Preparing Soil For Planting an Organic Vegetable Garden



VIDEO

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Published September 14, 2022

TRANSCRIPT:

TERRY ALLEN:
Hi. I'm Terry Allen with SEEDS OF CHANGE™. And today, we're here at the beautiful Lincoln Park Zoo in Chicago talking to Jeannie Nolan.

JEANNE NOLAN:
I'm the founder of The Organic Gardener Ltd. and the director of The Edible Gardens in Lincoln Park Zoo, which I pant and maintain on behalf of Green City Market. I've been growing food for over 20 years, and I'm very excited to help you get started on your gardening journey.
As organic gardeners, we choose not to use synthetic fertilizer, herbicide or pesticide. Instead, as the plants take nutrients from the soil, each year we add back in compost and certified organic fertilizer.

LOOSEN THE SOIL 18" DEEP
Proper soil preparation is a crucial part of having a successful organic garden. Your ultimate goal when you're preparing soil, whether you're in the ground, in a container or in a raised bed, is to achieve 18 inches of well-aerated nutrient dense soil.

If you’re growing in a container, the only tool you will need is a trollop. If you’re growing in the earth or in a raised bed, you’ll need a few other tools: you’ll need a round nosed shovel and a hard rake and you’ll be good to go.
The first step to well-prepared soil is aerating, or loosening up, your soil. This is really crucial, so that the roots of the plant can travel through the soil.
You can see that our soil is full of worms. When you see a lot of worms in the soil, it’s a good indicator that the soil is healthy, which makes for healthy plants.

ADD COMPOST AND FERTILIZER
Even though we’ve been gardening here for seven years, we still add fresh compost every year. We also use a good quality certified organic all-purpose vegetable fertilizer. Read the back of the packet for directions on how much to apply. Mix your compost and fertilizer thoroughly into your soil.

RAKE SMOOTH
The final step is to rake the soil smooth to prepare it for planting. Now you’re ready to direct seed into your well-prepared, smooth seed bed.

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Start gardening now

When & How to Start Seeds Indoors
Discover how simple it is to start growing seeds indoors with helpful tips for planting, watering, and preparing them for transplant in your garden.

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Planning an Organic Vegetable Garden

There are five keys to setting up a successful organic vegetable garden, and we want to share them with you.

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How To Make An Organic Compost Pile

See how easy it is to make your own nutrient-rich compost by using a few simple ingredients and investing a little time, effort, and backyard engineering.

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Pruning Apple Trees

Get tips on stimulating fruit production by pruning your apple trees in the winter season.

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