



CULTIVATING A SAFE PLACE TO GROW



Soil pH Basics

Purpose

This fact sheet provides a simple overview of soil pH and why it matters for healthy plant growth in home, community, and therapeutic garden settings.

What Is Soil pH?

Soil pH describes how acidic or alkaline the soil is.

It is measured on a scale from 0 to 14:

Acidic soil: below 7

Neutral soil: around 7

Alkaline soil: above 7

Most garden plants grow best in slightly acidic to neutral soil.

Why Soil pH Matters

Soil pH affects how easily plants can absorb nutrients.

If the pH is too high or too low, nutrients may be present in the soil but unavailable to plants.

- Healthy soil pH supports:

- Strong root development
- Better growth and flowering
- Reduced plant stress
- Improved garden success

Signs Soil pH May Be an Issue

You may notice:

- Poor growth despite watering and care
- Yellowing leaves
- Weak or stunted plants
- Plants are struggling even in good conditions

These signs can have many causes, but soil pH is one factor worth checking.

Simple Ways to Check Soil pH

- Home soil pH test kits
- Soil testing services
- Observation over time alongside plant performance

In therapeutic settings, soil testing can also be a gentle learning activity.

General pH Preferences (Guide Only)

Vegetables: slightly acidic to neutral

Herbs: mostly neutral

Native plants: often tolerate a wider range

Always consider local conditions and plant needs.

Practice Notes

Soil pH does not need to be perfect.

Healthy gardens are built gradually through observation, care, and patience.

In therapeutic horticulture, learning about soil pH can support:

- problem-solving
- curiosity
- understanding cause and effect

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