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BEST ORGANIC AMENDMENTS FOR NORTH TEXAS SOIL

Alfalfa Meal - Provides many nutritional benefits not only for plant use, but for soil organisms as well. One very important ingredient is tricontanol, a powerful plant growth stimulator. Alfalfa is very high in vitamins, plus N-P-K-Ca, Mg, and other valuable minerals. Use at 25 pounds per 1,000 square feet.

Bat Guano - A natural, all-purpose fertilizer containing lots of trace elements. N-P-K percentages vary based on source, read your package for the nutritional content. Apply 10 - 20 pounds per 1,000 square feet.

Blood Meal - Organic source of nitrogen. Good to use as a mix with cottonseed meal. Apply 10 - 20 pounds per 1,000 square feet.

Bone Meal - Organic source of phosphorus. Apply 10 - 20 pounds per 1,000 square feet.

Compost - Can be made at home or purchased ready-to-use. Back to Earth Cotton Burr Blend is ideal to use for amending clay soils. Cotton burrs produce humic acid as they decompose, which helps to break up clay soils.

Compost provides a carbon energy source for beneficial soil microorganisms.

Compost Tea - Compost tea added to your garden soil will introduce beneficial microbial life to your garden.

Covington's Soil Builder - Three great soil amendments in one convenient application. Covington's Soil Builder contains **Back to Earth Composted Cotton Burrs**, **Expanded Shale** and one pound of **Texas Greensand** per bag. Use in all newly prepared landscape and vegetable beds, and to top dress or replenish depleted soils in all parts of the landscape. **Highly recommended.**

Earthworm Castings - An effective organic fertilizer that is high in beneficial bacteria, calcium, iron, magnesium and sulfur, and contains over 60 trace minerals. Earthworm castings are great to add to the soil in container plantings and when preparing vegetable garden beds.

Coffee Grounds - An excellent natural fertilizer with an acid pH and up to 2 percent nitrogen. Collect grounds at home and from your local restaurant or coffee shop and use in the compost pile, or apply directly to the soil. Coffee grounds are a natural soil amendment and acid organic matter for bed preparation. Use directly in alkaline soils or mix into the compost pile.

Cow Manure - It is best to use cow manure in composted form to avoid weed seed and odor. Good source of nitrogen. Excellent in vegetable bed preparation and as an aid to manufacturing compost. Apply 20-30 pounds per 1,000 square feet.

Epsom Salts - A fast-acting source of magnesium and sulfur. Use dry at ½ pound per 100 square feet or add a ½ cup to each tomato plant or rose bush at planting.

Fish Emulsion - A concentrated liquid fish fertilizer for use directly in the soil or as a foliar feed.

Poultry Litter - Chicken litter is a great natural fertilizer. High in nitrogen and rich in nutrients, this manure is easily broken down and helps restore depleted soil to a healthy balance. Apply 20 pounds per 1000 square feet.

Molasses (Dry) - An excellent carbon and carbohydrate source that effectively stimulates beneficial microorganisms. It can be used as a bed preparation ingredient, as a compost starter or applied on the surface of the soil. Apply 20 pounds per 1,000 square feet.

Molasses (Liquid) - This sweet syrup contains sulfur, potash, and many trace minerals. Molasses is a good, quick source of energy for soil life and microbes in compost piles. Liquid molasses is used in sprays; dry molasses is broadcast. **Sugars are used to stimulate the microbes in the soil.**

Mycorrhizal Fungi - Contains living beneficial fungus; enhances root and plant growth. A healthy mycorrhizae population boosts plants' immune systems. The fungi also helps plants uptake phosphorous properly from the soil.

Expanded Shale - This gravel-sized rock is very porous and breaks clay soil, making the soil easily worked and better draining. You only need to add it to the soil once and work it into the beds at root level. Expanded shale has been in test gardens for many years and does not deteriorate. This product is often referred to as a "Clay Buster". Till in 2- 3 inches of expanded shale, 6 to 8 inches deep, in all newly prepared landscape and vegetable beds. **Highly recommended.**

Soft Rock Phosphate - Excellent source of phosphorus and calcium. Great for vegetable garden preparation. Apply 25 – 50 pounds per 1000 square feet once a year, or ½ a cup to tomatoes/vegetables at time of planting.

Sulfur - Used to lower the pH of our North Texas alkaline soils. It is especially useful in the preparation of planting beds for Azaleas, Gardenia, Camellias and other acid loving plants. Apply granulated sulfur twice a year to such beds at a rate of 5 pounds per 1,000 square feet.

Horticultural Cornmeal - May be used in soil or bed preparation to help control fungal diseases on shrubs, roses, fruit trees and turf. Apply 20 pounds per 1,000 square feet of surface area of soil.

Corn Gluten Meal - Used to control annual weeds that germinate from seed. The key is to broadcast the material before the weed seeds germinate. It is best to make two applications per year - one in February-March and one in May-June. It is also an excellent organic fertilizer as it contains 9-10 percent nitrogen. Apply 15-20 pounds per 1,000 square feet.