

Garden Soil Management Overview

Creating a new garden from purchased soil

(typically sandy/low organic matter soil)

- Test your soil first to determine exact requirements
- Till in 2 in. of compost the first year, 1 to 2 in. during later years
- Till in recommended lime, phosphorus, and potassium before planting
- ✓ Apply full rate of recommended nitrogen fertilizer during the growing season

Creating a new garden from existing lawn

(grass cover on relatively fertile soil)

- Locate in well drained soil, full sun, away from buildings
- Test your soil first to determine needed adjustments
- Don't throw away that sod !
 - it's a "gold mine" of organic matter and nutrients
- Kill out grass by layering 1-2 in. compost over newsprint
 - leave covered 2 months minimum or from fall into late spring
- Add recommended lime, phosphorus, potassium fertilizers
 - till compost, rotted paper, dead sod, all materials in together
- ✓ Little or no nitrogen fertilizer should be needed the first year

Maintaining an existing garden

(established, productive garden)

- Application rates to build up fertility are no longer needed !
- Soil test every 3 years to "fine-tune" your applications
- Apply moderate amounts of all materials
 - 1 in. compost or shredded leaves each fall (skip if OM > 10 %)
 - lime should only be needed every 3-5 years (or even less frequently)
 - little or no phosphorus should be needed (compost/manure supply enough)
 - supplement potassium, as recommended, before planting
 - apply most of the recommended nitrogen fertilizer at mid-season
 - apply ½ rate or less nitrogen fertilizer if OM level optimum (5–8 %)
- ✓ Apply only what is needed, at recommended rates. Don't just put "more on" !