



MOUNT PROSPECT SUSTAINABILITY news

FALL 2025

SOIL - UNDERGROUND BUT OVERLOOKED

As Mount Prospect residents begin to look forward to fall activities in our community and clean up their gardens, it is important to learn about the true star of planting - soil! Poor soil quality can have negative impacts on anything planted in your garden; as well as your lawn and the larger eco-system. Prepare for 2026 by learning more about your soil today.

Soil Acidity

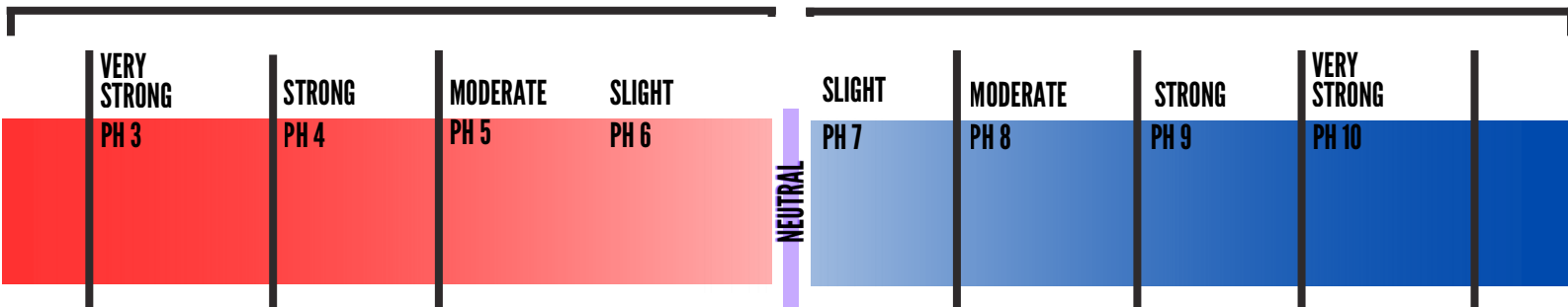
Feel like you're doing everything right, but your garden or lawn aren't looking the way you would like? Sometimes this can be a side effect of a soil having too much or too little acidity. The acidity of

soil can impact the ability of plants to absorb nutrients from the soil. Most plants prefer a slightly acidic to neutral soil, with a pH of 6 to 7, because that is the range in which all nutrients are readily available. Soil pH also affects the activity of soil micro-organisms. Bacteria that decompose organic matter are hindered in strongly acidic soils. Local microbes in the area surrounding the roots are attracted to this area by "microbial food" produced from the roots underground. Microbes then help process the nutrients that are needed by the plants. There truly is a lot going on ...

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ACIDIC SOIL

ALKALINE SOIL



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SOIL HEALTH

underground, and disturbing the process at play can have negative side effects for the health of roots, soil, and the plant!

Understanding Soil Structure

When you pull out a shovel full of dirt it may look like there's not much going on with the soil, but it's actually a very intricate structure with its own little micro-ecosystem. One of the key areas in the ecosystem is the rhizosphere, or the area directly surrounding the roots of anything planted. The area surrounding the roots is where all of the magic happens underground for plants. Most gardeners know that this area is where your plants collect the water and nutrients they need to grow into healthy plants, but it's actually a two-way street!

Biodiversity

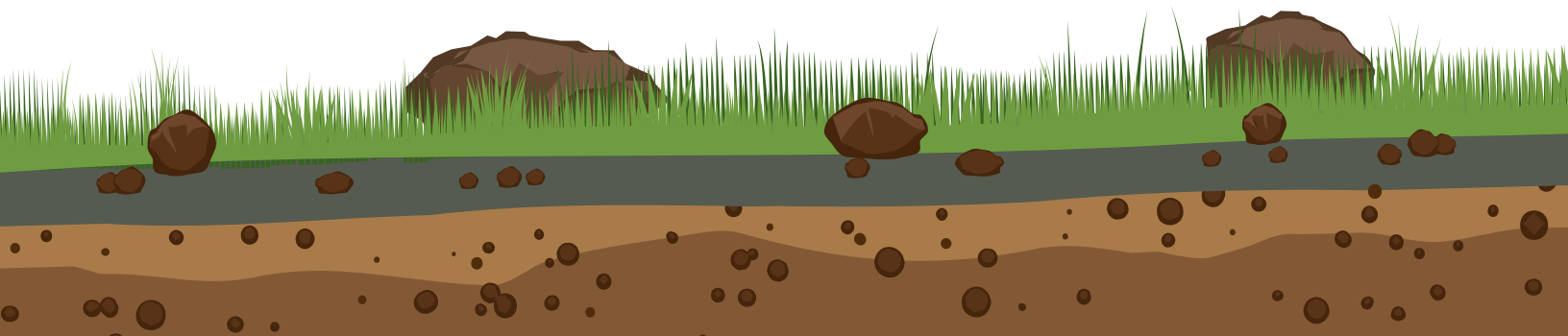
Another crucial part of maintaining the health of your soil comes down to “biodiversity,” or the concept of maintaining a diverse array of various plants in any garden space. Different plants use different levels of nutrients from the soil, too much of the same type of plant can put increased stress on specific nutrients. Depleting the resources in your soil can result in long term growing difficulties. Too much of the same type of plant can also increase the chances of negative impacts to your garden from diseases and pests.

