

# Raised-Bed Gardening: Grow a Vegetable Garden in Raised Beds

Raised beds make vegetable gardening less work. Learn why and discover great raised-bed gardening design techniques.

## Benefit: Save Your Back

Raised-[bed gardening](#) can reduce back strain because you won't have to bend over as far to reach the plants. With easier access and less pain potential, you're better able to enjoy the labor involved in planting, tending, and harvesting vegetables. Build your raised beds so they're at least 12 inches tall. If the [walls](#) are slightly below waist level, you can sit on edges to work the soil and harvest your bounty without having to bend over at all.

## Grow Longer

The soil in raised [beds](#) typically warms earlier in spring than the surrounding earth. It also tends to dry faster, so you can get cool-season crops planted sooner, extending the growing season and your vegetable crop choices.

**Test Garden Tip:** To extend the gardening season for your raised beds, fashion hoops like these and then [drape](#) plastic over them. The makeshift cold frame will help you gain a few extra growing weeks in spring and autumn.

## Overcome Bad Soil

Raised-[bed gardening](#) is the answer if you have sandy or clay soil. Instead of struggling with poor topsoil, all you need to do is fill your raised beds with high-quality topsoil and start gardening. Nutrient-rich soil means fewer struggles for plants and less frustration for the gardener. To keep the soil healthy, continue to feed it with compost and other organic matter.

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## Stop Grass from Invading

- Lawn grasses, which have spreading root systems, often infiltrate a standard [vegetable garden](#) and become a serious weed. But when you practice raised-bed gardening, nearby turf won't be able to spread into your vegetable crops.

## Make Your Garden More Attractive

- Set up a series of small raised [beds](#) in tidy rows or a pattern and you'll end up with the most visually appealing [vegetable garden](#) on your block.

## Never Till Again

- Raised [beds](#) provide a healthier environment for beneficial microorganisms and earthworms because there's no foot traffic to compact the soil. And you avoid the time and expense of tilling.

## Space Them Correctly

- In your raised-[bed gardening](#) plans, leave enough space between the beds to easily maneuver a wheelbarrow for adding soil, harvesting, spreading mulch, or other activities. Similarly, if you have grass paths between your raised beds, make sure there's enough space to comfortably run your lawn mower.

## Grow Up with Vines

- Include [trellises](#), obelisks, or tuteurs in your raised-bed [gardening](#) plans. Buy or build one or two to grow vining crops such as peas, beans, cucumbers, and even tomatoes. The extra height brings visual drama to your plantings, especially if most of what you grow is relatively short.



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- Fall-Harvest Vegetable Garden
- Fresh lettuce, spinach, and peas aren't limited to spring. Replant as temperatures cool in late summer for a second round of these favorites.
- Garden Size: 4 by 4 feet



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- Colorful Vegetable Garden
- Red cabbage, golden oregano, and Johnny jump-up teams with chard, lettuce, onions, and other favorites to create a design that looks great and provides lots of tasty treats.
- Garden size: 16 by 32 feet.



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- All-American Vegetable Garden
- Some of the best-tasting vegetables, including 'Sugar Snap' pea and 'Brandywine' tomato, came from American [gardens](#). Celebrate homegrown flavor with this garden.
- Garden Size: 6 by 6 feet



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- Heritage Vegetable Garden
- This [garden](#) includes many heirloom varieties, such as 'Brandywine' tomato, 'White Wonder' cucumber, and 'Amish Snap' pea for great-tasting produce all season long.
- Garden size: 10 by 20 feet



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### Italian-Inspired Vegetable Garden

- Grow your own fresh vegetables to make perfect pasta sauces and other mouthwatering Italian dishes.
- Garden Size: 6 by 6 feet