

Raised Vegetable Garden Bed

Many people are interested in planting vegetable gardens but are discouraged by their soil type; drainage problems, infertile soils, planting space and bedrocks in their backyards. The good news is that making raised beds can eliminate those hindrances.

Advantages of raised bed

- ❖ You can formulate your own fertile soil mixture
- ❖ It improves soil drainage and aeration
- ❖ It improves weeds and insects prevention and control
- ❖ You can choose where to make your garden with less limitations

Soil Mixture

- ❖ Soil amendments (good clean soil from bags or reliable bulk source, cow manure, chicken manure, sawdust, horse manure and compost)
- ❖ Lime optional
- ❖ Fertilizer is optional (do soil test at your local extension office before applying fertilizer)
- ❖ If considering organic garden; the more organic matter the more fertile the soil

Bed Construction

- ❖ Bordering materials (untreated lumber, concrete blocks, old and weathered railway ties, landscaping ties)
- ❖ Bed can be any length
- ❖ Bed should be three to four feet wide
- ❖ Soil depth should be 6 to 8 inches high
- ❖ Till soil before making bed
- ❖ Place card board or newspaper at the bottom of bed before adding soil mixture
- ❖ Add amendments until bed is filled

Planting

- ❖ Select clean viable seeds or purchase seeds that are treated with fungicide and insecticide (non-organic garden. Choose organic seeds from a reputable distributors)
- ❖ Select strong healthy seedlings
- ❖ Have basic knowledge of crops before planting
- ❖ Know planting time for crops (fall or spring)
- ❖ Know number of days from planting to maturity
- ❖ Know predicted first and last freeze date for your region.

Care and Maintenance

It is advantageous to use about 2 inches of mulch in beds to conserve moisture and suppress weeds. Keep soil moist and not wet, water in the morning and not midday or late evening, scout for signs of insects and diseases. Use pesticides only when necessary and fertilize based on soil sample results. Harvest crops at right time; over mature crop lose taste and texture. Remember to place dead or old non-disease plants in compost heap.

Challenges

It takes more effort to keep the beds moist compare to in-ground garden. Watering 2-3 times a week is not uncommon.

For further more information contact Grantly Ricketts at UF/IFAS Extension in Osceola County at 321-697-3000 or gricketts@ufl.edu