



# Texas Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Division

## How To Build a Raised Edible Garden

### GENERAL INFORMATION

Plant a vegetable patch in your garden. Children and Senior's will have fun caring for seedlings as they mature. And there's no better reward for a well-tended garden than a crisp carrot straight from the earth (washed, of course) or a nice ripe tomato right from the vine.

A raised garden bed can be made from a simple frame of rot-resistant lumber that holds soil in place and brings it to a height that's easy for everyone to reach without stepping onto precious plants. A good size garden is 10 feet long by 4 feet wide. You can have any size garden, however; it should be no more than 4 feet wide so little arms can reach the plants in the middle. Cedar is a recommended wood because it's safe to use around edible plants and turns a pleasant silvery gray as it weathers.

### MATERIALS NEEDED

- One 8-foot length of 2x10 cedar
- Two 10-foot lengths of 2x10 cedar
- Two 10-foot lengths of 2x4 cedar
- Three 3-inch deck screws
- Vegetable seeds or seedlings
- Starter fertilizer, appropriate for vegetables
- Garden soil
- Compost
- Grass clippings for mulch

### DIRECTIONS

- ✓ Cut stakes from 2x4s and angle one end to a point to hold the frame in place and keep the sides from bowing once it's filled with heavy soil.
- ✓ Vegetable gardens need a lot of light, so place the bed in an area that gets sun for most of the day.
- ✓ To improve drainage and prevent weeds from growing up into the garden, remove the grass beneath the bed and till the earth before adding soil.
- ✓ Using a jigsaw or circular saw, cut an 8-foot length of 2x10 cedar in half.
- ✓ Hold one of the 10-foot 2x10s on edge, and butt the end of a 4-foot 2x10 up to it so that the face of the longer board overlaps the end of the shorter board. Using a drill/driver, sink three 3-inch screws through the face of the long side and into the end of the short side.
- ✓ Attach the other sides together, using three 3-inch screws on each corner and overlapping the long sides over the short sides.
- ✓ With the four sides assembled, place a framing square in each corner, one at a time, and adjust the frame until the corner lines up square. After aligning the frame, check all four corners again with the framing square.
- ✓ Leaving the corners perfectly square, tack scrap lumber across each one with 3-inch screws to hold it in place.
- ✓ Move the frame to the sunny spot you've picked out for the bed. Using an edger or spade, mark the ground around the perimeter of the frame.



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- ✓ Set the frame aside. Using a sod cutter or grub hoe, skim away the grass layer. Increase drainage for your garden by turning the soil beneath the bed area with a pitchfork or rotary tiller.
- ✓ Set the frame back in place over the tilled area. Using a 4-foot level, check the position of the frame. Dig out the soil beneath the frame until it sits level on all sides.
- ✓ Cut ten 2 foot-long pieces of 2x4. Make two diagonal cuts on one end of each piece to create a point. Using a sledgehammer, drive these stakes at least 18 inches into the ground along the outside of the long sides of the frame at 2½-foot intervals. Using the drill/driver, secure each stake to the frame with three 3-inch screws.
- ✓ Remove the temporary corner braces. Drive a stake inside each corner. On one short side of the bed, secure the stakes with screws driven through the frame on both sides of each corner. On the other short side, leave the screws off.
- ✓ Remove the unscrewed short side of the bed. Using a wheelbarrow, fill the bed with a mixture of soil and compost. Level out the soil and continue filling until it is 2 to 3 inches from the top of the frame.
- ✓ Replace the short side of the bed and, using a drill/driver, secure it to the long sides and to the corner stakes with 3-inch screws. Use a reciprocating saw or handsaw to cut the top of each stake flush with the top of the frame.
- ✓ Select plant seeds or seedlings for your vegetables. Dig a small hole for each one, mix in the appropriate amount of starter fertilizer, set the seed or seedling into the hole, and then cover it with soil.
- ✓ Once the bed is planted, water it thoroughly. Then cover the soil with about an inch of mulch made from grass clippings. (Using grass clippings to mulch around the plants will help keep the soil moist and stop weeds from growing).

