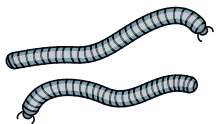


Why fertilise?

Living soil

A handful of good garden soil contains billions of tiny living organisms of a diverse range of species: bacteria, fungi and algae on the one hand, amoebae, flagellates and ciliates, tardigrades, nematodes and bristle worms on the other, not to mention earthworms, woodlice, springtails, mites and insect larvae among many others. They break down the organic substances in mulch, compost and green manure, releasing nutrients in the process.



Julida



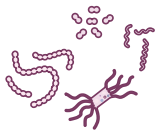
Enchytraeidae



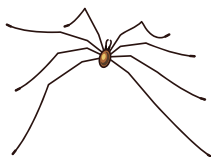
Flagellates



Glomerida



Bacteria



Harvestmen

Plants absorb these nutrients in soluble form through their roots. Although humus-rich garden soil contains sufficient nutrients, only 2% can be directly absorbed by plants. These substances are trapped in the parent rock, organic matter or mixture of clay and humus. It is living organisms that make nutrients soluble.

To preserve the soil's fertility, we need to return the nutrients that have been removed. Certain nutrients are vital for plants: when these substances are lacking, plants wither. But be aware that an excess of nutrients can be harmful to plants.



Soil improvement

Maintaining and developing soil life

Preserving biodiversity means protecting the organisms that live there and benefitting from their activity in the vegetable garden. Working the soil in an environmentally friendly way is a must. In the long term, the aim of every gardener should be to avoid digging as much as possible, by conscientiously managing compost and fertilising with green manure or mulch. This guarantees nutrient-rich soil without polluting the groundwater or harming living creatures.

Disadvantages of mineral fertilisation

Quick-acting, easily soluble synthetic mineral fertilisers are often used. These are immediately absorbed by the plant. They act quickly, but

- this effect does not take into account the plant's actual needs,
- superfluous nutrients are easily leached and have a negative impact on groundwater,
- while excessive nutrients increase plant growth, they also reduce the plant's immune defences against pests and disease.

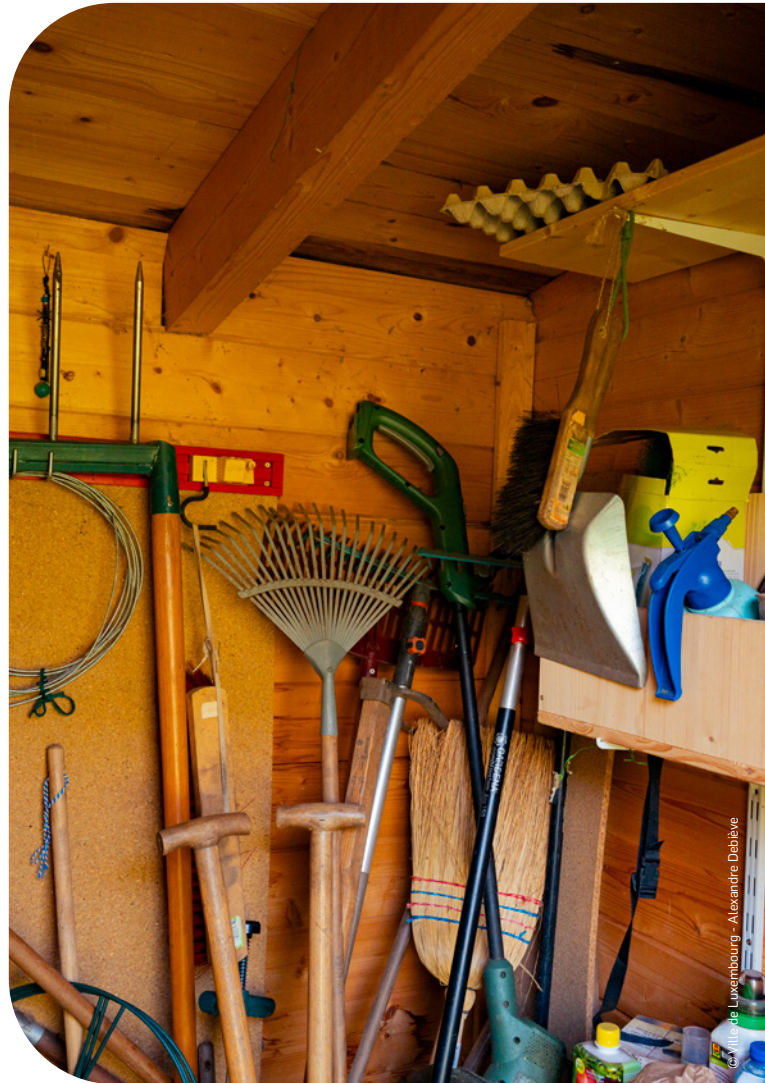
Benefits of natural soil fertilisation and maintenance

- humus-rich living soil,
- continuous fertilisation to promote plant growth,
- no need for chemicals,
- low-cost, year-round fertilisation,
- less time and effort needed to work the soil,
- habitat for a wide variety of living soil organisms.

What you can do:

- slightly loosen the soil with a one-tooth cultivator, a spade or a small hoe,
- fertilise regularly with compost,
- in very heavy clay soils, it might be necessary to hoe the soil,
- digging in autumn lightens soil weighed down by frost,
- create a new garden bed.

Composting and applying liquid or solid manure are all good eco-friendly options, but not all gardens are suited to this. Before going ahead, you must be sure that the smell of these substances and the visual appearance of their containers will not bother your neighbours. Keep this in mind when planning your garden!



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