



Full Sun and Partial Shade Crops

FULL SUN

Basil
Carrots
Chives
Corn
Cucumbers
Eggplant
Melons
Okra
Peppers
Potatoes
Pumpkins
Squash
Tomatillos
Tomatoes

PARTIAL SHADE

Arugula
Beans
Beets
Broccoli
Brussels Sprouts
Cauliflower
Collard Greens
Cress
Kale
Endives
Lettuce
Mustard Greens
Peas
Radishes
Spinach
Swiss Chard

VEGETABLES

Artichoke
Asparagus
Broccoli
(Purple Cape and Nine Star)
Radicchio
Rhubarb
Spinach
(Ceylon, Sissoo and New Zealand)
Sweet Potato
Water Cress
Yams

HERBS

African Basil
Garlic
Ginger
Horseradish
Lavendar
Lemon Balm
Mint
Onions (Bunching)
Oregano
Parsley
Rosemary
Sage
Thyme

FRUIT

Apples
Apricots
Avocado
Broccoli
Blackberries
Cherries
Currants
Dates
Huckleberries
Grapes
Peaches
Pears
Persimmons
Plums
Raspberries
Strawberries

EARLY JULY PLANTING

Beets
Broccoli
Brussel Sprouts
Carrots
Cabbage
Cauliflower
Collard Greens
Cucumbers
Green Beans
Kale
New Zealand Spinach
Radishes
Summer Squash
Sweet Corn
Swiss Chard
Turnips

These crops take approximately 60 to 70 days to mature.

Plant in Early July to ensure a harvest by first frost.

Zone 7
October 1st - 10th

Companion Planting – Most Common Crops

CROP	COMPANION
Tomatoes	Carrots, Cucumbers, Onions
Peppers	Bush Beans, Carrots, Onions
Summer Squash	Bush Beans, Onions Sweet Corn
Leaf Lettuce	Bush Beans, Carrots, Onions, Peas, Spinach, Radishes
Carrots	Peas, Radishes, Lettuce, Onions, Tomatoes
Sweet Corn	Pumpkins, Melons, Squash, Peas, beans, Cucumbers
Beets	Onions, Lettuce, Cabbage, Beans
Potatoes	Peas, Cabbage, Bush Beans, Corn
Green Beans – Bush	Cabbage, Lettuce, Carrots, Peas Radishes, Beets
Radishes	Lettuce, Peas

