

My Gardening Practices

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Outline

- General Philosophy
- Garden bed preparation
- Soil remediation
- Pest control
- Weed control
- Tools

Personal Philosophy

- Vegetables are cheap at the store. So why go to the trouble of growing these at 10x the equivalent cost (in time)?
- Control ripeness and freshness; interesting plants
- Understand what ancestors went through
- Learn about nature
- Develop and fine-tune labor-saving devices or ideas, for fun
- Spending as little money as possible, but have to balance labor with cost of a convenience
- Exercise
- At ANL, attempt to do this without poisons, which increases the challenge, but helps you learn even more about nature



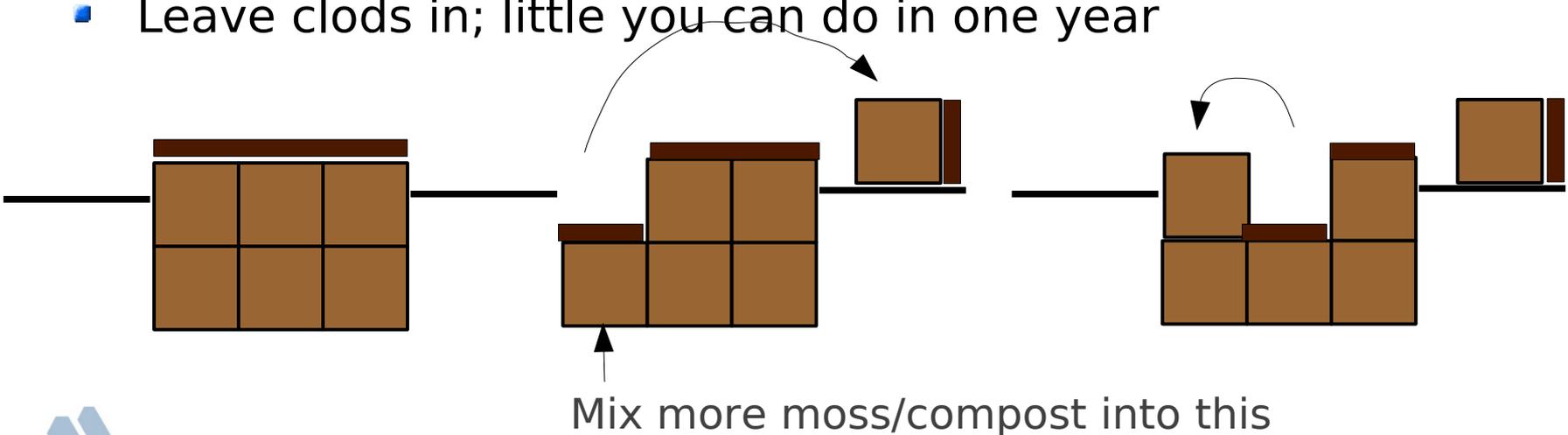
How to prepare the bed

- Dig a defined trench around your plot
 - prevent grasses from leaping over
 - Drainage from our yearly “100-year rains”
- Make beds narrow enough to reach over for weeding
- If not, then use board for walking in bed
- Don't pack the soil. Let watering settle the soil.
- Use square shovel, or rounded shovel; to me it doesn't matter



