

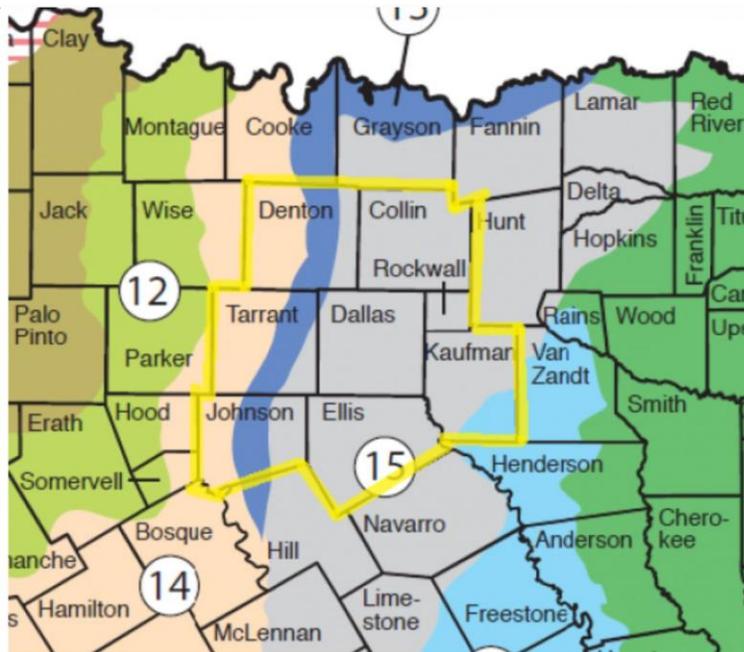
Improving Soils

Note from Dinah: This was a much narrower topic than the other four GGC Forum discussion topics. Therefore, I am going to use a different format to share your good ideas. In reality, the process of improving soils often takes years if not decades. There is no "quick fix" in spite of what we would love to believe. A few ideas are not research-based, but were suggested by your GGC friends. So I am including them.

Soil type should be only one of the three most important considerations when choosing what to plant in your landscape. (The other two are sun/shade and watering requirements.)

The map below shows the types of soil in the D/FW area (according to Soils Alive. <https://soilsalive.com/north-texas-soil-types-d1/>)

What do all of these soil types have in common?
They are mostly alkaline meaning they sit above 7 on the pH scale.



If you look at DFW highlighted in yellow, you will see that North Texas alone houses 3 different soil regions. The bulk of our Metroplex is in the grey colored area which is the Blackland Prairie. This area is made up of dark black to light grey clays. The dark blue area is called the Eastern Cross Timbers and it houses mostly sandy loam soil. Then, off the western border you've got the Grand Prairie which is a mix of clays, limestones, and some silty loams.

One of the first things many gardeners do is to send a soil sample to Texas A&M. Follow the instructions at <http://soiltesting.tamu.edu/>. If your soil test confirms that your soil is alkaline, our recommendation is to use plants that are happy in alkaline soils. In other words, unless you want to use "heroic" soil amendments, don't plant azaleas, camelias, hydrangeas or other acid-loving plants.

<u>TYPE OF SOIL</u>	<u>TECHNIQUES</u>	<u>AMENDMENTS</u>
Sandy soil	Use mulching mower to leave clippings on the grass.	Compost, leaves, mulch
		Back to Earth brand
		Marshall Grain brand compost
Clay soil	Add crushed leaves and other organic material. Use mulching mower to leave clippings on the grass.	Compost, ground up leaves, mulch, expanded shale, gypsum, crushed lava sand, scoria (a form of light pumice)
Alkaline soil	If you want to add plants to your landscape that need acid soils (such as azaleas, camelias, hydrangas, loropetalum), use amendments to acidify soils. This is a temporary "fix". These amendments need to be repeated if your plants begin to look unhappy!	Acidify soil with coffee grounds, cottonseed meal, pine bark, ground up oak leaves NOTE: cottonseed meal is "cheap" at Grapevine Feed Store (Master Made)
		Dr. Iron