
How to Make a Raised Garden Bed Using Recycled Materials

DIY Earth Day Project-Environmental Science 12
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Introduction

For this DIY project I am going to show how people can build their own raised garden bed using mostly recycled materials from around the house. We built a 4'x8' planter but the same technique can be used to build whatever size you like or have materials for in your woodpile, garage, or workroom. These beds are awesome for growing your own vegetables and berries!

Tool use should be supervised and remember to have fun!



Step One:

Planning, Materials, Location, Tools

I recommend that you take the time to sketch out your design on a piece of paper before you do any construction.

Include the location of the bed in your yard as well as the dimensions of the bed that you are planning to build.

TIP: Check out what materials you have around the house before you start, then you will know how big or small a bed you can build.

Materials for a 4x8 foot Bed

It took four pieces of lumber:

3 pieces 2"x8"x8' and 1 piece 4"x4" x6'

2 for the sides which was 8 feet long and 1 eight foot plank cut in half for the two ends.

The 4"x4" piece was used for the corner posts and the center support.

Also, landscape fabric was used on the bottom after the frame was built.

TIP: The landscape fabric keeps weeds from growing up into the bed!

Location: Plan where you have some space for the garden bed(s). If you have a big yard then space is not an issue but factor in the sun. In other words, put the bed in a flat spot where it will get a good sun (do your best with the space you have). Also, make sure you can access water easily for your bed with a hose or watering can.

TIP: the south side of your home usually gets the most sun.



Tools:

- Power drill and wood screws
- Power saw
- Hammer and nails
- Wood clamps
- Tape measure, pencil, square
- Scissors or something sharp
- Shovel, gloves
- Safety Equipment, safety glasses for example



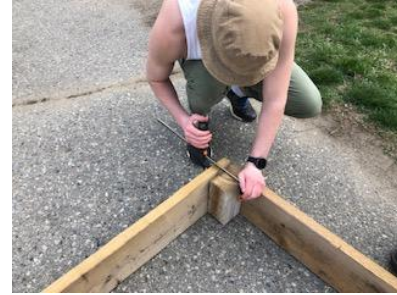
Step Two: Building

The construction of the garden bed starts with building the wooden frame. Measure each piece of wood by using a measuring tape, square and a pencil. Make marks on the wood that needs to be cut. For example, mark the two ends and the corner posts. The posts should be cut at the length of the width of the wooden plank. The ends should be sawed in half. Make sure you have safety glasses on when you are using a power saw. The center support can be cut from the same wood that was used for the posts limiting waste!

TIP: when cutting wood have a helper support long pieces.



Once you have the wood for the bed cut to size, prepare the power drill and wood screws for securing the frame. Then use the two of the posts and take one of the ends, use the screws (two per post) to attach the posts to the ends of the wood, making the start of the frame. Then do the same thing to the other two posts and end piece.



You will have the two sides (long pieces) left, the ends with the posts are now used to screw on the sides. You might need to use some wood clamps to help hold the frame together. Make sure your frame is square, finish off the frame with the center support, by using the saw and cutting to length the inside distance from the bed, side to side. Then screw the support in the middle of the bed to create a strong frame.





You are almost done building the garden bed. Using landscape fabric you can save time by not weeding as much. Pick which side of the frame you would prefer to be on the bottom, and then cut the fabric with scissors to the size of the frame. Use nails or staples to attach the fabric to the bottom of the bed.



TIP: use a sheet of plywood if you want to elevate the bed



Step Three: Placing the Bed

After the frame and landscape fabric is done, move the garden bed to the location you are planning to use it in (maybe get a partner or friend to help move it).



Step Four: Add Soil



Make sure to fill the bed with good quality soil to help your plants grow well. Either get the soil from a local garden store, which would probably be bagged or order the soil in bulk to save money and avoid the plastic bag. Good quality soil can last for years, by keeping up with it and topping it off with new soil or using compost.

Fill the garden bed up to at least $\frac{2}{3}$, but don't over fill the soil to the rim or some of the soil could leak out.

TIP: add mulch to your soil to help it retain moisture

Step Five: Planting

Congratulations you have built a raised garden bed! Now it's ready for the growing season. Plant your vegetables. Use your garden bed for being more self sustainable by growing your own food and for a healthy, fun learning experience.

