

HERBACEOUS PERENNIAL BED PREPARATION

- *Test the soil
- *Soil free of weeds (especially perennial weeds)
- *Soil well draining
- *Soil contains sufficient organic matter
(4 in. O.M. per 12 in. of soil)
- *Incorporate Potash (in 95% of cases)...e.g. Muriate of Potash

Test Your Soil:

- *pH
- *organic matter (also an indicator of N needs)
- *lbs/Acre available phosphate
- *lbs/Acre available potash, (soil test report will help you)

Minimum Standards:

- | | |
|-----------------|-------------------------------|
| *pH | 5.5-6.5 (for most perennials) |
| *organic matter | 5% |
| *phosphate | 50lbs. avail / Acre |
| *potash | 120lbs. avail / Acre |

Perennials that prefer Acidic Soil: add Sulfur or aluminum sulph.?

Many irises
Asclepias tuberosa
Baptisia
Arctostaphylos
Astilbe
Phlox paniculata

Perennials that prefer Alkaline Soil: add lime (which grade)?

Gypsophila
Lavender
Dianthus
Delphinium
Centranthus
Gray-foliaged plants

NO PERENNIAL WEEDS!

You will pay later for taking the easy way out now!

*Glyphosate (e.g. "RoundUp")....preferably several times
spray then work up....let weeds come up and spray again

*Eptam....soil incorp. to treat soil before planting

*Covering with black plastic or tarp or old carpet or newspapers
plan on covering for 6 weeks....only works well in sun

*Cultivation or cultivation/cover crops
only works if you have patience and know what to do

*Bring in "weed free" topsoil....good luck!
it is possible to find topsoil that is essentially free of
quackgrass and some other perennial weeds

*Continually double-dig and fork through your bed before
planting....hand-pull every sprig of weed that pops up
(either before or after you put your garden plants in)
Pulling errant weeds is an essential habit for any gardener

*Pre-emergent herbicide after planting, such as corn gluten

Well Draining Soil:

Amend with Organic Matter (4 in. O.M. per 12 in. of soil)

Raised Beds

Add sand....usually not a good idea

sand + clay in the right proportions = "concrete"

Drainage tile....few resort to this

!!!! ORGANIC MATTER !!!!!

It is best to keep adding each year - even after bed is established
Variety is the spice of an Amended Soil's life!

*Leaf Humus

*Sphagnum Peat Moss

*Mushroom Compost

*Wood Products

*Composted Aged Manure

*Compost

Fertilizer: (in most cases apply in spring)

All plants take up the same fertilizer salts regardless of where
they come from....a factory or a manure pile.

However, organic fertilizers help the health of the soil
beyond just providing fertilizer salts to the plant.

Hardware Store 10-10-10 is ok...just that - ok (not great)

We like "Osmocote"-type products (controlled release)

"Milorganite" is good (and helps keep the deer away - and some
people too), consider organics like cottonseed meal.