

Growing A Successful Garden

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“Growing A Successful Garden,” starts with a strong foundation.

The condition of your soil all depends on getting the soil ready, eliminating weeds and spending time getting your soil in the best condition. Time spent in preparing your soil reduces the time you will spend throughout the course of the growing season! It also will produce healthy nutritious

vegetables!

Soil Textures: Sand, Silt and Clay.

1. Sandy soil feels gritty, it tends to be nutrient poor and low in beneficial microbes and organic matter that plants thrive on.
2. Silty soil feels smooth like talcum powder. It is dense and does not drain well and is more fertile than sandy or clay soil.
3. Clay soil feels harsh when dry and slippery and stick when wet.
4. Most soils fall in between one of these soils.

Soil Fixes:

- Sandy soil can be improved by adding organic material – well-rotted livestock compost, used wood chips, leaves, hay, straw, peat moss or sawdust. Applying 2" layers of the organic material each year will make for better soil.
- Silty soil can be improved by adding coarse sand (not beach sand) or compost. Add an inch of organic matter each year.
- Clay soils will be improved by adding 2-3" of organic matter worked into it. Add compost, coarse sand (not beach sand), and peat moss. Applying 1" of organic matter each year can only improve it.

Good Soil Amendments:

- Bark – made from tree barks are good for improving soil structure.
- Compost – excellent for soil.
- Manure – well-rotted livestock manure.
- Leaf Mold – decomposed leaves.
- Lime – raises the pH of acid in soil, also helps loosen clay soil.
- Peat Moss – helps retain water.

- Sand – improves drainage in clay soil.
- Mulch – Organic (straw, hay, grass clippings, shredded bark) insulates the soil from extreme heat and cold.

Plants need air just as humans! That makes me think of when my youngest granddaughter was like 2 or 3, when this old grandma would get up out of the chair I would walk kind of stiff like and she said to me, “Grandma why do you walk like a penguin?” Then one day I wasn’t walking all stiff like and I said to her, “Ali, grandma isn’t walking like a penguin today.” and her response was, “You mean you are walking like a human?” Just had to add that tidbit!!



Walking like a penguin

Now back to plants need air, air in the soil holds atmospheric nitrogen that is converted into usable air for plants. Adding organic material, especially compost helps balance air supply to plants.

Plants also get thirsty: When rain isn’t sufficient then we need to add or not add it. All forms of life need water but not too much or too little. In sandy soils water drains off quickly, silt or clay soil get water-logged, this will suffocate the plant roots and soil organisms. Adding organic material holds water so that plants can use it when needed.



Watering the garden

Compost will improve almost any soil, silty and clay soils gain nutrients and are improved greatly with adding compost. Make your own compost or buy it, either way it is a beneficial organic material to add to your garden. Making your own compost is as easy as piling layers of brown (straw, leaves) and green layers (grass clippings, livestock manure or food waste) on top of one another, keep the pile wet. DIY Compost: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZAMy_ZJ0Xa8

There is so much more to know about “Growing A Successful Garden.” Yet once you have that garden going and are enjoying all the benefits of having that fresh produce or if you are one that freezes or cans it for the winter months it is so worth it.

My personal tricks I have used in my garden that I found worked well.

- Crushed Egg Shells: I save them up for a while in the spring and then I put them in my blender and make them into a powder and use them when planting my tomatoes, they are a great calcium builder. There are other plants that they are really useful for.
- Epsom Salt: I have used this for a couple of years when planting my peppers, I just put a handful in the ground before adding the plant, I also have mixed Epsom Salt

with water and put it in a spray bottle and sprayed the pepper plants once peppers start forming on the plant.

Epsom Salt is rich in magnesium and sulfate.

- Grass Cuttings: I have raked up the grass cuttings after my husband mows the grass and I pile it around my tomato plants, it keeps the weeds out and also gives the tomato plants.

<https://www.gardeningknowhow.com/edible/vegetables/tomato/mulch-for-tomatoes.htm>

So there you have it, I hope this gives you some useful information for your gardening journey!!!