



What to Plant in August

Vegetables

Peppers:

- Planting: Ready-to-plant seedlings.
- Conditions: They love the heat and prefer sunny locations.
- Care: Regular watering, with good soil drainage.

Eggplants:

- Planting: Ready-to-plant seedlings.
- Conditions: Heat-resistant, need plenty of light.
- Care: Regular watering, keeping the soil moist.

Zucchini:

- Planting: Ready-to-plant seedlings or direct seeds into the ground.
- Conditions: Heat-resistant, prefer sunny locations.
- Care: Regular watering and organic fertilization for better growth.

Green Beans:

- Planting: Direct seeds into the ground.
- Conditions: Prefer warm spots with plenty of sunlight.
- Care: Regular watering, especially during the flowering and fruit development stages.



Herbs and Aromatic Plants

Basil:

- Planting: Ready-to-plant seedlings or seeds.
- Conditions: Prefers sunny spots and is heat-resistant.
- Care: Regular watering, avoiding soil dryness.

Oregano:

- Planting: Ready-to-plant seedlings or seeds.
- Conditions: Heat-resistant, prefers sunny spots.
- Care: Moderate watering, withstanding dry conditions.

Thyme:

- Planting: Ready-to-plant seedlings or seeds.
- Conditions: Heat and drought-resistant, prefers sunny spots.
- Care: Minimal watering, with well-draining soil.



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Flowers and Ornamental Plants

Canna indica:

- Planting: Bulbs.
- Conditions: Loves heat and light, ideal for summer months.
- Care: Regular watering and well-drained soil.

Cycas:

- Planting: Ready-to-plant seedlings.
- Conditions: Heat and drought-resistant, prefers direct sunlight.
- Care: Moderate watering, with good drainage.

Geranium:

- Planting: Ready-to-plant seedlings.
- Conditions: Heat and drought-resistant, ideal for pots and flower beds.
- Care: Regular watering and good ventilation to avoid diseases.

Portulaca:

- Planting: Ready-to-plant seedlings or seeds.
- Conditions: Heat and drought-resistant, prefers sunny spots.
- Care: Moderate watering, with good drainage.



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Dragon Fruit: A Detailed Guide

Dragon fruit, also known as pitaya or pitahaya, is an exotic fruit with a striking appearance and many nutritional benefits. It is widely cultivated in tropical and subtropical regions of the world, including Cyprus, where the climate is suitable for its growth. This guide provides detailed information on dragon fruit, including its varieties, cultivation, benefits, and uses.

Dragon Fruit Varieties

There are three main varieties of dragon fruit:

- **Hylocereus undatus (White Flesh, Red Skin):** This variety is the most common and has white flesh with black seeds and red skin.
- **Hylocereus costaricensis (Red Flesh, Red Skin):** This variety has red flesh with black seeds and red skin. Its flavor is more intense compared to the white-fleshed variety.
- **Hylocereus megalanthus (White Flesh, Yellow Skin):** This variety has white flesh with black seeds and yellow skin. It is usually sweeter than the red varieties.



Dragon Fruit Cultivation

- **Climate and Soil Requirements:** Dragon fruit plants thrive in well-draining, sandy, or loamy soils with a pH between 6 and 7. They prefer warm climates with temperatures from 20°C to 30°C and can withstand short periods of drought. They require plenty of sunlight for optimal growth and fruiting.
- **Propagation:** Dragon fruit can be propagated by seeds or cuttings. Propagation by cuttings is faster and ensures that the new plant will have the same characteristics as the parent plant.
- **Planting:** Plant the cuttings about 5 cm deep in well-draining soil. The plants need support to climb, such as trellises or posts.
- **Watering and Fertilizing:** Dragon fruit requires regular watering, especially during the growth and flowering periods. Avoid excessive moisture to prevent root rot. Use a balanced fertilizer with micronutrients to promote healthy growth and fruiting.
- **Pruning:** Regularly prune the plants to remove dead or diseased branches and maintain the desired shape. Pruning also helps improve air circulation and light penetration.



