

Skill Level: BEGINNER These how-to's are suitable for people who are new to DIY and who have a basic knowledge of tools. If you've painted a room or re-potted a plant, you can probably complete one of these projects by yourself in a few hours or less.

✓ MATERIALS

- Rototiller or Cultivator (gas or electric)
- Power Source (gasoline, electric cord, electric battery)
- Ear Protection
- Safety Glasses
- Work Gloves

These instructions, and the accompanying video, will show you how to prepare your garden for planting using a rototiller or cultivator.

PREPARATION

01 Select a rototiller based on the size and labor requirements of the chosen planting area.

- Rear-tine rototillers typically are the largest and have the most power with a gas engine and a tilling width of 12-24". They are most popular for breaking up native (untilled) soil and quickly adding soil amendments in larger gardens.
- Front-tine rototillers are powered by smaller gas engines with 12-36" wide tines used to till established gardens.
- Cultivators are even smaller and are powered by gas or electric motors. They're designed to remove weeds and turn soil near existing plants.
- **TIP:** 4-cycle gas engines typically are larger and have more power than 2-cycle engines. 4-cycles run on gasoline; 2-cycles require a mixture of gas and oil as indicated by the manufacturer. Ask a Lowe's associate for assistance in selecting the appropriate rototiller and accessories for your garden.



02 Make sure that the selected garden area does not have underground utility lines that can be damaged by digging tools. Before digging or cultivating a new garden, call 811 to be connected with the local utility companies. They will mark your utility lines for you.

03 For new gardens, first remove the sod and any rocks or stones. For existing gardens, pull up any thick weeds; smaller weeds will be chopped up by the tiller.



IMPORTANT

Before operating a rototiller or cultivator, thoroughly read the manufacturer's operating manual for specific guidance and safety tips. If you have additional questions, contact the manufacturer directly. For general questions on rototilling and gardening, discuss the job with a Lowe's associate or call a professional for help.

ROTOTILLING A GARDEN

01 Read the rototiller manufacturer's instructions carefully to become familiar with the controls and how to operate it safely. Make sure to wear the appropriate safety gear and clothing when tilling.

- **TIP:** When is a good time to till? For best results, wait a day or so after it rains so the dirt is semi-dry. Plus, with a little moisture, it will be easier to till.

02 Set the tiller for the appropriate depth. Use a shallow setting to start on hard, compacted soil. For softer ground, start at a medium setting.



03 Start the tiller, following the manufacturer's directions.

04 Engage the tines and slowly make parallel passes across the garden. Let the tiller do the work.



05 Once you have tilled the entire garden, adjust the tiller to its deepest setting and begin making passes perpendicular to the first pass rows. Walk slowly and let the machine do the work.



06 Continue tilling until the soil is broken up to a depth of about 8".

Your garden soil should now be loose, fluffy and finely textured—perfect for planting a great garden. For tips on planting, check out the Plant Guide at [Lowe's.com/Plants](https://www.lowes.com/plants). And to see other outdoor projects with step-by-step instructions, visit [Lowe's.com/Videos](https://www.lowes.com/videos).



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