

# SOIL PREPARATION

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Prepare the soil before you plant to grow healthy, deep, strong roots that require water less often.

## REDUCE COMPACTION

Rototill or spade before you plant to break up compacted areas and allow air and water into the soil. This is important for all types of plants.

## ADD COMPOST

Mix compost into the soil to hold more moisture between watering and slowly fertilize plants. Compost is especially important in new developments and areas that have never been planted. Topsoil is not the same as compost.

Use good quality compost and spread it 1 to 2 inches deep over the planting area. Rototill the compost into the soil as deep as possible — at least six inches is ideal. Aged manure also works well.

A soil test is the best way to determine if you need compost or fertilizer and how much to add based on the type of plant. After preparing the soil, apply mulch to the surface within a few days to prevent weeds and soil erosion. Install plants immediately or over time.

## MATERIALS TO AVOID

Avoid using fresh manure, sand, wood ashes, biosolids and mountain peat. Do not use leaves, wood chips and bark that have not yet decomposed. These materials can cause nutrient deficiencies in surrounding plants.

**Visit [soiltestinglab.colostate.edu](http://soiltestinglab.colostate.edu) or call 970-491-5061 to get a soil test.**



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