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Dragon Fruit Benefits

- **Nutritional Value:** Dragon fruit is rich in vitamins C and B, antioxidants, fiber, iron, and magnesium. It is low in calories and is an excellent source of hydration due to its high water content.
- **Health Benefits:**
- **Immune System Boost:** The high content of vitamin C and antioxidants helps strengthen the immune system.
- **Digestion:** The fiber content contributes to improved digestion and the prevention of constipation.
- **Skin Health:** Antioxidants help combat free radicals and promote skin health. • **Blood Sugar Regulation:** Fiber can help regulate blood sugar levels.

Dragon Fruit Uses

- **Culinary Use:** Dragon fruit is extremely versatile and can be used in many culinary applications:
- **Fresh:** Consumed raw, often in fruit salads or as a snack.
- **Juices and Smoothies:** Adds an exotic flavor to juices and smoothies.
- **Desserts:** Used in ice creams, sorbets, cakes, and other desserts.
- **Salads:** Can be added to salads for a tasty and nutritious element.
- **Cosmetics and Health:** The antioxidants and vitamins in dragon fruit make it popular in cosmetic products to enhance skin health.



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Challenges and Pests Common Pests:

Common Pests:

- **Aphids:** Small insects that feed on the plant's sap, causing damage to leaves and stems.
- **Fruit Flies:** Lay their eggs on the fruit, leading to infestation by larvae and fruit rot.
- **Scale Insects:** Cause damage to stems and fruit by sucking plant juices.

Diseases:

- **Root Rot:** Caused by excessive moisture and poor drainage.
- **Anthracnose:** A fungal disease that causes dark spots on leaves and fruit.



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Passion Fruit: A Detailed Guide

Passion fruit, also known as *Passiflora edulis*, is a tropical fruit known for its unique flavor and numerous health benefits. It is widely cultivated in various parts of the world, including Cyprus, where the climate is suitable for its growth. This guide provides detailed information on passion fruit, including its varieties, cultivation, benefits, and uses.

Passion Fruit Varieties

There are two main varieties of passion fruit:

- **Purple Passion Fruit (*Passiflora edulis f. edulis*):** This variety produces smaller fruits with purple skin and a strong aromatic flavor. It thrives in cooler, subtropical climates.
- **Yellow Passion Fruit (*Passiflora edulis f. flavicarpa*):** This variety produces larger fruits with yellow skin and a slightly sweeter taste. It prefers warmer, tropical climates.



Passion Fruit Cultivation

- **Climate and Soil Requirements:** Passion fruit plants thrive in well-draining, sandy-loam soils with a pH between 6.5 and 7.5. They require warm climates with temperatures from 20°C to 30°C and can tolerate light frost. Adequate sunlight and protection from strong winds are essential for optimal growth.
- **Propagation:** Passion fruit can be propagated by seeds or cuttings. Seed propagation is common, but plants grown from seeds may take longer to bear fruit. Cuttings from healthy, mature plants can also be used to ensure desired characteristics.
- **Planting:** Space the plants about 2-3 meters apart to allow proper air circulation and growth. Install trellises or support structures for the vines to climb, as passion fruit is a vigorous climber.
- **Watering and Fertilizing:** Regular watering is essential, especially during dry periods. Avoid excessive moisture, as it can cause root rot. Fertilize with a balanced fertilizer containing nitrogen, phosphorus, and potassium to promote healthy growth and fruiting.
- **Pruning:** Regularly prune the vines to remove dead or diseased branches and maintain manageable size. Pruning also enhances air circulation and light penetration, reducing the risk of fungal diseases.



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Passion Fruit Benefits

- **Nutritional Value:** Passion fruit is rich in vitamins A and C, dietary fiber, and antioxidants. It also contains important minerals such as potassium, magnesium, and iron.
- **Health Benefits:**
- **Immune System Support:** The high levels of vitamin C and antioxidants help strengthen the immune system and protect against infections.
- **Digestion:** The dietary fiber in passion fruit aids digestion and prevents constipation.
- **Heart Health:** Potassium helps regulate blood pressure, while dietary fiber and antioxidants contribute to overall cardiovascular health.
- **Anti-inflammatory Properties:** The antioxidants in passion fruit have anti-inflammatory effects, which can help reduce inflammation and prevent chronic diseases.

