

BUILDING A RAISED BED

A raised bed is a box generally constructed of wood without a bottom that is filled with soil for planting a garden. They are often used as an option for sites with poor soil quality, for gardeners with special needs such as senior gardens (who aren't able to bend down) or youth gardens (where you want to provide clear boundaries). They can also add a nice design element in the garden providing clean straight lines.

ADVANTAGES

- **IMPROVED DRAINAGE** – For heavy and poorly drained soils, raised beds help roots to grow above difficult soil conditions.
- **EXPANDING THE GROWING SEASON** – Soil in raised beds warms earlier in spring allowing for an earlier planting.
- **MAINTENANCE** – Because plants are growing above the level of walkways, less stooping is required for weeding, watering and other chores.
- **USING DIFFICULT SITES** – Raised beds make gardening possible on sites where growing would otherwise be impossible such as sites with extremely rocky soils or sites with moderate soil contamination. Note: Even with raised beds, it is not recommended to garden in areas where ground lead levels more than 320 ppm.
- **ACCESSIBILITY** – Raising the beds up to 2 feet tall will make beds accessible to wheelchairs and persons who have difficulty bending and kneeling. Raised beds are a good choice for young children they help to define the space where youth should walk.



DISADVANTAGES

- They can be expensive! In addition to the wood for the beds, you'll need topsoil and compost to fill the beds.
- They will dry out quicker than in ground beds because they heat up quicker and do not retain water as well.

BUILDING AND INSTALLING A RAISED BED

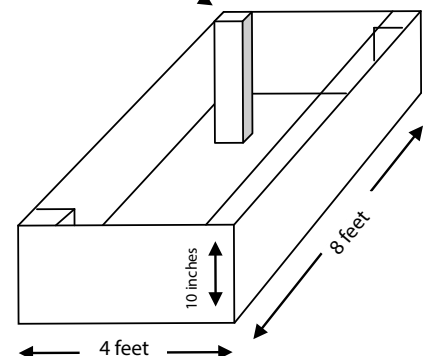
- Construct your beds on a level surface.
- With the assistance of another person hold two 4 foot boards standing up on their ends and place an 8 foot board on top of them aligning the corners.
- Using nails or screws, secure each corner of the bed using 3 nails at each corner. Flip the bed over and place the second 8 foot piece on top of the bed and repeat.
- Reinforce each corner of the bed by attaching 4 corner posts with screws.
- Seal the wood with a water seal to increase longevity of the wood.
- Temporarily, place bed in desired location in the garden mark the corner posts in order to dig a four inch deep hole for each. Move bed aside and dig holes. Holes should be dug deep enough so that bed sits level on the ground and there is no gap between wood and the ground.
- Cover inside of bed area with a weed block fabric such as newspaper or cardboard to smother any existing grass and weeds.
- Add soil and compost mix to bed. A 4 foot by 8 foot bed requires approximately 3/4 of a yard of soil. We recommend using a mix of 3/4 topsoil and 1/4 compost.



MATERIALS AND TOOLS NEEDED

- 2 pieces of 2 inch by 10 inch by 8 foot untreated lumber
- 2 pieces of 2 inch by 10 inch by 4 foot untreated lumber
- (12 foot lengths are standard ask your lumber yard to cut it for you)
- 4 pieces of 2 inch by 2 inch by 14 inch untreated lumber - for corner posts
- Screws and Nails - 2^{1/2} inch galvanized deck nails (8 total nails) and screws (16 total screws)
- Newspaper, cardboard or weed fabric
- Soil and compost mix to fill the bed (approximately 3/4 of a yard total)
- Water seal, like Thompsons or linseed oil
- Hammer and/or Drill (with screw & phillips drill bit)

corner posts- 4 inches will be underground



This Resource Guide is prepared by Keep Growing Detroit for participants in the Garden Resource Program. For more info please contact 313-757-2635, keepgrowingdetroit@gmail.com or visit our website at WWW.DETROITAGRICULTURE.NET