

Recipe for Good Garden Soil

So you want to plant a vegetable or flower garden and you've discovered the soil in our valley leaves a lot to be desired. You want to know how to fix it. You're not alone! Hundreds of Gardeners in the Tri-Valley area use this recipe.

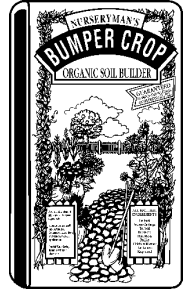
Bottom line is you need to *incorporate organic material* (compost) into the soil to improve the texture, *adjust the pH* to counter our alkaline conditions and *add nutrients*.

It has been said that if you take care of the soil, the plants will (practically) take care of themselves. Incorporating organic material into our heavy clay soil and keeping it moist (not wet) will make everything about gardening easier, easier to dig, easier to weed and easier for plants to grow. On the other hand, if you just leave the soil as it is and try growing vegetables or flowers in it, you will be fighting with the soil from beginning to end and your plants will lack vigor. The following recipe is suitable for vegetable gardens, flower gardens and groundcover areas.

For every 100 square feet, (10 x 10) add the following each year:



1. Enriched soil amendment
**Master Nursery Gold Rush or
Master Nursery Bumper Crop** (5 to 8 bags)
2. Fertilizer
**Master Nursery Tomato & Vegetable Food or
Master Nursery Rose and Flower Food or
Master Nursery Master Start** (For groundcover areas) (10 pounds)
3. E. B. Stone **pH Adjuster Plus** (sulfur) or GreenAll **Iron Sulfate** (2.5 pounds)
4. Gypsum or Gypsite (50 pounds)



Soil Amendments:

Our Recipe calls for a couple of inches of enriched soil amendment (Gold Rush or Bumper Crop) to be worked in the garden each year. (If you are just starting out you can safely double the recommended amount so long as you work it into the soil deeply.) Both of these soil products contain compost and 15% chicken fertilizer. Chicken manure is a natural organic fertilizer packed with nitrogen to give those young vegetables their first push of growth. Gold Rush is 85% fir bark. Fir compost is a great organic soil conditioner that does not decompose as quickly in the soil as other forest products. It also helps hold the clay particles apart (filling in the gaps). Bumper Crop includes various other organic goodies like earthworm castings, kelp meal and bat guano.



Fertilizer

Master Nursery Fertilizers are created to provide a balanced meal of nitrogen for green growth, phosphorus for roots, flower and fruit development, and potassium for general health and vigor. These fertilizers also contain minor elements that plants need for a variety of internal functions such as chlorophyll production, germination, etc. Choose a fertilizer according to your situation.



Sulfur & Iron

Iron Sulfate provides extra iron for the best green, which facilitates photosynthesis, the building blocks of plant growth. The sulfur in Iron sulfate also lowers the soil pH making nutrients trapped in the clay more available to plants and also helps compensate for the high alkalinity of valley water. **pH Adjuster Plus** is sulfur and accomplishes this same reduction in pH levels and also helps release existing iron already in the soil so it becomes available for the plants to use.

Gypsum or Gypsite

Gypsum improves the soil by "loosening" clay's attraction to itself, allowing moisture to penetrate more effectively as well as making the clay less sticky and easier to work.

Turn over the soil in your planting area to a depth of 4" to 6"; add the above ingredients and turn again. The finished soil should be about 1/3 enriched soil amendment and 2/3 native soils.) Its always much easier to work soil that has been adequately moistened before you begin to work it. Flood or sprinkle the area deeply a day or 2 before you begin digging.

As the years go by and you continue to enrich your garden area with an annual application of the **Good Garden Soil Recipe**, your soil will become deeper, and richer and your plants will flourish. In future years be sure to monitor your soil fertility with a soil testing kit. The soil test will provide you with the information needed to maintain a balanced, nutrient filled soil in your garden beds.

