

GARDENS/MINI-FARMS NETWORK

USA: TX, MS, FL, CA, AR, WA; México, Rep. Dominicana, Côte d'Ivoire, Nigeria, Nicaragua, Honduras, Kenya, Malawi, Mozambique, Haïti, England, India, Uzbekistan, South Africa [2011], Indonesia, Liberia [2012], Ghana [2013], minifarms@gmail.com

Workshops in organic, no-till, permanent bed gardening, mini-farming and mini-livestock farming, worldwide, in English & Español

Organic, No-till Gardening

Every gardener should garden according to these practices which are ecologically sustainable, environmentally responsible, socially just and economically viable. There is unlimited, documented proof. The gardener does not need to buy anything, from anybody, at any time except seed.

Poor, unhealthy soil is the reason for low yields. The solution to poor, unhealthy soil is organic matter.

Organic, no-till gardening in permanent beds, with permanent paths, using hand tools, takes almost no funds, increases yields 50 to 100%, reduces labor by 50 to 75%, reduces expenses to nearly 0, creates healthy soil with high fertility, stops soil compaction, rainwater runoff, soil erosion, eliminates weed, disease and insect problems.

With no-till, organic matter [green manure/cover crops or weeds or crop residue] generates the following results:

- ❖ The mulch gradually rots into the soil providing a constant supply of nutrients while eliminating composting.
- ❖ Moisture retention due to the mulch means reduced need for watering; saving both resources and labor.
- ❖ Mulch prevents weeds from growing, reducing another laborious chore.
- ❖ Because of greater nutrients, plants can be planted twice as densely as normally recommended.
- ❖ The combination of denser spacing and healthy soil means a fourfold increase in yield. Josef Graf

Howard Garrett. Dirt Doctor, has promoted organic gardening/landscaping since 1988. rodaleinstitute.org has promoted it since 1974. Roland Bunch has promoted green manure/cover crops since 1982. In Honduras it made farming profitable and stopped migration to the city. Singing Frogs Farm since 2010. Fukaoka Farm, Japan, has been no-till [rice, small grains, vegetables] since 1947 [onestrawrevolution.net]. At the time of my visit: an India gardener has been no-till for 5 years; a Malawi farmer has been no-till [vegetables] for 25 years [model garden/mini-farm]; Ghana farmer for 3 years [only one farmer knew it out of 385 members in the association], Honduras farmer has been no-till [vegetables & fruit] with permanent beds on the contour (73° slope) for 6 years; Honduras farmer farms 10 acres [corn/beans] with only a machete; Ruth Stout [read her books] had a no-till garden for 25 years and 7,000 visitors. There are organic, no-till gardeners in every country but nearly impossible to find.

No technique yet devised by mankind has been anywhere near as effective at halting soil erosion and making food production truly sustainable as no-till (Baker)

1. No garden tractor, no tiller, no sprayer, no fertilizers, no chemicals, no pesticides, no herbicides.
 2. Healthy soil produces healthy plants for high yields. Resists insects and diseases.
 3. Healthy soil is made by adding organic matter.
 4. Soil always covered: crops, cover crops, mulch.
 5. No rain water run off; all goes into the soil.
 6. Use green manure/cover crops [legumes, & non-legumes, etc] to add organic matter to the soil.
 7. Intercropping and/or crop rotation
 8. External organic matter [leaves, grass clippings, etc. Free? Use as mulch. Use old pallets for bins.
 9. Weeds; never let go to seed; cut and leave as mulch
 10. Leave all crop residue on top of the soil.
 11. **No-till: no digging, no cultivating** Destroys organic matter, etc. Worms and roots will till.
 12. Permanent beds. Used 2000 BC in Mexico & Guatemala. [3-6 ft. wide; any length] No sides?
 13. Permanent paths [covered with free tree chips? 15-20% of the garden is in paths and that saves 15-20% of the seed, labor and time. If drip irrigating, saves 15-20% of the water] Yields will be much higher.
 14. Winter: diy hoop houses, high tunnels
 15. Transplants: Start seed indoors as needed.
 16. Support for climbing plants: tomato cages, trellises. Make them using cattle & hog panels.
 17. Open-pollinated seed [no hybrids; no GMOs]
 18. **Irrigation:** Buy or diy drip lines or diy bucket drip. Request instructions.
 19. **Moscovies:** Should be in every garden. Eats bad insects, roosts in trees, needs little purchased food. Good eggs and meat.
 20. Imitate nature. Most gardeners fight nature.
¡Nature always wins!
- A. rodaleinstitute.org/20101005_birke-baehr-food-fighter-and-future-farmer
- B. blog.lochnesswatergardens.com/how-gardening-benefit/
- C. newhope360.com/trends/gmo-engineer-turns-organic-devotee-true-story
- D. craftsmanship.net/drought-fighters/
- E. growingagreenerworld.com
- F.

uniquemainefarms.com/uniquemainefarms.com/Khadighar_Farm.html

G. dirtdoctor.com

I volunteer to teach workshops, English or Spanish, when expenses are paid.

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Garden centers promote the use of chemicals, fertilizers, pesticides, GMOs, etc because it is profitable for them; not because it is best for the garden. No one profits promoting organic, no-till gardening: nothing to sell.

Thank you for all the info. I am applying it in my own vegetable patch. It is working. Got half a pocket of potatoes off a square metre. So would imagine about 10 pounds per square yard. This off previously dead low, carbon soil. Sure next crop will be better. Your advice is so simple. People do not believe me when I tell them. I am so excited about growing things now. This coming from a commercial plum farmer. Jeremy Karsen, middagkrans@mwebbiz.co.za

"We sold the tiller. The best gardening move we ever made." Andrea

VA: I'm a left-over from the original soils list, was converted then to no-till. Had our first hard frost last night, but I was prepared with the help of Coleman's "Four-Season Harvest". Our beds produce year 'round, never mono-crop, mostly volunteers. Amazingly simple. My 99 year old mother, who grew up on a Michigan farm, is still shocked at how well this works. Even with last winter's 6 feet of snow. Tom Vincent

I confirm Ken's advice. I've been using mulch and no-till since the late sixties. It works. It really works. I now manage a 5,000 ft² community garden in its fifth season. It started on hard clay with turf grass using cardboard and mulch. Leaves are added to the beds every fall and it has never been tilled. It's a beautiful, fruitful garden. I have friends who have sand and advised them to do the same. They've been very successful as well. It will work anywhere. Judith Hainaut

**If you garden this year the way you gardened last year,
this year you will have the same results you had last year.**

