



HYANNIS
COUNTRY GARDEN
Raised Bed Gardening

- The beauty of raised beds is having planting areas that you don't step on. This keeps soil structure intact. You can grow more plants in intensive spacing this way. Build them only 4 feet wide so that they can be tended from each side without stepping on the soil. Raised beds can be as deep as you want.
- Do not line the bottom with plastic or landscape fabric. Many plants will send roots into native soil. If possible, turn native soil and amend with compost/manure before building and filling raised beds. If you're concerned about weeds or roots, cover the bottom with newspapers after turning native soil.
- Fill beds with real soil/loam mixed with compost/manure. Do not use potting soil. Use compost instead of peat although coconut coir is fine to add to the compost/manure. Use at least $\frac{3}{4}$ loam to $\frac{1}{4}$ compost. There are soil calculators online for determining how much loam you'll need for your beds.
- Mound the soil up a bit the first year – it will settle at least 2 to 3 inches over the first season.
- Replenish soil with compost/manure annually or mix in chopped leaves in the fall. Every four or five years you may want to add more loam. Deeper soil = deeper, stronger roots.
- For areas with several raised beds, you can either have the spaces between bed as lawn or mulch these areas using newspaper/catalogs with mulch on top.
- As with all vegetable/annual/perennial gardens, deep soaking less often is better than a little every day. (Attention: Hand watering is never deep enough!)
- It's possible in well-amended raised beds to plant things very thickly – this produces a good crop and shades out weeds. You can cut recommended planting distances in half, except for root crops.

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