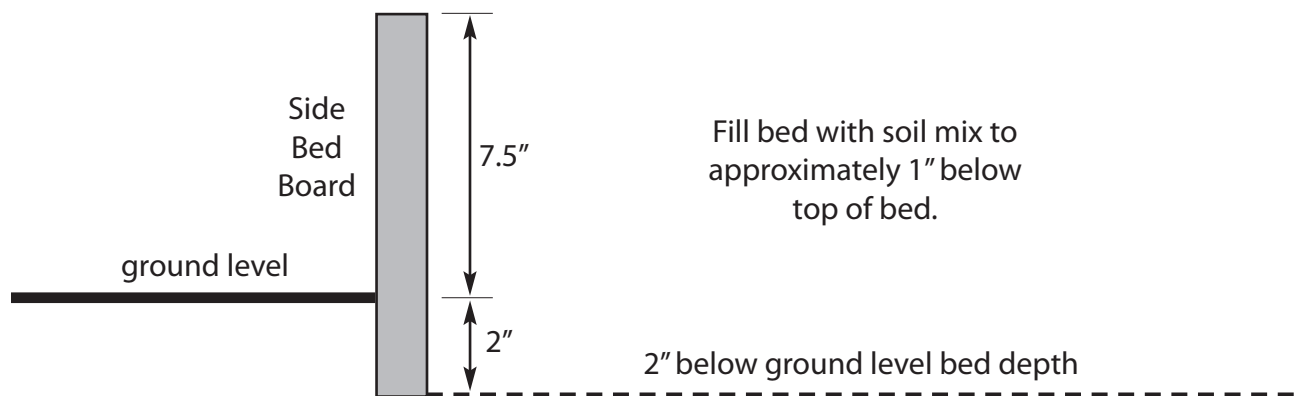
4' x 8' x 10" Raised Bed Soil Mix

8 - 40 lb. bags of topsoil

3 - 40 lb bags of compost

1 - 40 lb bag of dihydrated cow manure

1 - 2.7 cu. Ft. bag of peat moss



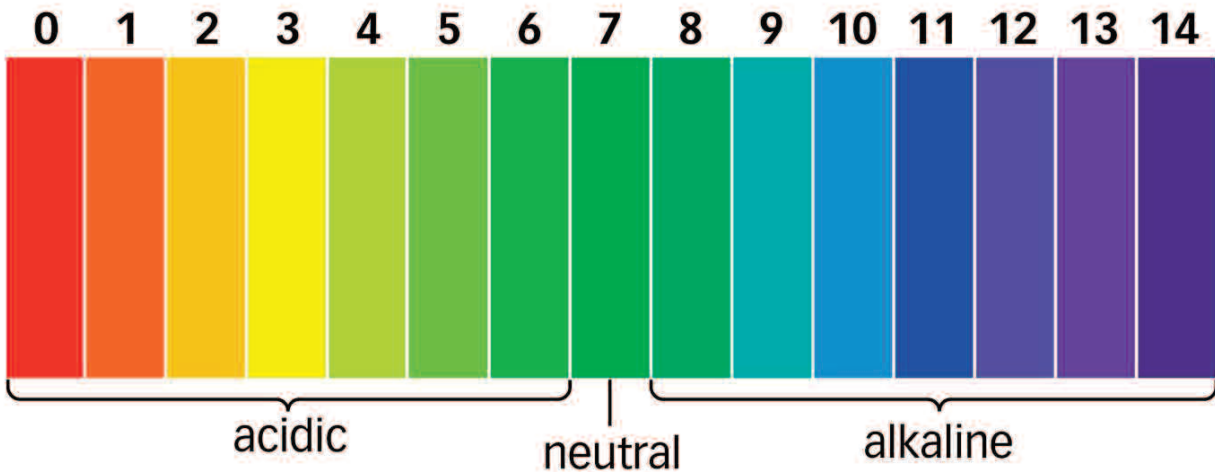
Board Preservation Mix

3 parts **Klean Strip**[®] (green) odorless mineral spirits

1 part boiled linseed oil

Mix in an empty paint can. Pour into a roller pan. Apply with a paint roller.

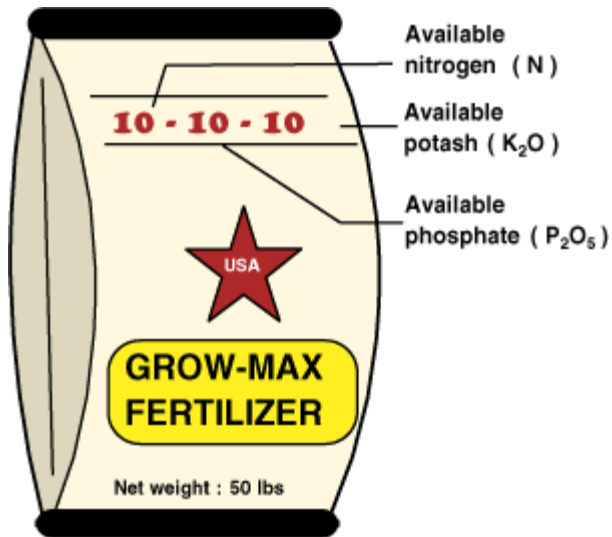
Vegetable pH Chart



Vegetable	Ideal pH	Vegetable	Ideal pH
Artichoke	6.5 – 7.5	Lettuce	6.1 – 7.0
Asparagus	6.0 – 8.0	Mushroom	6.5 – 7.5
Beans	6.1 – 7.5	Mustard	6.0 – 7.5
Beet Root	6.0 – 7.5	Onion	6.0 – 7.0
Broccoli	6.0 – 7.0	Parsnip	5.5 – 7.5
Brussel Sprouts	6.0 – 7.5	Pea	6.0 – 7.5
Cabbage	6.0 – 7.5	Peanut	5.0 – 6.5
Carrot	5.5 – 7.0	Pepper	5.5 – 7.0
Cauliflower	5.5 – 7.5	Potato	4.5 – 6.0
Celery	6.0 – 7.0	Pumpkin	5.5 – 7.5
Chicory	5.0 – 6.5	Radish	6.0 – 7.0
Corn	5.5 – 7.0	Rhubarb	5.5 – 7.0
Cress	6.0 – 7.0	Sweet Patato	5.5 – 6.0
Cucumber	5.5 – 7.5	Shallot	5.5 – 7.0
Garlic	5.5 – 7.5	Soybean	5.5 – 6.5
Horseradish	6.0 – 7.0	Spinach	6.0 – 7.5
Kale	6.0 – 7.5	Tomato	5.5 – 7.5
Kohlrabi	6.0 – 7.5	Turnip	5.5 – 7.0
Leek	6.0 – 8.0	Water Cress	5.0 – 8.0
Lentil	5.5 – 7.0	Watermelon	5.5 – 6.5

A Homeowner's Guide to Fertilizer

Understanding the Fertilizer Label



All fertilizer labels have three bold numbers. The first number is the amount of nitrogen (N), the second number is the amount of phosphate (P_2O_5) and the third number is the amount of potash (K_2O). These three numbers represent the primary nutrients (nitrogen(N) - phosphorus(P) - potassium (K)).

