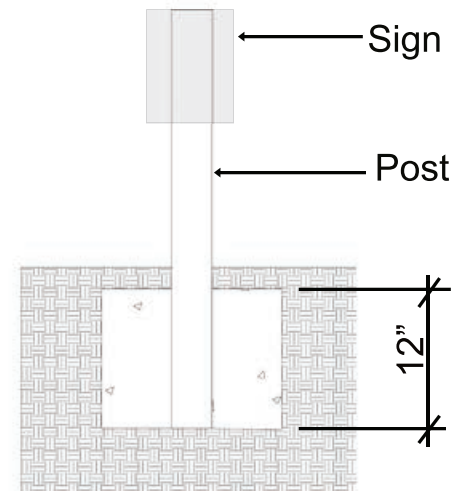


# SOLARIZATION TO PREPARE SOIL FOR WILDFLOWER SEEDS



## MATERIALS

- \* Hoe, Racks and Shovels
- \* Wheelbarrow
- \* Native Soil
- \* Plastic
- \* Metal Stakes
- \* Duct Tape
- \* (2) 4x4x4
- \* (2) Bags of Concrete
- \* (2) Signs



## NOTE:

- \* Perimeter is marked with orange paint.
- \* Sign post locations are staked.

Solarization is a simple non-chemical technique, which captures radiant heat energy from the sun. This energy causes physical, chemical, and biological changes in the soil. These changes lead to control or suppression of soil borne plant pathogens such as fungi, bacteria, nematodes, and pests along with weed, weed seed and seedlings.

Helpful Hint: Solarization is most likely to be effective during long days of high temperatures and no wind. The summer months are the optimum time for solarization.

## How to Solarize?

Step 1: Spade the soil 2 -3 inches down (when possible) to bring weed seed to the surface then clear the area of debris and large clods and make the area reasonably level.

Step 2: Water the soil, if it is dry. The soil should not be saturated, but have a crumbly damp look for planting. Moist heat is more lethal to pathogens than dry heat. The soil can be moistened just before the plastic is applied.

Step 3: Place blk. plastic (clear, construction-grade plastic can vary in thickness from 1 to 2 mm) over the soil surface as tight as possible. Bury the edges in a 6" – 8" deep trench. The soil/plastic contact should be as tight as possible in order to raise the soil temperature as high as possible to as great a depth as possible. When there are weeds and large clods of soil, the plastic is not tightly over the soil for the needed "greenhouse" effect. If the area to be solarized is wider than the plastic available, 2-to-3-foot wide strips can be joined with tape.

Step 4: Leave the plastic in place for 4-6 weeks, the temperature can get as high as 140 degrees, test it with a thermometer and keep data on your solarization science – sunny vs. cloudy days. Monitor the plastic for tears and breakage. Any tears or sections where the plastic breaks down should be patched and replaced.