



## Gardening Terms

**Acidic:** A soil, compost, or liquid with a pH between 0 and 7.0 (on a scale of 0.0-14.0). Often referred to as "sour" soil by gardeners.

**Aeration:** Any method of loosening soil or compost to allow air to circulate.

**Alkaline:** A soil with a pH between 7.0 and 14 (on a scale of 0.0-14.0). Often referred to as "sweet" soil by gardeners.

**Annual:** A plant that blooms, produces seed, and dies in one year.

**Beneficial Insect:** An insect that benefits your garden by eating or laying its eggs in other insects, thereby controlling their population.

**Biennial:** A plant that completes its full life-cycle in two growing seasons. It produces leaves in the first and flowers in the second.

**Biological Pest Control:** Using living organisms such as beneficial insects or parasites to destroy garden pests.

**Bolt:** A term used to describe a plant that has gone to seed prematurely.

**Bone Meal:** Finely ground fertilizer composed of white or light gray bone that adds phosphorus to the soil.

**Chelation:** The formation of bonds between organic compounds and metals, some of which are insoluble, as in humus. Soluble chelates are used in fertilizers to help keep nutrient metals, such as iron, mobile in the soil and thus available to plants rather than locked up in insoluble mineral salts.

**Chlorosis:** A yellowing or blanching of the leaves due to lack of chlorophyll, nutrient deficiencies or disease.

**Cold Frame:** An unheated structure usually made of wood and covered with glass or plastic. Cold frames are used to protect plants from frost and are helpful season extenders.

**Companion Planting:** The sowing of seeds in the garden in such a way that plants help each other grow instead of competing against each other.

**Compost:** Completely decayed organic matter used for conditioning soil. It is dark, odorless and rich in nutrients.

**Cover Crop:** Vegetation grown to protect and build the soil during an interval when the area would otherwise lie empty.

**Crop Rotation:** The planting of a specific crop in a site different from the previous year.

**Damping Off:** Decay of young seedlings at ground level following fungal attack. Often the result of soil borne diseases, humidity and over watering.

**Dead Heading:** The act of removing spent flowers or flowerheads for aesthetics, to prolong bloom for up to several weeks or promote re-bloom, or to prevent seeding.



**Deep Shade:** A plant requiring less than 2 hours of sun a day.

**Direct Seed:** To seed directly into the soil instead of starting your seeds indoors.

**Fertilizer:** An organic or synthetic material added to the soil or the plant, that is important for its nutrient value.

**Foliar Fertilizing:** A technique of feeding plants by applying liquid fertilizer directly to plant leaves.

**Fungicides:** Compounds used to prevent the spread of fungi in gardens and crops, which can cause serious damage to plants.

**Green Manure:** A crop that is grown and then incorporated into the soil to increase soil fertility or organic matter content. Usually turned over into the soil a few weeks before new planting begins.

**Hardening Off:** The process of acclimatizing plants grown under protection, in the greenhouse for example, to cooler conditions outdoors.

**Heavy Soil:** A soil that contains a high proportion of clay and is poorly drained.

**Humus:** Typically its dark loamy earth.

**Mulch:** Any organic material, such as wood chips, grass clippings, compost, straw, or leaves that is spread over the soil surface (around plants) to hold in moisture and help control weeds.

**N-P-K:** An abbreviation for the three main nutrients that have been identified as absolutely necessary for plants are nitrogen (N), phosphorus (P) and potassium (K). These three are also known as "macronutrients," and are the source of the three numbers commonly found on fertilizer labels.

**Organic:** Refers to something derived from living organisms and is made up of carbon-based compounds. It is also a general term used for a type of gardening using no chemical or synthetic fertilizers or pesticides.

**Perennial:** A plant that grows and flowers for years. They are either evergreens or may die back to the ground but will grow again the following season.

**Rhizome:** A fleshy underground stem or runner. Creeping grasses spread by rhizomes.

**Topdressing/Sidedressing:** Applying fertilizers or some kind of soil amendment after seeding, transplanting or once the crop has been established.

**Transplanting:** The moving of a plant from one growth medium to another.