Another Way to Address Biodiversity?

Try rotating plants yearly when possible. An effective plant rotation will allow you to maintain soil nutrients.

Can I Test my Soil?

Of course! The Illinois Extension has a list of private labs that can perform tests on your soil to help understand what's going on with your soil. They also provide instructions on how to collect soil samples and assist in interpreting your soil test results. [Visit <https://extension.illinois.edu/soil> for more information.](https://extension.illinois.edu/soil)



MOUNT PROSPECT SUSTAINABILITY

Village Launches New Sustainability Brand!

MAIN LOGO

The Village understands that protecting our environment is a top priority, and education is one of the best ways for the community to come together and tackle big issues. To help improve the ability to share information, the Village looked to a new branding tool to improve communications and outreach.

Village Sustainability efforts, information, programs, and initiatives will now be branded under the new “Green Prospect” Village Sustainability Brand. Having a recognizable brand for sustainability will

The logo for Green Prospect features the word "green" in a light green, lowercase sans-serif font, and "prospect" in a darker green, lowercase sans-serif font. A small green sprout with two leaves is positioned above the letter "p" in "prospect".

allow residents to understand when something is a trustworthy source coming from the Village and create a visually appealing brand that helps stand out from regular Village communications activities. Be on the look out for the new brand!

Look Out for the alternative logo as well!



Village Recycling: Plastic Film & Bags and Styrofoam

Two of the most common items people ask recycling questions about are plastic film and bags, and Styrofoam. To help answer these questions and make recycling easy, the Village is able to accept both of these items at specific Village facilities.

The Village offers two locations for plastic film and bag drop-off: **Recycling Center** located at the west end of the parking lot at the Public Works Facility (1700 West Central Road) and Village Hall (50 S. Emerson Street). When residents bring their unwanted plastic materials to drop-off locations, not only are they

helping to keep thousands of pounds of waste out of landfills, they are also helping create beautiful and environmentally responsible outdoor products.

All clean Styrofoam is accepted at Public Works on Tuesdays from 10am - 2pm and Thursdays from 1pm - 3pm. Please do not drop off Styrofoam outside of these hours at Public Works.

Want to learn more about special recycling in the Village? Click the link below!

[Click HERE for more recycling information!](#)

REDUCE, REUSE, AND RECYCLE

The Three Rs: More Than Just Options

Most people have probably heard the motto “Reduce, Reuse, and Recycle” at some point in their life. These are often viewed as three great tools to reduce waste and source pollution and to protect the environment.

The three Rs are placed in a very specific order - an order explaining how a consumer good should be handled. Pollution prevention, or source reduction (i.e., not using something to begin with), is the best option. Reusing is the second best option, and then recycling as a last option before standard disposal. Each one of these options has (usually) more environmental impact than the option before.

Review the following ways to help increase reducing what is used and reusing items:

Reduce

Reducing what is purchased, used, consumed, and eventually disposed of is the best way to help the environment and live a more sustainable life. The next time you are at the store, be sure to ask yourself, “do I really need this?” Do you really need that additional Halloween decoration? Do you need that shirt that you just sort of like?

The easiest way to reduce what you consume is to answer “no” to those questions. Careful planning can help people reduce their impact as well. Plan out how you want to decorate your home and get things accordingly.

Reuse

Don’t just think of reuse as the cutting off the tops of soda bottles and using them as planters! Instead, reusing is a great mindset to have when you are going through life. Always be on the hunt for items that you can reuse or use multiple times. Examples include refilling a reusable water bottle instead of taking single use plastic bottles, bringing your own bags to the grocery store, or using cloth rags instead of paper towels!

And don’t forget to ask friends, family, and neighbors about reusing their items or donating your items for someone else to use! If you are active on Facebook, check out Mount Prospect Free Group, Mount Prospect Buy Nothing, and Mount Virtual Garage Sale. People are always getting rid of old appliances or things they don’t use anymore. Check to see if anyone is getting rid of something you were going to buy!



