

Garden Standards Guide

Natural methods to keep the garden healthy include composting, companion planting, crop rotation, mulching, raised beds, solarizing, double-digging, cover cropping, using green manures, carefully selecting crop species, weeding, and being flexible. Importantly, keeping the garden healthy also means that we don't use synthetic chemicals. Synthetic chemicals are found in fertilizers, pesticides, and herbicides.

Fertilizers

Best Practice	Allowed	Not Allowed
Compost from the garden	Purchased Organic Compost	Sewage sludge
“Green manures” *	Herbivore manure **	Carnivore manure, any manure with antibiotics
Kelp or seaweed (liquid and powder)	Blood and Bone Meal	All ammonia-derived sources
Alfalfa meal	Hoof and horn meal	All chemically-synthesized sources
	Fish Emulsion	Chilean nitrate (16-0-0) Fish emulsion with added phosphate
Rock phosphate	Bone meal	Acidulated phosphates (superphosphate)
Soft phosphate (colloidal)	Soap phosphate	All synthetic sources (DAP, MAP, etc.)
Wood ashes		Charcoal ashes (from a BBQ or stove, etc.) Cigarette ashes
Granite or feldspar dust		Chilean nitrate of potash (15-0-14) Muriate of potash, KCl (0-0-60)
Green sand		All synthetic sources

* Green manure = a type of cover crop grown to add nutrients and organic matter to the soil. It can also be used as a living mulch to protect and improve soil conditions.

**Manure from herbivores (not carnivores) is often considered a good source of organic matter for your garden beds, but raw manure needs time to cure or age. This curing process best takes place in compost where it needs to reach high temperatures to kill pathogens and weed seeds. Organic, aged manure is available in bags for purchase at many nurseries and plant stores.

Pesticides

Best Practice	Allowed	Not Allowed
Beneficial insects*	Neem	Bendiocarb, Bug B Gon, Captan, Consan
Hand-picking (esp. at night for snails)	Pyrethrins	Cygon, Detergent, Diazinon, Dursban
Spraying with garlic, onion, oil, & pepper sprays	Rotenone	Insectagon, Kelthane, Lindane, Malathion
Biodegradable soap** solutions(not detergent)	Nicotine	Permethrin, Pest Meal, Sevin
Traps (beer, pheremone, sticky, water, food)	Sabadilla	Slug and Snail Bait, Thioldan, Thuricide
Row covers	Iron phosphate, diatomaceous earth (for slugs and snails)	
Companion plants***		

*These include ladybugs, praying mantis, trichogramma wasps, lacewings, tachinid flies, syrphid flies, and BT (*Bacillus thuringiensis*), but don't forget about encouraging bird habitat as well as homes for toads, snakes, and spiders.

**An example of a biodegradable soap is Dr. Bronner's®; you can look on the labels of other soaps to see if they are biodegradable as well.

***Companion planting is the planting of different crops in close proximity for the purpose of assisting in nutrient uptake, pest control, pollination, or other factors to increase crop productivity. Common companion plants include marigolds, nasturtiums, borage, basil, mint, yarrow, garlic, onions.

Herbicides

As for weed control, the use of herbicides is not part of a philosophy that keeps a garden healthy. Weed control methods used in our gardens include primarily mulching to suppress weed growth (which also helps conserve water), hand weeding and hoeing. Bio-control, the use of live insects that feed on certain invasive weeds, is also an organic alternative to chemical herbicides. Please, do not use Preen 'n Green, Roundup, Weed-B-Gon, or **ANY** other herbicide in our gardens.

Seeds/Starts

If starting seedlings in pots in a greenhouse or inside, it is important to first scrub pots with soap and water to eliminate any salts or debris that can attract the growth of fungus, algae, or bacteria.

Best Practice	Allowed	Not Allowed
Organic Vinegar	Bleach*	Hydrogen dioxide
Hydrogen peroxide-based products	Organic ethyl alcohol	Chlorine dioxide
Certified organic seeds/starts	Purchased seeds/starts that you grow organically	Conventional seeds/starts you grow conventionally

* 4 mg/L (parts per million)

**80 ppm in the wash water. A post-treatment wash with clean water is required.

Our goal is to have an organic garden. Please check with your local garden store, the Master Gardeners website, or neighboring gardeners for organic means of dealing with gardening problems. In the event that an organic solution is not a viable option to a severe problem, an alternative solution can be submitted to the Garden Coordinator for consideration.