

SOIL RESOURCES FOR EDIBLE GARDENING



If you want to grow healthy plants, you need to build healthy soil. Healthy soil is full of nutrients, microorganisms and organic matter. It has good drainage and water holding capacity and helps keep the water and air free of pollutants. Improve the quality of your soil by adding compost and mulch. Before you add fertilizer, test your soil to find out what your garden needs and make sure the soil is free of contaminants. You can build healthy soil by planting cover crops, using a “no-till” technique such as sheet mulching or straw bale gardening, and rotating your crops to prevent attacks from pests and disease.

Soil Testing

King Conservation District Soil Testing Program

Tests for fertility, pH, and organic matter. Does not include testing for heavy metals. Free testing for landowners who reside within the eligibility area, one time only, five samples. Additional soil tests can be added for a fee.
www.kingcd.org, soiltesting@kingcd.org, (425) 282-1905

UMass Extension Soil & Plant Tissue Testing Laboratory, Amherst, MA

Tests for fertility, pH, cation exchange, lead and aluminum. Extra charges for organic matter and soluble salts.
soiltest.umass.edu, soiltest@umass.edu, (413) 545-2311

Cascade Analytical, Inc

Tests for fertility, organic matter, pH, and soluble salts. Extra charges for lead and arsenic.
www.cascadeanalytical.com/analytical-services/agricultural/soil-fertility, (800) 545-4206

Soiltest Farm Consultants, Inc.

Offers a variety of tests for fertility, heavy metals and other elements.
www.soiltestlab.com, (800) 765-1622

Kuo Testing Labs, Inc.

Offers a variety of tests for fertility, heavy metals and other elements.
www.kuotesting.com, (800) 328-0112

Edge Analytical Laboratories

Tests for heavy metals, bacteria, pesticides and other contaminants.
www.edgeanalytical.com, (800) 755-9295

Sheet Mulching and Straw Bale Gardening

<https://green2.kingcounty.gov/gonative/Article.aspx?Act=view&ArticleID=36>
www.agroforestry.net/free-publications/sheet-mulching

www.nicholsgardennursery.com/strawbales.htm
www.no-dig-vegetablegarden.com/straw-bale-gardening.html

Find local sources of arborist chips, organic straw bales, cardboard or burlap bags:

The Garden Hotline, gardenhotline.org, (206) 633-0224, help@gardenhotline.org

Cover Crops

Mail Order:

Fedco Seed Company, www.fedcoseeds.com/ogs.htm, (207) 426-9900
Johnny's Selected Seeds, www.johnnyseeds.com, (877) 564-6697
Osborn Seed Company, www.osborneseed.com, (800) 845-9113
Peaceful Valley Farm Supply, www.groworganic.com, (888) 784-1722
Territorial Seed Company, www.territorialseed.com, (800) 626-0866

Local Retail – King County:

Bellevue Nursery, <http://bellevuenursery.com/>, (425) 454-5531
Furney's Nursery, www.furneysnursery.com, (206) 878-8761
Hayes Feed and Country Store (206) 242-8000
McLendon's Hardware, www.mclendons.com, Renton (425) 235-3555 Woodinville (425) 485-1363
Molbak's Nursery, www.molbaks.com, (425) 483-5000
The Grange in Issaquah, <http://grangesupply.com/>, (425) 392-6469

Local Retail: Seattle:

City People's Garden Store, www.citypeoples.com/gardenstore, (206) 324-0737
Magnolia Garden Center, www.magnoliagarden.com/, (206) 284-1161
Sky Nursery, www.skynursery.com, (206) 546-4851
Swansons Nursery, www.swansonsnursery.com, (206) 782-2543
Walt's Organic Fertilizer Co., www.waltsorganic.com, (206) 297-9092
West Seattle Nursery, <http://westseattlenursery.com/>, (206) 935-9276

Certified Organic Soil Products

Bulk

Bailey Compost, www.baileycompost.com, (360) 568-8826
Cedar Grove Composting, www.cedar-grove.com, (877) 764-5748
DirtExchange, <http://dirtexchange.us>, (206) 599-3478 (carries Cedar Grove products)
Sky Nursery, www.skynursery.com, (206) 546-4851 (carries Cedar Grove products)
Yelm Earthworm & Castings Farm, www.yelmworms.com, (877) 339-6767

Bagged

Black Gold OMRI certified products – available at local retail stores including Fred Meyer
Cedar Grove Compost & Potting Soil - available at local retail stores
Zoo Doo compost. Call the ZooStore at (206) 548-1535 to check for availability.

Organic Fertilizer Sources

Walt's Organic Fertilizer Co., www.waltsorganic.com, (206) 297-9092. Granular certified organic 'Rainy Pacific NW Blend' fertilizer and others blended for local conditions.
Hendrickus Organics, <http://www.hendrikusorganics.com>, (425) 392-9977. Granular certified organic fertilizers and soil conditioners blended for local conditions.
Dr. Earth, www.drearth.com. Granular and liquid fertilizers
E.B. Stone, www.ebstone.org. Granular and liquid fertilizers
Neptune's Harvest, www.neptunesharvest.com, Granular and liquid fertilizers
WISOrganic, <http://wisorganic.com>. All-purpose organic liquid fertilizers made from food scraps collected at PCC Natural Markets and made into fertilizer in Issaquah.
Wiser Worm Farm, www.wiserwormfarm.com. Worm tea fertilizer made from certified organic worm castings.

Crop Rotation for Integrated Pest Management and Fertility

"The Maritime Northwest Garden Guide", Seattle Tilth, rev. ed., 2014.
"Your Farm in the City", Lisa Taylor, 2011, Black Dog and Leventhal Publishers, Inc.
"Growing Vegetables West of the Cascades", Steve Solomon, 2007, Sasquatch Books.



Learn More About Natural Yard Care

Contact the Garden Hotline with your garden questions!
help@gardenhotline.org (206) 633-0224 gardenhotline.org

