

**Preparation Of land**

*Open Education Resource*

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Eliminating weeds and getting the soil ready for your crops (flowers and vegetables) are important first steps in growing a successful garden. Time spent in preparation reduces the time you'll have to spend maintaining and weeding your plot over the period of the growing season.

Choose the spot. Vegetable gardens and most flowerbeds require at least 6 hours of full sun each day. Choose a level spot -- either natural or terraced -- that has well-drained soil.

Mark the boundaries. Outline the new garden plot with string and stakes, a hose, or a line of powdered limestone. After testing a soil to soil-testing lab for nutrient and pH analysis, according to test report decide the nutrient application. Also test results will tell you which minerals and pH amendments your soil needs to grow healthy crop (vegetables and flowers).

Add amendments. Adjust the soil pH -- its measure of acidity or alkalinity -- by adding ground limestone or sulphur as recommended by the soil test results. Improve the soil fertility, clay soil drainage, and sandy soil water-holding capacity by adding organic material, such as compost, well-rotted livestock manure, or composted fir bark. Apply a 1- to 2-inch layer of organic material over the garden.

Turn the soil. Work the amendments into the top 6 to 12 inches of soil with a rot tiller or garden fork. Break up large clods and remove rocks and roots. Work the soil only when it is dry enough to crumble easily after squeezing never when it is saturated with water.

Tips

The best time to eliminate weeds and grass is the season before you plan to plant your garden. You can do it just prior to planting, too, but may have more weeds pop up throughout the growing season.