



ADA STORE
0395 S.R. 235 – 2½ miles North of Ada
419-634-0351

Visit our Web Site at:
www.newleafgc.com

KENTON STORE
927 E. Columbus, Rt. 67 by Shopping Plaza
419-675-2718

Winter Hours thru March 10: M-W-F 9-4, Sat. 9-1, Sun. Closed
Early Spring Hours starting March 12: M-W-Thurs-F 9-5, Sat. 9-2, Tues & Sun. Closed
Tues. & Sat. hours may change later in the month depending on weather – Please CALL for hours.

Get Garden Soil Ready BEFORE Planting

Grow on a strong foundation and you'll produce healthy, nutritious vegetables and beautiful flowers year after year.

Very few people are lucky enough to have soil that has the perfect texture, nutrients and pH in their garden. This causes gardeners to be disappointed when their plants to struggle to survive. So, how do you know if your soil is healthy? And what do you do if it isn't?

Determining Soil Health - Of the 17 or so elements thought to be essential for plant growth, nitrogen, phosphorus and potassium (i.e. 12-12-12) are the most important because plants take them from the soil in the largest amounts. One way to determine what minerals are lacking or abundant in your soil is to get it tested. Local Cooperative Extension Services (see below) often offer low cost soil tests. These tests usually measure levels of soil pH, magnesium, phosphorus, calcium, potassium, and sometimes nitrogen. For a less intensive test, pick up a do-it-yourself version such as the **Rapitest Soil Test Kit** and do your own simple chemistry. pH levels can be critical to your plant's ability to absorb nutrients. Most minerals and nutrients are best available to plants in soils with a pH of 6.5 to 6.8. If your soil is acidic (low pH, at or below 6.0) or alkaline (high pH, above 7.0) it doesn't matter how rich it is in nutrients, the plants won't be able to absorb them. pH is usually included in a soil test, but you can bring in a sample to our store, or buy a pH Meter and determine the pH balance of your soil.



The best time to get the soil tested is in the spring or fall when it is most stable. This is also the best time to add any soil amendments or fertilizer should your soil fall short of minerals or nutrients. Don't guess – TEST!

Soil Texture and Type - In addition to uncovering your soil's pH, nutrient content and mineral levels you'll want to examine its texture. Soil texture depends on the amounts of sand, silt and clay it holds. Sand constitutes the biggest pieces of soil particles and feels gritty to the touch. Next in size are the silt particles which are slippery when wet and powdery when dry. The smallest pieces are clay. They are flat and tend to stack together like plates or sheets of paper. To determine soil texture, pick up a little and rub it between your fingers. If the soil feels gritty, it is considered sandy. If the soil feels smooth like talcum powder, it is silty. If the soil feels harsh when dry and slippery and sticky when wet, the soil is heavy clay. We have mostly clay soil in our area and it is quite dense, does not drain well and tends to be hard and crack when dry. Because there isn't much space between the clay particles, there usually isn't much organic matter or microbial life in the soil. Plant roots have a hard time growing in the hard material.

Improving Garden Soil - Adding organic matter in the form of compost and aged manure, or using mulch or growing cover crops (green manures), is the best way to prepare soil for planting. Adding chemical fertilizers will replenish only certain nutrients and do nothing for maintaining good, friable soil. Organic matter will help supply everything your plants need. Adding gypsum also loosens up clay soil. Gypsum is calcium sulfate which helps clay soil by acting on the chemical properties, but not by changing the physical properties of the soil. It causes a chemical reaction that allows the soil particles to not hold as much water. It is also an excellent source of calcium and calcium deficiency is one of the causes of blossom-end rot in tomatoes and peppers. Gypsum does not affect the soil pH.

Organic Matter - Adding compost will improve almost any soil. The texture of clay soil, not to mention its nutrient levels, are radically improved from having compost mixed in. All soils get better with annual applications on top. Compost can be purchased by the bag, or you can make it yourself at home. Compost and other organic materials hold soil particles together and help to retain moisture. They also absorb and store nutrients that are then available to plants, and compost is a food source for beneficial microorganisms.

Once you do have all the amendments you need, it's just a matter of digging up the top 6 to 12 inches of existing soil, thoroughly mixing the materials in, and then raking them level. You are now ready to plant a garden that will support great plants.

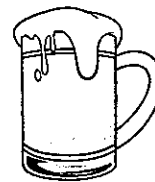
Remember – Garden success starts in the ground!

OSU Extension – Hardin County
1021 W. Lima St. Suite 103
Kenton, Oh. 43326

OSU Extension – Hancock County
7868 Co Rd. 140
Findlay, Oh. 45840

PRODUCT SPOTLIGHT

What does BEER and SOIL pH have in common?



The inventor of the pH scale was Dr. Soren Sorenson who was a chemist for a Danish Beer company in 1909. They found that the flavor of the beer was very dependent on the acidity or alkalinity of the beer. They had no way to measure that. pH actually stands for "power or potential of hydrogen". So the pH scale helps to create better soil and better beer! Beer is one of the oldest beverages produced. Hops have been used since 800 AD to flavor & preserve beer.

Since we're on the subject of beer, this year we are carrying Hops used in making beer. The Craft Beer hobby keeps growing, so this gives you the opportunity to grow your hops! There are over 100 varieties according to the YCHHOPS Website. We will carry 2 varieties:



Cascade - this is an Aroma type variety with Alpha acids of 5.5 - 9% with a Floral citrus, grapefruit, spicy tones.

Centennial is also an Aroma type variety with Alpha Acids of 7 - 12% with floral and lemon citrus tones.