Passion Fruit Uses

Culinary Use: Passion fruit is versatile and can be used in various culinary applications:

- Juices and Smoothies: The pulp and juice add a tropical flavor to beverages.

- Desserts: Passion fruit can be used in cakes, tarts, ice creams, and sorbets.
- Sauces and Dressings: Its tangy flavor pairs well with both sweet and savory dishes, making it a great addition to sauces and salads.

Traditional Medicine: In some cultures, various parts of the passion fruit plant are used in traditional medicine to treat conditions such as anxiety, insomnia, and respiratory problems.



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Challenges and Pests Common Pests:

Common Pests:

- Aphids: These small insects feed on the sap of passion fruit plants, causing damage to leaves and stems.
- Fruit Flies: They lay their eggs on the fruit, leading to infestation by larvae and fruit rot.
- Nematodes: These microscopic worms attack the roots, causing stunted growth and yellowing of leaves.

Diseases:

- usarium Wilt: This fungal disease causes wilting and yellowing of leaves and can lead to plant death.
- Anthracnose: A fungal disease that affects leaves, stems, and fruit, causing dark spots and fruit rot.



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The Green Economy and the Role of Plants in Achieving Its Goals

The green economy represents an economic model that combines economic growth with environmental sustainability and social well-being. At the heart of the green economy is the concept of sustainability, where natural resources are used in a way that ensures the health of the planet for future generations. Plants play a crucial role in this model, offering numerous environmental and economic benefits.

What Is the Green Economy?

The green economy focuses on activities that promote sustainability, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, protect biodiversity, and enhance the circular economy. These activities include the development of renewable energy sources, sustainable management of natural resources, and reduction of pollution and waste.



The Role of Plants in the Green Economy

Plants are key players in achieving the goals of the green economy. Here are some ways plants can contribute:

Reducing Carbon Dioxide (CO₂) Emissions

- Through photosynthesis, plants absorb CO₂ from the atmosphere and release oxygen. This process helps reduce the concentration of greenhouse gases.
- Forestry and Reforestation: Planting trees and restoring forests are effective methods for absorbing CO₂ and combating climate change.
- Urban Gardens and Parks: Green spaces in cities help reduce CO₂ levels and improve air quality.

Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy

- Plants can improve energy efficiency and support the use of renewable energy sources.
- Green Roofs: Green roofs reduce the need for air conditioning and heating, improving the energy efficiency of buildings.
- Bioenergy: Crops like willow and miscanthus can be used for bioenergy production, providing a renewable energy source.




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Sustainable Management of Natural Resources

- Plants play a central role in managing natural resources, especially water and soil.
- Water Management: Plant roots help filter water and maintain the quality of aquatic environments.
- Soil Improvement: Plants contribute to preventing soil erosion and improve soil fertility through the decomposition of organic materials.

Circular Economy

- Promoting the circular economy involves recycling and reusing materials, and plants can significantly aid in this.
- Composting: Organic waste from plants can be turned into compost, reducing the need for chemical fertilizers and improving soil health.
- Recycling Plant Materials: Crop waste can be reused as organic materials for construction and energy production.



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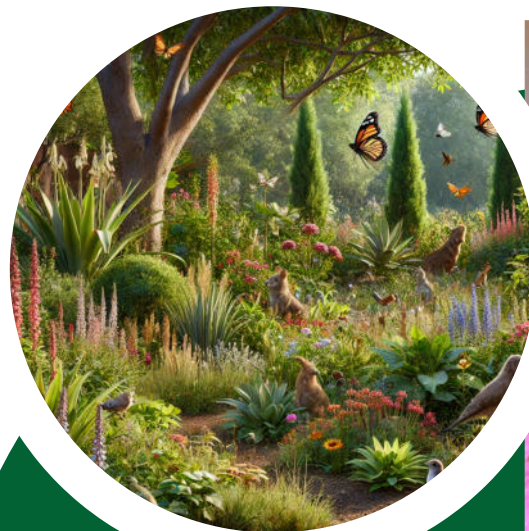
The Role of Gardens in Environmental Protection

