

the rate of 4-8 oz a square yard (110-220 g per 0.83m²). It is worth keeping chickens, if you have a wood stove, to get the fertilizer.

Table 6: POULTRY MANURE, BEFORE AND AFTER MIXING WITH WOOD ASH

	Fresh droppings %	Wood ash treated %
Moisture	72.00	16.70
Organic matter	20.00	89.85
Nitrogen	1.66	0.90
Phosphorus	0.91	1.50
Potash	0.48	2.12

Organic fertilizers

Though there is a slowly released source of phosphorus in rock phosphate, which is fossilized dead fish from dried-up seabeds mainly in North Africa, and Gafsa rock phosphate is bought in quantities by organic farmers, no gardeners have any need to use it, because fine bonemeal is easy to buy and offers both phosphorus and nitrogen. There are a number of organic fertilizers of this type which are relatively expensive, including dried blood, which pro-

vides the tonic effect of quickly released nitrogen, for a crop that has hung about too long; hoof and horn meal, offering slowly released nitrogen; and blood, fish and bonemeal, which is, today, material from slaughter houses and fish-finger factories, that cannot go into cattle cake. The quantities to use will be quoted in the month-by-month chapters, but gardeners really need them less often than they may think they do. Table 7 gives details of the chemical comparison between these fertilizers.

Table 7: AVERAGE ANALYSIS OF ORGANIC FERTILIZERS

	Moisture (per cent)	Nitrogen (per cent)	Phosphorus (per cent)	Potash (per cent)
Dried blood	—	9-13	0.8	—
Hoof and horn meal	—	6.5-13.2	0.1-0.2	—
Bonemeal	0.2-14	0.3-4.6	14.1-33.2	—
Bone and meatmeal	6.0	3.9-12.3	0.9-19.0	—
Fish meal	—	6.3-8.9	6.0-8.9	—
Seaweed meal	—	2.80	0.22	2.29

Seaweed is an excellent tomato fertilizer as it holds more potash than phosphorus. There are many liquid seaweed preparations for use as 'foliar feeds', for plants feed not only through their

roots, but their leaves as well. This was discovered during World War II, when our blockade prevented the French importing copper sulphate for spraying their vines, so they used copper nitrate

Month - By - Month
Organic Gardening
The Green Gardener's Calendar
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bare ground in the autumn and let the worms take it under as a supplement to nature's lawn food, which is wormcasts.

Wood ashes

Wood ashes are used by most organic gardeners, but the potash here, which is mainly potassium carbonate, washes out just as badly as chemical sources from the sandy soils that need it. They vary widely from 37 per cent potash for lime-tree branch ashes to 8 per cent for oak and birch, but they are also rich in calcium, with spruce up to 60 per cent and elm down to 17 per cent, so their best use is scattered, in place of lime, on compost-material layers, where there will be some complex chemical reactions, one of which produced the salt-petre (potassium nitrate) that made the first gunpowder for the Chinese in 350 BC. Do not try to use up the ashes from a wood-burning stove with extra thick layers in the compost heap, or you will unbalance it chemically. Spread your ashes on the floor of the poultry house under the perches, and they will dry out the droppings until these can be swept rather than scraped out, with a real saving in trouble, time and smell. There is a chemical reaction between the alkaline potassium carbonate, and the acid ammonium carbonate of the poultry manure, and the result is as shown in Table 6. The potassium is converted to a less readily available form, and the result is a far better balanced manure than anything else from the poultry shed. Keep the grey-brown powder in a dry place, and use it as a good general organic fertilizer at

properties of clay that gardeners y heave up the heavy forkfulls um in the faint hope that make easier digging, are too o describe, though a model of s looks like an explosion in a ll factory. It can be demons-tiring some of your stickiest two glasses of water. Stir a l of gypsum into one and ther without. If you wait and will see all the suspended clay o small crumbs and falls to 3, leaving clear water, while without gypsum stays as ver. Adding the dolomite, as helping the action of the breaking up the clay. l 2 oz a square yard (400 g 2) and hoe it into your clay in spring or both, with the on showing a real change in of the soil. It will not be the effect can be watched as our changes and the puddles e vegetable rows vanish as ets away again. The mixture itute for humus, but the air e roots and the soil bacteria , making plant foods already available to the plants and bonus in fertility, turning into soils to be appreciated hated. Regular dressings of