This label, known as the fertilizer grade, is a national standard.

A bag of 10-10-10 fertilizer contains 10 percent nitrogen, 10 percent phosphate and 10 percent potash.

Fertilizer grades are made by mixing two or more nutrient sources together to form a blend, that is why they are called "mixed fertilizers." Blends contain particles of more than one color. Manufacturers produce different grades for the many types of plants.

You can also get fertilizers that contain only one of each of the primary nutrients. Nitrogen sources include ammonium nitrate (33.5-0-0), urea nitrogen (46-0-0), sodium nitrate (16-0-0) and liquid nitrogen (30-0-0). Phosphorus is provided as 0-46-0 and potash as 0-0-60 or 0-0-50.

Calculating Nutrient Content

To calculate the pounds of nitrogen in a **50-lb bag of 10-10-10 fertilizer**, multiply 50 by 0.10. Do the same for calculating the amounts of phosphate and potash. A 50-lb bag of 10-10-10 contains a total of 15 lbs of nutrients: 5 lbs nitrogen, 5 lbs phosphate and 5 lbs potash. The remaining weight is filler, usually sand or granular limestone.

Another example:

50-lb. bag of 8-0-24 fertilizer

1. To calculate the pounds of nitrogen: Multiply 50 by .08, which equals 4.
2. To calculate the pounds of phosphate: There is no phosphate in this bag of fertilizer.
3. To calculate the pounds of potash: Multiply 50 by .24, which equals 12.

A 50 pound bag of 8-0-24 fertilizer contains a total of 16 lbs of nutrients: 4 lbs nitrogen, 0 lbs phosphate, and 12 lbs potash. This would leave us with 34 lbs of filler.

Selecting a Fertilizer Grade

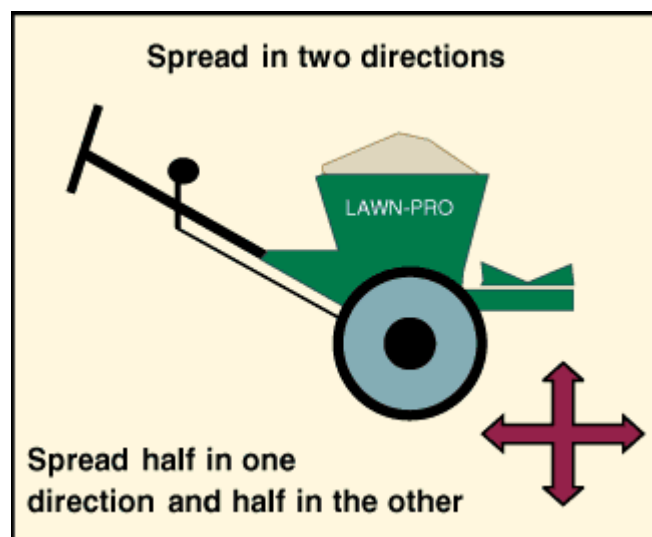
The best way to select a fertilizer grade is to have your [soil tested](#). The [soil test report](#) will recommend a fertilizer grade for your use. The report also comes with a management note that provides guidelines for supplementing nitrogen for lawn and garden crops.

Typical grades recommended for lawns and gardens include:

- 5-10-5
- 5-10-10
- 10-10-10
- 8-0-24
- 6-6-18

Spreading Fertilizer

Have you ever seen a lawn that looked like it had different colored stripes. This was probably caused by spreading fertilizers the wrong way. To make sure that the color and growth of your plants are the same, fertilizers must be spread evenly. The most popular types of fertilizer spreaders are the drop spreader and the cyclone spreader. Cyclone spreaders generally provide the best results. Make sure when you spread the fertilizer that you overlap your spread pattern by Applying half the material in one direction and the remainder in the opposite direction. Break up any clumps so that the fertilizer won't get clogged in the spreader.



If you have questions regarding which grade of fertilizer to use or how much fertilizer to use, contact your local agricultural advisor or the [Agronomic Division](#) in Raleigh, NC.



[Soil
Test
Page](#)



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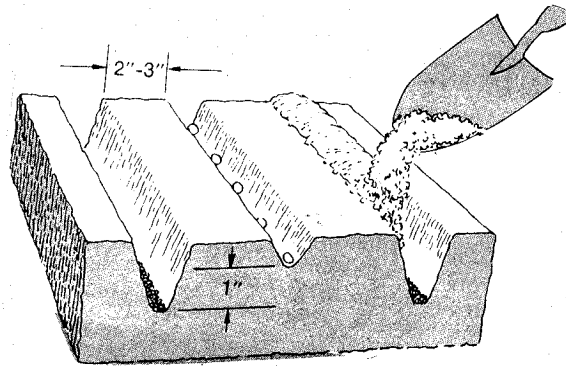


