

Prepping the garden site

"Pay me now or pay me later"

Paul Drobot

Preparing the site is like the old oil commercial where a car mechanic is looking at a broken engine and he says *"pay me now or pay me later"*. Meaning that if the car owner had changed their oil they wouldn't have the major car repair expense. This is true for gardens. Proper site preparation will save lots of time, effort and money in the long run.

Once the garden is established it is hard to do major soil amending. Getting the soil ready for planting can be as simple as adding some organic matter or more complex and time consuming.. The following is a short list of "site prep" scenarios for a potential garden site.

Lawn sites

- kill the existing grass
this is a "whole heck of a lot" of less work than digging out the sod not only is digging out the sod back breaking but you must dispose of the clods
- turn in the dead grass into the existing soil
this will add organic matter to the soil
- raise bed at least 3-4 inches by adding more soil
if this is not done the bed will settle below the grass level and become a swamp
- amend the soil
- firm the soil
walk on the soil to firm it down so it won't settle below the plants crown
in large gardens I walk a tiller (without the bar down) over the soil

Soil sites

- kill the existing plant material
any weeds left at this point will come back to haunt you
- till or hand mix bed
amend existing soil at this point
- raise bed by adding soil
- amend soil
- firm the soil

Raised Beds

- using man made structural material
 - landscape timbers
 - railroad ties
 - 2 by lumber
 - concrete cast units
- using natural material
 - rocks and boulders
 - lannon stone

"There is no soil that is so perfect that the addition of some soil amending material will not increase the soils productivity"