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*Organic*

**GARDENING  
TIPS**

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FAMILY OWNED

LOCALLY MADE

# WHAT MAKES A GARDEN *organic?*

## ORGANIC GARDENING (or-gan-ic gar-den-ing)

Organic gardening is gardening that puts the health of the soil first.



Healthy soil is alive with a **whole ecosystem of microbes, fungi, insects, and other tiny beings who break down dead organic matter** (think mulch, compost, and manure) and harvest its nutrients. They gather around the roots of living plants, which trade the sugars they produce for those same nutrients.

In non-organic gardening, synthetic fertilizers cut out the microbial middleman. They put key nutrients into the soil that plants can use immediately, which leads to rapid plant growth. The trade-off is that the plants stop providing sugars to feed the soil life, and the fertilizers make the soil less welcoming for them. Eventually, the soil life dies off. **Non-organic methods are extremely productive at first, with diminishing returns over time.**



*Soil filled with living things and sticky plant sugars holds lots of carbon, letting it absorb water like a sponge.*



*Fruits and vegetables grown in living soil give us a wide variety of nutrients.*



*As you add organic matter, your soil will get healthier and more productive each year.*

# ORGANIC VS. NON-ORGANIC

## GARDENING PRACTICES

	ORGANIC	NON-ORGANIC
<b>Adding Nutrients</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Compost</li><li>• Manure</li><li>• Mulch</li><li>• Blood Meal</li><li>• Bone Meal</li><li>• Fish Emulsion</li><li>• Seaweed</li><li>• Worm Castings</li><li>• OMRI-Listed* Fertilizers &amp; Plant Food</li></ul>	Synthetic fertilizers that are produced by humans through chemical processes, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Ammonium Nitrate</li><li>• Ammonium Phosphate</li><li>• Potassium Sulphate</li></ul>
<b>Suppressing Weeds</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Mulch</li><li>• Close Spacing of Plants</li><li>• Hand- or Flame- Weeding</li><li>• OMRI-Listed* Herbicides</li></ul>	Synthetic herbicides, usually marketed as “weed preventers” and “weed killers”.
<b>Discouraging Pests</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Lures and Traps</li><li>• Parasitic Species</li><li>• Supporting Plants’ Natural Defenses Through Overall Health</li><li>• Companion Planting</li><li>• Neem Oil</li><li>• Insecticidal Soap</li></ul>	Synthetic pesticides, often sold in the form of a spray.
<b>Managing Disease</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Companion Planting</li><li>• Crop Rotation</li><li>• Tool Sanitization</li><li>• Biological or Mineral Treatments Such as Neem Oil, Copper, and Sulfur</li></ul>	Synthetic fungicides, often sold in the form of a spray.

*Even with organic products, read instructions carefully and protect your skin and lungs from concentrated liquids and powders.*



\* The Organic Materials Review Institute reviews products that can be used in certified organic farming. Look for the OMRI Listed® seal to quickly find organic gardening products in your local gardening store.