

How to Create New Planting Beds and Amend Your Soil



You will need the following for new homes with clay and fill soil:

- four (4) bags of soil conditioner (finely ground pine bark) per 100 square feet of bed area
- quality topsoil (optional) at the rate of 1 cubic yard per 100 square feet of bed area
- BioTone to add at time of planting (per package directions)

Procedure

Delineate the bed shape by using a garden hose to create the bed outline. When you are satisfied, mark the bed shape using inverted marking paint. To eliminate any existing grass, spray the bed area with a quality herbicide like Roundup. Wait about a week before tilling. Sometimes a second application may be necessary, depending on the type of grass. Before tilling, cut a smooth edge around the bed area using a flat spade or a bed-edger. The edge should be in the shape of a "V", about 3-4 inches deep, tilted away from the lawn area. When you are ready to till the bed areas, simply spread the soil conditioner and topsoil (if you use it) evenly over the area to be tilled. Then till everything in at one time. Till thoroughly, but don't till around shallow-rooted trees such as dogwoods, since root damage can lead to potential problems with your trees.

If you need to add topsoil to your bed areas choose sandy, loamy topsoil that will aid in good drainage. To build the bed up by three inches, add topsoil at a rate of one cubic yard per 100 square feet.

Remember; do not pile soil against tree trunks. This can:

- lead to the development of disease
- induce rotting of both the outer and inner bark of the tree
- deprive the tree of food and water and eventually cause tree death

To Create Annual and Perennial Bed Areas

Follow the same technique outlined for creating 4 general bed areas, but for each 50 square feet of bed add:

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...don't till around shallow-rooted trees such as dogwoods, since root damage can lead to potential problems with your trees.



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How to Create New Planting Beds and Amend Your Soil cont.

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- 2 bags of good-quality compost or Ocean Forest Potting Soil (one of the only “potting soils” suitable for amending planting beds)
- 1 50 pound bag of manure
- A slow-release or Plant Tone fertilizer by directions on package

Additional Fertilization

Shrubs, trees, perennials, and annuals can be fed Tree and Shrub Fertilizer, Plant Tone, or Osmocote. These slow-release fertilizers are better for your plants because they release nitrogen slowly over a period of several months. This creates healthier plants and a healthier environment, by preventing excess nitrogen from washing into our waterways.

Finishing Touches

To finish all your beds with a professional touch, try this trick. Mulch the bed with pine needles, allowing the needles to extend over the “V” edge you made with the spade before tilling. After mulch has been spread, simply tuck the needles into the “V” with the spade. This technique will give you a neat, professional look. Other mulches can be used to achieve the same finished look.



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