

What is Grit?

Q: In streaming the British gardening shows, the presenters frequently speak of using "grit" to enhance drainage. A search on Google reveals that horticultural grit is not a product generally sold in the USA. My visit to one local nursery got only a puzzled look; and, in another an attempt to sell pelletized lime as "the same thing."

In close up views showing the gardener's hands the size appears to be no less than 3/16" or 5/16" and no more than 3/8". Is grit available here under another name? What is the benefit of adding grit to clay soil? I am assuming that adding significant crushed limestone gravel would change the pH to the detriment of the Camelia, Azalea and Rhododendron shrubs in my garden. Any comments would be appreciated. Thanks.

A: We had to consult our Sullivan County Director and Extension Agent, Chris Ramsey, on this question as we haven't ever heard of "grit" being available in our area.

His recommendation would be to add organic matter to break up clay soil.

For organic matter, we recommend organic mulch or pine straw. Pine straw is acidic and will break down to help keep your acid loving plants happy. Pine straw and the organic mulch will also help with breaking up the clay.

I hope this answered your questions on this subject. Feel free to ask more questions and thank you for using our website.