



**LIVING
PONO
PROJECT**
Growing Futures for All

Raised Bed Gardening Guide

A Step-by-Step Guide to Growing Your Own Food



Raised bed gardening is an excellent way to grow fresh, healthy food while improving soil quality and making gardening more accessible. This guide will walk you through the process of building and maintaining your own raised bed garden, from site selection to harvest.

1. Site Selection & Preparation

Consider Drainage

Ensure good drainage to prevent waterlogging. Poor drainage can lead to root rot and unhealthy plants.

Sunlight

Choose a location that receives at least 6 hours of sunlight daily. Most vegetables thrive in full sun.

Level Ground

Ensure the area is relatively flat and level. This will make construction easier and ensure even water distribution.

Soil Preparation

- Clear the area of weeds, grass, and rocks.
- Consider adding compost or other soil amendments to improve the soil's fertility and structure.
- You can also consider using a weed barrier cloth or cardboard under the raised bed to prevent weeds from growing up through the bottom.



Preparing soil for your raised bed

2. Building the Raised Bed Frame

Materials

You can use wood (treated or untreated), recycled materials like pallets or old tires, or even purchase pre-made kits. Choose materials that are safe for food production and will last several seasons.

Frame Construction

- Build a sturdy frame that is tall enough for the plants you plan to grow.
- Consider the depth of the bed, with 18 inches or more generally recommended for better drainage and root development.
- Ensure the frame is level and stable to prevent soil from washing out.

Bottom

- Decide whether you want a bottom or not. If you do, use a porous material like weed barrier cloth or burlap.
- If you don't want a bottom, you can simply fill the bed with soil after construction. This allows for better drainage and root growth into native soil.



Youth learning hands-on construction techniques

3. Filling the Raised Bed

Soil

Use a high-quality potting mix or garden soil. The right soil mix is crucial for healthy plant growth.

Layering

You can layer the soil with compost, manure, and other organic matter to improve fertility and structure. This creates a nutrient-rich environment for your plants.

Consider Mulch

Mulch can help retain moisture and suppress weeds. Organic mulches like straw, wood chips, or leaves also add nutrients as they decompose.



Preparing and layering soil in the raised bed

4. Planting & Maintenance

Plant Selection

Choose plants that are suitable for raised beds and your local climate. Consider companion planting to maximize space and benefits.

Planting

Plant seeds or seedlings according to their spacing requirements. Proper spacing ensures adequate airflow and light for each plant.

Watering

Water regularly, especially during dry periods. Raised beds can dry out faster than ground-level gardens, so monitor soil moisture carefully.

Fertilizing

Fertilize as needed, using a balanced fertilizer or compost. Regular feeding helps maintain soil fertility and plant health.

Weeding

Regularly remove weeds to prevent them from competing with your plants for nutrients and water.

Pest Control

Monitor for pests and take appropriate action if needed. Use organic methods whenever possible to maintain a healthy garden ecosystem.

Mulch

Apply a layer of mulch to help retain moisture and suppress weeds. Refresh mulch as needed throughout the growing season.

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