

# ASK THE LANDSCAPE PROFESSIONAL

## Welcome

### To my Weekly Series

Feel free to send me questions you'd like to have me answer and I will do my best to address the ones of most general interest. Email or mail your questions to:

[info@sprigsandtwigs.net](mailto:info@sprigsandtwigs.net) or Linda Lillie,  
Sprigs & Twigs Inc, PO Box 245, Gales  
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### Question this Week:

Dear Linda - I have several vegetable boxes that are now cleaned up from the summer veggies we grew - mainly tomatoes. Being a relative greenhorn in terms of vegetable gardening I was wondering what, if any, tips you have with regard to winter protection for the soil. This year despite new soil and fertilizer being added at the beginning of the growing season, the outcome was not quite as good as the previous year. I am wonder if I could do to protect and improve the soil. Should I feed the soil some type fertilizer or just wait till spring. Should I cover the boxes? Appreciate any advice you may offer... Michael



## Linda's Answer:

Dear Michael - No need to put fertilizer in the boxes now. Wait until spring. I would take some of the leaves from your trees, shred them with your lawn mower and incorporate them into the soil. Dig deeply and mix them in well. Put as much of the leaf litter as you can into the soil. The leaves will decompose over the winter and add organic matter to the soil that helps create air spaces for the roots of the plants. The decomposing leaves also add valuable microbes to the soil.

In spring, add some compost and/or composted manure to your bed. It's all about getting those valuable microorganisms (fungi, bacteria, etc.) into the soil. The soil organisms eat the soil and "poop" out fertilizer for the plants to take up and grow.

No need to cover the boxes over the winter. It's important that rain water get into the boxes to help with the breakdown process. After mixing leaves into soil, then put a thick covering of shredded leaves on the surface of soil to keep the soil insulated. In the spring, mix those surface leaves into the soil.

Throughout next year's growing season, you can continue to incorporate more compost into your boxes which add more organic matter and microbes. Good luck and thank you for your question.