Grow Good Soil
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If you want a great garden, you need great soil. Think about growing soil, not just plants.

**Build your soil.** No matter what kind of soil you have, the solution is simple. To make it better for plants, add organic matter or compost. Feed the billions of tiny beneficial organisms by recycling organic waste back into the garden as mulch. Use cover crops to protect soil from compaction and erosion during our rainy winters. Then chop them into spring soil to add organic matter.

**Pile it high!** Let time and nature do the work. Gather leaves, pile them on a tarp and use a pitchfork and garden hose to get them wet. Think *giant Caesar salad*. Pile, moisten leaves on your garden beds and anchor them with burlap sacks or floating row cover.

**Put greens to work.** It’s not too late to sow cover crops in empty garden beds. Hardy winter covers such as fava beans, wheat, oats, barley and crimson clover can be sown through October. Broadcast them evenly across the garden bed and chop them in with a steel rake. Cover beds with floating row cover until seeds have germinated to keep hungry birds and squirrels from harvesting your seeds. Water and weed as you would any seed bed.