

Gardening in Small Spaces

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College of Agriculture,
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Where Can We Grow Plants?



In Ground

- Can grow almost anything
- Must have (or make it yourself) ‘good’, well-drained soil
- Close to water
- Tiller
- Soil is free



What Can I Grow?

- Herbs
- Almost any vegetable
- Blueberries
- Strawberries



Containers

- Plastic
- Terra cotta
- Metal
- Wood
- And many others





F₁ Salad Bush

ALL
AMERICA
SELECTIONS
WINNER

Growing More with Less Space

Intensive Gardening

Conventional gardens, planted in rows about 3 feet apart, have been popular for many years because they can be planted and easily cultivated with a farm tractor or a rototiller. However, because of the wide spaces between rows, such gardens are not very space efficient. Gardeners with limited land area may want to plan an intensive garden.

Intensive gardens employ space-saving techniques such as wide-row planting, raised beds, intercropping, succession planting, vertical training and planting in stairstep arrangements. Extending the growing season using plant protectors is another technique of intensive gardening. Lettuce, radishes and other cool-season crops can be grown early in the spring or late in the fall with such protection.

Keep in mind that some intensive techniques may require more time, labor and money than conventional techniques. Also, closely spaced plants use more water than widely spaced plants, and competition for water may reduce yields during times of drought.

In wide-row planting, vegetables are planted in wide rows between narrow pathways as opposed to single rows with wide spaces between the rows. The vegetables are spaced so that they will just touch one another at maturity. This method of gardening may reduce weed problems, although hand weeding will be more difficult. Since less soil remains bare than in conventional gardens, usually less erosion occurs.

Be aware that vegetables prone to certain diseases should not be planted too intensively. Tomatoes, for example, will suffer less from disease if moving air dries their leaves. When placed too closely, plant leaves retain moisture longer, and disease organisms thrive and are easily spread.

Raised Beds

Raised beds increase plant growth by providing excellent root development and drainage. To prepare the soil, turn over the soil and mix it with compost (see "Preparing the Soil"). Then, mark out the beds and permanent paths between them. Combining raised beds with wide-row planting, in the greatest yields in a garden. Raised beds often perform better than conventional gardens so will dry out faster than conventional gardens.

Figure 7. Raised bed.



- Also, try sowing radish seeds with carrot seeds. The radishes germinate quickly, marking the row of slowly sprouting carrots. Radishes are harvested within a few weeks, long before they interfere with the carrots.

Many other intercropping ideas will develop from your own gardening experience. Remember, however, that yields of certain vegetables may be reduced when crowded.

Succession Planting

Seed or transplant immediately after the first crop is harvested. For example, when you harvest a Swiss chard or New Zealand spinach, you can plant a fall crop of broccoli, spinach

or other plants upright rather than vining crops, tomatoes, peas or beans on trellises, or in cages. Besides increasing yields, you will also have cleaner fruit

Home Vegetable Gardening in KY ID-128

Table 9. Container vegetable recommendations.

Season/ Light Req.	Spacing/ Container Size	Varieties	Days until Harvest
Bean (green, bush type)			
Warm Full sun	5 - 6" apart 8 - 10" deep	Romano Bush Blue Lake Bush Tendercrop	50 58 54
Beets			
Cool Tolerates partial shade	2 - 3" apart 24" x 36" x 8"	Kestrel Red Ace Merlin Detroit Supreme	53 53 55 59
Broccoli			
Cool Full sun	15" apart 12" x 48" x 8"	Green Comet Emperor	55 60
Cabbage			
Cool Full sun	12 - 24" apart 10" deep	Fast Vantage Stonehead Market Prize Super Red 80	65 70 76 82
Carrots			
Spring, Fall Partial shade	1½ - 3" apart 24" x 36" x 10"	Ya Ya Sugarsnax Little Fingers	56 68 65
Collards			
Cool, Fall Full sun	6" apart 8 - 10" deep	Champion Georgia/Southern Vates	60 80 80
Cucumbers			
Warm Full sun	12 - 16" apart 12" x 48" x 8"	Sweet Success Sweet Burpless Hybrid	55 55
Eggplant			
Warm Full sun	1 per 4 - 5 gal container	Orient Express (Japanese type) Dusky Blackbell Fairy Tale	58 61 70 50
Kale			
Cool, Fall Partial shade	6" apart 12" x 48" x 8"	Dwarf Blue Curled Vates	55 57
Lettuce			
Early spring, Fall Partial shade	4 - 6" apart, leaf; 10" apart, head 12" x 48" x 8"	Kentucky Bibb Buttercrunch Royal Oakleaf Red Sails Burpee's Iceburg	54 75 50 45 85

