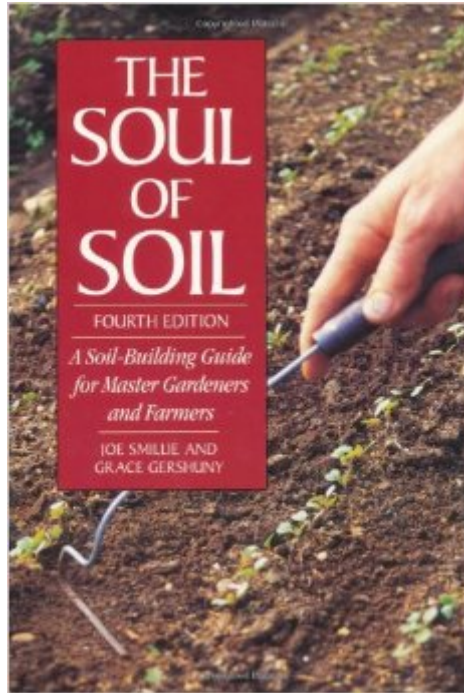


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# The Soul Of Soil: A Soil-Building Guide For Master Gardeners And Farmers, 4th Edition



## Synopsis

Soil is the basis not only for all gardening, but for all terrestrial life. No aspect of agriculture is more fundamental and important, yet we have been losing vast quantities of our finite soil resources to erosion, pollution, and development. Now back in print, this eminently sensible and wonderfully well-focused book provides essential information about one of the most significant challenges for those attempting to grow delicious organic vegetables: the creation and maintenance of healthy soil. Chapter 2, "Understanding the Soil System," is alone worth the price of admission. Gershuny and Smillie give lay readers and experts a clear explanation of subjects--soil life and nutrient cycles--that have confounded most authors. Nowhere will the reader find simpler and more coherent descriptions of key concepts including cation exchange capacity and chelation. There are other books about soil available, including Grace Gershuny's comprehensive *Start with the Soil*, and there are books that feature chapters on soil building. What distinguishes *The Soil of Soils* is the authors' concise presentation; they give readers important information, including technical essentials, without getting bogged down in scientific or quasiscientific mumbo-jumbo. In addition, useful tables list specific compost materials, green manures, and other resources that allow growers to translate into action the more general information provided by the book. The soil-building techniques featured include: Organic matter management Building and maintaining humus On-site composting Green manures and rotations Cultivation and weed control Nutrient balances and soil testing Using mineral fertilizers Planning for organic certification Updates to the 1999 edition include analysis of Proposed Rules for the National Organic Standards, and expanded recommendations for private testing services and soil-testing equipment for home gardeners and organic farmers. All of us involved in the cultivation of plants--from the backyard gardener to the largest farmer--need to help regenerate a "living soil," for only in the diversity of the soil and its creatures can we ensure the long-term health of ourselves and our environment. *The Soul of Soil* offers everyone a basic understanding of what soil is and what we can do to improve our own patch of it. Seen in this light, this practical handbook will be an inspiration as well. Â

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

I had purchased "Start with the Soil" by the same author and loved it. I thought this book would be a more advanced version but this is not the case. It was actually written before and reworked in a different format to become "Start with the Soil". This is the reason I gave it a lower rating. Although there are some differences, I would say if you are interested in a home size garden or landscape, this book is really not the better choice even though the other is no longer in print. That said, the information contained is invaluable and something anyone who loves working the soil should really understand--which ever version you end up purchasing.

This is truly a good book. It is short, simply written, and very informative. However, it is a little technical for the average Gardner. I personally picked-up this book to gain general knowledge about soil, and I found everything I asked for and more. Nevertheless, there were things that I felt were not explained enough, but that's not the fault of the author because I am neither a master gardner nor a farmer. In the begging of the book it almost seemed like the author was one of the environmentalist extremists, however as I continued reading I found the author to be a responsible writer with no extremism. As a matter of fact, on several occasions the author offered advise to non-organic farmers. Overall, a great book and coming from my non-farmer background I would give it 4 stars.

The Soul of Soil  
The Soul of Soil  
Understanding our soil is essential to successful gardening and farming, as well as to building a sustainable future for the planet. Grace Gershuny and Joe Smillie have devoted decades to unlocking the secrets of this mysterious and often maligned substance and they share their wisdom with us here. Includes descriptions of the major soil types, nutrient cycles and physical properties of soil, as well as lessons on composting and cover cropping. This book gives us the tools we need to understand the complex interactions that take place below our feet as we work to turn the tide against the erosion, pollution and outright destruction of our precious

earth.

The book is written for the farmer, but I found it very helpful for a budding horticulturalist. There are some very handy charts, especially the one that described how to determine the soil fertility based on what weeds were growing in the soil! There are plenty of recommendations for adding organic matter to the soil, and how to treat soil so that it will be the best environment for planting.

I am a farmer. I utilized this book a great deal this past growing season, from quoting a beautiful explanation of what sustainable agriculture is, understanding compost application rates, reading the health of a field by the weeds present, to the instructions for on-farm compost making. There are also a number of great tables contained in this book, which I'm sure I will reference time and time again. The language is clear, not too technical for a generalist to understand, yet with enough information to be worth the time reading. While I couldn't recommend this for someone on their first foray into gardening, I feel that it is a must read for any aspiring farmer.

If you are a home gardener who wants to make your backyard attractive, skip this book, but if you are serious about growing things and understanding ecological principles, this is a great resource.

This book is a good primer that introduces basic soil biology and chemistry. I would have liked to have been shown clear examples of the application of the principles outlined in the book as it relates to an actual operation complete with a standard soil analysis.

When the DVD "Symphony of the Soil" is released in Autumn 2012, this is the book you need to fully appreciate the DVD and better understand soils. This book is designed for the layperson, yet contains a robust amount of current knowledge and understanding of soils without being overwhelming. A nice handy reference.

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