

HOW TO PLANT A RAISED GARDEN BED



1.

Add quality soil and/or compost. Use a rake to level the surface, removing any rocks, large sticks, and other debris.



2.

Plant your plants a little closer together than you do in your other beds. Start with taller plants such as tomatoes on the north side of the raised garden bed.



3.

Plant medium-sized plants like peppers in the mid-section of the bed.



4.

Plant short plants like radishes, carrots, and beets in the south side of the bed.

5.

Plant onions and herbs along the outside of the bed and the corners to save space.



Steps to take to Prepare for Raised Bed Gardening

1. **Test your soil before you start planting.** Start with a planting mix and then add the appropriate compost to convert the soil so it holds nutrients, water, and oxygen for prosperous plants.
 2. **Don't walk on the soil.** One of the advantages of growing in raised garden beds is the fluffy soil. Make sure you are able to reach every inch of your raised garden bed from the outside.
 3. **Mulch.** Use wood chips, straw, grass, or leaves so you have to do less weeding in the long run. Mulching also helps to keep the soil in your raised garden beds moist.
 4. **Use worms for optimal growth.** They break down raw organic matter, digesting the soil and aerating it to relieve compaction. They also add nutrients via their digestive systems.
 5. **When planting veggies, keep companion planting in mind.** Some plants get along and some do not. For instance, corn grows well in the same bed as cucumbers, but not in the same bed as tomatoes. And onions thrive when planted in the same garden bed as lettuce and carrots, but are hindered when planted with beans and peas.
 6. **Compost.** Use a method such as trench composting to feed your raised garden beds your kitchen and garden waste. The plant will take the nutrients it needs right at the root.
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Raised Bed Gardening Tips

1. Decide What You Want to Plant in the Raised Garden Bed

You first need to decide what you are going to plant in your [raised garden bed](#). Just about anything that grows in a regular garden will grow in a raised bed. It's not recommended that you try to grow trees in your raised garden because the roots will extend well below the level of the soil you add to the frame. Other than that, you can plan your raised bed garden just as you would a standard one. Once you've decided what you're going to plant, research how much space is needed between each particular plant as well as how deep the soil must be (those factors differ depending on the plant). This information will help you determine the width and depth of your raised garden bed.

2. Build or Purchase a Raised Garden Bed

Decide whether you're going to tackle building a raised bed or if you'll opt for the easier route and purchase a pre-made frame. Place the frame before you start adding anything into it. Your beds should be at least 12" deep. Depending on the depth of the roots of your particular plantings, you might want to consider a lining underneath to protect the garden from weeds and/or pests.

A [raised garden bed](#) can be any size. You can make it as high or wide as you want. Standard height is usually 12” tall. Make sure your raised garden bed is deep enough to handle the roots from your plants without having them reach down into the existing soil of the yard (this soil will differ in acidity, density, and composition of the soil you add). If you will only be able to access one side of the garden bed, try to keep the width no bigger than 2’. If you will be able to access both sides you can go up to 4’ wide. You want to make sure it is not too wide where you can’t reach everything. If you have back pain or chronic pain in your lower extremities you might be better off using a standing garden bed. That way you can garden without bending, kneeling, or stretching.

To give your plants extra room and soil, consider digging out the area where you are placing your raised garden bed. You can dig up to 12” and fill it with rich soil and compost. This will allow you have almost 2’ of rich soil for your roots to grow strong and drain well.

3. Fill the Garden Beds with Soil

Once you have your raised garden bed framed out, fill it with soil. The soil should be rich potting soil or compost. Using a hand rake, level out the surface. Pick out any rocks or debris that could get in the way of your growing plants.

Depending on your preference and the types of plants you will grow, the soil can be flush with the top of the garden bed or a couple inches below. For example, tomatoes and artichokes that grow straight up could have soil that is flush with the bed. Plants such as flowers may look better with a lower soil level so that you can see the flower, but not the stem.

4. Plant Your Seeds or Starters

When you place the plants, follow the instructions for seed depth and space that is on the seed packet. Note that you can plant them a little closer together because the fertilizer in the soil will be more concentrated in such a small space.

Some types of seeds, such as carrots, do not need to be planted very deeply—you can just sprinkle them on the surface of the soil. Once your seeds are in place, sprinkle a little bit of soil on top of them. You can use a hand cultivator to help rake through the topsoil and create sow lines for your seeds.

Vine plants such as cucumbers or trumpet vines can be planted along the edge of the bed. This allows them to trail over the edge and around the ground. The roots will still be getting the healthy nutrients from the [raised garden beds](#), and you will have more room to plant other plants.

Note: Due to plants' releasing various compounds like nitrogen and potassium, which can alter the pH levels in the soil and stunt the growth of your plants, you will want to be careful what you plant next to each other. Here is an example of what can and cannot be grown together in your backyard garden:

Feel free to plant beans, beets, carrots, cauliflower, corn, cabbage, strawberries, and cucumbers together as long as you keep away shallots, garlic, onions, and leeks. Keep cucumbers away from potatoes, but they do fine next to bush beans, radishes, and lettuce. Peppers like to be by carrots, parsley, tomatoes, eggplant, and onions, but kohlrabi is their enemy. Lettuce and cabbage are not friends. Onions do not like beans, peas, and asparagus. Spinach gets along with everybody.

Usually, there will be a guide on the back of the seed packet that will tell you which plants can be placed by each other and which need to be placed alone.

5. Water the Newly Planted Garden

After all of your seeds and plants have been added to your [raised garden bed](#), it's time to give them a drink. Beyond the first day, be sure that the plants get enough water every single day in order to have the most successful garden.

Are You Ready to Have a Raised Garden Bed?

[Raised bed gardening](#) is a great alternative to the typical garden. More and more home gardeners are opting to use raised garden beds as they are easier to maintain, more conservative, and yield healthier results. The soil warms more quickly and gardeners have more control over water drainage and what grows in their gardens. Plus, raised beds can be easier on the back, especially if the height is increased enough to allow easier reaching without bending. And if the walls are high enough, raised bed gardening may even discourage little critters from taking a sample of your wares. A raised garden bed is an ideal way to help kids learn about gardening. The raised height means there's no chance of them stepping on the plants!

Keep in mind that a [raised garden bed](#) is not the same as a container garden. Container gardens, also known as standing gardens, are entirely off the ground, like a raised bed on a table. Raised bed gardens are built-up areas that are surrounded by retaining walls or frames (usually wood). The walls can be anywhere from a few inches to a foot or two high.

Raised bed gardening can be a lot of fun!