Table 9. (continued)

Season/ Light Req.	Spacing/ Container Size	Varieties	Days until Harvest
Peas			
Cool Full sun	4 - 6" apart 8 - 10" deep	Little Marvel Sugar Ann Cascadia	62 55 58
Peppers			
Warm Full sun	14 - 18" apart ½ - 4 gal	Carmen King Arthur Gypsy Hybrid Hot Anaheim Hungarian Wax Jalapeno	75 59 65 77 65 65
Radishes			
Early spring, Fall Full sun to light shade	1" apart Any size, 6" deep	Cherriette Cherry Belle Icicle Cherry Bomb	26 30 28 25
Spinach			
Spring, Fall Full sun to light shade	5" apart Any size, 6" deep	Tyee Melody Bloomsdale Long- Standing	42 43 48
Summer Squash			
Warm Full Sun	1 per 5 gal container	Black Magic (green zucchini) Gold Rush (yellow zucchini) Burpee Hybrid (green zucchini) Sunburst (yellow scallop)	44 50 50 52
Swiss Chard			
Spring, Summer, Fall Partial shade	4 - 5" apart Any size, 6 - 8" deep	Bright Lights Rhubarb Chard Fordhook Giant	55 60 60
Tomatoes²			
Warm Full sun, at least 6 hrs/day	1 per 4 - 5 gal container	Lizzano Terenzo Tumbler Superb Super Bush	65 56 49 75
Turnips			
Cool Partial shade	3 - 4" apart 24" x 36" x 8"	Hakurei Purpletop Globe Seven Top	38 55 42
Zucchini			
Warm Full sun	1 per 5 gal container	Spineless Perfection (green)	45





Gardening in Small Spaces

Rick Durham, Horticulture; Brad Lee, Plant and Soil Science; and Ashley Osborne, 4-H Youth Development

Gardening, in one form or another, is a popular hobby in the United States. Taking part in gardening activities helps promote healthy habits, including spending time outdoors, being physically active, and consuming homegrown fruits and vegetables.

Although most would agree that gardening is a worthwhile endeavor,

- Better root growth from amending native soils or utilizing soilless mixes typically results in higher yields from plants grown in raised beds.
- Raised beds require less stooping during weeding and watering, making gardening easier for those with limited mobility.
- Raised beds allow for more efficient

has a low pH (3.5–4.0) and requires addition of lime for most crops. Used in moderation, peat is considered by some as a renewable resource; however, its regrowth rate is slow at 1 mm per year.

• **Coinpith.** Coin is the fibrous outer layer of a coconut that is used to rope and mats. A byproduct

ing may be especially noticeable in fall and spring. If the raised beds are high (> 24 inches) you might consider adding a large uncomposted organic component in the bottom of the bed. Before adding amended soil or soilless mix, up to two thirds of the raised bed height could be filled with the leaves, straw, grass clippings, newspaper, or wood chips (or a mixture of these components). Use a layer of grass clippings or some other compostable organic layer to separate the blended mixture of native soil and organic amendments from the bottom two thirds of raw organic material. The bottom two thirds of the raised bed will

The following vegetables will grow in an area receiving 4 to 6 hours of direct sunlight a day (however, best yields may be realized in full sun).

Carrots	Lettuce	Radishes
Cauliflower	Onion	Spinach
Swiss chard	Parsley	Winter squash
Cucumber	Peas	

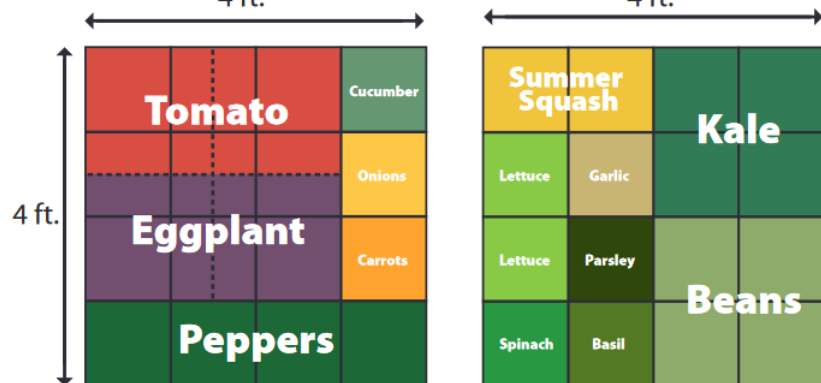


Figure 1. Example of vegetable spacing in a raised bed garden*

* As you plan from year to year, remember to move plants around if possible. In this example, each year the plants grown in the first bed (e.g., eggplant, peppers) can be moved to the second bed and plants grown in the second bed (e.g., summer squash, kale, lettuce) can be moved to the first bed to prevent build up of certain pests.

