How to Read a Fertilizer Label

What the letters represent:

N = Nitrogen  
Key nutrient in plant growth

P = Phosphorus  
Important for root establishment

K = Potassium  
Promotes vigorous growth and hardiness

What the numbers represent:

Percent of each nutrient in the bag

A fertilizer with the numbers 24-8-16 contains

- 24% Nitrogen
- 8% Phosphorus
- 16% Potassium

The percent of each nutrient in the bag can be converted into pounds of nutrient in each bag. If the bag is a 50 pound bag, then there is

- 12 pounds of Nitrogen
- 4 pounds of Phosphorus
- 8 pounds of Potassium

Note that phosphorus is often referred to as phosphate and potassium is often referred to as potash.