



August 2022 - Vol. 26

The best time to improve your soil is in the fall!

Healthy soil means healthy plants and FALL is the best time to feed and cover your garden soil—before winter sets in! In this article we'll tell you about simple and inexpensive ways to cover your garden with nourishing organic matter! As we've heard our resident Master Gardener, Cheryl Pytlarz, remind us each spring and fall - *soil is the bedrock of any successful garden!*

Tip #1 - Cover your garden

Covering the soil during wintertime offers a number of benefits.

It suppresses weed growth. And by using organic matter such as compost or manure, you're gradually feeding the soil—specifically, the life within the soil - which, in turn, feeds the crops you grow in it.



You don't need to buy expensive soil amendments as much of the way you can improve your soil is free or very cheap. Here are a few ways to both cover and feed your garden soil.

- **Mulch/Compost** - Use the nutrient-rich cranberry mulch we get from Bartling's Cranberry Co. as a "top dressing" across your bed. And if you haven't done so already, next summer you might consider **composting** your biodegradable items like: vegetable scraps from your kitchen, egg shells, coffee grounds, and healthy plant leaves. After regularly mixing/turning a good combination of these ingredients, by the time fall arrives you'll have produced a robust compost that will be a powerhouse in your garden bed.
- **Aged Manure** - Manure is fantastic as well, but it has to be from a trusted source. You don't want it contaminated with herbicides which could pass through a horse or cow and inflict damage on your crops.

Add compost or aged manure about an inch deep across your bed to keep the soil covered over winter, weeds suppressed, and worms busy. The worms will drag it down into the soil so the microbes can work on it, releasing all those nutrients over time, and ready to feed your crop next spring.

For more information about using manure in your garden bed, please refer to this article from the Wisconsin Horticulture, Division of Extension, "Using manure in the home garden" by clicking <https://hort.extension.wisc.edu/articles/using-manure-in-the-home-garden/>

For additional information about *fall soil improvements*, please refer to this article of the same name published by Gardener's Supply Company: <https://www.gardeners.com/how-to/fall-soil-improvements/7036.html>

Tip #2 - Test your soil

To make sure your soil has the right amount of nutrients for excellent plant growth, perform a basic soil test (something that's recommended every 3 to 5 years.). A basic soil test usually measures phosphorus, potassium, soil pH, and organic matter (a proper pH is important for nutrient availability to plants).

Soil pH - pH is the measure of the soil's acidity/alkalinity. Most vegetables grow best in soils that are slightly acid, falling between the 6.0 and 7.0 range on the pH scale. Add lime (or burned wood ash) if you need to raise the pH and sulfur to lower it to within these levels.

Tip #3 - Leave your soil un-tilled

Tilling disrupts the soil structure and can kill earthworms. Instead, simply dig by hand to remove any weeds, old plants, and debris. To add your compost and soil amendments, simply add a layer on top and you then turn the soil lightly with a garden fork to mix the amendments.

And lastly, **Tip #4 - Remember your "In the Hole" soil amendments next Spring!**



A VALUABLE TIP FROM MASTER GARDENER CHERYL PYTLARZ

Improving your garden soil with IN-THE-HOLE amendments!

In an existing garden, soil amendments typically are an ongoing task, even if it's as simple as digging in some compost prior to each year's plantings.

To help yield a healthy harvest, I recommend placing certain soil amendments "in the hole" at planting time for these various vegetables:

"IN THE HOLE" at planting	BLOODMEAL	BONEMEAL	CHICKEN POOP/MANURE	COMPOST	DIATOMACEOUS EARTH	FERTILIZER	LIME (to adjust pH)	WORM CASTINGS	TOP MULCH w/COMPOST	Protect from cabbage worm using Diatomaceous Earth on soil around stem & cover thru mid-June.	Protect from larva with row cover until first harvest.
ARTICHOKE	X			X	X		X	X	X		
BEETS							X				
BROCCOLI	X			X	X			X	X	X	
CABBAGE	X			X	X			X	X	X	
CANTELOPE	X							X			
CARROT	ASK SARAH KREMBIS!										
CELERY			X					X	X		
CUCUMBER	X							X			
EGGPLANT		X						X	X		
KOHLRABI										X	
PEPPER		X	X					X			
RADISH											X
SPINACH							X				
SQUASH, WINTER	X							X			
TOMATO		X	X					X			
TURNIP											X

May 29, 2021

Your guide to all-season garden maintenance . . .

from *Growfully*.com

All of your hard work planting seeds and baby plants a few months ago is now bearing fruit (no pun intended) and you're now being rewarded with the freshest and tastiest produce. And while we're enjoying our harvests, it's a good time to remind ourselves of the tasks we performed to this point that worked, and what didn't work, and that the garden season is still not over!