VEGETABLE FERTILIZER GUIDE

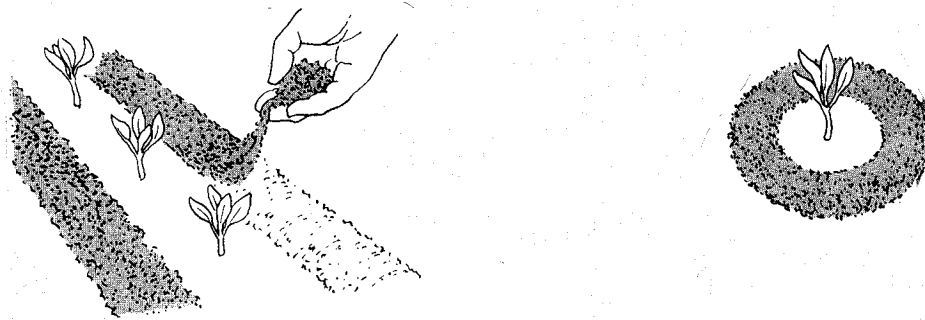
Asparagus	In a trench 15" deep, mix 2" of topsoil with 4" of rich organic matter. Place in bottom of trench. Spread superphosphate or bone meal, to provide phosphorus, at the rate of 5 lbs. per 100 sq. ft. Mix 1" of topsoil into this fertilizer. <i>1st Year:</i> Early fall - add 2 1/2 lbs. of 5-10-10 per 100 sq. ft. Late fall - add 2 1/2 lbs. superphosphate per 100 sq. ft. <i>2nd Year:</i> Spring & fall - dress with 2 1/2 lbs. of 10-10-10 per 100 sq. ft. <i>3rd Year & beyond:</i> Same as 2nd year, but in the spring, fertilize after harvest.
Beans	Pre-plant: If necessary, use 5-10-10, 3-4" deep, at the rate of 1 1/2 lbs. per 100 sq. ft. Side-dress: 1 T. of 5-10-10 per plant every 3-4 weeks or generous scoop of rotted manure.
Beets	Pre-plant: Work aged manure or compost into top 8", or 3-4 cups 5-10-10 into top 4-6" for every 20-foot row. Side-dress: If growing slowly, use 2 cups 10-10-10 per 20-foot row.
Broccoli	Pre-plant: 3-4 lbs. 5-10-10 per 100 sq. ft. Side-dress: 3 weeks after transplant with 1 T. high nitrogen fertilizer.
Brussels sprouts	Pre-plant: 2-4 lbs. 5-10-10 per 100 sq. ft. Side-dress: Once a month with 5-10-10, 1-2 T. per plant.
Cabbage	Pre-plant: 3-4 lbs. 5-10-10 per 100 sq. ft. or 3-4 shovels of aged manure or compost. Side-dress: Month after transplant, 1 lb. 10-10-10 per 25-foot row.
Chinese cabbage	Side-dress: 1/2 lb. 10-10-10 per 25-foot row when plants are 4-6", then every three weeks thereafter.
Carrots	Pre-plant: 1 lb. 5-10-10 per 50 sq. ft. Side-dress: When 6" tall, use natural fertilizer such as dried manure or fish fertilizer. Thin layer hardwood ash, 4" deep, for potash (for sweetness).
Celery	Fall of year: Generous amounts of compost and/or manure in top 3". Side-dress: Every 2-3 weeks with manure tea or 1 tsp. 5-10-10 per plant.

