

PLANT FOR SUCCESS

PREPPING FOR YOUR GARDEN

Figure out your sun/shade for all seasons (keep a notebook)

Note the type of soil - dry to moist, clay, sandy clay loam, rocky etc. in the area you are planting. The type of garden you plant will be determined by the above conditions. Wind will also come into play because wind can be very drying to soil and plant leaves.

Do you have drainage/water issues? Solve them now with gravel/rock drainage rivers, drainage pipe or garden borders. Incorporate the problem into your garden design by creating streams/pathways that follow the natural flow of the water.

Do you need to limb up existing trees to provide more light?

Do existing shrubs need to be removed, moved or trimmed to improve air circulation?

Are you starting from scratch? If so, plant your shrubs/trees first. They will become your wind break/shade and backdrop for your perennials/annuals. They are the bones of your garden along with any hardscapes, structures and artwork.

Consider what large garden art/structures you want before planting because it saves moving plants later.

OK, YOU KNOW WHAT YOU ARE DEALING WITH AND IT'S TIME FOR DIGGING IN THE DIRT

Sandy Clay, Clay or loam? **Loam** - you are lucky! Start planting.

Sandy Clay - add lots of leaf mulch/compost, some pea gravel/permatil (for additional drainage), peat moss (moistened before adding) crushed oyster shells for plants that like less acidic soil. Mix all this with the existing clay soil. Using a mantis tiller makes this job much easier.

Hard clay - Sit down and cry. Your work is cut out for you. Lazy? Raise your beds, use gravel and rock to create an interesting design and place beautiful pots for plants or plant prairie grasses that thrive in clay conditions. If those suggestions don't appeal, then add lots and lots of sand, gravel, wet peat moss, leaf mulch, compost to the existing soil. Your plants will have to be planted at least 4 inches above the original soil line and whole areas will need to be prepared in this way. You cannot plant one plant in a hole as this creates a bowl that fills with water and the plant dies because the bowl does not drain. You will need to till the ground at least 18" so the plant roots have somewhere to grow deep rather than sideways.

SOIL IMPROVERS

Permatil/Vole block — can be purchased at the Garden Patch in Columbus, NC

Perlite — any garden center or box store

Liquid seaweed/Fish emulsion — purchase on line

Liquid Aerify — purchase on line -excellent product

PRODUCTS FOR PESTS

Permatil for voles and drainage, <https://fairviewgardencenter.com/blog/mole-and-vole-prevention/>
Sweeney's Mole and Gopher peanuts available on Amazon.

Castor Oil - purchase on line for vole removal.

Granular vole product "I Must Garden" can be purchased at the Garden Patch in Columbus.

Green Screen deer repellent (really works) you can order at <https://greenscreen1.com> or purchase locally from Charlene & Chuck Leneschmidts 828-625-5201 charleenle@yahoo.com

Murphy's Oil Soap - All kinds of bugs

Neem Oil - bugs

Snapshot Weeds 6-8 month pre-emergence weed control - obtain on-line

Corn meal from feed stores not grocery store - pre-emergence weed control

FERTILIZATION

Always check internet for your zone because the months to fertilize will be different.

In our Lake Lure mountain area our zone ranges from zone 6-8 because of the isothermal effect and the many micro climates.

Fertilize three times.

1. March/April
2. June
3. August/Sept

5/10/5 fertilizer for general fertilization

10/10/10 fertilizer for general fertilization

SEEDS

American Meadows www.americanmeadows.com Wild Flowers, Seed Packets, Bulbs

Thompson and Morgan www.thompson-morgan.com Best sowing guide

(United Kingdom - 28 day delivery to the U.S.)

Swallowtail Garden Seeds www.swallowtailgardenseeds.com 1400 seed varieties

Johnny Selected Seeds www.johnnyseeds.com Organic seeds

Pinetree Seeds www.superseeds.com vegetables, flowers, herbs, plants

TIPS

The internet is your gardening friend - use it.

Get a Mantis tiller - go in with a friend or group. I prefer the electric version as I am old and it always starts. I use a lot of extension cord. Make sure you get the one that handles more power.

Use lots of ground covers and learn to propagate. Ground covers smother weeds so less weeding.

Use gravel and rocks and large all weather containers for difficult areas.

Water long and deep rather than shallow. You will water less often and plant roots will follow the water and grow down instead of up to the surface trying to find the water. Use water retention crystals in the bottom of the plant/shrub holes. Lasts five years. Miracle Grow product but there are other brands.