

Spreader Procedure

Do's and Don'ts

- ✓ Always apply at the recommended rate range for best results
- ✓ Apply straight after mowing if possible
- ✓ Apply at least 3 days before the next cut
- ✓ Put a third less fertilizer on grass in shady areas
- ✓ There should be moisture available in the soil – never apply on parched lawns. If it's a dry period wait until AFTER a good down pour
- ✓ Don't rush when applying anything to the lawn. You will do a better job and be safer with a steady walking pace
- ✓ Fertilizer is a type of salt so it is sensible to wear long sleeves and gloves to stop drying of the skin. It will sting if you have a cut
- ✓ Eye protection is advised as fertilizer can ricochet off hard objects
- ✓ Never fill the spreader on the lawn
- ✓ The best time for weed control is 10 to 20 days after fertilizing your lawn
- ✓ Overlap spreading gives best results



Spreader procedure

Though this may appear complicated it's not. It is just like mowing the lawn; normally you go up one line and come back down along side it. The main difference for this spreading procedure is that we are going to overlap; in other words if you were using the mower you would go up the first line but rather than coming back down alongside it you would come back with the mower half on the uncut grass and half on the cut grass. By doing this 'overlap' up and down the lawn you will have effectively cut the grass twice. It's that simple!

If you are using a spreader for the first time you may want to practice before filling it with fertilizer. This can be done empty to get used to the controls and then with coarse dry sand. Sand won't fly out very far from the spreader so expect most fertilizers to go a little further. It is also a good idea to keep your finger(s) on the shut off lever so that you can quickly stop the fertilizer flow if you run into any difficulties.

Overlap Spreading

Overlap spreading is where you cover the area twice either by overlapping as you spread (diagram 1) in one direction or by two direction spreading in a crossways direction (diagram 2). The first method is usually the simplest.

It can be a good idea to have something to aim at as you go up and down the lawn. Marker posts of dowelling or even a couple of long handled screw drivers will do. You only need two, one for each end of the lawn. As you reach one whilst spreading you'll move it to the next position so that you can aim at it on your return trip. Have a look at the positions of the markers in diagram 1.



Alternatively, do your spreading a few days after mowing or better still on a dewy morning. This way your feet or wheels leave tracks and you can see the route you take enabling you to stay parallel to your previous route.

This procedure is for the shoulder spreader

If you're using a wheeled rotary spreader then the only difference is the lack of handle to crank. Just remember that your speed determines how far the fertiliser will be thrown. If you are using a drop spreader use the 'two direction' overlap method.

- ✓ A good steady pace is required. Use the [Pace Guide](http://www.lawnsmith.co.uk/enthusiast/technical-lawn-help/measuring-testing) at <http://www.lawnsmith.co.uk/enthusiast/technical-lawn-help/measuring-testing> if you feel in need of help.
- ✓ Start by planning in which direction to go up and down your lawn; choose either the longest edge or the straightest edge to start on.
- ✓ The usual 'overlap' method for this spreader would be 'single direction'. However, if your lawn is a complicated shape you may wish to use the 'two direction' procedure which is normally used for 'drop spreaders'.

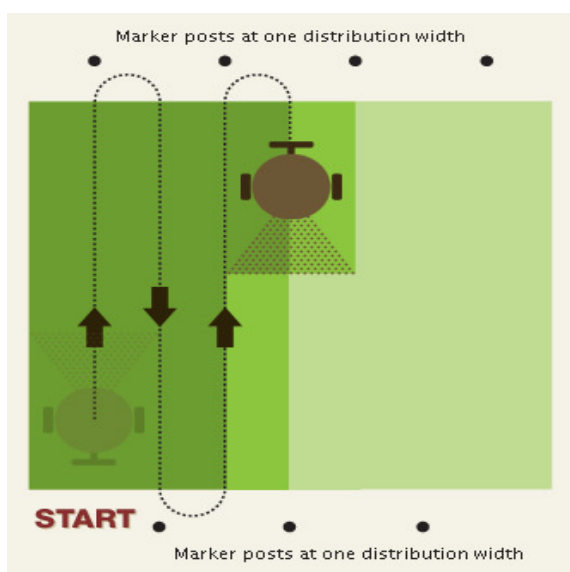


Diagram 1 - Overlap single direction

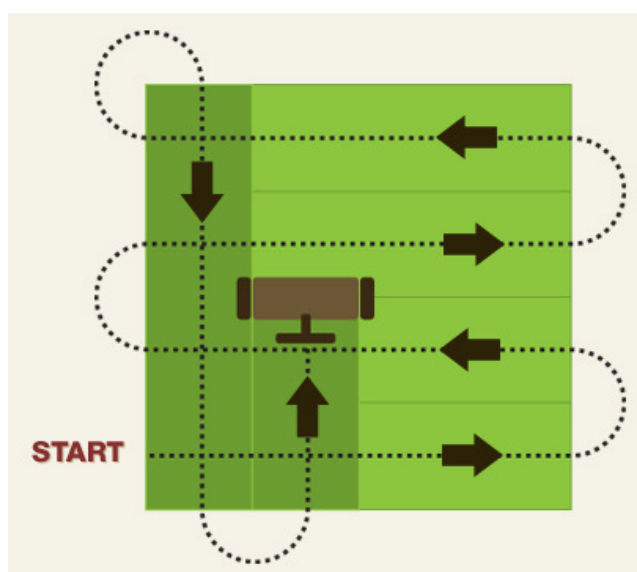


Diagram 2 - Overlap two directions

- ✓ If this is your first time with your spreader or fertiliser set your spreader to a little bit less than the recommended setting for your Lawnsmith® fertiliser. This is to cover for variations in your speed.
- ✓ Measure and fill the spreader with the required amount of fertiliser. If you ordered a little extra then keep it aside just in case.
- ✓ Place your number '1' marker post 2 metres* away from the lawn edge at the far end of the lawn (top left of diagram 1 above). Go back to the bottom end of the lawn and place marker '2' in position for your return spreading trip down the lawn; this will be an additional 2 metres* (4 metres in total) from your starter edge. Note: 2 metres* is half the width that your fertiliser spreader should spread.