Corn	Pre-plant: 3-4 lbs. 5-10-10 per 100 sq. ft. Side-dress: 2 lbs. high nitrogen fertilizer (urea or ammonium sulfate), per 100 sq. ft. when plants are 8-10" tall. Use again when silks appear, adding superphosphate to N.
Cucumbers	Pre-plant: Use plenty of compost or well-rotted manure. Side-dress: 4 weeks after planting, just as vines begin to run, use 2 handfuls compost or 1 T. 5-10-10 per plant.
Eggplant	Pre-plant: Mix 1" well rotted manure or 2-3 lbs. 5-10-5 per 100 sq. ft. Side-dress: When plants set several fruit, use 1 T. 5-10-5 or 10-6-4 per plant.
Lettuce	Pre-plant: 1 lb. 10-10-10 per 25 sq. ft. Side-dress: 3-4 weeks after planting, use 1 tsp. 10-10-10 per plant. May also use fish or seaweed fertilizer.
Melons	Pre-plant: Generous amounts of rotted manure or compost. Side-dress: Mulched - Use liquid fertilizer (fish, seaweed, manure tea) Unmulched - Use 1/2 cup 5-10-10 for every 4-5 plants. Again in 3 wks.
Okra	Pre-plant: 1/2 lb. 10-10-10 per 25-foot row. Side-dress: 1/2 lb. 10-10-10 per 25-foot row or aged manure or rich compost. (Side-dress three times: 1. After thinning; 2. When first pods begin to develop; 3. At least once midway through the growing season.)
Onions	Fall: Mix rich compost or manure into soil. Pre-plant: 1 lb. 10-10-10 per 20 sq. ft. Side-dress: 1 lb. 10-10-10 per 20-25 foot row when plants are 4-6" tall and when bulbs swell.
Parsnips	Pre-plant: Use a slow-release fertilizer. Side-dress: If a slow-release fertilizer has not been applied, use 1-2 cups 5-10-10 per 25-foot row or its equivalent after 1-2 months.
Peas	Pre-plant: 1-1 1/2 lbs. 5-10-10 per 100 sq. ft. Side-dress: When 6" tall, use 1/2 lb. of a 1:1 mixture of ammonium sulfate and dehydrated manure per 25 foot row.
Peppers	Pre-plant: 1 1/2 lbs. 5-10-10 per 100 sq. ft. Side-dress: Monthly with 1 T. 5-10-10 per plant.
Potatoes	Pre-plant: In an 8" trench or hole, mix 5-10-10 at the rate of 1 lb. per 25-foot row with 2 inches of soil. Side-dress: When hilled for the 2nd time, use 1 lb. 5-10-10 per 25-foot row or compost, seaweed, or fish emulsion.
Pumpkins	Pre-plant: Mix rotted manure and a handful of 5-10-10 into top 6-8" of soil. Side-dress: Use 5-10-10 on hill and side roots.
Radishes	No special fertilization necessary.
Rhubarb	Pre-plant: Mix well-rotted compost or manure into soil. Fertilize early spring each year with 2-3 shovels of well-rotted manure per plant or 1/2 cup of 5-10-10. Side-dress: At the same rate in early summer after the main harvest period.
Spinach	Mix compost, manure, and/or 10-10-10. No additional fertilizer necessary.

Squash	Pre-plant: Work plenty of good compost or aged manure into 1' of soil. Side-dress: 1 T. 5-10-10 per plant. Summer squash - When 6" tall. Again when they bloom Winter squash - When vines start to run. Again when small fruit form
Sweet potatoes	Pre-plant: 3 lbs. 5-10-10 per 100 sq. ft. of row, plus fine compost. Side-dress: 3-4 weeks after transplanting with 3 lbs. 5-10-10 per 100 sq. ft. (Use 5 lbs. if soil is sandy.)
Tomatoes	Pre-plant: 3 lbs. 5-10-10 per 100 sq. ft. Side-dress: 3 lbs. 5-10-10 per 100 sq. ft. after fruit sets



Pre-plant: put fertilizer 1" below seeds and 2-3" to each side



Methods of sidedressing established plants

Soil Condition

There are almost 17 ingredients that are essential for the overall well-being of your soil. Hence among them, nitrogen, phosphorus, and potassium are considered the most important or you can name them primary elements as plants soak them in huge amounts from inside the soil. Fertilizers that comprise them are known as complete fertilizers. Although they are not complete fertilizers in the true sense, this is because plants do require calcium, magnesium, and sulfur as secondary nutrients. Some other micronutrients included are boron, copper, iron, manganese, and zinc. Another important element that your soil should have is the acid-alkaline balance. While comprising them all you can formulate a fertile texture to call your spring garden soil a healthy one.

Soil Testing

Although we have discussed essential nutrients that your garden soil should have. But how would you know whether they do exist in your garden soil or not? There is a way to examine which minerals are missing and which are in abundance. Local Cooperative Extension Services frequently offer minimal expense soil tests. These tests normally measure levels of soil pH, magnesium, phosphorus, calcium, potassium, and in some cases nitrogen. They may likewise report the soil's micronutrient content, yet this isn't important for the landscaper who adds a lot of organic matter to make a difference. For a less serious test, get a DIY form, for example, the **Rapitest Soil Test Kit** to uphold the testing using your chemistry. In case of any severe issue, you can take advice from experts at any time.

PH levels can be basic to your plant's capacity to retain supplements. Most minerals and supplements are best accessible to plants in soils with a pH of between 6.5-6.8. If your garden soil is acidic (low pH, at or underneath 6.0) or soluble (high pH, above 7.0) it doesn't make any difference how rich it is in supplements, the plants will not have the possibility to assimilate them. The best and ideal opportunity to get the soil test is in the spring or fall when it is generally steady. It is also going to be an ideal time to add soil amendments that are missing.

Soil Type

Learning about your soil is essential to formulate effective prep for your future harvest. Whether your garden has clay or sandy soil you have to determine your soil type first. Generally, garden soil is divided into three major types.

