



Soil Management



NO TILL

The no till method preserves the soil integrity and microbiome by using different techniques like cover cropping with thick rooted crops (daikon radish and sun flowers) to break up compacted soil. Another tool commonly used is a broadfork.



COMPOST

Composting is a great way to recycle materials. Compost needs sun (heat), moisture (water), and adequate air flow to grow the microorganisms required to breakdown materials. Consider creating a vermicompost, or composting with worms.

SHEET COMPOSTING

Sheet composting is layering different recycled materials in order to enhance the soil microbiome and or suppress grass/weed growth. This method could use cardboard, newspaper, straw, grass clippings, leaves, kitchen scraps, etc. Essentially you are composting in place.

INCORPORATE ORGANIC MATERIAL

Organic materials can help to support the health of our soil while enhancing the nutrients. Consider what the materials will add to the soil and how much might be needed. Things like grass clippings, leaves, and straw can often be used in excess while pine needles and wood ash are acidic and should be monitored.

SOLARIZATION

Solarization is a great alternative to tilling when you are cultivating your initial garden space or needing to do a weed kill. Place a heavy duty tarp over the space. Next, make sure your tarp is secure by staking it out and/or place heavy materials on top of the tarp like cinder blocks or bricks. In the hot summer months this typically will take 2-3 weeks.



MULCH

There are a variety of different types of mulch of which are typically available to us for free! Think of leaves, wood chips, straw, newspaper, cardboard, or you could incorporate a living mulch in the form of a low growing crop like strawberries, creeping thyme, etc.

Content and infographics developed by Megan Pullin, M. S. 500 RYT.
For educational purposes only



Virginia Cooperative Extension is a partnership of Virginia Tech, Virginia State University, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, and local governments. Its programs and employment are open to all, regardless of age, color, disability, gender, gender identity, gender expression, national origin, political affiliation, race, religion, sexual orientation, genetic information, military status, or any other basis protected by law.