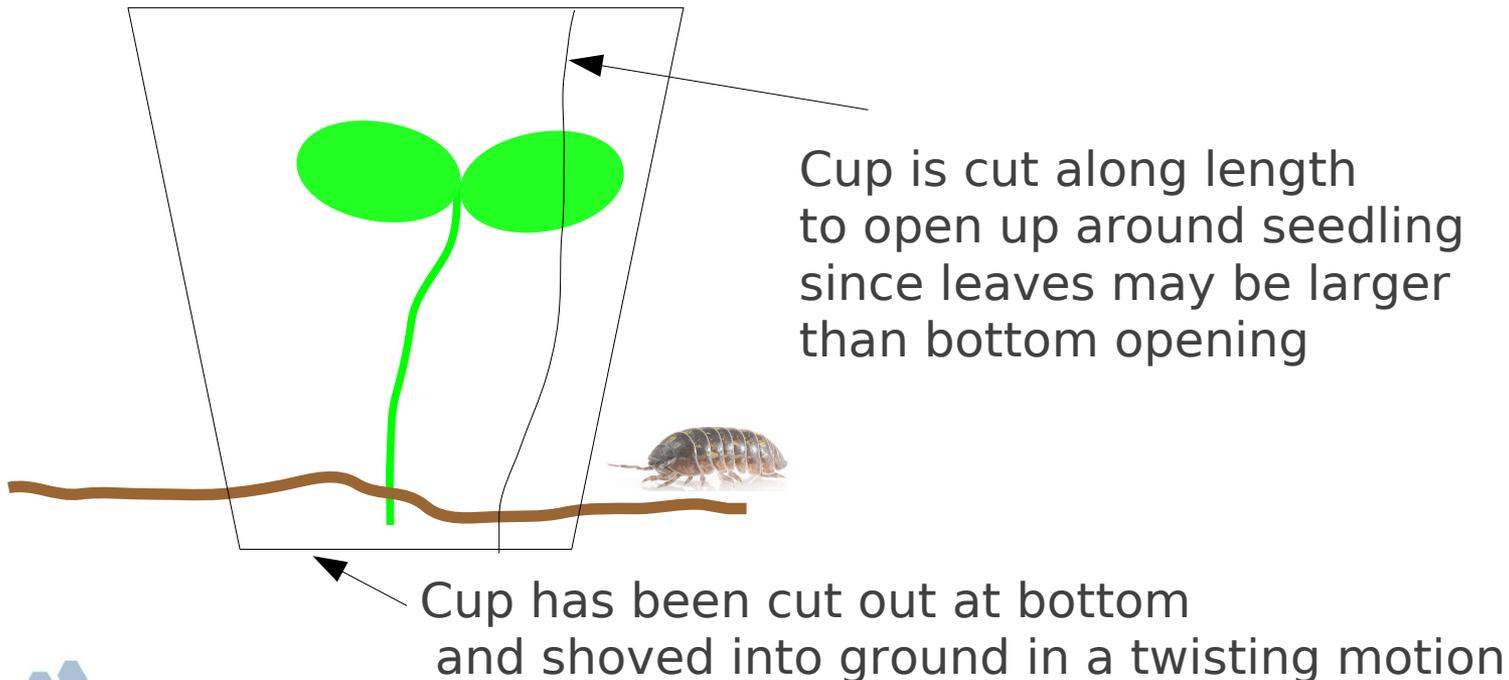
Soil Amendment

- Peat Moss (buy at store)
 - Easily transported
 - 1 cu. yd for 100 square feet covers 3 inches
- Compost
 - By all means if you have made some
- Mix into soil to depth of (whatever you can handle)
 - 12 inches for me, or let MFS rototill it
- In garden at home, I “double” dig because soil is not that heavy
- Leave clods in; little you can do in one year



Pest Control for Seedling

- Squish bugs by hand. Juices does not penetrate skin, I think.
- Put cut-up plastic (this year it will be paper) cups around each seedling
 - Successful on all seedling at ANL I had over the last two years



Pest Control for Seedlings

- <http://forums.gardenweb.com/forums/load/ipm/msg0902382625110.html> mentions borrowing chickens.
- I actually had chickens in my 20s (shared in a co-operative) and they completely clean the bugs that they can reach.
- I never tried home-made pesticides



Weed Control

- Lesson learned: Apply fertilizer as close to the plant as possible, or when the plant is bigger than weeds, otherwise the weeds will take over.
- Lesson learned: make sure so-called landscape fabric is very opaque. May have to double up on the cheaper ones.
- Hoe is used to remove weeds when not using fabric. Use when weeds are small. Need to hoe once a week, I would say.
- Vines are difficult to hoe around. Probably need an opaque fabric. However the roots of branches will have hard time to get into the soil.

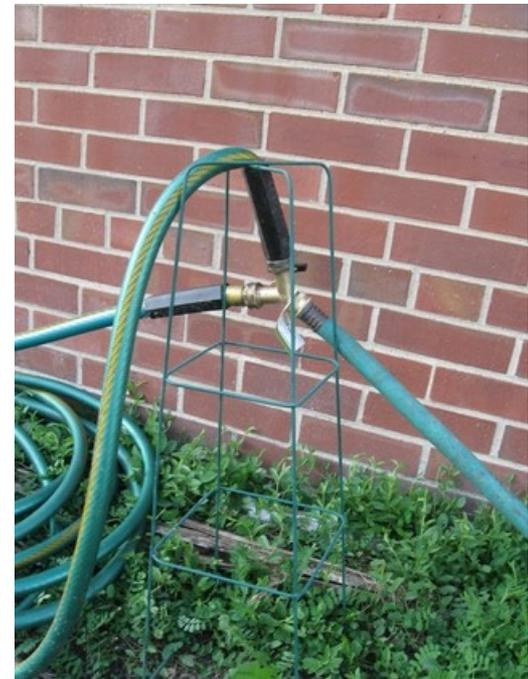


Examples of Pest and Weed Control



Hose management that I observed

- Elevate hose switch so that you can find it
- Hose guide so that hoses don't sweep across beds
- Cheap hose stand (not shown)
- Note that water supply can only handle one hose running at a time



Tool description and function

- Square shovel
- Round-point shovel
- Spading fork (I brought just a regular fork) for heavy soils.
My spading fork broke under stress
- Hoe
- Garden trowel
- File (show how to file)