PARTICLE POLLUTION

Air Quality Info

The Chicagoland area has experienced a variety of air pollution incidents and days with high particle pollution. With wildfires and other environmental issues increasingly more prevalent, it's important to understand what to do on days with poor air quality from air pollution and particle pollution.

A great app to see the Air Quality in your area in real time is the AirNow app from the USEPA that was invented by an EPA scientist. You can [access the AirNow app by visiting https://www.airnow.gov/](https://www.airnow.gov/)

The Illinois EPA issues daily air quality forecasts, based on the Air Quality Index

(AQI), for 14 sectors in Illinois. The AQI is a color-coded system that classifies air quality from Good (Green) to Hazardous (Maroon). Because air quality can change as a result of changing weather conditions, long-range air quality forecasts are not possible. Air quality forecasts are typically issued the afternoon prior but may be updated throughout the day if conditions warrant, similar to the weather.

The chart on the following page demonstrates the Air Quality Index, who should be concerned, and what you can do.

What is Particle Pollution?

Particle pollution comes from many different sources. Fine particles (2.5 micrometers in diameter and smaller) come from power plants, industrial processes, vehicle tailpipes, woodstoves, and wildfires. Coarse particles (between 2.5 and 10 micrometers) come from crushing and grinding operations, road dust, and some agricultural operations.

Particle pollution causes a number of



serious health problems, including coughing, wheezing, reduced lung function, asthma attacks, heart attacks and strokes. It also is linked to early death in people with heart or lung disease.

PARTICLE POLLUTION

Air Quality Index

Who Needs To Be Concerned?

What Can You Do?

**Good
(0-50)**

No worries, it's a great day to be outside!

**Moderate
(51-100)**

Some people who may be unusually sensitive to particle pollution.

Unusually sensitive people: Consider making outdoor activities shorter and less intense. Watch for symptoms such as coughing or shortness of breath. These are signs to take it easier.

Everyone else: It's a good day to be active outside.

**Unhealthy for Sensitive Groups
(101-150)**

Sensitive groups include: **people with heart or lung disease, older adults, children and teenagers, pregnant women, minority populations, and outdoor workers.**

Sensitive groups: Make outdoor activities shorter and less intense. It's OK to be active outdoors, but take more breaks. Watch for symptoms such as coughing or shortness of breath.

People with asthma: Follow your asthma action plan and keep quick relief medicine handy.

People with heart disease: Symptoms such as palpitations, shortness of breath, or unusual fatigue may indicate a serious problem. If you have any of these, contact your health care provider.

**Unhealthy
(151-200)**

Everyone

Sensitive groups: Avoid long or intense outdoor activities. Consider rescheduling or moving activities indoors.

Everyone else: Reduce long or intense activities. Take more breaks during outdoor activities.

**Very Unhealthy
(201-300)**

Everyone

Sensitive groups: Avoid all physical activity outdoors. Reschedule to a time when air quality is better or move activities indoors.

Everyone else: Avoid long or intense activities. Consider rescheduling or moving activities indoors.

**Hazardous
(301-500)**

Everyone

Everyone: Avoid all physical activity outdoors. **Sensitive groups:** Remain indoors and keep activity levels low. Follow tips for keeping particle levels low indoors.

Go Green Mount Prospect

Go Green Mount Prospect is a new start up group aimed at raising environmental awareness, inspiring people to take action, and creating a more sustainable community. Go Green's vision is for Mount Prospect to be a thriving, environmentally conscious community where sustainable living is second nature, and everyone plays a role in protecting our planet for future generations.



Look for Go Green Mount Prospect at community events throughout the Village!

Up Coming Go Green Events - Events at Cap's Ice Cream

Environmental Night at Caps

August 22, 6PM - 8PM

A fun and informative evening at Cap's with Go Green and the League of Women's Voters

Reuse & Recycle Textile Pop-op

September 20, 11AM - 1PM

A hands on creative event to discover ways to extend the life of your clothes!

Interested in getting involved with Go Green? Visit their website [HERE](#) to learn more about the organization!

How To Use Fall Leaves

Summer is wrapping up and fall leaves will soon be on our minds. The Village's fall loose-leaf collection program provides a convenient, no-cost means of disposing of leaves without having to bag them. But before raking leaves to the curb, think about how you may use them in your yard and garden.

Leaf mulch provides several benefits when applied appropriately:

- reduces weeds around the base of plants

- maintains soil moisture and temperatures
- prevents soil erosion
- adds nitrogen and organic matter back into the soil
- supports soil-dwelling organisms

Shredded leaf mulch can more quickly breakdown into organic matter.

For more information on gardening tips and techniques [visit the Chicago Botanic Garden's website.](#)