- Clay Soil
- Sandy Soil
- Silty Soil

To examine the soil, simply get a bit and rub it between your fingers. If the soil feels abrasive, then it means that it is sandy. Whereas if it feels smooth like bath powder, it is silty. If the soil feels cruel when dry and elusive and tacky when wet, it means that your soil is heavy clay.

How To Prepare Garden Soil For Spring Growing

Formulate a plan of preparation as per your findings based on testing and consideration. In order to encourage beginner gardeners, we have separated the process into three simple steps.

1. Garden Area Clean-Up

Cleaning rocks and other harmful debris is essential for the betterment of your farming. Hence for this, you need to dig up a bit with the help of a spade and cut the sod into small shapes. It will help you identify rocky pieces and debris that you can remove using your hands.

2. Loosen the Soil

Are you going to prepare garden soil for the first time? If yes then you must release the tension by loosening up soil from about 8 inches to 12 inches. Loosen soil will help your roots to go down for better performance.

3. Add Organic Matter

Putting some organic matter like compost will help you get a good start. Spread at least 2 to 3 creeps of fertilizer or matured excrement on the soil and close to four inches.

Many gardeners will dive fertilizer into the soil, but this is not the right way. However, there's additionally a no-till theory to uncover less weed seeds and not upset the soil structure; essentially leave the fertilizer at the top surface and let the worms do the driving for you!

4. Improve Your Soil Quality

Soil amendments are useful agents when it comes to improving soil quality. They are generally used to improve soil texture, nutrients and balance the PH level of your soil. Soil amendments are classified into two major types.

5. Organic Soil Amendments

Organic soil amendments are made up of compost, aged manure, and wood ash.

6. Inorganic Soil Amendments

Whereas, inorganic soil amendments are composed of sand, perlite, lime, and vermiculite.

When it comes to choosing the right form of amendments then it all depends upon the type of soil you have. With soil amendment you can convert your poor soil into a nutrient-rich, just add some aged manure, compost, and other leaf molds. Why is your amendment essential for your soil?

- It helps you in soil relaxation that uplifts the drainage and mineral relaxation.
- It strengthens the sand soil and helps in holding water.
- It makes it hassle-free for you to dig soil and work with.
- With the amendment, you can get the ideal pH level that is best for vegetables, fruits, and flowers.

7. How To Add Organic Matter

• You need to put sufficient organic matter on your nursery so it tends to be spread to a profundity of somewhere around 2 inches. Try not to add in excess of a 4-inch layer. With a fork, blend the natural matter into the the existing soil. Ensure it is all around joined and spread equitably!

• Keep on adding organic matter each season when you hold a soil plan to construct and keep up with the soil. It might take a few periods of revisions until the soil is loamy.

• After the amendment process, the best way is to pour a sufficient amount of water and examine the moisture inside the soil.

• Wait for at least two weeks and after passing the required time you are good to go for planting.

• But before sowing seeds it is good to clean up if any debris or dirt is there and also level the soil.

How to Harden Off Seedlings

Acclimate your seedlings before you transplant.

Transplanting seedlings into your garden this year? Plan at least a week in advance to "harden off" indoor-grown seedlings before setting them into the still-cold earth. We need to acclimate indoor-grown transplants because the cushy confines of a warm home or greenhouse are really nothing like the great outdoors: Inside, seedlings are treated to steady temps, consistent light, and attentive watering; outside, seedlings face chilly soil, scorching sun, wind, rain, and other tests of their endurance. Although plants are generally pretty forgiving, give them time to adjust to their new environment and they'll do much better.

Melons, Tomatoes, Peppers, Eggplant, Zucchini, Basil and Cucumbers are especially sensitive to cold temps, so be sure not to leave them out overnight if the forecast predicts temperatures lower than 50°F. Many gardeners keep row covers (Agribond) on hand to protect young plants from unexpected dips in temperature.

Take "Baby Steps."

Hardening off is an incremental process. Slowly introduce seedlings to outdoor conditions in "baby steps":

- First, pick an overcast day when outdoor temps are 45°F or warmer.
- Begin by setting transplants out for 1-2 hours in a sheltered location protected from wind and direct sun; then, return your transplants indoors until the following day.
- For the next few days, gradually increase the time spent outdoors. Don't put plants out on especially windy days or when temps are below 45°F.
- As plants adjust, move them to a spot with direct morning sun. The intense afternoon sun can burn tender leaves.
- Gradually increase exposure to afternoon sun by moving them or leaving them to linger for longer in the same spot.
- Harden off plants over a period of 1-2 weeks, until seedlings can tolerate a full day of outdoor exposure. If day and nighttime temps both hold at 50°F or warmer, your precious seedlings will be ready to plant! Choose an overcast day or wait until late afternoon to set them out.

