Plant World
The "root" of successful gardens!
SIX GENERATIONS OF FAMILY SERVICE

ORGANIC GARDENING

With pesticide bans and our desire to clean up the environment, organic gardening is more important than ever!

You can create your own garden in an environment for plant life, which is extremely fertile, and natural in conception, using methods devised since cultivation began. Here are our tips on organic gardening. To make your own fertilizer mixture, combine a few of the materials, which are rich in nitrogen, phosphorous, potassium and trace elements listed below. Do not attempt to equate the organic fertilizer ratio with the chemical one. The objective of organic fertilizing is to feed the soil, not just to apply the minimum amount of nutrient to produce a single crop in one season. Most organic fertilizers are slow acting, however there is great residual power, which improves the soil for many years. Organic fertilizers can be worked into the soil in spring or fall, top-dressed around growing plants, or added to the compost heap.

- Basic slag – an industrial by-product, rich in calcium and trace elements
- Blood meal – 15% nitrogen, 1.3% phosphorous, 7% potassium
- Bone meal – 2-4% nitrogen, 22-25% phosphorus
- Compost
- Grass clippings – rich in nitrogen and can be worked into the soil as green manure
- Hulls and shells make attractive mulches
- Leaf mould – shred leaves and keep damp, particularly valuable for acid-loving plants
- Manure – horse, hen, sheep and rabbit have higher nitrogen content than cow or pig
- Phosphate rock – an excellent source of phosphorous and trace elements
- Sawdust – a useful mulch when well-rotted
- Wood ashes – 1.5% phosphorous, 7% potash. Avoid contact with germinating seeds or new plant roots
- Dried hops – 3.5% nitrogen, 1% phosphorous
- Municipal sludge – considered to be an economical way to replenish soil

COMPOSTING & EARTHWORMS

Earthworms will digest and condition soil by producing their own weight in castings every twenty-four hours. However, where strong chemical fertilizers are used, conditions distasteful to earthworms arise. You may introduce 500 earthworms to your compost pile after three weeks to aid in decomposition. When making a compost pile, be sure to mix grass clippings and vegetable tops with some material which is high in nitrogen, such as manure.

All materials should be wet to start with and the heap should be kept wet. Turn the pile often, initially every three or four days. The material should be crumbly and a dark, rich colour when ready. Five to six weeks of decomposition should do it. Compost, which is not, yet finished (very fibrous), may be applied in fall. 1”-3” of compost may be applied to the garden annually.

TOADS & BIRDS

Toads are true friends of the organic gardener since 90% of their diet consists of insects. They have strong homing instincts so keep an imported toad penned up for a while until it adjusts to its new surroundings. Set out pans of water and “toad houses” (upside-down flower pots with “doors” cut in them).

One of the most successful and inexpensive ways to control insects around gardens is to get birds to do much of the work. Birds will eat ant eggs, spiders, weevils, scale, moths, millipedes, grasshoppers and crickets. In spring and summer, provide suitable nesting areas as well as materials for making nests, and some water. Plant California poppies, cosmos, marigolds, asters and sunflowers to attract weed seedeaters. Provide feeding supplements during the winter, such as breadcrumbs, suet, orange and apple slices, millet and sunflower seeds.

TRY SOME OF THESE ORGANIC CONTROLS TO YOUR INSECT PROBLEMS.

- Aphids – enrich the soil organically, grow nasturtiums among vegetables and fruit trees.
- Bean beetle – encourage praying mantises, plant heaviest crop of beans for early harvest.
- Cabbage maggot – organic insecticide
- Chinch bug – thrives on nitrogen-deficient plants, therefore, apply compost
- Cucumber beetle – heavy mulching is a time-tested control.
- Cut worm – organic insecticide
- Maggots – use tarpaper collars around plants to prevent flies from laying eggs, place plants in irregular rows to confuse maggots.
- Nematodes – consistent use of compost, avoid chemical sprays, fertilize organically, interplant with marigolds.
- Root maggot – use a mulch of oak leaves.
- Rotenone organic insect dust for sucking and chewing insects on vegetables and small fruits.
- Organic insecticide – A biological control for larvae on vegetables, ornamentals and trees.
- Fossil flower Diatomaceous Earth and insecticide soap controls sucking and chewing insects on roses and vegetables.