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Planning the vegetable garden

Royal Horticultural Society

growit

Activities

What do you know about plants?

- What do plants need to grow?
- Can we provide these conditions in the garden?
- Why is it good to grow our own fruit and vegetables?
- Taste
- Nutrition
- Cost

Designing the garden

1. We need to measure the total area of the garden and work out where the sun will rise and set each day to see how much sunshine our garden will get.
2. We can draw a scale map of the garden on squared paper and discuss what kind of areas we would like in the vegetable garden – where will we put our vegetable beds and compost heap, for example?
3. Can you think of any gardens you really like and why you like them?

   What plants would you like to grow?

   Mark out proposed beds
4. Soil types and pH. Simple soil test and pH (see below)

Further work - assessing soil invertebrates

Take a sample of fresh soil, place in a sieve on top of a funnel and position a spotlight above it so that the soil dries out a bit. Any invertebrates should burrow down through the soil to get away from the light and will fall into the funnel. Then observe and identify using a magnifying glass.

Further work - testing soils

The mineral constituents of soil are sand, clay and silt. The soil's texture can be described in terms of the proportions of these components. Loam contains a mixture of all three.

We can check if the soil is acidic or alkaline using a pH test kit. (See additional pH handout for more information).

To test soil
Begin with a golf ball sized amount of soil.
Add water to soil and knead until it has a putty consistency.

See chart overleaf ▶

Simple soil test