



# How to Prepare a Raised Bed Garden

Preparing a raised garden bed is similar to preparing an in ground bed. The difference is that the former is set up above the ground. Although you rarely have to dig the ground out before setting up the bed, the groundwork is still time consuming. If you are interested in learning how to prepare a raised garden bed, consider the following steps.

## Steps

- 1 Draw out a plan of your raised garden.** Label where you want each vegetable and flower to grow. Remember to add room for you to maneuver around your garden for harvesting and picking if your garden is for vegetables.
- 2 Choose a location for your raised garden bed.** Ideally, you should select a place that sits in the sun at least 6 hours in a day.
- 3 Decide on the height of your raised bed.** If you cannot till your current land, then the plants or flowers you grow will have to depend on the soil in your garden bed. Therefore, expect to build a raised bed that is approximately 3 feet (0.91 m) high. If your land is conducive to planting, then you only need to build a raised bed that is 8 inches (20.32 cm) high.
- 4 Decide on the size of your garden and lay out the perimeter.** If you choose to use corner posts, lay out a hose or string to define the boundaries of your garden. Position your corner posts and dig a trench approximately 1 to 2 inches (2.54 to 5.08 cm) deep from post to post along the marked edges. Alternatively, for a more simple design, omit the corner posts and lay out your two side walls and front/end boards so that they form a rectangle.
- 5 Assemble your garden bed frame.** Secure each side wall by screwing it together with the neighboring front or end board. The front and end boards can be placed either inside or outside of the side walls but be sure to be consistent on both ends.
- 6 Level the frame.** Dig and add soil where necessary to level the frame. Make sure that the frame is securely in place since it will be keeping your soil and growing plants or flowers from eroding.
- 7 Get the base of your raised bed cleaned up before adding the topsoil.** If you have Bermuda grass, you will have to remove it with a shovel; otherwise, just get rid of the big weeds, rocks and other debris. Pour the topsoil into the frame. You can also mix in some compost for added nutrition, should you feel it necessary. Just make sure that your soil, whether it's amended or not, feeds your plants and retains some moisture while providing drainage and ventilation. Additionally, you should mix the compost into the topsoil before pouring it into the frame. Once the soil is added, spread it out and rake it down.
- 8 Design an irrigating system for your raised vegetable or flower garden.** Consider drip irrigation that waters the area. A sprinkle system with perforated hoses is also adequate. Whatever you decide, make sure that your system will not overwater your garden or waste water.

## Tips

- Consider rot-resistant posts and responsibly harvested lumber for your raised garden bed border.

## Sources and Citations

- Videos provided by MIgardener | Simple Organic Gardening & Sustainable Living
- <http://www.homedepotgardenclub.com/Dimensions/Article.aspx?contentid=1142>

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