200 Mehrhof Hall
PO Box 110675
Gainesville, FL 32611-0675
www.gardeninginaminute.com

Soil Solarization

Today on Gardening in a Minute: soil solarization.

Most Florida soils contain nematodes, microscopic worms that can seriously harm your vegetable and landscape plants by damaging their roots.

One way to curb nematode activity is to add organic matter to your plantings.

You can also try solarizing the soil in your garden. In the summer, remove all the plants from the area. Break up the soil, add any desired amendments, and irrigate the area. Then cover it with sturdy, clear plastic film, securing the edges to hold in the heat.

Leave the plastic on the ground for about six to eight weeks. The heat held in by the plastic can reach temperatures as high as 130 degrees, baking the nematodes and vastly reducing their population.

Solarization will also reduce weeds and diseases.

For more information about solarization, contact your county Extension office or visit Gardening in a Minute dot com.

Gardening in a Minute is a production of the University of Florida's Center for Landscape Conservation and Ecology, IFAS Extension, and WUFT-FM.