

# SOIL RESOURCES FOR EDIBLE GARDENING



If you want to grow healthy plants, you need to build healthy soil. Healthy soil is full of nutrients, microorganisms and organic matter. It has good drainage and water holding capacity and helps keep the water and air free of pollutants. Improve the quality of your soil by adding compost and mulch. Before you add fertilizer, test your soil to find out what your garden needs and make sure the soil is free of contaminants. You can build healthy soil by planting cover crops, using a “no-till” technique such as sheet mulching or straw bale gardening, and rotating your crops to prevent attacks from pests and disease.

## Soil Testing

### King Conservation District Soil Testing Program

Tests for fertility, pH, and organic matter. Does not include testing for heavy metals. Free testing for landowners who reside within the eligibility area, one time only, five samples. Additional soil tests can be added for a fee.  
[www.kingcd.org](http://www.kingcd.org), (425) 282-1900

### UMass Extension Soil & Plant Tissue Testing Laboratory, Amherst, MA

Tests for fertility, pH, cation exchange, lead and aluminum. Extra charges for organic matter and soluble salts.  
[soiltest.umass.edu](http://soiltest.umass.edu), (413) 545-2311

### Soiltest Farm Consultants, Inc.

Offers a variety of tests for fertility, heavy metals and other elements.  
[www.soiltestlab.com](http://www.soiltestlab.com), (800) 764-1622 or Local (509) 765-1622

### Kuo Testing Labs, Inc.

Offers a variety of tests for fertility, heavy metals and other elements.  
[www.kuotestinglabs.com](http://www.kuotestinglabs.com), Toll Free (800) 328-0112 or Local (509) 488- 0112

### Edge Analytical Laboratories

Tests for heavy metals, bacteria, pesticides and other contaminants.  
[www.edgeanalytical.com](http://www.edgeanalytical.com), (800) 755-9295

## Sheet Mulching and Straw Bale Gardening

<https://gardenhotline.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/Sheet-Mulching-2020.pdf>  
<https://gardenhotline.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/Straw-Bale-Gardening-2020.pdf>  
<https://green2.kingcounty.gov/gonative/Article.aspx?Act=view&ArticleID=36>  
<https://agroforestry.org/free-publications/sheet-mulching>  
[www.no-dig-vegetablegarden.com/straw-bale-gardening.html](http://www.no-dig-vegetablegarden.com/straw-bale-gardening.html)

### Find local sources of arborist chips, organic straw bales, cardboard or burlap bags:

The Garden Hotline, [gardenhotline.org](http://gardenhotline.org), (206) 633-0224, [help@gardenhotline.org](mailto:help@gardenhotline.org)

## Cover Crops

### Mail Order:

Fedco Seed Company, [www.fedcoseeds.com/ogs.htm](http://www.fedcoseeds.com/ogs.htm), (207) 426-9900

Johnny's Selected Seeds, [www.johnnyseeds.com](http://www.johnnyseeds.com), (877) 564-6697

Osborn Seed Company, <https://www.osborneseed.com> (360) 424-7333  
Canadian rep (604) 518-6953

Peaceful Valley Farm Supply, [www.groworganic.com](http://www.groworganic.com), (888) 784-1722

Territorial Seed Company, [www.territorialseed.com](http://www.territorialseed.com), (800) 626-0866

### Local Retail – King County:

Bellevue Nursery, <http://bellevuenursery.com/>, (425) 454-5531

Hayes Feed and Country Store (206) 242-8000

McLendon's Hardware, [www.mclendons.com](http://www.mclendons.com), 5 locations

The Grange in Issaquah, <http://grangesupply.com/>, (425) 392-6469

### Local Retail: Seattle:

City People's Mercantile, <https://www.citypeoplesmercantile.com/>, (206) 524-1200

Magnolia Garden Center, [www.magnoliagarden.com/](http://www.magnoliagarden.com/), (206) 284-1161

Sky Nursery, [www.skynursery.com](http://www.skynursery.com), (206) 546-4851

Swansons Nursery, [www.swansonsnursery.com](http://www.swansonsnursery.com), (206) 782-2543

Urban Feed and Garden, <https://www.urbanfeedandgarden.com>, (206) 420-2047

Walt's Organic Fertilizer Co., <https://waltsorganic.com/>, (206) 297-9092

West Seattle Nursery, <http://westseattlenursery.com/>, (206) 935-9276

## Certified Organic Soil Products

### Bulk

Bailey Compost, [www.baileycompost.com](http://www.baileycompost.com), (360) 568-8826

Cedar Grove Composting, <https://cedar-grove.com>, (877) 764-5748

DirtExchange, <http://dirtexchange.us>, (206) 599-3478

Sky Nursery, [www.skynursery.com](http://www.skynursery.com), (206) 546-4851

### Bagged

Black Gold OMRI certified products – available at local retail stores including Fred Meyer

Cedar Grove OMRI Certified Compost & Potting Soil - available at local retail stores

FOXFARM products – soil products available at local retail stores

Zoo Doo compost, <https://www.zoo.org/zoodoo> - herbivore manure compost – order online in spring

## Organic Fertilizer Sources

Walt's Organic Fertilizer Co., <https://waltsorganic.com>, (206) 297-9092. Granular certified organic 'Rainy Pacific NW Blend' fertilizer and others blended for local conditions.

Restore Soils/Hendrickus Organics, <https://www.restoresoils.com/>, Granular certified organic fertilizers and soil conditioners blended for local conditions.

Dr. Earth, <https://drearth.com>. Granular and liquid fertilizers

E.B. Stone, [www.ebstone.org](http://www.ebstone.org). Granular and liquid fertilizers

Neptune's Harvest, [www.neptunesharvest.com](http://www.neptunesharvest.com), Granular and liquid fertilizers

Wiser Worm Farm, [www.wiserwormfarm.com](http://www.wiserwormfarm.com). Worm tea fertilizer made from certified organic worm castings.

## Crop Rotation for Integrated Pest Management and Fertility

"The Maritime Northwest Garden Guide", Seattle Tilth, rev. ed., 2014.

"Your Farm in the City", Lisa Taylor, 2011, Black Dog and Leventhal Publishers, Inc.

"Growing Vegetables West of the Cascades", Steve Solomon, 2015, Sasquatch Books.



Seattle  
Public  
Utilities

Learn More About Natural Yard Care

Contact the Garden Hotline with your garden questions!  
[help@gardenhotline.org](mailto:help@gardenhotline.org) (206) 633-0224 [gardenhotline.org](http://gardenhotline.org)

