



Mount Vernon

An Innovative Community; Authentically Hometown

Sweeter Soil with Substantial Savings

Free lime sludge available from the City of Mount Vernon

MOUNT VERNON, September 9, 2022 – The City of Mount Vernon is offering thousands of tons of lime to the farming community for soil application **free of charge**. Under the Ohio EPA’s “Beneficial Use” Permit, the lime has been found to be extremely useful for crop production.

Lime addition to soils in crop production can result in increased yields by increasing nutrient availability. The lime requirement is based on a test that measures the capacity of the soil to provide nutrients to plants. Agricultural lime is typically mined from a limestone quarry and is generally known as either dolomitic (high magnesium) or calcite (high calcium) lime. The effectiveness of lime is measured in terms of total neutralizing power (TNP).

While quarry lime is a high cost to farmers, an alternative is lime sludge from a municipal water treatment plant. Lime sludge, generated from the municipal water-softening treatment process, typically has a TNP of around 60. This compares well with the TNP of commercial lime products.

Local crop farmer Tim Smith applied the City’s lime and is thrilled with the opportunity and results.

“It’s free lime!” said Smith. “We bumped up the application to five tons per acre to make up for the water content, but it’s free.”

The moisture content of this lime is approximately 37 percent, so Smith called a friend and got creative. “We used a vertical beater manure spreader owned by Doug Neighbarger to apply this wet lime, and the spread pattern was nearly perfect,” said Smith. “As soon as I can, I’m going to get more from the City.”

An independent consultant’s tests show the City’s lime contains elements that provide optimal growing power for crops, in terms of both TNP and Cation Exchange Capacity. CEC measures the soil’s ability to provide available nutrients to plants. Lime increases the CEC and thus the nutrients available to crops.

Rendell Shira, certified crop adviser for RS Crop Consulting, Mount Vernon, explained how the lime application supports the soil in our area.

“Lime makes fertilizer work and is a catalyst to make nutrients available to your plants,” he said. “The City’s TNP levels are 61.3 percent, which is considered really good.”

The potential benefits for Knox County and the region could be an economic boost to the agricultural community. As yields rise, so do local profits, “Applying this lime to our fields in Knox County will improve the overall gross domestic product of the region,” said Brian Ball, P.E., who is the City’s Engineer and a Knox County farmer.

For more information on lime sludge from the Mount Vernon Water Treatment Plant, call the City Water Office at (740) 393-9504.

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ABOUT THE CITY OF MOUNT VERNON:

The City of Mount Vernon is an innovative community with an authentic hometown feel. The City is dedicated to providing modern services with an emphasis on continual improvement, customer service and equitable laws that support our citizens and visitors, while retaining and attracting investors in our community. Home to 17,000 people, Mount Vernon is the county seat for Knox County and boasts historic buildings and districts as well as business and professional, educational and recreational opportunities through many adaptive reuses of the community's infrastructure and spaces. The City has strong ties to higher education, with Mount Vernon Nazarene University, Kenyon College and Central Ohio Technical College operating satellite locations in the historic downtown. Located 40 miles northeast of Columbus, Mount Vernon is near the geographic center of Ohio and has connections all over the globe.

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