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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
Adding Nutrients	• Compost • Manure • Mulch • Blood Meal • Bone Meal • Fish Emulsion • Seaweed • Worm Castings • OMRI-Listed* Fertilizers & Plant Food	Synthetic fertilizers that are produced by humans through chemical processes, including: • Ammonium Nitrate • Ammonium Phosphate • Potassium Sulphate
Suppressing Weeds	• Mulch • Close Spacing of Plants • Hand- or Flame- Weeding • OMRI-Listed* Herbicides	Synthetic herbicides, usually marketed as “weed preventers” and “weed killers”.
Discouraging Pests	• Lures and Traps • Parasitic Species • Supporting Plants’ Natural Defenses Through Overall Health • Companion Planting • Neem Oil • Insecticidal Soap	Synthetic pesticides, often sold in the form of a spray.
Managing Disease	• Companion Planting • Crop Rotation • Tool Sanitization • Biological or Mineral Treatments Such as Neem Oil, Copper, and Sulfur	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.

OMRI® LISTED

* **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.