fruit tree, for instance, has a different nutrient demand than a vegetable, and a young





Jaya is special and leads the way on how a community can work and live together in harmony.

**5. Crime was high when you first joined the USJ8 station. The crime index has dropped tremendously. How has this changed over the years? Is community involvement in crime prevention one of the reasons why the crime index has dropped?**

I agree that when I first took the helm as station chief in USJ8, the crime index was quite high. I took the first step by studying and analyzing the crime trend. This was followed by coming up with a strategic crime prevention plan complimented with engaging with the community to help deter crime in their respective neighbourhoods. The first three years was tough and exhausting as it involved getting to know the community and then engaging with them.

I led many crime prevention activities with the assistance of the respective neighbourhood Rukun Tetangga voluntary patrolling scheme and Residents Associations. This included carrying out joint patrols and snap checks in neighbourhoods. The cooperation and assistance extended by communities helped in bringing crime down. This for me is the true meaning of Community Policing where the police assimilate themselves into the community. We were sure to be called for any activity carried out by the community. In Subang Jaya, the relationship between the police and community is inseparable.

**6. What will you miss in Subang Jaya when you move to your new posting?**

to me. I have gotten to know many in the community personally to the extent that I know where they stay, where they work, how many children they have, and even what time they leave for work and return home. This intimacy helped me in bringing the crime index down in USJ. I watched over the community like I watch over my own family.

**7. What is your personal message to the community of Subang Jaya?**

I pray and hope that this special relationship which the community shares with each other and the police will continue to be nurtured after I leave. It is my hope that the community will extend the same hospitality and friendship to my successor. God willing, if I am given the opportunity to return to serve in Subang Jaya again in the future, I will come immediately. I pray that Subang Jaya remains safe and is protected from any unforeseen circumstances.

**EDITOR'S NOTE: We would like to wish Jasni all the best in his new posting in Bukit Aman. Our team has spent countless days and nights working beside him on crime prevention rounds and community engagement. One of his most recent success was the arrest of two suspects involved in the murder of a couple in USJ. It was made known to us that based on a tip-off Jasni rushed to the location where one of the suspects was hiding and arrested him. This led to more arrests and eventually the success in solving the murders.**

**Thank You Jasni - Polis dan Masyarakat Berpisah Tiada.**

demand than a vegetable, and a young plant "eats" differently, in terms of nutrient type and quantity, than a mature plant. Plants also require several types of nutrients. The five of the most important nutrients are nitrogen (N), phosphorus (P), potassium (K), calcium (Ca), and magnesium (Mg). And these nutrients are required in different amounts, depending on the plant type and age.

We further know that different mineral fertilizers are formulated differently, in terms of what nutrients these fertilizers contain and the quantity of each of these nutrients. Some fertilizers are packed with only N, P, and K nutrients (even then with differing ratios), where others additionally include micronutrients such as boron (B), copper (Cu), and zinc (Zn), among others.

But at least for these mineral fertilizers, their nutrient contents are known with guaranteed certainty. Organic fertilizers, however, cannot guarantee such nutrient contents, because organic fertilizers are from natural sources, where their nutrient content are typically very variable. For instance, the nutrient content in poultry manure, even obtained from the same poultry farm, can differ according to batches.

What then can you do? I recommend that you have your garden soil tested once every few years (such as once every two or three years) for the nutrient content. This is so that you know what nutrients your garden soil lack and how much fertilizers to apply to overcome their shortfall. Knowing your garden soil nutrient content is also very helpful for you to determine how effective had been your soil management. Soil test laboratories, including in my university,



The next step is to calculate how much fertilizers to apply based on the nutrient content in your fertilizers, so that your fertilizers meet the nutrient demand of your plants. Unfortunately, fertilizer calculations can appear daunting to some. I also do not have space here to show some basic fertilizer calculations, but my university has run two gardening workshops in the past, where fertilizer calculations were part of the workshop programme. Why not register yourself for the next workshop?

Fret not. Here is my general advice to have a healthy garden soil, applicable to most soils and plants. For every one square meter of your garden, add about 3 kg of organic matter every year (like leaves or twigs but compost is strongly recommended) on the soil surface. Organic matter is the lifeblood of your soil, and its addition is vital to keep your soil healthy. In addition to the organic matter, you can further add, once every half a year, about 70 g of NPK 15:15:15 (also known as NPK Green) per square meter.

Do not over-fertilize, particularly with mineral-based fertilizers (like NPK fertilizers). Always follow the fertilizer instructions and avoid adding in "extra", thinking the extra amount will boost plant growth and yield. Instead, over-fertilization could cause nutrient toxicity or nutrient imbalance, where the latter is the typical cause for flower abortion, fruit drop, or luscious leaf growth but without flower formation.