

Organic Gardening Guidelines

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

Thank you for your cooperation in making our gardens safe and healthy for all participants. These are basic guidelines. For more detailed information on gardening organically please contact the Garden staff at (812) 349-2805 or cmeyer@co.monroe.in.us.

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 is truly a revitalizing and magical gardening mixture. It provides nitrogen, phosphorus, and potassium, 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.

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 manures (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)

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, utilize companion plantings and rotate crops. All of these considerations can help prevent insect problems.

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

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

Beneficial insects (ladybugs, praying mantids, trichogramma wasps, lacewings, tachinid and syrphid flies, etc.)

Neem

Pyrethrum

Quassia

Ryania

Sabadilla

Prohibited

Synthetic pesticides, insecticides or fungicides of any kind (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)

Synthetic herbicides of any kind are prohibited (Preen ‘n Green, Roundup, Weed-B-Gon, etc.)