



Photo credit: UConn Extension

Soil Preparation – Organic Matter

Let's talk a bit about soil preparation. Regardless of the type of soil you may have in your garden, it can be improved by adding organic matter to it. Even clay soil can benefit from the addition of organic matter. Amending the soil will improve drainage and aeration. It also encourages root development. Adding large amounts of organic matter to sandy soil will help the sandy soil hold water and nutrients.

So how do you get organic matter? Organic matter includes a wide variety of living or dead plant and animal material. Grass clippings, leaves, shredded newspaper and compost are excellent forms of organic matter.

You need to add enough organic matter to the soil to physically change the soil structure. At least one-third of the final soil mix should be some type of organic material. Spread a two to four inch layer of organic material over the garden surface and till or turn it to a depth of at least six to ten inches. If you need to add fertilizer to this area, apply the recommended rate over the garden surface at this time and till or turn it in along with the organic material.

The beauty of organic matter is that it improves soil and serves as a food source for soil fungi and bacteria. With careful management the preservation and accumulation of soil organic matter can help to improve soil productivity resulting in greater plant growth and development. Remember though, do not work your soil if it is too wet.

The first day of spring is March 20th. Let's hope that it brings warmer temperatures! I don't know about you but I'm itching to get started in my garden. See you at Spring Fling! Until next time, happy gardening!



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