WHAT TO COMPOST

Fruits and vegetables

Eggshells

Coffee grounds and filters

Tea bags

Nut shells

Shredded newspaper

Cardboard

Paper

Yard trimmings

Grass clippings

Houseplants

Hay and straw

Leaves

Sawdust

Wood chips

Cotton and Wool Rags

Hair and fur

Fireplace ashes

WHAT NOT TO COMPOST AND WHY

Black walnut tree leaves or twigs

- Releases substances that might be harmful to plants

Coal or charcoal ash

- Might contain substances harmful to plants

Dairy products (e.g., butter, milk, sour cream, yogurt) and eggs*

- Create odor problems and attract pests such as rodents and flies

Diseased or insect-ridden plants

- Diseases or insects might survive and be transferred back to other plants

Fats, grease, lard, or oils*

- Create odor problems and attract pests such as rodents and flies

Meat or fish bones and scraps*

- Create odor problems and attract pests such as rodents and flies

Pet wastes (e.g., dog or cat feces, soiled cat litter)*

- Might contain parasites, bacteria, germs, pathogens, and viruses harmful to humans

Yard trimmings treated with chemical pesticides

- Might kill beneficial composting organisms

* Check with your local composting or recycling coordinator to see if these organics are accepted by your community curbside or drop-off composting program.

BENEFITS OF COMPOSTING

Enriches soil, helping retain moisture and suppress plant diseases and pests.

Reduces the need for chemical fertilizers.

Encourages the production of beneficial bacteria and fungi that break down organic matter to create humus, a rich nutrient-filled material.

Reduces methane emissions from landfills and lowers your carbon footprint.

HOW TO COMPOST AT HOME

There are many different ways to make a compost pile; we have provided the following for general reference. Helpful tools include pitchforks, square-point shovels or machetes, and water hoses with a spray head. Regular mixing or turning of the compost and some water will help maintain the compost.

BACKYARD COMPOSTING

Select a dry, shady spot near a water source for your compost pile or bin.

Add brown and green materials as they are collected, making sure larger pieces are chopped or shredded.

Moisten dry materials as they are added.

Once your compost pile is established, mix grass clippings and green waste into the pile and bury fruit and vegetable waste under 10 inches of compost material.

Optional: Cover top of compost with a tarp to keep it moist. When the material at the bottom is dark and rich in color, your compost is ready to use. This usually takes anywhere between two months to two years.

Garden Maintenance

1. Mulch

After planting your plants, add mulch around them to keep the soil cool, the weeds down, retain water, and will also compost and add to the quality of your soil. Be sure to put 2-inches of mulch into your garden each year after planting. It will help your garden start on the right foot and is a major component of good vegetable garden care.

2. Water

Everything on this earth requires water to live. Your plants are no different. Keep this in mind when considering vegetable garden care because if you expect the garden to produce, you'll have to water regularly. Each garden will have different water requirements based on what you plant in the garden. On average, you should plan on watering the garden an inch per week. Some plant varieties may require more.

3. Don't Drench the Entire Plant

As crucial as watering is, it is as important to know how to water your plants. If you water the entire plant, you are leaving room for diseases to happen. Instead, try to water the root of the plant. Avoid getting water on any blooms or foliage of the plant. It is easier to water the right amount as well, by avoiding overhead watering systems and stick with soaker hoses.

4. Weeds

Weeds can be detrimental to your garden. They will compete with your plants for nutrients and usually win the war. With this in mind, be sure to make it a point to pull weeds from your garden at least once a week. As soon as you see new weeds poking through the mulch, remove them.

5. Feeding

Fertilizing is important for any garden. Keep in mind, you can choose natural fertilizers, such as chicken manure fertilizer, or you can purchase fertilizers online or locally.

Either way, you should fertilize as much as your plant varieties need. Some plants need fertilizer more frequently than others. Be sure to do your research before applying anything to your garden.

6. Remove Dead Material

When your plants begin to bloom, it will be natural to find dead blooms on a plant. Be sure to remove these, a process called deadheading. Not only will it add to the look of your garden, but it will also make room for new blooms to increase the plant's production.

7. Check the Plants Regularly

If you want to stay ahead of pests and diseases, you are going to have to put in the effort to spot them before they do any real damage. How do you go about doing this? You need to make it a priority to check your garden weekly for signs of pests or illness in your plants. If you see either, begin treating right away.

8. Crop Rotation for Good Vegetable Garden Care

Crop rotation is one of the most important things you can do for vegetable garden care. The reason is if you plant a crop in the same location year after year, pests are going to figure it out and treat your yard like an all-you-can-eat buffet. Plus, if you don't give the soil a break in particular areas of your garden by planting other items, you could also give diseases a solid breeding ground.

Make rotating your crops a priority.

