



# RAISED BED GARDENING GUIDE

## ADVANTAGES OF RAISED BED GARDENING

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Raised Bed Gardening is an organic growing method which allows you to grow a larger, more plentiful harvest with less cost, in less space, using less water and seeds, and less work than traditional gardens.

- Growing your own garden helps families improve their health through better nutrition.
- With Raised Garden Beds, plant placement is done differently than in traditional row gardens, allowing you to grow five times as many crops as traditional gardens.
- Raised Garden Beds use 20% of the space of single-row gardens. They can be located closer to the house where they will get more attention and care, resulting in a better, easy to manage garden and a more usable harvest.
- Because your gardening space is more compact and productive, Raised Garden Beds reduce water usage significantly as you only water the productive area of your garden and not weeds or empty soil.
- Raised Garden Beds use specially formulated soil which does not require tillers to break it up, added fertilizers, or weed killers.
- The special soil used in Raised Garden Beds is not dug from your existing soil which means it does not contain weed seeds. The soil is not as compact which means if weeds seeds blow in, they are easily removed.

# SETTING UP YOUR GARDEN

## WHAT DO I NEED?

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1. Lifetime Raised Garden Beds
2. Soil Mix
3. Weed Barrier
4. Seeds or Starts

### **SOIL MIX:**

#### **VERMICULITE**

Vermiculite is used to retain moisture in soil. The more coarse the vermiculite the better.

#### **PEAT MOSS**

Peat moss makes the soil lighter, more loose and helps with water retention.

#### **BLENDED COMPOST**

Buy or create your own compost using the Lifetime 80 or 65 gallon composters. A mixture of several different kinds of compost is recommended. Compost is the organic matter that provides the nutrients your plants need to thrive.

#### **HOW MUCH TO USE**

One 4' x 4' box takes approximately 8 cubic feet of mix.  
You will need 2.5 cubic feet (75 quarts) of each product.

# SETTING UP YOUR GARDEN

## COMPOST

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Different types of compost provide a more comprehensive type of nutrition than just one product alone. There are several types of compost we recommend, including: chicken compost, bat guano, kelp meal, worm castings and mushroom compost. The specific types of compost are not as important as having enough variety to provide a comprehensive nutrient mix.



# SETTING UP YOUR GARDEN

## WHAT DO I NEED?

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### **WEED BARRIER:**

If you are planting your Raised Garden Bed over grass or soil, first make sure to clear out the ground from debris as much as possible. Place the weed barrier under you box to keep weeds or grass from poking through into your garden.

### **HOW MUCH TO BUY:**

Weed barrier fabric comes in width x length measurements. For your 4' x 4' boxes you will need to buy four feet x the number of feet of boxes. For example with two boxes 4' x 4' you will need a piece of weed barrier that's at least 4' x 8'. Extra fabric can be used to create aisles between your boxes.



# SETTING UP YOUR GARDEN

## PLANT SPACING

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Proper plant spacing is a key factor that makes the difference between Raised Bed Gardening and other types of gardening. Traditional gardening is derived from farming. Plants tend to be planted in rows up to 30' long and spaced 3' apart (so you can walk between the beds for harvesting and weeding). Raised Garden Beds are made to be extremely compact, so each bed is no wider than 4' across allowing you to reach in from all sides without stepping on your garden.

The key to a great harvest is proper spacing. The chart on the following page describes the number of plants you can grow in each square foot of garden space.



# SETTING UP YOUR GARDEN

## PLANT SPACING

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### 1 PLANT PER SQUARE FOOT

Broccoli  
Peppers  
Cauliflower  
Cilantro



### 4 PLANTS PER SQUARE FOOT

Swiss Chard  
Lettuce  
Parsley  
Potato



### 9 PLANTS PER SQUARE FOOT

Bush Beans  
Spinach  
Summer Squash



### 16 PLANTS PER SQUARE FOOT

Carrots  
Onions  
Radish  
Small Beets



# SETTING UP YOUR GARDEN

## VINE CROPS

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If you want to grow vine crops, such as tomatoes, cucumbers, etc., you will need a trellis. A trellis is a structure that will support the plants. You can buy them ready to go from various stores or build them yourself using metal tubing and nylon netting. Nylon netting is stronger and more durable than string.



### TIPS FOR TRELLISES:

Do not place vine crops in sections of the Raised Garden Bed where they will shade plants that need sun.

Don't worry about melons growing on the trellis becoming too heavy. Plants understand the law of gravity and will make the stem thicker in order to keep the fruit from breaking the plant by its own weight.



# SETTING UP YOUR GARDEN

## LOCATION

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- Stay clear of trees and shrubs where roots and shade may interfere.
- Pick an area that gets 6-8 hours of sunshine daily.
- The area should not puddle after a heavy rain.
- The area should be close to the house for convenience.
- Areas with existing soil are not important, as you won't be using any.



## **TIPS & TRICKS**

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Lifetime Raised Garden Beds require very little attention. The only things you need to worry about are watering your plants, planting and harvesting at the proper times, and removing the occasional weed seed that might fly into your garden. Remember that as soon as you have harvested a plant, add a little compost into the empty space, mix it in, and replant the space based on if you are planting a spring, summer or fall plant.

## **WATERING**

Treat plants like kids. Do your kids like it when you spray them with freezing cold hose water? Well, plants behave the same way. The best way to water a Raised Garden Bed is to have a bucket of sun warmed water and use a cup to pour water at the base (not the leaves which can cause leaf rot) of each plant. Drip irrigation systems also work well.

You cannot over water a Raised Garden Bed. If you use the proper ingredients the soil mixture we have described works like a sponge. It will absorb the water it can and expel the rest.

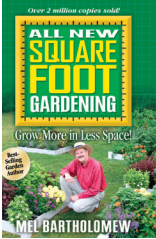
## **ADD FLOWERS TO YOUR RAISED GARDEN BED**

Flowers not only improve pollination, but they will improve the overall beauty of your garden, which in turn, brings you out to it more often.

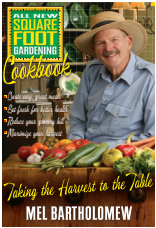
## ADDITIONAL REFERENCES

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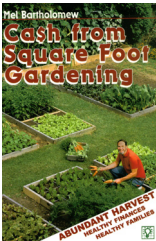
There are many additional sources of information available that will help you be successful with Raised Bed Gardening and get the most out of it. We recommend the following:



The *All New Square Foot Gardening* book outlines what to plant, how to plant it, where to plant it and when to harvest. This book outlines the theory behind square foot / Raised Bed Gardening and teaches you in easy steps.



Once you have your garden harvested then what? *The Square Foot Gardening Cookbook* will show you how to maximize your harvest and how to cook delicious meals from the produce you grow.



*Cash from Square Foot Gardening* will teach you how to make extra money from the surplus produce you grow in your garden.

Additional gardening tips can be found at :  
[www.squarefootgardening.com](http://www.squarefootgardening.com) or at [www.lifetime.com](http://www.lifetime.com)

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