



LOOKING AFTER *your garden* IN PERTH

TURN CLAY INTO GARDEN SOIL

To reduce the watering requirements of your plants you need to look beyond the green stuff and down to the brown stuff. Drought tolerant soil is crumbly, well drained and biologically active with a decent layer of slowly decaying mulch.

Improving the health of your soil not only uses less water, but it saves you time and money, requires less chemicals and produces amazing looking plants.

Clay Soils

Clay soils are heavy to dig and suffer from lack of aeration. On the plus side they have good (sometimes too good!) water holding capacity and hold nutrients around the plants. Improving clay soil is about improving aeration and reducing compaction.

Step 1: Some clay soils respond well to the addition of gypsum. To test your soil, put a 6mm lump of soil into a glass of rainwater. If it the clay dissolves into the water over the next 24 hours, your soil will respond well to the addition of gypsum. The more it dissolves, the better the gypsum will work and help to add structure to the soils. Add 0.5 – 1kg per square metre.

Step 2: Add plenty of organic matter such as manure, compost or soil improver and dig it through the top 40cm of the garden bed. We recommend the Green Life General Concentrate to help improve the soils. For the heavier gravelly soils in the hills 1/3 compost and 2/3 of the existing soil is usually adequate.

Step 3: If your clay soil is very heavy and is prone to flooding during winter, plants may need to go in raised garden beds or mounds of well-draining soil so that the main root ball is not sodden.

Step 4: While you are digging, add some mineral rock dust and any pH amendments you may need.

Step 5: Add a slow release fertiliser with rock minerals and soil microbes such as Troforte.

Step 7: After planting, apply a 75mm layer of a free draining, quality organic mulch such as Dsatco Triple C. Remember to leave a few centimetres around the trunks of plants to allow air circulation and prevent fungal problems.

Step 8: Sit back and admire your healthy garden as it thrives and flourishes.

Remember that miracles don't happen overnight. Improving soil takes time and patience, but that's one of the beauties of a garden – its wonderful ability to make us slow down

General advice only. Please ask one of our Horticulturists if you require specific advice for your situation.