

### River Sand:Allatoona Dredge Soil

**pH:** 5.8

**Characteristics:** Low Nutrients, can improve drainage if heavily mixed in native clay (50%volume), low water holding capacity, low nutrient holding capacity

**Use:** Filling holes and ruts.... Possibly for diluting native soils if certain nutrients are too high, like calcium for blueberries

**Cost:** Free with weeds seeds, but the trip to the chiropractor will cost you.

### Peat Moss

**pH:** 3.5-4.5 Acidic

**Characteristics:** Low Nutrients, High Water holding Capacity, High Nutrient Holding Capacity

**Use:** Seed Starting Mix: 1/3 volume, Potting Mix: 1/3, or less volume. Amending soil for Blueberries, camellias and other acid loving plants

**Cost:** \$12.00-3.8 cubic foot bale

### Worm Castings

**pH:** 6.8

**Characteristics:** High Nutrients in slow release form: 1-2% NPK, magnesium and calcium, beneficial microbes, high water holding capacity

**Use:** Seed Starting Mix: 15-20%, Potting Mix: 15-20% volume. Too expensive or valuable to use widely in lawn/garden

**Cost:** \$1-2 per pound. Or free if you make it!

### Mushroom Compost

**pH:** 5.5

**Characteristics:** Soil Amendment, not a reasonable source of nutrients. Can improve drainage, reduce compaction if mixed in native clay (25%volume), high water holding capacity

**Use:** Amending native soil prior to planting landscape beds, turf seed or sod, potting mixes 1/3 volume

**Cost:** \$4-1 cu. Ft bag, or \$35-45 cu. Yard bulk price

### Kitchen Scrap Compost

**pH:** 6.3

**Characteristics:** Soil Amendment, low level of nutrients (less than 1.5% by weight) that are slow release. Can improve drainage, reduce compaction if mixed in native clay (25%volume), high water holding capacity

**Use:** Amending native soil prior to planting landscape beds, turf seed or sod, potting mixes 1/3 volume

**Cost:** Free if you make your own! Harder to find strictly food waste compost.

### Coffee Grounds

**pH:** 6.1 Not that acidic!!

**Characteristics:** Soil Amendment, contains almost 2% Nitrogen by weight in slow release form. Great source of Carbon, very low nutrients

**Use:** Addition to compost-20:1 Carbon:Nitrogen ratio, incorporated around base of perennials, adding to wood mulch around trees and shrubs. Do not use as only source of mulch, fine particles will bind together and inhibit air and water movement

**Cost:** Free!

## Soil Amendments for Gardeners in Cherokee

Soil amendments are one of the best ways to improve the soil conditions in our native clay. Some materials may be better in certain situations. Use this a reference in making those decisions and remember to test your soil!



**UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA**  
**EXTENSION**

### **Cherokee County Extension**

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<b>Soil Conditioner-Aged Pine Bark</b>
<b>pH:</b> 4-5
<b>Characteristics:</b> increases air porosity, lightens soils, reduces compaction, increases water absorption
<b>Use:</b> Incorporation into landscape beds prior to planting, use 4-15lbs of dolomitic limestone per cubic yard to raise pH. 2-3" tilled 8-12" is recommended. Also used in potting mixes for perennials, shrubs and trees.
<b>Cost:</b> \$3/1.5 cu ft bag.

<b>Wood Ashes</b>
<b>pH:</b> 9-13.5 Highly Variable!
<b>Characteristics:</b> Alternative to Limestone for pH adjustments, Calcium is most abundant element in ash. Good source of P, K and Mg-fertilizer equivalent to (0-1-3) also good source of many micronutrients for plant growth.
<b>Use:</b> Lime equivalent can vary between 25 to 60 percent. Use sparingly or over large areas, test soil yearly to avoid over application. Addition of moisture prior to application is recommended. Do not apply near wells, bodies of water, or areas prone to runoff
<b>Cost:</b> Free or low cost unless you put down too much.

<b>Horse Manure-Aged</b>
<b>pH:</b> 6.4
<b>Characteristics:</b> Generally low nutrient levels compared to other manure sources, less than 1% by weight. Good soil conditioner to increase soil organic matter, lightens heavy clay.
<b>Use:</b> Be cautious! Soluble salts may be high which can inhibit plant growth. Residual herbicide from the forage source may be present. Weed seeds may also be introduced. If using around vegetables it is recommended to wait 120 days till harvest for low growing and root crops or 90 days for others. Know your source, and compost first if possible compost it yourself.
<b>Cost:</b> Free or relatively cheap.

<b>Cherokee County Native Soil</b>
<b>pH:</b> 5-5.9
<b>Characteristics:</b> Structurally-heavy clay. Poor drainage. Good water holding capacity. Good nutrient holding capacity, with a little work, makes a Very good soil. High in calcium
<b>Use:</b> Amend with 25% compost or soil conditioner. Many times it is good to mix native soil back in raised bed situations for water and nutrient holding capabilities.
<b>Cost:</b> Free or relatively cheap.