** Early plants are grouped together for crop succession and smaller plants are placed on the outer areas of the garden to avoid shading.

help reduce disease. Factors that may increase disease pressure include disease present on plants growing during the previous year, disease susceptible cultivars being planted, or the garden area lacking exposure to morning sun to quickly dry dew and evening rains.

Raised bed gardens are ideal for succession planting. Succession planting allows a garden space to be used throughout the growing season, in spring, summer, and fall. For example, a plant that is harvested in spring is immediately replaced by a seed or transplant to be grown and harvested in summer. Vegetables such as spinach, lettuce, cabbage, and broccoli, grow well in spring and can be planted relatively early (late March or early April). These crops are often harvested by mid-May when summer vegetables, such as tomatoes, beans, peppers, and squash are planted. Some

(many of the same cool-season crops that were grown in the spring garden). Preparing for three gardening seasons and planting in succession will achieve the most intensive and efficient use of your garden space. For additional information on when to plant consult Home Vegetable Gardening in Kentucky (ID-128).

Training plants to grow vertically also allows for intensive and efficient gardening. This approach saves space and often results in higher quality produce. Examples include tomatoes and vine crops. Tomatoes can and should be staked or caged to support vertical growth. Vine crops such as cucumber, squash, and even melons can be trained to a trellis rather than allowed to sprawl across the ground. In the case of squash and melons, both of which have large fruit, individual fruit may need to be held up by a sling of plastic mesh or nylon hose for additional

not grow tomatoes (and related crops such as potatoes, peppers, and eggplants) in the same bed for more than three years. Give the plants a break from tomatoes (and related crops) for a couple of years by moving them to another bed, growing them in a container, or not growing them at all. This will prevent pests from building up in the soil. High numbers that will eventually affect the performance of your plants. An alternative to this practice is to remove and amend soil mix to three years when the same plants are being grown in the same space.

Care and Maintenance

One of the benefits of raised beds is that the plants are elevated, making weeding and less stooping is required for maintenance and harvest of

Table 1. Cost comparison of material to construct the frame of a 4 foot x 4 foot x 12 inch raised bed

Item Description	Cost Per Item (\$)*	Quantity	Adjusted Cost
Pressure Treated Lumber 4' x 4' x 12" Raised Bed			
2" x 12" x 8' Pressure Treated lumber	13.97	2	27.94
4" x 4" x 8' Treated post for corner bracing	8.17	0.5	4.09
Galvanized 1/4" x 3" lag screw	0.63	16	10.08
Galvanized 1/4" flat washer	0.12	16	1.92
TOTAL			44.03
Pressure Treated Lumber 4' x 4' x 12" Raised Bed			
5/4" x 6" x 8' Pressure Treated lumber	5.37	4	21.48
4" x 4" x 8' Treated post for corner bracing	8.17	0.5	4.09
Galvanized 1/4" x 3" lag screw	0.63	32	20.16
Galvanized 1/4" flat washer	0.12	32	3.84
TOTAL			49.57
Composite Decking 4' x 4' x 12" Raised Bed			
1" x 5.5" x 8' composite deck material	17.97	4	71.88
4" x 4" x 8' Treated post for corner bracing	8.17	0.5	4.09
Galvanized 1/4" x 3" lag screw	0.63	32	20.16
Galvanized Steel 1/4" flat washer	0.12	32	3.84
TOTAL			99.97
Cedar Board 4' x 4' x 12" Raised Bed			
1" x 6" x 8' Cedar board	18.57	4	74.28
4" x 4" x 8' Treated post for corner bracing	8.17	0.5	4.09
Galvanized 1/4" x 3" lag screw	0.63	32	20.16
Galvanized Steel 1/4" flat washer	0.12	32	3.84
TOTAL			102.37
Concrete Block 4' x 4' x 12" Raised Bed			
16" x 8" x 8" Concrete block (Hollow for base)	1.35	12	16.20
16" x 8" x 4" Concrete block (Solid for top cap)	1.34	12	16.08
TOTAL			32.28

*Costs obtained September 2016

Raised Beds

- Any vegetable or fruit
- Improves drainage
- Warms quicker
- Easier to work in??