How Gardening and Garden Care Can Contribute to Reducing the Carbon Footprint

Gardening is not just a hobby or an activity for beautifying our outdoor space. It plays an important role in environmental protection and reducing the carbon footprint. Gardening and garden care can offer multiple benefits for both the environment and society. Below are some ways gardening contributes to reducing the carbon footprint:

Carbon Dioxide (CO₂) Sequestration

- Plants play a crucial role in sequestering CO₂ from the atmosphere. Through photosynthesis, plants absorb carbon dioxide and release oxygen. This process helps reduce CO₂ levels, one of the main factors in climate change.
- Planting trees and shrubs in your garden contributes to increased CO₂ sequestration.
- Growing indoor plants can also help improve air quality in your home.



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Reducing Energy Consumption

- Growing your own vegetables and fruits can reduce dependence on products transported from afar, reducing the carbon footprint associated with food transport.
- Planting organic vegetables and fruits in your garden reduces the need for products that require energy for transport and storage.
- Using solar systems for garden watering can reduce energy consumption from non-renewable sources.

Increasing Biodiversity

- Cultivating different plant species in the garden can help maintain and increase biodiversity, which is critical to the health of ecosystems.
- Planting local and endemic plants supports local fauna and flora.
- Creating natural habitats for animals and insects helps support local ecosystems.



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Waste Management and Composting

- Composting is a natural process that turns organic waste into valuable fertilizer for the garden.
- Composting kitchen scraps and garden waste reduces the amount of waste that ends up in landfills.
- Compost enriches the soil and reduces the need for chemical fertilizers, which are energy-intensive to produce.

Sustainable Water Management

- Water conservation is crucial for environmental sustainability. There are many techniques you can apply in your garden to reduce water use.
- Collecting and using rainwater for garden watering reduces dependence on potable water supplies.
- Installing drip irrigation systems helps reduce water waste and maintain soil moisture.

Reducing Chemicals

- The use of chemical pesticides and fertilizers can have negative impacts on the environment and our health.
- Using organic pesticides and fertilizers reduces environmental pollution.
- Incorporating natural pest predators in the garden helps maintain a healthy ecosystem.



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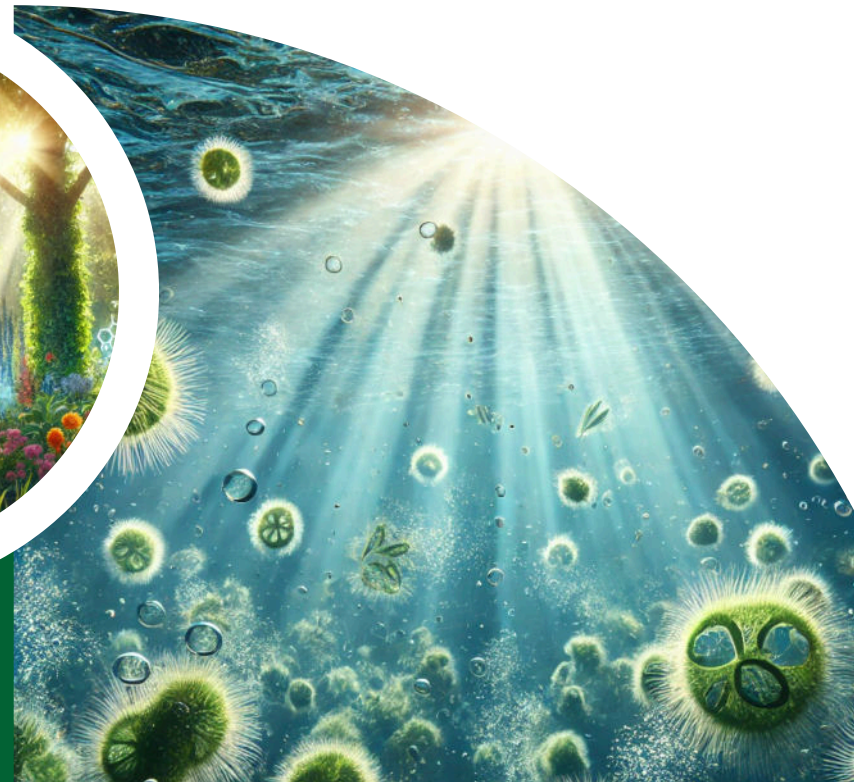


