



CITY OF BLOOMINGTON
Parks and Recreation

Community Gardening Program Organic Method Guidelines

The National Organic Standards Board defines organic methods as “These methods integrate cultural, biological, and mechanical practices that foster cycling of resources, promote ecological balance, and conserve biodiversity.” 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.

Bloomington Parks and Recreation requires all gardeners to follow organic method guidelines.

Thank you for your cooperation in making our gardens safe and healthy for all participants. Below are basic guidelines. For more detailed information on gardening organically, please contact the CGP staff at (812) 349-3704, communitygardens@bloomington.in.gov or during the posted Garden Hours at the garden sites.

FERTILIZERS

Organic compost is an exceptional fertilizer. It provides nitrogen (N), phosphorus (P), and potassium (K), as well as other elements like calcium, magnesium, sulfur, and other micronutrients. Furthermore, compost improves soil tilth, improves drainage, prevents erosion, neutralizes toxins, holds precious moisture, releases essential nutrients, and feeds soil microbes essential to soil health. A quick way to tell if a fertilizer is approved as an organic substance is if it is labeled “[OMRI Listed](#).”

Below are some 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

Organic compost (N, P, K)
Animal manures (composted or properly 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)

(More on reverse)

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Prohibited Fertilizers

Miracle-Gro or synthetic fertilizers of any kind
Milorganite or any formulations containing sewage sludge
Ammonium Phosphates like DAP or MAP
Chilean Nitrate
Superphosphate (acidulated phosphates)
Chilean Nitrate of Potash (15-0-14)
Muriate of Potash, KCl, (0-0-60)
Charcoal or cigarette ashes

PESTICIDES

Organic methods promote a healthy ecosystem where birds, insects, plants, microorganisms, and people 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 crop rotation. All of these actions can help prevent insect problems. Again, pest control products that are "[OMRI Listed](#)" are permitted for use.

Below are recommended pest controls that may be used when there are still problems despite trying the methods listed above; followed by prohibited pest control substances.

Pest Control in Organic Plots

Beneficial insects (ladybugs, praying mantids, trichogramma wasps, lacewings, tachinid and syrphid flies, etc.)
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)
Bacillus thuringiensis (BT)
Chitin
Diatomaceous earth
Bicarbonates -sodium bicarbonate (baking soda) and potassium bicarbonate
Sulfur

Prohibited for use

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, including, but not limited to, these brand names/products: Roundup, Scythe, Preen, Spectracide, Ortho, Image, etc.