

## ABSTRACT

THESIS: Soil suitability and citizen interest in gardening, Muncie, Indiana

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Gardens do not grow without human interest; however, human interest is not sufficient to support a garden if soil quality is unsatisfactory. This study asked two questions about gardening in Muncie, Indiana, USA: (1) how interested are residents in gardening? (2) how well can residents garden, based upon selected soil properties? Mailed surveys and telephone calls addressed the first question. Fifty-eight percent of respondents indicated they gardened. Compared to non-gardeners, gardeners rated their soil quality higher, modified soil more comprehensively, and were more interested in helping others garden. Survey response bias and non-response bias occurred. Soil analysis addressed the second question. Soil pH and soil organic matter were satisfactory for gardening. Soil Pb levels were above the federal threshold of  $1,200 \text{ mg kg}^{-1}$  in only three (5%) sampling locations. More than adequate, and at times excessive, levels of P and K were found. This thesis includes recommendations for future research.