How do you make sure your garden is healthy, nice-looking, and productive through the entire growing season?

Following are daily, weekly, and monthly to-do lists we pulled together to help keep you on track with your garden bed maintenance.

Daily Maintenance Tasks:

The number one piece of advice we give gardeners is to *visit your garden daily!* This isn't always feasible, but whenever possible, a daily/regular trip to your garden can do wonders for keeping your garden healthy, tidy, and productive (as well as do wonders for your mental health).

On your daily garden visits: Check for water needs. Pull some weeds in and around the base of your bed. Check for pests or blights. Add to your compost. Harvest any fruits or veggies.

Weekly Maintenance Tasks:

It's a good idea to devote a good chunk of time each week to garden maintenance. Most folks do this on a nice weekend day—it's a wonderful way to spend a Saturday morning!

On your weekly visits: Remove all weeds - we really want you to stay on top of those pesky weeds! It's a good idea to make sure your garden is weed-free, at least weekly. While this is easier said than done, it's a good goal to strive for. Fertilize, if needed. Deal with diseases and pests. Prune/trim back plants to encourage growth. Plant more succession crops. Remove spent plants.

Monthly Maintenance Tasks:

If you're on top of your daily tasks and weekly tasks, monthly maintenance is pretty easy in the garden! **Here's what we recommend you tackle each month:** Soil fertilizer, if needed - if you would like to side-dress or otherwise fertilize your garden with soil amendments, monthly is a common schedule for doing that. Check if you need to replenish mulch. Use natural weed preventers and herbicides - if you are using natural weed preventers (like corn gluten meal) or natural herbicides to kill weeds (like horticultural vinegar), reapplying them monthly is a good routine to get in to help you reduce your weeds.

End of Season Maintenance Tasks:

Once you're ready to wrap up for the year, don't just ignore your garden until the spring—make sure you put your garden "to bed" for the year so you can get a jump start for the next growing season. **Our suggestions include:** Remove *unhealthy* plant debris - leaving debris from infected plants in the garden over winter is one of the most common causes of future insect and disease problems. Plant a cover crop to condition the soil. test your soil. Amend the soil and adjust the pH. Mulch.

You'll find the full article at https://growfully.com/garden-maintenance/?ck_subscriber_id=1576216552&utm_source=convertkit&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=My+TOP+Tip+For+a+Better+Garden%20-%204911594

The Power and Magic of Pollination

Do you know that misshapen cucumbers, tomato blossoms falling off, and zucchini shriveling up before reaching maturity can be tied to low pollinator activity in the garden?

Do you know why some bees *buzz*? Some plants like blueberries and tomatoes release their pollen through two tiny pores in each anther. Bees bite the anthers, hold tight, and buzz to shake the pollen out of the flowers. Bumblebees are living tuning forks, using a middle C tone to propel thousands of pollen grains from a flower in under a second.

Successful pollination requires year-round efforts. Continuous blooms throughout the growing season provide pollinators with a constant food supply. **In the Spring**, consider planting early blooming plants to provide food after pollinators hibernation or northern migrations. **In the Fall**, late



Successful pollination requires year-round efforts. Continuous blooms throughout the growing season provide pollinators with a constant food supply. In the Spring, consider planting early blooming plants to provide food after pollinators hibernation or northern migrations. In the Fall, late blooming plants provide many pollinators with needed fuel before hibernation or for the southern migrations of pollinators like monarchs and hummingbirds. **In the Winter**, even when there appears to be little to no activity, pollinators are in the garden. *Leave healthy, decaying plants alone—they may be sheltering pollinating insects as they overwinter.*

Do you know some butterflies travel thousands miles? At the beginning of each spring, monarch butterflies migrate north from Mexico, following the growth of milkweed and then return in the Fall.

Do you know how bees find a flower patch? Honey bees communicate through a waggle dance in which scout bees return to the nest and dance to inform other bees about the distance and direction of a newly discovered flower patch.

Do you know WHO pollinates?

- **Butterflies** often visit round flowers with flared petals that lead to narrow throats that conceal nectar. Butterflies land on the wide petals, then delicately probe the flower's nectary (the gland that produces nectar) with their long proboscis (tongue).
- The long, thin bill and tongue of a **hummingbird** allows it to reach the nectar hidden deeply in tubular flowers. Hummingbirds frequently visit beebalm and honeysuckle.
- Most **moths** go unnoticed even though they outnumber butterflies 10 to 1. They are often active at night and dull in appearance. Night-blooming flowers have sweet scents and white or cream colored blossoms that reflect the moonlight to attract moths after the sun sets.
- Some **flies** act just like bees, visiting sweet-smelling flowers. Others have more disgusting tastes. They are attracted to flowers with putrid odors, meat-like colors, or fur-like textures that lure them in by pretending to be the fresh dung of dead animals that flies desire.
- **Beetles** are referred to as "mess and soil" pollinators that blunder their way through delicate blossoms searching for food or a mate. Beetles tend to visit flowers close to the ground.