PALLET VERTICAL GROW WALL



Self Sufficient Me





Winter cover crops and
kale

UK Arboretum





Atlanta Botanical
Garden amphitheater
of vegetables





Rake in leaves or
add straw

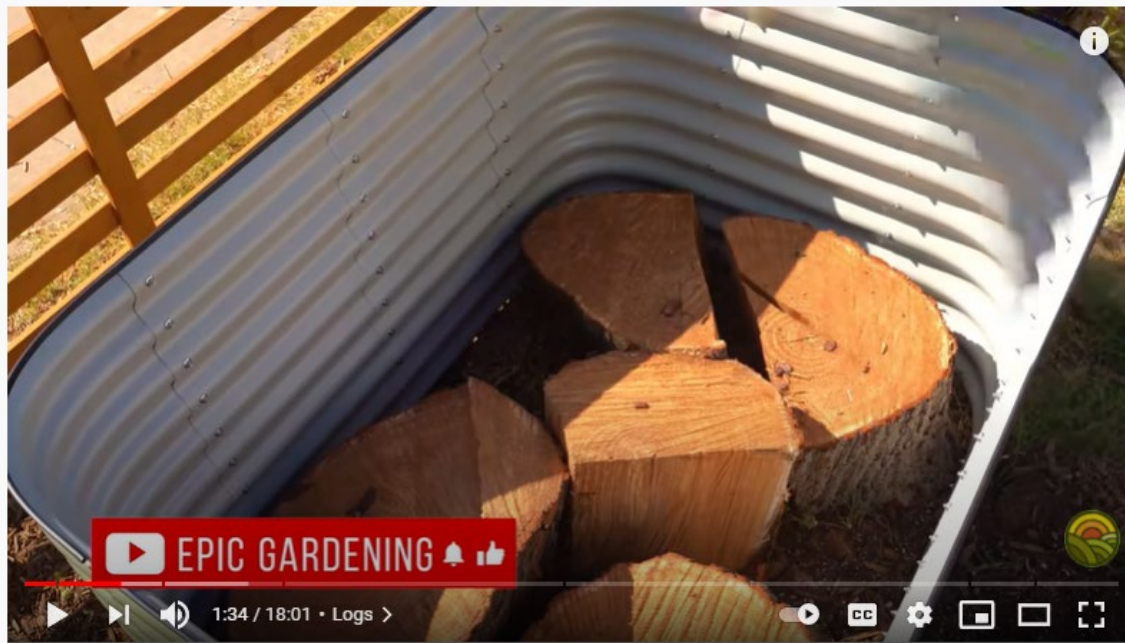


Add more compost as
needed

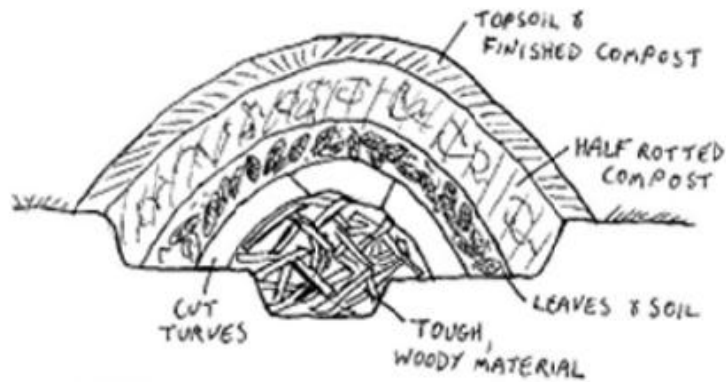
What about the Soil??

RECIPES

- Per UK pub $\leq 25\%$ soil, 75% organic amendments
 - Coir
 - Peat
 - Compost
- Avoid using $>75\%$ compost
- Lamp' l 50% soil, 25% compost, 25% OM
- Mel' s Mix $\frac{1}{3}$ peat/coir, $\frac{1}{3}$ vermiculite, $\frac{1}{3}$ compost blend

