



Bucks Country Gardens

The Raised Garden

Working in a garden is a truly enjoyable experience for all people. Unfortunately, some people cannot bend over or work on their hands and knees due to health problems. What our little garden illustrates is that, even if you are confined to a wheelchair, you can have a beautiful blooming garden. A raised garden eliminates back and leg strain, allowing you to work in the soil from a standing or sitting position.

Here are a few tips for growing in raised beds:

In Construction

Use a pressure-treated, rot resistant wood, fiberglass, or other material that can withstand moisture and soil. Be sure the frame is at least 9-inches deep, with 12-15 inches even better. The bottom of your structure must have drain holes. If you are building a raised garden for a person in a wheelchair, make sure that person can reach the center of the frame easily so that they can use all the space available.

SOIL

Use a good soil mixture, as the soil in a raised bed dries more quickly than the ground does. We suggest a mixture of equal parts of soil, sand, and peat, with cow manure added. Fill the frame, water in and allow soil to settle before planting.

WATER

Be prepared to water your garden in hot weather just as you would potted plants. Watering systems that use a drip irrigation method can be adapted to your beds. You can even put it on a timer to water automatically.

FERTILIZING

Because the drainage in a raised bed is so good, the soil is depleted of nutrients much faster than a regular soil. Depending on your crop, use a balanced liquid formula, or mix a 5-10-10 formula in when planting. A slow release formula will fertilize for 3-4 months – which is ideal for a raised garden.

WHAT TO GROW

Just about anything that you grow in a regular garden can be grown in a raised garden. Even corn, if you're prepared to protect it from wind and keep up with the watering! With vegetables, we suggest growing the dwarf and bush varieties, to save on space. Cucumbers can be grown on a trellis or allowed to cascade over the side of the garden. A mixture of vegetables and flowers is both useful and attractive. Plants, like mini roses, can be grown. Try plunging the pots into your garden, and then taking them out as fall approaches. No matter what your gardening interests, you can adapt them to raised gardening.

Gardening is a joy that all people should experience. In our country today, there is a surge towards the use of gardening as therapy for mentally disturbed patients. Growing a plant, watching it respond to the human touch, is very rewarding. Perhaps someone you know would benefit from the good feelings created by a growing, productive garden.