

Good Soil Starts In Winter!

I know it's cold outside and not a whole lot to think about with the garden, but there are a few items that you should consider. Many of us are thinking about raising a few veggies this year. Regardless if the reason is for providing tasty vegetables or just saving money on the grocery bill, now is a good time to start preparing the soil. I know it is much too cold on most days to get out, till and dig, but there are several items you can look at doing. On the top of my list is to get a good soil test done. I am not talking about a little \$3.99 kit here – I am talking about a test from a professional soil lab. Garden centers will offer these services to their customers so they will be more successful. The cost is usually around \$20 for a complete soil work-up for a garden and it is well worth it. The advantage of doing the test now is that it gives you time to help get your soil corrected before the start of the planting season. Some items such as soil pH can be very crucial to plant growth and nutrition. Adding the correct amount of lime to the soil is very important, and lime takes time to work into the soil

Another factor that should be addressed in the test is organic matter. If organic matter is too low, nutrients from fertilizers will just run off and plant nutrition will suffer. Take your soil sample from 4 inches down and over several random areas where the crop will be grown. Mix these together and bring them in a Ziploc bag. A pint worth of soil is plenty. It generally takes about a week to get the results back and then a trained person should explain them to you and develop a plan of action.

If you have a garden area where wire grass or wild Bermuda has been a problem, you may want to consider catching a nice day and turn this soil over to expose the roots to the cold and this will often aid in at least slowing down their growth.

Enjoy the garden!

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