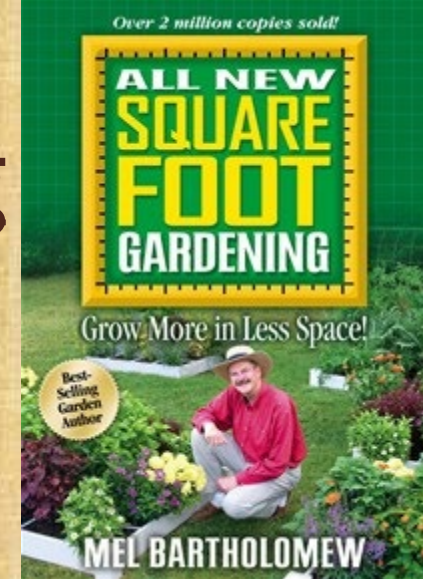


- Incorporate hugelkultur techniques if bed is about 30+ inches deep



SAN DIEGO

Square Foot Gardening



- Principle #1:
uses 20% space
to grow same
amt compared
to traditional
rows

Square Foot Gardening

- Principle #2:
only need 6”
of mix to
grow plants
in



Square Foot Gardening

- Principle #3:
4' X 4'
— can easily reach
across and tend



- ✓ 1 cabbage
- ✓ 1 broccoli
- ✓ 1 cauliflower
- ✓ 4 heads romaine
- ✓ 4 heads leaf lettuce
- ✓ 16 onions
- ✓ 4 heads salad lettuce
- ✓ 4 bunches chard
- ✓ 9 bunches spinach
- ✓ 16 carrots
- ✓ 9 beets
- ✓ 16 radishes
- ✓ 1 pepper
- ✓ 1 tomato (dwarf or determinate varieties)

Square Foot Gardening

- Important to make the squares



Square Foot Gardening

- Materials needed to make the beds
 - Plastic or recycled plastic lumber
 - Lasts forever but more \$\$ up front
 - Untreated lumber*
 - Will need replacement but cheaper up front
 - Concrete blocks
 - Can get these for free, lasts forever
 - Straw bales
 - Weed free bales



* Black locust, osage orange, catalpa, cedar, sassafras, bald cypress

What Wood is Safe to Use in My Garden?

By Dr. Leigh Whittinghill, Assistant Professor of Urban Agriculture

Pallets

Pallets are readily available and versatile. They can be used to make horizontal or vertical gardens or repurposed as many other things. When selecting a pallet for use, there are a few things you should consider:

- First, look for the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC) logo. The IPPC developed the International Standards for Phytosanitary Measures No. 15 (ISPM 15). This is a standard that requires all solid wood packaging material to be treated and marked to prevent the spread of disease and insect pests. If you can't find this logo, it is best to avoid using the pallet because you will not have clear information



Square Foot Gardening

- Materials to go in the bed
 - Sphagnum peat moss
 - Compost (from 3 to 5 different manufacturers)
 - Vermiculite
- 1:1:1 mixture by volume
- Weed mat



SFG dedicated to
fingerling potatoes



Be sure to do a
better job of
keeping a weed-
free swath around
the bed

Garlic

Broccoli & cabbage, spinach
on corners, kale in others

Weed-free area
around the bed



Spinach on ends, kale in
middle 2

Broccoli & cabbage spaced 1
plant per square

Potatoes 4 per square

High rise (also called
top hat) below



Potatoes in grow bags
and sq ft garden

Potatoes in SFG prior to harvest

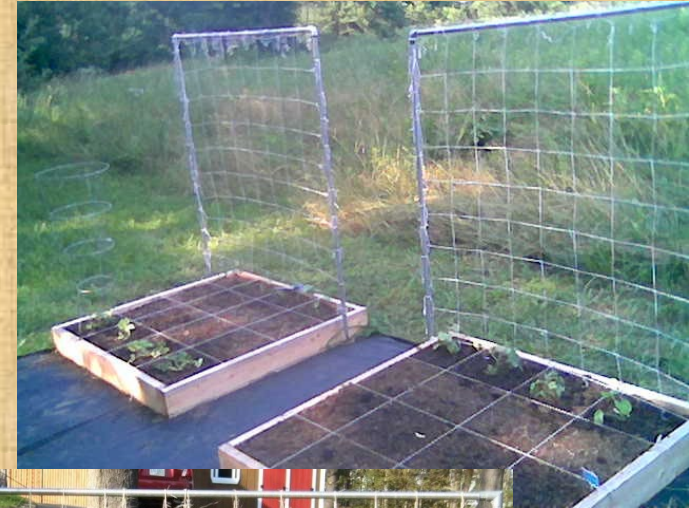


2012 temps over 100°F
SFG produced more yield

Square Foot Gardening - Critters



Square Foot Gardening - Trellis



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Pre-Planned

Design Your Own

Planting & Care

Encyclopedia

To create your own garden, click **Plan Your Own Garden**. Just drag and drop crops to the planting grid and the planner fills in the number of plants.

Kitchen Garden Planner

Pest and Disease Directory

Rainfall Calculator

Zone Finder

Vegetable Encyclopedia

Soil Calculator

Plant to Plate

Choose from garden plans, complete with instructions and printable maps.