How to grow Beer Hops - The site needs 6-8 hours of sun and plenty of room. Hops can grow to 25' tall and weigh 20 lbs. It grows vertical and needs a good trellis for support. A heavy rope is recommended for the vine (called bine) to grow up. This can be attached to a roof or have a few poles securely mounted in the ground. They like well cultivated soil, and if planting 2 varieties they need to be kept separated. The roots of hops "bine" are very vigorous and can take over a garden. Plant in a mound to provide good drainage; fertilize and mulch to help with weeds. When it starts to grow pick the best "bines" and train to go up the rope. Remove the rest. The "bine" will need a little help at first, then will grow up on its own. Hops grow all summer & are ready to harvest late summer. Also, water during dry spells. You won't get a good yield the first year, but the plants will last for years. To see if they are ready for harvest, examine the cones. A mature hop is dry to touch, springy with a very strong aromatic odor and be filled with thick yellow-gold lupulin powder. It should leave yellow lupulin powder on your fingers. Not all hop cones ripen at the same time, so pick regularly and store in a dry location away from the sun. Store cones in paper bags while drying then place them in sealed bags and put in the freezer. After harvesting cut the "bines" back to 3'. The winter will kill off the "bines", after which you can cut them back further and cover till Spring. In the spring cut around the plant to trim the roots back to about a foot, then start the process again! Check websites for more information. They take a little work, but may be fun to experiment with!

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED



Winds undulate
While snowflakes accumulate!
So cold it's hard to believe
We'll be relieved
But Spring has sunshine up her sleeve.
And tho we're wary,
We know snow is temporary!
Old Farmer's Almanac

Garden To Do List March



Garden:

- Walking on wet soil will cause compaction. After the spring thaw wait until the ground dries to start working it. To test moisture level, squeeze a clump of dirt in your hand, if it breaks apart when you open your hand, it is dry enough to work.
- Amend soil with gypsum, compost or peat moss to add nutrients and improve drainage.
- Plant peas, onion sets, radishes, spinach, kale and lettuce as soon as soil thaws and can be worked
- Prepare vegetable garden beds as soon as possible for early vegetables like cabbage, cauliflower, broccoli and Brussels sprouts
- Plant pansies, violas, snapdragons and alyssum
- Start seeds indoors that can be planted after frost free date such as tomatoes and peppers. Our **average frost free date is May 15**. Watch weather forecasts for cold nighttime temps to cover plants!
- Harvest horseradish while still dormant.
- Spray fruit trees with dormant oil, peach trees with **Bonide Liquid Copper Fungicide** before bud break.
- Fertilize blueberries & apply a soil acidifier.
- Test saved seeds for germination.

Perennials

- Clean up perennial beds.
- Tie up and cut back ornamental grasses to within a few inches from the ground.
- Cut dead wood out of roses and trim to shape.

Landscape

- Trim dead/damaged branches from trees and shrubs.
- Remove protective mulches around perennials as temps begin to warm and plants break dormancy. Don't remove too soon as hard freezes are possible.
- Transplant roses, shrubs and ornamental trees before leaf buds open.
- Apply slow release fertilizer to shrubs and perennials.
- Apply Preen, a pre-emergence herbicide, to prevent weeds in landscape beds.
- Get help with landscape design now before the busy gardening season.

Lawn

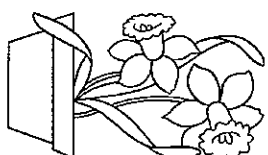
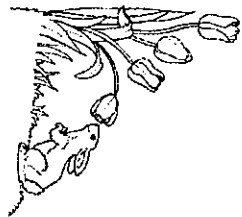
- Apply crabgrass preventer. This not only prevents crabgrass, but all weed seeds from germinating.

SPRING FLOWERS FOR EASTER - APRIL 1ST

Tulips - Lilies - Hyacinths and MORE!

Try our non-allergenic Asiatic Lilies for Easter and then plant outdoors as a perennial to enjoy year after year!

Garden Flags - Fairy Garden Items
Spring Wreaths - Spring Silks & Picks
Wind Chimes - Stepping Stones



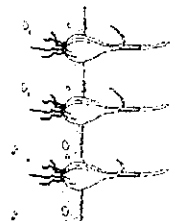
Early Spring Shopping Check List

- Seeds - bulk & pkgd.
- Seed Starter Mix
- Peat Pots & Pellets
- Jiffy Cell packs
- Seed Heating Mats
- Perlite & Vermiculite
- Fruit Tree Sprays
- Dormant Oil Spray
- Fertilizers
- Crabgrass Preventer
- Soil Amendments
- Gypsum
- Animal Repellents
- Peat Moss & Bark Mulch
- Preen weed preventer
- Asparagus Roots
- Onion Sets
- Seed Potatoes
- Fruit Trees & Plants
- Cool weather vegetable plants



Coming Later

- Asparagus Roots
- Onion Sets
- Seed Potatoes
- Fruit Trees & Plants
- Cool weather vegetable plants



Call NOW to get on our Spring Schedule

- Landscape design & installation
- Landscape maintenance - clean up, trimming, edging & mulching
- Paver patios and sidewalks & concrete retaining wall installation
- Lawn fertilization and weed control
- New lawn installation - seeding & sodding

Now's the time to Spray Fruit Trees!



Use dormant sprays before leaf growth in early spring.
Dormant Oil: This kills over-wintering insects. Spray when temperatures are above 40°F.
Copper Fungicide: Use for Peach Leaf Curl. Can repeat application every 7-10 days if necessary.

Then follow with **Fruit Tree Spray** according to the schedule. You can pick up a **Fruit Tree Spray Schedule** at either store!