

# Beth Young

G A R D E N D E S I G N

XXXXX Residence  
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## Soil Specifications

Soil has three main characteristics:

- Texture of the soil is important because if it is too clayey, silty or sandy, plants will not absorb all of the nutrients available in the soil, and water will percolate too quickly or slowly through the soil, stressing the roots.
- pH also affects soil fertility. A too-high pH (alkaline), or a too-low pH (acidic) will prevent nutrients from getting to the plant's roots.
- Nutrients (fertilizer) in the soil will foster healthy plant growth.

Ideally, soil will have a loamy texture with moderate pH (around 6.5-7), and all the major and trace nutrients available.

### Soil Test Results

*Note: soil test results for front and back yards were very similar, so soil recommendations are the same.*

|            | <u>You Have</u>  | <u>To Improve</u>  |
|------------|--|--|
| Texture:   | clay loam  | Add organic materials periodically   |
| pH:        | 5.9 (acidic)   | Add lime (also, plants that tolerate acidic soils have been specified)   |
| Nutrients: | low on nitrogen (N)<br>low on phosphorus (P)<br>low on calcium (S) | Add nitrogen annually<br>Nothing (adding lime will make P available)<br>Nothing (adding calcitic limestone as the lime source will also provide calcium) |

### Soil Recommendations

These recommendations are for prior to installing plants; see Garden Maintenance Checklist for ongoing soil management.

1. Texture. *This is optional because your texture is pretty good as it is.*

To improve texture to the planting beds, adding organic material in early spring is especially beneficial because it improves the texture as well as adds nutrients to the roots at the right time. See Garden Maintenance Checklist for ongoing soil management.

2. pH

Add calcitic limestone (lime) to the new lawn and surrounding planting beds in early spring at a rate of 8-9 lbs. per 100 sq. ft. Wait several years, then test the soil pH to see if more lime is needed (if pH is less than 6.5, another application of lime is needed). pH testers are available at nurseries. Note: Do not add lime around rhododendrons, azaleas, camellias, heathers or blueberries!

3. Nutrients

- a. Lawn: Apply a general lawn fertilizer. A good choice of fertilizer would be a 3-1-2 ratio, such as 21-7-14, 15-5-10 or 14-4-8. Apply at a rate of 1 lb. nitrogen per 1,000 sq. ft. (see Handy Fertilizer Formulas for help on calculating application amounts). If installing lawn in mid-winter, wait until April to fertilize.
- b. Planting Beds: apply 3.5 lbs. per 100 sq. ft. of 5-10-5 and 5 lbs. per 100 sq. ft. of 0-46-0. If fertilizers with the ratios shown are not available, contact your local garden center for the appropriate substitution.