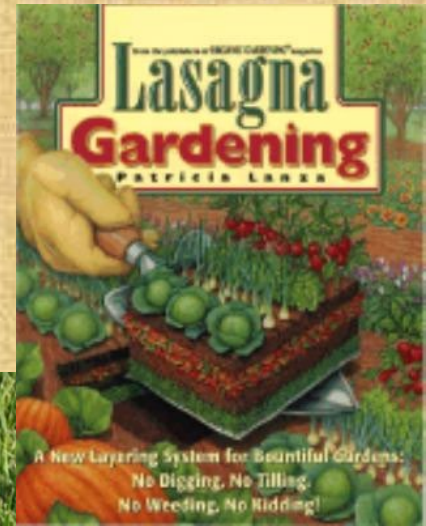
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Lasagna Gardening

- Layering of organic materials



Cardboard,
newspapers,
grass
clippings,
compost,
shredded
leaves, etc....

Mulch: 2-3" Wood Chips, Straw

4-6" of Cured Compost, Topsoil or Garden Soil

Browns

Greens

Browns

Greens: Veg Scraps, Manure, Grass Clippings,
Worm Casings, Hay, Compost, Coffee Grounds

Browns: Straw, Fall Leaves, Shredded
Paper, Pine Needles, Wood Chips

Wet Sheets of Cardboard or Newspaper

Soil Amendments: Gypsum, Peat Moss, Bone
Meal, Blood Meal, Coconut Coir, Rock Dust, etc.

Make layers until it's
about 12-18" tall

Let it cook either over the
winter (earthworms will
mix everything) or..



Water, cover with plastic in
early spring & let it cook
for a month or so



Keep weeds controlled
around your bed

Most lasagna gardens have
some sort of edging

Use same materials for
edging as for square
foot gardens



Straw Bale Gardening

Beth Wilson

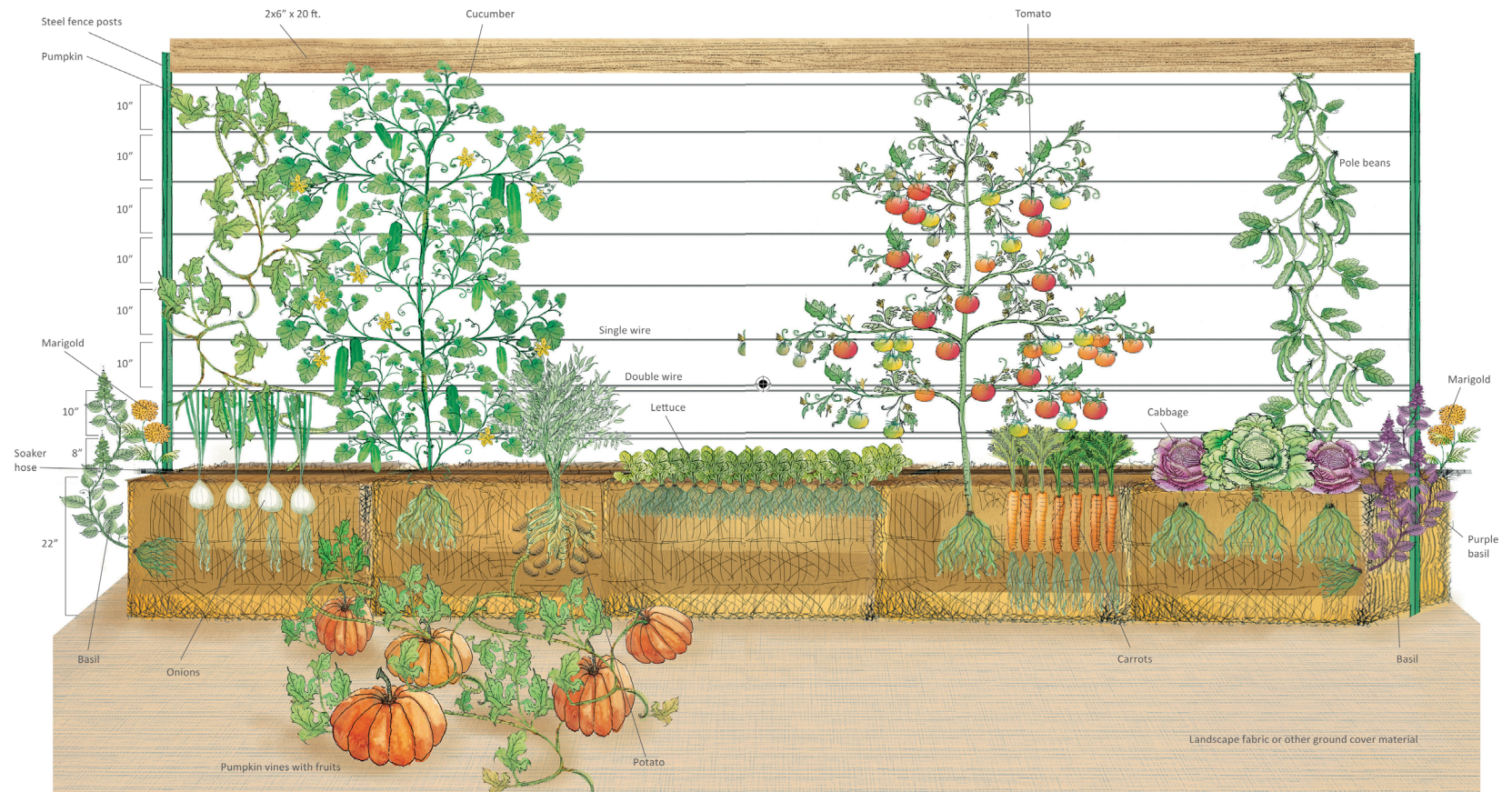
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Cross-section of a Straw Bale Garden (5-Bale)