* Very fine fertilizers (SPRING & SUMMER *FINE* and WINTER GREEN) may not reach the edge so you may be better to adjust your width and markers down a little from 2 metres to 1.75 metres rather than changing speed. Practicing with sand is a good idea.

- ✓ Always start the fertilizer spreader by cranking the handle first and then pulling the hopper lever back after you start your first step. This way you are moving when the first granules hit your lawn.
- ✓ Start walking up your lawn in a straight line 2 metres* away from the edge aiming at your first marker. The crank handle should achieve about one rotation for each time your right (or left) foot touches the ground.
- ✓ This speed of crank should 'throw' the fertilizer to the edge of your lawn 2 metres* away. If it doesn't reach crank and walk a little faster. If it goes over slow down a little.
- ✓ Always walk in a straight line. If the edge weaves in and out you can always go back and give missed patches a quick 'squirt' from your spreader or sprinkle fertiliser by hand when you've finished the main lawn area.
- ✓ As you approach the end of the lawn shut the fertiliser lever off when the granules hit the end of the lawn; then you can stop walking and then stop cranking. I often keep cranking even when I'm turning around and not spreading anything. Keeps the rhythm!
- ✓ You've now got to go back down the lawn AND overlap so move the marker post '1' that you've just arrived at four metres along the lawn so it's there for you to aim at on your next return trip up the lawn. Now go back 2 metres (which should be half-way between your first and second positions for marker 1) and face back down the lawn in line with your marker '2' at the other end. You should also be standing at the edge of the fertiliser that you spread on the way up. See the diagram for guidance.
- ✓ So off you go; crank handle, start walking and open shutter. The fertiliser you are now spreading should be just reaching your foot prints from when you came up the lawn. Simple isn't it?
- ✓ Repeat the above until the lawn is complete.

- ✓ Now go and touch up any contours along the edge that got missed. Try 'squirting' fertiliser (perhaps practice with sand first). It's very easy:
 - Stand still
 - Crank gently
 - Half open fertiliser shutter
 - Adjust cranking speed to 'squirt' fertiliser into the desired area
 - Slowing down or speeding up the cranking will spread fertiliser closer or further away

- ✓ Finally, you may have noticed that the ends of the lawn where your markers were only got fertiliser on them when you walked up to them. When you turned around the spot where you started the next run didn't get a second dose of fertiliser. This means the ends of your lawn (or the top and bottom in the first diagram above) only got half the required amount of fertiliser. This is easy to sort; just walk along the ends of your lawn 2 metres from the edge and spread fertiliser once. Job done.

Left over fertiliser

Just a little left over? Great! Put what little you have back in the bag ready for next time and give yourself a pat on the back (keep unused fertiliser sealed and dry).

If there is more than expected left then go and put it on the lawn. Don't 'overlap' spread or you may put too much on part of your lawn and not have enough for the rest. Just go up the lawn (or change direction if you prefer) and come back down by moving 4 metres along (twice as far as you did when overlap spreading) so that the fertiliser doesn't overlap; this is called 'single' spreading. If you're in doubt that you have enough to do the whole lawn just partially open the fertiliser shutter and let a little bit through. The first time I did this I think I still had some left over.

As you will realise from this last bit, you can make a total pig's ear of spreading and still make good in the end. I can also promise you that this sounds harder than it is. When you've done it once you'll realise how stupidly simple it is! And to prove it, just wait two weeks and I'll bet your lawn looks lush and green and even all over!

Hopefully you didn't run out of fertiliser. If you did and you planned ahead you'll have some spare ready for just an eventuality. Before putting it on though do check that your spreader is set correctly.

Finally, make adjustments to your spreader setting ready for next time. If you did have a little too much left over AND set your spreader to slightly less than the recommended setting you know this is part of the reason. You can now safely increase the opening of your spreader so that the correct amount goes on next time you use this fertiliser. If you ran out of fertiliser then reduce the spreader setting slightly.

Everyone will have to make some adjustment to their spreader as everyone's walking speed is different. If you think part of the reason is inaccurate area calculations then go and measure the lawn again.

Once finished thoroughly wash or hose the spreader and allow it to dry before storing. A squirt or wipe of the metal parts with WD40 will stop rust forming.

Tricky areas

Some areas don't permit you to walk up and down on different tracks. For example you may have a path between flower beds that's only a metre wide or a small 3m x 3m lawn.

Very small lawns

- ★ Use the 'squirting' method above. Stand at one edge and 'squirt' fertiliser so that it covers from the middle of the lawn to the far edge. Repeat this process from all four edges
- ★ Hand spread

Very narrow lawns or lawn paths

- ★ Half open the shutter and crank very slowly so that you only spin the fertiliser the width of the lawn. Walking slowly also helps. Sometimes one run puts enough fertiliser in so I leave it to you to decide whether to do a second run in the opposite direction
- ★ Hand spread

2 metres up to 6 metres wide

1. Walk up and walk down the centre of the lawn
2. Spin slower or faster to make fertiliser reach edges
3. If area less than 4 metres wide reduce fertiliser by partially closing shutter
4. If area wider than 4 metres walk slower to increase fertiliser application