



HOW TO DO RAISED BED GARDENING?

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How to do



raised bed gardening





What is raised bed gardening?

Raised bed gardening is a form of gardening in which soil is raised above ground level and may or may not be enclosed in some way.

There are basically three types of raised beds:



- **Raised ground bed:**

These are flat top mounds of soil that are 6 to 8 inches high and do not have support frames. These are the simplest options for raised beds as they only require soil and they do not have support frames. These are ideal for larger areas of vegetable gardens.

- **Supported raised beds:**

They consist of mounds of soil surrounded by a supportive edge or frame. They are useful when the ground has a slope or is uneven. You can build a flat surface on top of an uneven surface with this type of bed.



- **Containerized raised bed:**

Now this is what we typically talk about when we speak of raised bed gardening. They are essentially large containers or pots that are filled with soil. They have a base and a taller side, about 20 -30 inches from ground level.. They are versatile and they make gardening possible in many different kinds of conditions.

Why do raised bed gardening?

The main reason for doing raised bed gardening is to have control over soil and water conditions. Raised beds ensure uniform distribution of water and allow the soil to be well drained. Raised garden beds allow you to plant a garden almost anywhere, from a small patch of grass to a patio. It is an easy way for new gardeners to start their green journey.

How to do raised bed gardening?

- **Layout:**

You should plan the layout of your raised bed garden in such a way that there is enough walking space between the beds. The width of the bed should not be more than 4 feet so that you can

reach all areas that need tending.

- **Construction:**

You can either build your own raised bed or purchase it online or offline. Many easy-to-do raised bed kits are available in the market. They are prefabricated, often made of wood, metal, or UV-protected PVC. They sometimes come with a cover to protect your delicate plants from frost and wind.

If you consider constructing your own raised bed, then the material that you used is of utmost importance. The sides of the raised beds contain the soil and lend support to the structure. Untreated wood is a good option for the sides of the bed. If it is chemical-treated wood, then it is





advisable to line the bed with PVC sheets to prevent the chemicals from leaching into the soil. Metals panels are also easy to install, but they rust over a period of time and need to be replaced often. Railroad ties or sleepers can also be used. Stone or concrete blocks are also another less expensive option. It should be kept in mind while constructing raised beds that the structure should be sturdy enough to contain the weight of the soil and the plants.



Soil:

The soil to be used in raised garden beds should be a good mixture of garden soil, compost, and cocopeat in the ratio of 2:1:1. It should not have any rocks, sticks, or clumps. If the ground is healthy and is

not infested with weeds or pests or treated with chemicals then you can directly put the soil on top of the ground. But if the ground is contaminated then you must line the bottom of the container with either a plastic sheet or cardboard sheets or mulch to form a barrier and then put your potting mixture. You can fill about one-third of the container with leaves, twigs, and paper and then put the potting mixture on top. The depth of the soil should be according to the plants you are planning to grow. Minimum depth required for leafy vegetables is one foot and for non-leafy vegetables like tomato, chili and brinjal it is two feet.

Placement:

The raised beds should be placed at a site that gets good 5-6 hours of direct sunlight in the day. They should be close to a water source to facilitate watering.

What to grow in raised beds:

The raised garden beds are most often used for growing food like vegetables, herbs, and fruit. They can also be used to grow a small flower garden or small shrubs. Large trees or shrubs that require a lot of space for their roots, branches, and leaves should not be grown in raised gardens.

Watering and maintenance:

The raised garden beds are able to drain excess water away from the plants so they never get oversaturated. They tend to dry out more than in-ground gardens so they need to be watered more often. The soil



should be rejuvenated between seasons by carefully digging, tilling, and sprinkling it with organic manure.

Advantages and disadvantages of raised bed gardening

Raised bed gardening has many advantages and a few disadvantages. The advantages are:

- You have control over the quality of the soil that you are growing your plants in and you can modify the soil composition according to the plants you want to grow.
- Raised beds are more productive than beds on the ground because the soil is not walked on and is thus less compacted and has better drainage.
- The soil in raised garden beds warms earlier and the plants start to grow earlier in the season.
- The soil in raised beds is free from weeds or pest infestation and thus needs less maintenance.
- The raised beds are easy on your back and your knees as you don't have to squat down or bend over to work on them. It is especially convenient for senior people or specially-abled people to work on them.
- It is easier to install wildlife barriers like netting or fencing on a raised bed.

However, there are a few disadvantages:

- Building a raised bed can be a time-consuming and expensive process.
- The raised beds are more exposed to heat and cold and they also tend to dry out soon, so you have to be very careful in handling that.
- Raised beds can't be more than four feet wide and they require walking space in between, so you may lose out on some gardening space. This is a disadvantage especially if you have limited area for gardening.

There is no reason why you should not take up raised bed gardening. With a little planning, effort, and investment you can have more control over the growing conditions of your plants and make your gardening life easier and more productive with raised bed gardening.



About Organo Et School

Organo Et School empowers people to embrace eco-living mindsets, behaviors, and habits. We recognize that for any positive impact to be sustainable, it must be long-term and inter-generational.

Organo Et School is a learning initiative set up by Organo in 2017 and has been facilitating field visits and workshops for Schools and Interest Groups. Organo Et School has had over 25+ schools, 6500+ students, and 3000+ adults participate over the last 7 years.

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