What is straw bale gardening?

- It's a method of raising vegetables, herbs, and flowers planted directly into a straw bale
- You can also use hay, alfalfa, oat, or rye bales
- Straw is more common and generally cheaper and has less weed seeds
- Bales bound with poly twine work much better than bales with jute



Advantages?

- Bales are 2 feet tall, which makes them more accessible for gardeners who have trouble bending over
- The garden isn't permanent and can be moved
- Used bales can be used as mulch or composted



Advantages



- NO DIGGING!!!
- Poor or no soil not a problem
- Bales can be placed on pavement
- An inexpensive way to make a raised bed
- Less weeding
- Less soil disease problems

Disadvantages

- Requires more watering
- Time conditioning the bales
- Fertility can be an issue
- Bales may not hold up the entire season (twine)
- Depending on bale source and number needed can be expensive



Source/Cost of Bales



- Can be obtained from local farm stores
- Best method, directly from a farmer, generally will be cheaper too
- Average cost for just a few bales \$5.00 each
- Choose bales with poly twine that are baled tight
- You don't need grade A bales

Getting Started

- Bales have to be conditioned before planting
- Be sure bales are turned so that the cut end of the straw is pointing up, this allows water and fertilizer penetration
- Make sure the bales are where you want them, after they get wet they are very heavy!



Bale Conditioning

- Water the bales daily for three days to make sure water penetrates thoroughly
- Keeping the bales wet is very important
- On days 4, 5, and 6, sprinkle the top of each bale with $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of urea or ammonium sulfate and water in each time...or use a water soluble fertilizer at the label recommended rate...you can also do a variation of this.... 19-19-19
- Organic options include: 2 cups of blood meal, fish emulsion, Milorganite, compost/manure tea (may take 2-3 weeks for bale to heat up and cool down with this option)



Bale Conditioning



- Days 7, 8, 9, cut the amount of fertilizer applied in half and continue to water daily
- On day 10 stop adding fertilizer but continue to moisten the bales daily
- Day 11, feel the top of the bale for heat, an easy way is to push a meat thermometer into the bale.....if its over 99 Degrees F....continue to keep the bales moist until the temperature comes down
- Generally bales are ready to plant around day 12

Planting Methods

- Pockets or Holes: Create pockets or holes in the bale by removing straw
- Fill the holes with potting medium or compost....I like medium with fertilizer already added which will give your plants a boost
- The number of holes depends on what crops you plant (more on this later)



Planting Methods

- Flat straw bed: Spread potting medium or compost on top of the bale...3-4 inches is enough
- In both methods the planting medium is essential to get the plants off to a good start so they can root into the bale



Seeding and Transplanting

- Transplants or seeds can be planted with either method
- Flat beds work best for seeding things like lettuce, beets, and radish etc. that will have closer spacing
- Larger seeded plants like watermelon, cucumber, zinnia, and sunflower can be planted with either method but pockets or holes saves potting medium
- With transplants the pocket type works best, it gets the roots down in the bale for a good start

Planting Guide

- The number of plants a bale can support depends on the ultimate size of the plants and the length of time they take to mature
- Tomatoes: 2-3 plants
- Peppers: 4 plants
- Squash: 2-3 plants
- Zucchini: 2-3 plants
- Vining melons and cucumbers: 4 plants
- Broccoli, Cabbage, Cauliflower: 4 plants
- Smaller plants such as radish, beet, lettuce etc. plant like you would in the soil (follow packet directions)





