

Organic Gardening Guidelines

General Rules & Acceptance of Terms - Garden Plots

Monroe County Parks and Recreation requires all gardeners to follow these guidelines.

The National Organic Standards Board defines organic gardening as “*an ecological production management system that promotes and enhances biodiversity, biological cycles, and soil biological activity. It is based on minimal use of off-farm inputs and on management practices that restore, maintain and enhance ecological harmony.*” Organic gardening emphasizes working with nature, soil building, preventing problems before they occur, and using only natural, non-toxic or minimally toxic substances if intervention is required.

FERTILIZERS

The best fertilizer money can buy is made in our gardens: **Organic compost**. Compost is truly a revitalizing and magical gardening mixture. It provides nitrogen (N), phosphorus (P), and potassium (K), as well as other elements (calcium, magnesium, sulfur, and micronutrients). Furthermore, compost aerates soil, breaks up clay, binds together sand, improves drainage, prevents erosion, neutralizes toxins, holds precious moisture, releases essential nutrients, and feeds the microbiotic life of the soil. No chemical or additive comes close to providing so many benefits.

A quick way to tell if a fertilizer is approved as an organic substance is to see if it is labelled “OMRI Listed”.

Below are recommended fertilizers (followed by N-nitrogen, P-phosphorus, or K-potassium representing the three major plant nutrients provided by each fertilizer) that may be used; followed by prohibited fertilizers.

Recommended Fertilizers

- Compost from the garden (N, P, K)
- Animal manure (ideally composted or aged before use) (N)
- Alfalfa meal (N)
- Blood meal (N)
- Hoof and horn meal (N)
- Kelp or seaweed (liquid or powder) (N)
- Fish emulsion (N, P)
- Rock phosphate (P)
- Soft phosphate (colloidal) (P)
- Bone meal (P)
- Wood ashes (K)
- Granite or feldspar dust (K)
- Greensand (K)
- Vermicompost
- Soybean meal

PROHIBITED Fertilizers

- Synthetic fertilizers of any kind (e.g. Miracle Gro)
- Any formulations containing sewage sludge (e.g. Milorganite)
- DAP and MAP (ammonium phosphates)
- Chilean Nitrate
- Superphosphate (acidulated phosphates)
- Chilean Nitrate of Potash (15-0-14)
- Muriate of Potash, KCl, (0-0-60)
- Charcoal ashes (from BBQ, etc.)
- Cigarette ashes

PESTICIDES

Organic methods promote a healthy ecosystem where birds, insects, plants, microorganisms, and people all reach a natural balance that is beneficial for all. The first line of pest control for the organic grower should be a careful evaluation and maximization of the soil and nutrients for a plant. **Good compost and loose, rich soil are often the best solutions for pests.** Make sure plants receive enough water and sunlight, choose plants that grow well in this part of the world (we are in **hardiness zone 5**), utilize companion plantings and rotate crops from year to year. All of these considerations can help prevent insect problems.

Organic Gardening Guidelines

Below are recommended and not recommended (but permitted, with caution) pest controls that may be used when there are still problems despite trying the methods listed above; followed by prohibited pest control substances.

Recommended

- Hand-picking and/or moving to a different plant
- Traps (pheromone, sticky, water, food, etc.)
- Row covers
- Spraying with garlic, onion or vegetable oil, and pepper sprays
- Insecticidal soaps (preferably biodegradable soap solutions)
- BT (*Bacillus thuringiensis*)
- Chitin
- Diatomaceous earth
- Bicarbonates (sodium bicarbonate – baking soda, and potassium bicarbonate)
- Sulfur
- Isopropyl alcohol
- Hydrogen Peroxide

NOT Recommended, but permitted

- Neem
- Pyrethrum
- Quassia
- Ryania
- Sabadilla

PROHIBITED

- Synthetic pesticides, insecticides or fungicides of any kind. Including, but not limited to these brand names/products: Bug B Gon, Captan, Diazinon Insectagon, Kelthane, Lindane Malathion, Permethrin, Sevin, Thuricide, etc.
- Nicotine in any form
- Formulations containing copper (e.g., Bordeaux Mix)
- Rotenone
- Pyrethroids (synthetic pyrethrum)

HERBICIDES

Synthetic herbicides of any kind are PROHIBITED. This includes, but not limited to, these brand names/products: Roundup, Scythe, Preen, Preen 'n Green, Weed-B-Gon, Ortho, Image, etc.

Recommended herbicide alternatives

Deep Mulch (1-2 in or more)

Acceptance of Terms

I understand that I or members of my family, or any additional gardener will not be covered under any medical insurance through the County of Monroe, Indiana or through the Monroe County Parks and Recreation Department. I recognize that because of the nature of this activity that an injury may be sustained. In the event of an injury to myself, family member or additional gardener, I give my permission to call for ambulance or emergency personnel, and agree to pay the usual and customary charges for such service. I give permission to the attending physician to render such treatment as is medically necessary, and agree to pay the usual and customary charges for such treatment. I now release the County of Monroe, Indiana, the Monroe County Parks and Recreation Department, its employees, volunteers, agents, sponsors, officers, independent contractors, vendors and assigns for any personal injuries or damages to personal property caused by or having any relation to this activity. I understand that this release applies both to present and future injuries or damages, and that it binds my heirs, executors and administrators. I understand that I or a family member may be photographed and/or videotaped during this activity and assign and transfer all right, title and interest in any prints, digital images and/or film footage to Monroe County Parks and Recreation Department for marketing purposes.

Signature (Required): _____

In signing above, you agree to the General Rules & Policies and Acceptance of Terms.