

# Vegetable Garden Preparation Thyme

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The weather is warming up, Spring is upon us and it is “Vegetable Garden Preparation Thyme.”

Gardening seems so easy, but if you want those garden plants to produce for you there are steps to take make sure your soil is up to par. When it comes to a healthy garden, soil preparation makes a difference.

Testing your soil. You can have your soil tested at a local cooperative extension service office for free or a low-fee.

Or you can buy a DIY Soil Test Kit. I used a test kit to check my soil last year. Test kits: (links).



pH Test Kit

**How do you know if your soil is healthy?** Let's start with the facts of pH levels:

- Plants primary nutrients are nitrogen (N), Phosphorus (P) and potassium (K).
- Nitrogen promotes strong leaf, stem growth and dark green color, such as broccoli, cabbage, lettuce and

herbs.

- Phosphorus promotes root and early plant growth, it's important for cucumbers, peppers, squash and tomatoes.
- Potassium promotes plant root vigor, disease and stress resistance and also enhances flavor. Vital for carrots, radishes, onions and garlic.
- Calcium, magnesium and sulfur are your secondary nutrients.
- Calcium is essential to plant growth, an important part of the walls of the plant cells and root development.
- Sulfur lacking plants are not able to take in necessary nutrients, including vitamins and proteins.
- Magnesium is vital to the process of photosynthesis, lack of it stunts the plants growth.

pH levels are critical to your plants ability to absorb nutrients. A pH of 6.5 is a good number for home gardens, plant will thrive in pH levels 6.0 to 7.0 (slightly acidic to neutral) range. If your soil is acidic (low pH at or below 6.0) or alkaline (high pH, above 7.0), the plants won't be able to absorb the nutrients, so soil testing is very advantageous to a healthy garden.

Testing the soil in the spring or fall is the best time as then the soil is stable. Also best time to add any soil amendments or fertilizers.

As respected gardener Frank Tozer writes: "When building soil you not only improve your plants health, but you can improve your own."

I have only been gardening seriously for 4 years, most times my garden has given a great amount of produce, but I have had some nutrient issues. Last year I had Blossom End Rot on my Zucchini, I solved it by mixing up my own calcium treatment, which was ground up egg shells, milk and crushed up antacid tablets!! A real cheap way to solve a very annoying problem for your calcium lacking soil.