Keeping The Bales Upright







Watering

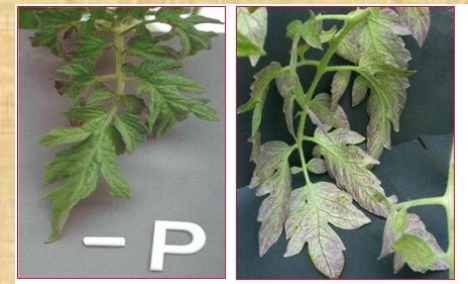
- Watering is the key to success on straw bales, water runs through the bale quickly
- Soaker hoses can be used but water must drip right against the plant
- Manual sprinkling works best but avoid wetting the leaves
- Milk jugs with small holes can be filled and set next the plants, water will drip out slowly and water the plants
- It would be very difficult to over water plants in straw bales



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Fertilization

- Adequate nutrition is critical to success in straw bale gardening
- Nitrogen gets tied up in the bale and can become low as will phosphorus and potassium.....water once per week with a water soluble fertilizer
- Signs of nutrient deficiency:
 1. yellowing leaves = nitrogen deficiency
 2. Purpling leaves = phosphorus deficiency
 3. brown edging of leaves = potassium deficiency



Fertilization



Weed Control

- Very little!
- If you use wheat straw there will be some wheat seed germination but it is easily pulled out
- If using hay there will be a lot more weed seeds that will grow from your bale and later it will be in your compost or mulch
- Avoid using compost or manure unless you know it is weed free



Pest Control

- Ground dwelling pests such as grubs, cut worms, fusarium and verticillium wilt we be little to now problem
- Bales are generally used only one season and helps to keep pest life cycles disrupted
- Still have cabbage worms though!



Placement of Bales

- Depends on what you grow....sun for sun loving plants, shade for shade loving...or tiered



Season Extension?



Recycling Bales

- In Kentucky bales will last only one season but you can get more than one crop in on a particular bale
- Used bales can be used as mulch or composted for future use
- Avoid using bales for mulch around the same plant families that were growing in them previously





Melons



Potatoes

Cuke, Squash, Pepper



Cuke, Squash, Beans



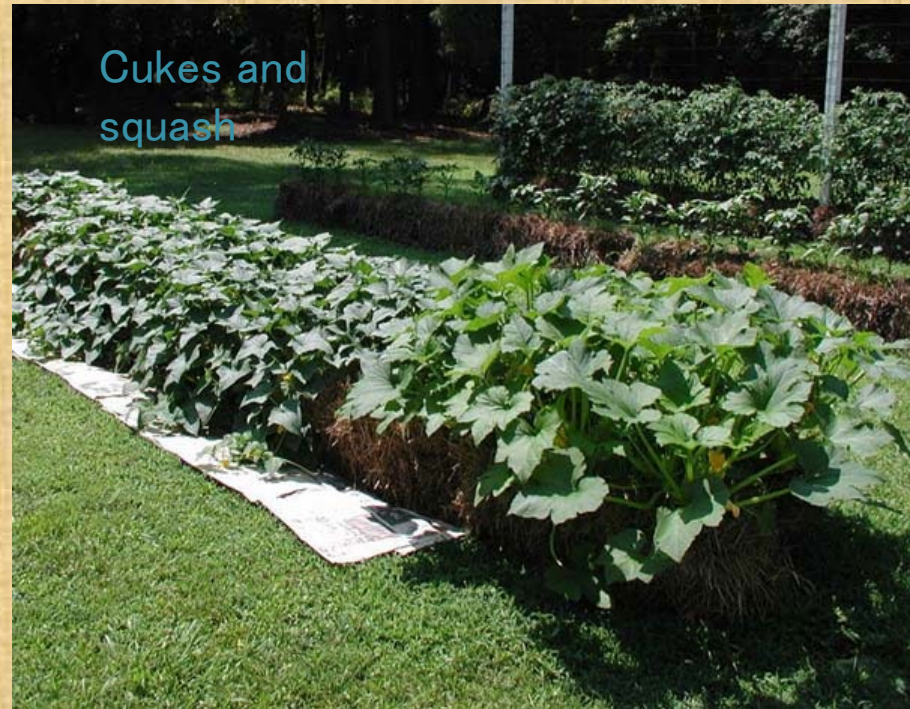
Strawberry Tower



Tomatoes with trellis



Cukes and
squash



Nothing wrong with some flowers...



BEFORE AND AFTER



Questions?



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