

# Best Practices for Building Better Soil

# 1

## Regularly add organic matter

Turn organic matter into the soil at least three months before planting to allow for proper decomposition.

Good organic matter to add includes dandelion leaves and roots, grass clippings, leaves, and spent vegetable plants. Avoid tilling in any plants with pests or disease, weeds, tough stalks, straw, and wood chips.

### Do this by...

- Cut stalks and stems of spent plants at soil level and leave the roots in the ground to decompose over winter
- Chop up spent vegetable plants and bury in soil to decompose

# 2

## Apply 1 - 2 inches of compost in addition to allotted manure each spring

Contribute materials and time to your garden's compost bins to ensure there is plenty of compost for your plot and your neighbor's! Finished compost can be spread over the soil surface before planting, while partially decomposed materials should be turned into soil at least three months prior to planting.

# 3

## Avoid bare soil by mulching and/or sowing cover crops

This will reduce weed pressure, regulate soil moisture and temperature, and help minimize the "hard pan" that develops from overhead watering.

- Cover crops we recommend include: crimson clover, field peas and oats, buckwheat, or phacelia. \*Make sure to select a cover crop that will die back over winter.\*
- Mulch with leaves, straw, or grass clippings.

Make sure these come from an unsprayed lawn!

*Don't hesitate to reach out with any questions!*

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