

# Healthy Soils, Healthy Communities

Science-based information about soil contaminants and healthy gardening practices

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## Healthy Gardening

Our project aims to help people make more informed decisions about healthy gardening practices and other steps to minimize the impacts of soil contaminants on their families and communities.

If you have tested your soil, [Understanding Results](#) can help you figure out how your levels of lead or other chemicals compare to background levels and health-based guidance values.

Even if you have not tested your soil, healthy gardening practices are still helpful. Taking steps to reduce contact with soil contaminants is especially important if you know or suspect that your soil may be contaminated (see [Sources and Types of Contaminants](#)).

The resources below will help you find the right strategies for your situation. See also our [FAQs](#) for additional help, and our [Compost](#) section for more information about the role of compost in sustainability and healthy gardening.

[“What Gardeners Can Do: 10 Best Practices for Healthy Gardening”](#) Short overview of steps you can take to avoid contact with contaminants and improve your soil. English and Spanish versions, 1-2pg (PDF), updated June 2014.

[“Metals in Urban Garden Soils.”](#) Information about metals commonly found in urban garden soils, including sources, behavior in garden soil, concerns about human and plant health, what gardeners can do, and related topics. 9 pg (PDF), March 2015.

New York State Department of Health [Healthy Gardening](#) page and “Tips for New and Experienced Gardeners, available in [English](#) and [Spanish](#). 2pg (PDF).

[“Understanding Your Test Results: Metals in Garden Soils and Vegetables.”](#) Recommendations taken from project results shared with gardeners, 6pg (PDF), updated December 2012

Cornell Waste Management Institute’s fact sheet [“Soil Contaminants and Best Practices for Gardens,”](#) 4pg (PDF), updated October 2009.

**Concerned about your chickens? Check out these resources too.**

[“What Gardeners Can Do: Tips for Urban Chicken Keepers”](#) Short overview of key strategies to help keep lead and other contaminants out of your backyard chicken eggs. English and Spanish versions, 2pg, (PDF), updated July 2013.

[“Understanding Your Test Results: Lead in Chicken Run Soils and Chicken Eggs.”](#) Recommendations taken from project results shared with gardeners, 6pg (PDF), updated October 2012.

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