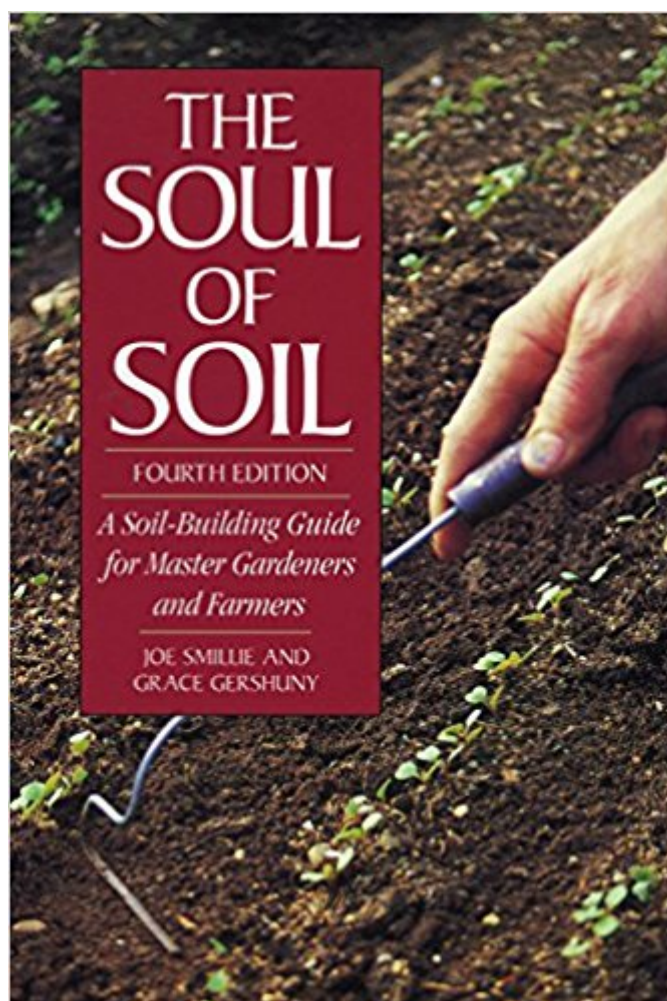


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# The Soul Of Soil: A Soil-Building Guide For Master Gardeners And Farmers, 4th Edition



## 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

Joe Smillie is the senior vice-president of Quality Assurance International, a leading organic certification agency. He is co-author of the books *The Orchard Almanac* and Rodale's *Chemical-Free Yard & Garden*, and is a founding member of the Organic Trade Association, and the International Inspectors Group. He lives in Richmond, Vermont. Grace Gershuny, in addition to her position on the staff of the U.S. Department of Agriculture's National Organic Program, has worked for many years as an educator, organizer, and market gardener. She is nationally known in the alternative agriculture movement, is the author of *Start With the Soil, and Compost, Vermicompost and Compost Tea: Feeding the Soil on the Organic Farm* as well as co-author of *The Rodale Book of Composting* and *The Soul of Soil*. She is on the faculties of the Institute for Social Ecology and Goddard College, and lives in Barnet, Vermont.

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.

The author does an amazing job balancing the technical with the practical. He does discuss some very technical aspects of soil science but does it in such a way that you never once think your sitting in a chemistry class. For the average gardener, this will probably be as technical as you'll ever want to get. If you are a budding soil scientist, this book will provide a gentle introduction to the topic that will prepare you for more advanced study. A truly multifaceted treatise on the art and science of soil

building and maintenance.

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.

Despite the title, this is one of the best organic foundation books I have read. You grow the soil, and the soil grows the plants. Scientifically based, but written in clear understandable language, this book goes over the basics of how to enrich your soil immediately or over years, using cover cropping, composting and other simple methods. Don't just read it - try it out. You have nothing to lose.

This is a must read for the serious environmentally conscious gardener and farmer alike. Tons of practical knowledge you can put to use the next time you step onto the planting grounds as well as the scientific results to back it up!

Great product at a great price. Soil from the perspective of the large farm. Useful also when evaluating your own lawn and garden. A great reference book to show off to your friends.

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.

Very good, but very technical. Not a pleasure read, but great for reading with a purpose. Lots of scientific terminology

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