Plants play a significant role in removing carbon dioxide from the atmosphere through photosynthesis. During the day, plants use solar energy to convert CO₂ and water into glucose and oxygen. This process helps reduce CO₂ levels in the atmosphere and produces the oxygen necessary for life on Earth.

The Contribution of Phytoplankton

Phytoplankton also plays a crucial role in removing CO₂ from the atmosphere. Phytoplankton are microscopic marine organisms that photosynthesize and are responsible for producing about 50% of the planet's oxygen. Additionally, phytoplankton sequesters large amounts of CO₂ from the atmosphere and helps regulate the climate.

The Role of Plants in Reducing CO₂



Why Gardens Are Important Despite Limited Nighttime Benefits

Although plants consume oxygen and release CO₂ at night, their overall contribution to reducing CO₂ and producing oxygen is positive. Additionally, gardens offer many other environmental benefits, such as:

1. **Reducing Ambient Temperature:** Plants provide shade and cool the environment through the process of transpiration.
2. **Soil Conservation:** Plant roots help stabilize the soil and prevent erosion.
3. **Improving Air Quality:** Plants filter pollutants and dust from the air.
4. **Preserving Biodiversity:** Gardens provide shelter and food for many species of animals and insects.

While plants respire at night and consume oxygen, their overall contribution to reducing CO₂ and producing oxygen is positive. Additionally, gardens offer numerous other environmental benefits that contribute to sustainability and improving our quality of life. Therefore, cultivating and caring for plants remains an important way to contribute to environmental protection.




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How to Educate Children in Garden Care and Sustainability

Educating children in garden care and sustainability principles is an important investment for our future. Through fun and educational activities, children can develop a love for nature, learn about the life cycle of plants, and understand the importance of protecting the environment. Here are some ideas for activities and educational programs that can inspire children to engage in gardening and sustainability.

Activities for Children

Planting Seeds and Plants

- One of the simplest and most fun activities for children is planting seeds and plants.
- **Vegetable Planting:** Children can easily plant vegetables like carrots, tomatoes, or lettuce and watch them grow.
- **Flower Planting:** Plant colorful flowers like sunflowers or daisies with children and explain the process of photosynthesis to them.

Making and Decorating Pots Creating and decorating pots is a creative activity that can inspire children.

- **Handmade Pots:** Use recycled materials like plastic bottles or tin cans to make pots.
- **Painting Pots:** Let children paint and decorate their pots with colors and designs.



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Making a Compost Bin Teach children the process of composting and how they can recycle organic waste.

- **Small Compost Bin:** Create a small compost bin in the yard or on the balcony and show children how to add fruit peels, vegetable scraps, and leaves.
- **Monitoring the Process:** Explain to children how organic waste turns into compost and how it helps plants grow.

Creating Insect Houses Insect houses can help enhance biodiversity in the garden.

- **Wooden Insect Houses:** Build small houses out of wood and fill them with leaves, tree bark, and other natural materials to attract insects.
- **Observing the Insects:** Encourage children to observe the insects that come and learn about their role in the ecosystem.



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Educational Programs

School Gardens Creating school gardens is an effective way to educate children in plant care and sustainability.

- **Gardening Lessons:** Incorporate gardening into the school curriculum with regular lessons on plant care, vegetable growing, and recycling.
- **Teamwork:** Give students the responsibility to care for the school garden, enhancing teamwork and a sense of community.

Educational Workshops and Seminars Organize educational workshops and seminars for children and parents.

