

# Soak it In ▀

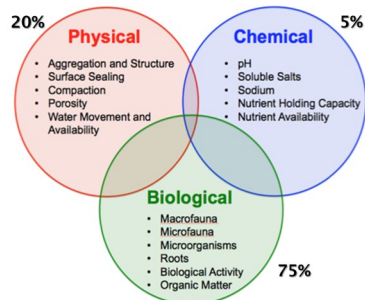
## Soil Amendments

Whether it's lawn care or gardening, organic soil amendments will increase your soil's health and water retaining ability. Each 1% increase in organic matter helps soil hold 20,000 gallons more water per acre . That's 20,000 gallons **not flowing** into Lake Erie.

Soil is alive! The living systems occurring above and below the ground's surface are determined by the property of the soil.



Soil is often ignored because it is hard to observe but it plays a crucial role in a plant's health and improving the quality of our shared waters. The majority of our soil is altered and compacted meaning water cannot soak in. Adding organic soil amendments helps increase the health of our soil including infiltration of rain water and snow melt.



Organic matter, often lacking in our urban soils, is crucial to soil's health. Most soil tests are for chemical properties but that only makes up 5% of the story. Biological indicators are 75% of the soil health picture.

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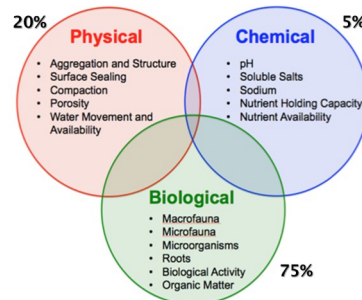
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Slow it Down Spread it Out, Soak it In  
#lakeeriestartshere

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## Organic soil amendments can be lumped into four broad categories.

**Fertilizers** - organic fertilizers release nutrients slowly over the course of a growing season when compared to their conventional highly soluble counterparts. They add organic matter to the soil and are typically made from by products of industry. Popular organic fertilizers include blood meal, kelp meal, feather meal, cottonseed meal, bone meal, and composted chicken manure.



Blood meal

**Minerals** - typically crushed rock pellets, dust, or sand-sized gravel. Minerals release nutrients very slowly over the course of years and are not prone to run-off. Common minerals include lime, sulfur, rock phosphate, azomite, greensand, and humates. Greensand can hold a third of its weight in water; whereas, humates can hold seven times their weight in water.



Greensand

**Compost** - is decayed organic material. In general, compost is what people think of when the term "organic matter" is used. Compost is a source of both nutrients and microorganisms.



Leaf humus

**Mulch** - is a protective layer added to the top of soil. It reduces soil erosion, retains water, and slowly feeds nutrients to the soil as it breaks down. Mulches include shredded bark, woodchips, straw, and pine needles.

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