9. Give Your Soil a Boost

The soil is your garden's foundation. Your plants depend upon it to hold the moisture they need and to feed them. If your soil isn't healthy, don't expect much more from your plants.

You need to make boosting your soil a priority. Test the soil to see what it needs and feed it. It may take a few years, but by investing in it, your plants will do much better.

10. Clean Your Garden Tools

A lot of people don't pay attention to the cleanliness of their garden tools. You might wonder why you should bother cleaning something if it is going to be covered in dirt with your next use.

Garden tools are in your soil, and there could be disease there also. To stop the spreading of viruses and diseases, it is important to clean your gardening tools regularly.

11. Lifting and Staking

Certain plants in your garden will become heavy from producing. Plants, like tomatoes, will need a stake in the ground and some twine to tie them up. It will help provide support to the plant, which keeps the tomato plant off the ground. This will protect the produce from becoming rotten and the plant from getting diseases and is all part of proper vegetable garden care.

12. Practice Good Sanitation

It is funny when you think how important sanitation can be in a garden since dirt surrounds it.

Yet, sanitation is an important component of caring for your garden. Be sure to clear any dead plants, leaves, or any other debris in your garden. Keeping the dirt clear, gives pests fewer places to live and thrive. In turn, this keeps your garden healthy.

13. Harvest Your Garden

When your garden begins to produce, be sure to harvest it promptly. If you leave the yield in the garden for too long, it will rot. From there it will hit the ground and begin drawing pests you don't want or need to your garden. Making sure to keep your garden picked is a great way to provide care for it.

14. Prune Properly

Pruning is as important as harvesting. Your plants will need to be pruned during their dormant season if you have perennials in your garden such as fruit trees. When pruning, be sure to leave room for new growth without bringing harm to the plant and will keep your plants healthy and vibrant.

15. Choose Disease-Resistant Plants

If you want to keep a healthy garden, the best place to start is by not inviting disease into it. One of the best ways to do this is to invest in plant varieties that are resistant to diseases in your area. You can accomplish this by researching common diseases in your area, or by speaking with someone at a local nursery.

16. Plants Need Their Space

Are you someone who enjoys your personal space? My mom is a 'hugger,' but my sister and I are the farthest things from it. Well, keep this in mind when planting your garden. Your plants are not 'huggers.' They need room to grow and room for air to circulate to fight off disease.

17. Location

One of the best ways you can care for your veggie garden should be done before you even start. You need to pick a great garden location. This location should be level (to ensure proper water distribution), and it should get at least 6 or more hours of sunlight. Choosing an excellent garden location can stop many problems many gardeners face.

18. Zone

Caring for your garden boils down to taking care of your plants and soil. You want to keep them both disease and pest free. Along with making sure they both are well fed. A great way to give your plants their best shot is to make sure you plant within your zone. If you follow the guidelines for your planting zone, plant on time, and plant only what can grow in your location, you are making wise choices for your garden. This equates to great care.

19. Close Out the Year

The final tip to caring for your garden is to make sure you close out the year well. When you are done gardening for the year, be sure to clean the garden up. Remove dead plants and any stray tools or debris. Finish the job by covering the gardening area in compost, manure, and mulch. It will give your soil a boost for the next growing season and will protect it as well. You could even plant a cover crop over your garden to provide the soil with another layer of protection.

Suggested Seed & Supply Sources

www.johnnyseeds.com
1-877-564-6697

www.highmowingseeds.com
802-472-6174

www.seedsavers.org
563-382-5990

www.fedcoseeds.com
207-426-0090

www.hudsonvalleyseed.com
845-204-8769

www.dixondalefarms.com
830-876-2430

www.harrisseeds.com
800-544-7938

www.noltsproducesupplies.net
717-656-9764

www.growerssupply.com.net
1-800-476-9715

BOOKS

HEIRLOOM

TIM STARK

CROWN PUBLISHING CORP.

BACK TO BASICS

ABIGAIL R. GEHRING

SKYHORSE PUBLISHING

THE SELF SUFFICIENCY HANDBOOK

ALAN AND GILL BRIDGEWATER

SKYHORSE PUBLISHING

HOW TO GROW MORE VEGETABLES

JOHN JEAUVONS

PENGUIN/RANDOM HOUSE

THE NEW ORGANIC GROWER

ELIOT COLEMAN

CHELSEA GREEN PUBLISHING

THE WINTER HARVEST HANDBOOK

ELIOT COLEMAN

CHELSEA GREEN PUBLISHING

THE HAVE MORE PLAN

ED AND CAROLYN ROBINSON

STOREY PUBLISHING

MAGAZINES

COUNTRYSIDE & SMALL STOCK JOURNAL

WWW.IAMCOUNTRYSIDE.COM

BACKWOODS HOME MAGAZINE

WWW.BACKWOODSHOME.COM