- **Composting Workshops:** Teach children and parents how to create and manage a compost bin at home.
- **Recycling Seminars:** Explain the importance of recycling and show how they can recycle everyday items in their garden.
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Field Trips and Visits to Farms Field trips to farms and nurseries can offer children hands-on experience in agriculture and plant cultivation.

- **Farm Visits:** Organize visits to local farms where children can see how food is grown and participate in activities like fruit picking.
- **Educational Programs:** Collaborate with local farms to offer educational programs that include animal and plant care.

Educating children in garden care and sustainability principles is a valuable investment for the future. Through fun activities and educational programs, children can develop a deep love and understanding of nature and environmental protection. In this way, we can create a new generation that is aware and active in promoting sustainability and environmental consciousness.



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Soil is the foundation for healthy plant growth, and choosing the right type of soil is crucial for success in gardening. Different plants have different soil needs, so it's important to know which soil types are suitable for your plants. Let's explore the various types of soil and what to consider for different plant groups.

Types of Soil

1. Sandy Soil

- Characteristics: Light, drains well, and warms up quickly in the spring. However, it has a low capacity for holding water and nutrients.
- Suitable for: Plants that prefer well-drained soils, such as cacti and succulents, lavender, thyme, and rosemary.

2. Clay Soil

- Characteristics: Heavy, retains water and nutrients well but drains slowly and can become very compact.
- Suitable for: Plants that require a moist environment, such as iris, calla lilies, and gladiolus.

3. Silt Soil

- Characteristics: Smooth texture, holds moisture and nutrients well but can become dense and heavy when wet.

Suitable for: Vegetables, fruits, and flowering plants that require rich and moist soil, such as tomatoes, peppers, and carrots.

Types of Soil



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4.Chalky Soil

- Characteristics: Alkaline with a high pH, drains well but may lack nutrients due to the high lime content.
- Suitable for: Plants that prefer alkaline soils, such as lavender, lilacs, and petunias.

5.Loamy Soil

- Characteristics: Ideal for most plants as it is well-drained, rich in organic matter, and retains moisture adequately.
- Suitable for: Vegetables, fruits, flowering plants, and ornamental plants. It is the ideal soil for rhododendrons, hydrangeas, and roses.



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Plant Preferences for Soil Types

Acid-Loving Plants

- Prefer: Acidic soil (pH 4.5-6.0).
- Examples: Hydrangeas, gardenias, azaleas, camellias.
- Tips: Use special acidic plant soil or add organic materials like peat and aluminum sulfate to lower the soil's pH.

Vegetables

- Prefer: Silt or loamy soil that is rich in organic matter and well-drained.
- Examples: Tomatoes, peppers, zucchinis, carrots, lettuce.
- Tips: Add compost or manure to improve soil fertility and structure.

Succulents and Cacti

- Prefer: Sandy or well-drained soil that doesn't retain moisture.
- Examples: Aloe, echinocactus, graptopetalum.
- Tips: Use specialized cactus and succulent soil or add sand and perlite to regular soil to improve drainage.

Flowering Plants

- Prefer: Loamy or slightly sandy soil that is rich in nutrients and well-drained.
- Examples: Roses, geraniums, gerberas, chrysanthemums.
- Tips: Add organic materials like compost and use balanced fertilizers to enhance flowering.
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What to Watch For

- **Drainage:** Ensure the soil drains well to prevent root rot. Add sand or perlite to improve drainage if necessary.
- **Soil pH:** Check the soil pH and adjust it according to your plants' needs. Use aluminum sulfate to lower the pH or lime to raise it.
- **Organic Matter:** Enrich the soil with compost or manure to improve fertility and structure. This helps in better water and nutrient retention.
- **Regular Fertilization:** Use fertilizers according to your plants' needs to ensure healthy growth.
- **Watering:** Adjust watering according to the soil type and the plants' needs. Sandy soils require more frequent watering, while clay soils need less.

By selecting and caring for the right soil, you can ensure the healthy growth and vibrant flowering of your plants, enjoying a beautiful and thriving garden.



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