



Adding Organic Material To Your Garden

Alfalfa -This is a leguminous plant used for fodder, pasture and cover crop. It comes in crushed or pellet form. Purchase alfalfa meal or pellets at animal feed stores. Some garden nurseries may sell it as well. Adds nitrogen, potassium, some phosphorus to your soil. Use in your compost pile or as a mulch.

Bark - Adds organic matter to your soil. Use as a mulch. Shredded is best for blocking out weeds. Bark will take some nitrogen from soil at first as it breaks down.

Blood Meal - Adds nitrogen. Use in your compost or add directly to your soil as an organic fertilizer.

Bone meal - This is made from crushed animal bone and can be purchased at any garden center or nursery. Adds phosphorus and some nitrogen. Use in your compost or add directly to your soil. Place in the hole when transplanting.

Coffee Grounds - .Adds nitrogen, some phosphorus and potassium to your soil.

Fish Fertilizer - This can be purchased at your local garden center or nursery. Adds nitrogen, phosphorus and trace elements to your soil.

Grass Clippings -Adds nitrogen to the soil. Use as a mulch or add to the compost pile. Keep away from plants stems when using as mulch. No chemical treated clippings.

Hay or Straw -Adds organic matter to soil. Use as mulch. Hay may contain weed seeds.

Kitchen Scraps - Collecting your own kitchen waste (not including any meat products) is probably the easiest. Often you can pick up vegetable waste from grocery stores or local restaurants so if you are looking for more than you can produce check these out. Adds nutrients and organic matter to the soil. Use in your compost. Do not add meat or greasy materials to the compost.

Leaves - Any type of leaves will work well as an organic gardening soil amendment. I collect leaves in the fall from neighbors and areas near where I live. I then crush them by running them over with my lawn mover or weed eater. I then place them directly on my garden beds or store them to be added to my compost over the winter. Brassicas grow well in beds where composted leaves are added. Adds nutrients and organic matter to the soil. Use as mulch and in your compost. Works better if you shred before using.

Manure - Adds nitrogen and mineral content to your soil. Used as a soil conditioner and fertilizer. Make sure it is aged for 6 months or more before using directly on your garden. Chicken, Cow, Horse, & Bunny manures are great, No Human, cat or dog.

Peat Moss - This is partially decomposed plant life taken from bogs and used as a rooting medium or soil conditioner. This organic gardening soil amendment can be purchased at garden centers and nurseries. Adds organic matter to the soil and helps soil retain moisture. Put it directly on the soil and turn under.

Phosphate Rock - This is finely ground, natural rock powder. It is one of the three major plant nutrients. It is designated by the letter P. Adds phosphorus and minerals. Use as a fertilizer in your compost or add directly to the soil.

Potash Rock - This is crushed rock and another one of the three major plant nutrients. It is designated by the letter K. Adds potassium. Use as a fertilizer in your compost or add directly to the soil.



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Sawdust - This is the waste left from cutting wood. It is best to use any sawdust except for cedar in your garden beds. Cedar sawdust has oils that are not good for your veggies, so use it only in your pathways. This can be purchased at garden centers or at sawmills if you have any in your area. Adds organic matter to your soil. Use as a mulch; great for pathways.

Seaweed - This is a sea plant that is washed up on beaches usually after big storms. It is most available in the fall and winter months and is a great organic gardening soil amendment. Adds potassium, some nitrogen, phosphorus and trace elements.

- Use fresh seaweed in your compost pile. It can also be purchased in a dry concentrate which can be diluted in water and used as a fertilizer tea.

Tea Grounds - Adds a variety of nutrients. Use in the compost pile.

Weeds - These will add green matter to your compost pile. Make sure you only use weeds that have not gone to seed and have no disease. Destroy others so they do not contaminate your compost. Adds varying nutrient content and trace minerals. Add to the compost pile.

Wood Ash - This is the grayish powder left after wood has been burned. After cleaning out your wood stove or wood burning fireplace place the ash on your garden beds or in the compost.

Wood Chips - This is bark, just in larger pieces. Check with your local tree trimming companies to see if they are giving it away or it can be purchased at local garden centers and nurseries. Adds organic matter to your soil. Use as a mulch in pathways. If adding to your garden beds you will need to add plenty of nitrogen to your soil first.

Worm Castings– Adds nitrogen. Add into bottom of hole when doing transplanting

Compost Tea– Helps to activate microorganisms in soil

Newspaper & Cardboard - Worms love it. Helps keep weeds down. Only 2-4 layers of newspaper, poke holes in cardboard for water to go through. Weight down with 2" of grass clippings.