

Acid Loving Plants



Soil pH is a critical factor for gardening success. Some plants thrive in neutral soil while other plants prefer soil that is on the acidic side. The difference lies in the plant's ability to use nutrients present in the soil. For plants that prefer an acidic soil a critical nutrient is iron. Iron is most available in soil with a pH of around 5.5. Without iron, acid loving plants will turn yellow and suffer stunted growth.

Testing and Adjusting Soil pH

Before planting any plant it is best to know the optimum pH range that the plant will thrive in and the pH of the soil in which you will be planting. "The right plant in the right place" is always the best policy. Purchase a pH test kit or meter. This will give you a more in-depth soil analysis along with the pH. To correct soil pH it is imperative that you know the soil pH before you attempt to change it. Adding shredded pine needles, or composted oak leaves, will assist in lowering soil pH over time. A quicker fix is the addition of two materials commonly used for this purpose: aluminum sulfate or garden sulfur. Aluminum sulfate will change the soil pH instantly because the aluminum produces the acidity as soon as it dissolves in the soil. Garden

sulfur requires some time for the conversion to sulfuric acid with the aid of soil bacteria. The conversion rate is based on the fineness of the sulfur, the amount of soil moisture, soil temperature, and the presence of bacteria. Based on these factors, the conversion rate of sulfur may be very slow. It may take several months, if the conditions are not ideal, to react. Acidifiers should be worked into the soil after application to be effective. Do not apply to leaf surface or burn may result. Read and abide by manufacturer instructions when applying. Keep in mind that it takes time to alter soil pH and your soil will tend to revert to its old pH over time, necessitating repeated treatment. Attempting to change soil pH too quickly may shock and kill a plant. A good rule of thumb is to adjust no more than one point per season. Fertilizers recommended for acid loving plants do not assist in adjusting the soil pH.

Acid Loving Trees & Shrubs

Azalea	Itea
Bayberry	Leucothoe
Blueberry	Magnolia
Dogwood	Mountain Ash
Fir	Mountain Laurel
Fothergilla	Oak
Heath	Pieris
Heather	Pine
Hemlock	Rhododendron
Holly	Spruce
Hydrangea	