

Squeeze every drop

The City of Oklahoma City has partnered with the Oklahoma State University Department of Horticulture and Landscape Architecture to help promote outdoor water conservation.

For more information about how you can save water outdoors check out these websites:
squeezeeverydrop.com
thinkwater.okstate.edu
sip.mesonet.org



The City of
OKLAHOMA CITY
UTILITIES DEPARTMENT



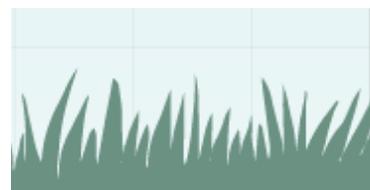
Oklahoma Cooperative Extension Service
Division of Agricultural Sciences
and Natural Resources
Oklahoma State University

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Improving Soil Quality



L-435



Dig in and get to know your soil

Having a beautiful, growing landscape starts with a healthy soil. A teaspoon of healthy soil contains about **1 billion bacteria**, which recycle nutrients, break down organic matter and give soil its earthy smell.

What's your soil texture?

The Oklahoma State University Soil, Water and Forage Analytical Laboratory can determine the specific texture of your soil or you can approximate your soil texture with the “texture by feel” method. Knead moist soil in your hand and squeeze it between your fingers.



- A **clay soil** feels smooth and sticky and sticks to shoes. Clay soils hold water very tightly and drain slowly relative to sandy soils.
- A **loam soil** feels partly gritty and partly smooth. It forms a ball that breaks easily when squeezed. This type of soil is easy to work and has a high water holding capacity.
- A **sandy soil** is gritty and will not stay in a ball. Water drains quickly through sandy soil relative to clay soil since it has large pore spaces.

Improve soil quality with 3 easy steps

1. Add Compost

Compost is a nutrient rich material that forms from the breakdown of organic materials. When added to soil, it loosens clay and helps sandy soils retain moisture and nutrients.



Ingredients for compost

- Most yard waste like grass clippings, leaves, and twigs (avoid composting weeds or grass clippings from the lawn that have received persistent herbicide applications.)
- Non-fat containing food scraps
- Straw
- Chipped branches
- Coffee grounds

Recipe

Alternate green (wet materials) and brown layers (dry) in a bin or pile. Keep the pile moist and periodically turn the pile to speed up decomposition.



2. Aerate Your Yard

Aerating is the process of taking small plugs out of the ground or forcing tines into the soil to reduce soil compaction and increase air flow, water infiltration, and nutrient intake. Different types of aerating machines can be rented or purchased from local stores.



Soil plugs left after aeration

3. Fertilize Appropriately

Take the guess work out of fertilizer application.

If you know what nutrients your soil needs you can grow healthy plants. The OSU Soil, Water, and Forage Analytical Lab can help you determine the nutrients in your soil and give you recommendations based on your test. The Oklahoma County Extension Office can provide you with more information.

A list of county Extension offices is available at:
<http://countyext2.okstate.edu/>

For more information on soil testing, visit:
<http://www.soiltesting.okstate.edu/>