

Raise it up a Notch

With Raised Garden Beds

Info Sheet

Whether planting flowers, herbs or vegetables, raised gardens can make gardening easier by reducing the need to bend or stoop. Keeping small plants in hanging baskets at a comfortable height is also a good technique for pain-free gardening. Not only do raised beds help make gardening more accessible, they can also help eliminate problems related to soil quality, drainage or pests.

Size and Shape

Raised garden bed designs are almost limitless. You can pick a height that makes it easier for you to garden and choose a shape that fits in with your landscape. Raised beds with wide borders can offer a place to sit while working. The width of the bed should be narrow enough to allow the gardener to work without straining or reaching. You can build a raised bed high enough to stand at, or design a bed to slip your knees under while sitting. Raised garden beds can also be designed to be wheelchair-accessible.



Water

Build your accessible garden near your water source to make watering easier. Use stones or cement around the spigot to ensure that the ground is not muddy. Keep in mind that raised gardens require more watering than conventional gardens.

Path

Use cement, concrete or bricks around your raised garden to make the walkway more accessible for rolling carts or wheelchairs. This will also keep the area from becoming muddy.

For more information, contact your local Cooperative Extension Service or visit www.uaex.edu

Raised Garden Beds

The raised garden bed described here is built with lumber. The sides are constructed of 2 x 4 boards with 4 x 4 posts at the corners, and the bottom is open to the ground. This is a basic container, but you can build your garden bed from almost anything—including stone, concrete blocks, logs, or even just a pile of soil. Additionally, you can construct a raised bed with legs and a bottom—similar to a table—and place it on a deck for easy access.

Selecting the Location

- Make sure you choose an appropriate location for the raised garden bed.
- The area should have easy access to water sources and allow enough room for you to work.

Preparing the Site

- A flat, level area is important.
- Make sure that the site has slight drainage away from the container.
- Clear the container area of sod and weeds.

Building the Container

- Cut the 2x4s and 4x4s to length. The recommended width is no more than 4 feet; however, select a length that will best suit your needs.
- Attach the first side of 2x4s to two 4x4s. Make sure the 2x4s are flush with the top and sides of the 4x4s.
- Build the opposite side the same way.
- Add the remaining 2x4s to the ends of the constructed sides to form a box within the recommended width.

