

RECIPE

New Garden Bed - with Mulch



Ready in **1 season or less**

Serves **the entire planet**

Ingredients

- High Quality Compost and/or Tea
- Unsulphured molasses
- Cardboard
- Wood mulch, shredded leaves, or straw
- Water

Preparation

1. Mow all existing plants (grass, weeds, etc)
2. Aerate the ground with a shovel or garden fork by gently digging in and wiggling tool every foot or so - **DO NOT TURN SOIL OVER**
3. Spread a 1 cm layer of biologically active compost or spray tea over the area
4. Mix 1 tablespoon molasses per gallon of water and lightly spread over the area
5. Lightly water in the compost, do not soak
6. Cover the area with cardboard
7. Soak the cardboard with water
8. Cover the cardboard with your mulch of choice and water well one last time
9. Wait (see tips) then plant with perennials
10. Enjoy your new garden!

Tips

- If made in the spring/early summer, bed will be ready for fall planting
- If made late summer/fall, bed should be ready for planting by late spring
- Plant plants with compost and mycorrhizal fungi spores

- Spray plants with compost tea shortly after planting and each spring to help maintain microbe populations

Produced by Renaissance Soil

Email: Revivesoil@gmail.com with comments or questions



→ Finding white strands like these in your mulch is a very good sign! These white strands are called fungal mycelium. The beneficial fungus is colonizing and breaking down your mulch, which is one step in a wonderful web of predator/prey relationships that cycle nutrients in the soil.

Mulched garden beds are best for perennial plants. This is common for aesthetic reasons, but also has great importance in terms of soil ecology. Perennial plants, along with trees and shrubs, prefer to eat their nitrogen in the form of ammonium (NH_4). Nitrogen stays in the ammonium form under slightly acidic soil conditions. It is the fungi in the soil that maintain the acidity that selects for ammonium thereby creating the preferred habitat of perennial plants.

Bare soil on the other hand is lacking in fungal foods and is therefore typically more dominated by bacteria. Bacteria form alkaline glues that make the soil less acidic and they also actively transform ammonium into forms of nitrogen called nitrate and nitrite ($\text{NO}_3 + \text{NO}_2$), which are the preferred forms of N for annual plants.