

# HOW TO MANAGE A SANDY SOIL.

People with sandy soil know how difficult it is to grow in, water runs through quickly and it lacks nutrients for your plants to grow well. Sandy soil mostly consists of fine particles of weathered rocks such as Lime, Granite and Quartz, but very little organic material. It is an ongoing process to manage sandy soil but one that can yield great results.

## How do you know you have sandy soil

- A simple test is to grab a small handful of your soil and wet it and try and roll it into a ball. If it is sand it will be difficult to do and will fall apart while trying to roll into a ball.



## How to fix sandy soil

The simplest way to fix sandy soil is to add organic material such as compost [Intelligro Bio-gro organic compost](#). Sandy soil has very little organic material in it, allowing water and nutrients to flow through.

- Add a layer of between 5-6 cm of compost on top of the soil and work into about 10 to 15cm. The beauty of sandy soil is that it is easy to incorporate compost into it due to its loose nature.
- Compost can breakdown very quickly in sandy soil so adding small amounts of coarser material such as straw, fine bark or leaves can slow that down. They also help with retaining water and nutrients.
- Add a slow release fertiliser to the soil as adding un-composted materials can temporarily reduce nitrogen in your soil. The first sign of this is when your plants start to turn yellow.

## Long term management of sandy soils

Improving a sandy soil is an ongoing project, it will require a continuous supply of Organic material each year. This will improve the soil over time, however it has to be done regularly to see the benefits. Add organic material several weeks before planting, at let it work on improving the soil.

## Tips

- Grow a cover crop in your garden if not planting over winter. This adds valuable nutrients as well as adding to the structure of your soil. See our [Cover Crops How to guide](#) at [igro.co.nz](http://igro.co.nz)
- Add a mulch over the top when you plant into your soil, this will help retain moisture in the soil.