Information obtained from [The Why, What, When, Where, Who, How of Pollination](https://gardens.si.edu/gardens/pollinator-garden/why-what-when-where-who-how-pollination/), Smithsonian Gardens.

<https://gardens.si.edu/gardens/pollinator-garden/why-what-when-where-who-how-pollination/>





Why Save Seeds?

Even if you've only been gardening for a few years, you've undoubtedly been amazed by how healthy and productive one particular variety of a vegetable or fruit was over another of a different strain planted in identical conditions.

From the earliest times, humans have nurtured the seeds of their cultivated crops and passed the seeds of the strongest from generation to generation. Both humans and plants rely on each other, and help each other to adapt and thrive in different

times and places. By saving the seeds from the best-looking and highest yielding plants in your garden, you are preserving the know-how to grow a resilient food supply in the face of environmental changes.

For more information about saving seeds, please check out the "Seed Saving Exchange" website at:

<https://www.seedsavers.org/>



Seed Savers EXCHANGE

Sign In | Sign Up | Free Catalog | Donate | 0 items

SHOP SUPPORT EXCHANGE PROGRAMS & RESOURCES VISIT ABOUT US

Keeping Heirloom Seeds Where They Belong

In Our Gardens & On Our Tables

Shop Seeds Request a Catalog

How to Save Seeds?



A great way to start saving your seeds is by selecting a few of your self-pollinating varieties like beans, peas, tomatoes, and lettuce. For beans and peas, let them stay on the vine until they are leathery and you can hear the seeds rattling inside. Pick them and let the beans dry indoors for a week or so.

For tomatoes, save only seeds from heirloom varieties and not hybrids (whose offspring won't taste the same as the parent plant). Pick the fruit ripe, scrape the seeds into a jar, add water and let them sit to ferment. The seeds will sink to the bottom as the fleshy residual rises to the top. After about a week, rinse the seeds and spread them out on a tea towel to dry.

For lettuce, let a vigorous-looking head come into bloom. Once you see the flowers turn into a white fluff, shake the stalks into a paper bag.

Store seeds in glass jars to protect them from insects and rodents. Label your jars with the name, harvest date and any of information of special note.



The bigger the seed, the longer the life span.



WHEN KEPT IN A COOL, DRY PLACE

seeds can last for many years!

A BEAN CAN SPROUT AFTER 20 YEARS, OR MORE, IF KEPT IN A FREEZER!

Information obtained from: [How to save seeds](#), The New York Times Magazine. Maria Wollan; and from [Seed Savers](#), The Furrow, Dean Houghton.

FYI

... Interesting class at the North Lakeland Discovery Center!

CANNING 101 – September 7, Wednesday, 9am – 3:30pm

Have you ever wanted to learn to can the abundance of fruit and vegetables from your garden but felt daunted by the process? In this class we will teach you the basics of both "water bath" and "pressure canning"; safety procedures for preserving food; tips and tricks; and essential tools of the trade.

Registration required by Sept 4th. \$45 (\$35 for members)

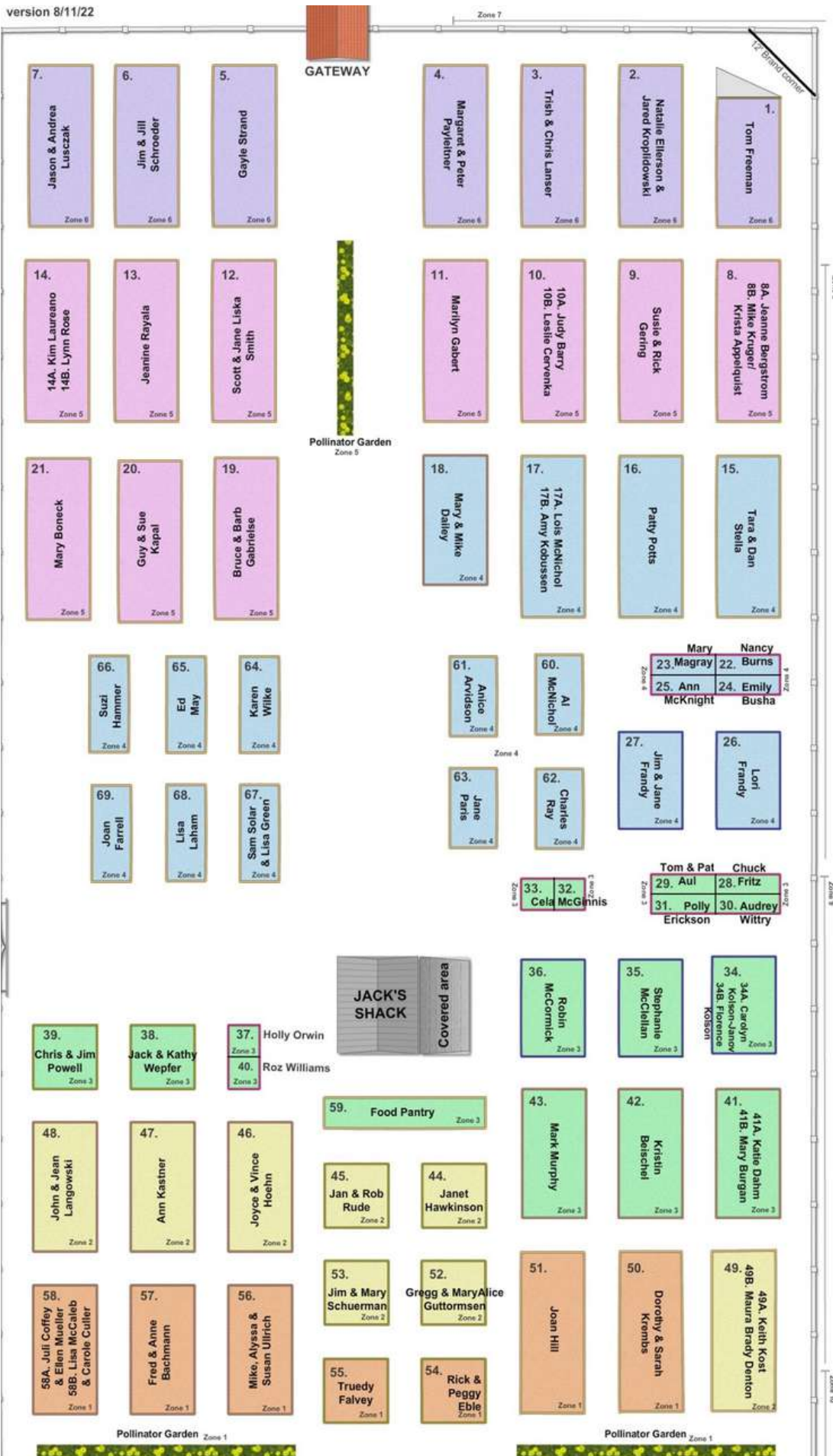


... Facts about cucumbers (submitted by Peg Eble)

- They contain most of the vitamins you need every day. Just one cuke contains Vitamins B1, B, B3, B5, B6, C, Folic Acid, Calcium, Iron, Magnesium, Phosphorus, Potassium and Zinc.
- Feeling tired in the afternoon? Put down the caffeinated soda or coffee and pick up a cuke! They are a good source of B vitamins and carbohydrates that can provide that quick *pick me up* that can last for hours.
- Tired of your bathroom mirror fogging up after a shower? Try rubbing a cucumber slice along the mirror. It will eliminate the fog and provide a soothing, spa-like fragrance.
- Are grubs and slugs ruining your planting beds? Place a few cuke slices in a small pie tin and your garden will be free of pests all season long. The chemicals in the cucumber react with the aluminum to give off a scent undetectable to humans but drive garden pests crazy and make them flee the area.
- Looking to fight off that afternoon or evening snacking binge? Cucumbers have been used for centuries for quick meals to thwart off hunger and starvation.
- Want to avoid a hangover or terrible headache? Eat a few cucumber slices before going to bed and wake up refreshed and headache free. Cucumbers contain enough sugar, B vitamins and electrolytes to replenish essential nutrients the body loses, keeping everything in equilibrium – avoiding both a hangover and headache!
- Looking for a fast and easy way to remove cellulite before going out or to the pool? Try rubbing a slice or two of cucumbers along your problem area for a few minutes. The phytochemicals in the cucumber cause the collagen in your skin to tighten, firming up the outer layer and reducing the visibility of cellulite. Works great on wrinkles, too!
[Typists note: REALLY, SERIOUSLY? Cucumbers – where have you been all my life?]

IRRIGATION SYSTEM - WATERING ZONES

version 8/11/22



IRRIGATION SYSTEM WATERING SCHEDULE

When activated, all zones will run for 90 minutes, with the first in the schedule starting at midnight, and completes before daylight.

Zones 1, 2, 3 (in order) will run on EVEN numbered days.

Zones 4, 5, 6 (in order) will run on ODD numbered days.

NOTE: A rain sensor is installed – irrigation will NOT run if the sensing mechanism has detected a total of 1/4" of rain during a rain event.