

Create A Garden Bed

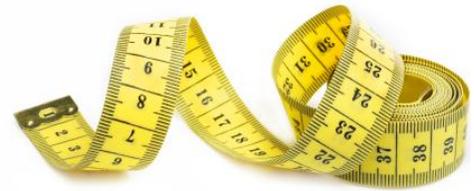
This step by step guide will help you as you create and plant your garden bed. By breaking down this process you can see how this potentially overwhelming experience will be a fun project.



Step 1: Plan & Design

When designing your garden bed there are a few things to consider. If it is an Island Bed, meaning you can walk completely around it, you will need a center focal point. This can be anything from a shrub to a tall ornamental grass. A border garden is typically viewed from one side and has a backdrop such as a wall or a fence.

Measuring out the garden space will give you a rough estimate of how many plants you will need. After analyzing the shape and size of the garden you should also take note of how many of each plant's growing habits you will need. For example, if it is a border garden, lining the back row with height is a good idea. Leave the bulk of the garden for average height plants, with colourful blooms and a mounding growth habit. The front of the bed is kept best for low growing 'creeping' plants.



You should also examine the external conditions of that garden location. This includes its sun exposure, air movement and soil drainage. Lastly, before choosing your plants, have a colour palette or theme in mind. This will help narrow down the many plant varieties available.

Step 2: The Right Plant For The Right Place

Just by simply choosing the appropriate well suited plants for your location, your life will be a lot easier. You can choose annuals, perennials or a mix of both. Just be sure all of your plants you choose meet your gardens requirements. For example, Portulaca or Sedum make the perfect plant for a [full sun](#) exposed garden that can tolerate drier soil conditions. Always take note of each plant's needs and care. Finally, you will want to check each plant's growing habit and size. Make sure you allow enough space between each plant so no two plants compete with each other. For instance you do not want a taller plant blocking a low growing plant. Double check the size of your garden versus the amount of plants, taking into consideration their growing size. This will ensure you have chosen the correct amount of plants.

Step 3: Prepare The Soil

It is always a good idea to add compost, manure or triple mix to the existing soil in your garden bed. Not only does this top up your garden it also revitalizes and adds nutrients to the current soil. Just like people who need vitamins to stay nourished, a healthy happy plant begins with the nutrients in the soil. Use a shovel or rake to mix and blend the fresh soil, you will want to dig up about 12 inches deep. Be careful to not over apply manure.



Step 4: Arrange & Plant

Now that the bed is prepared, it is very helpful to arrange your plants while they are still in their original pot. This is one last check to see if you left an amount of space between each plant that you are satisfied with. It also visually allows you to see how it looks all together. Now is the time to make any last minute changes if you are not happy with the layout. By prearranging your plants you will speed up planting as everything is organized and ready to go!

To plant, dig a hole twice as large as its current pot, this promotes air movement in the soil for proper root growth. Add a small amount of water to the bottom of the hole before placing your plant in. Slow release fertilizer works best if applied as a top dress after the hole is filled with the remaining soil.



Planting Tips:

- Squeeze the bottom of the pot so the plant comes out easier rather than pulling from the stem
- Sometimes less is more! Fewer varieties and more of them may be more effective than scattered varieties.

Step 5: Mulch It

After your planting is complete it is a good idea to spread mulch. Not only will this add a decorative layer to your garden it also naturally prevents weeds from growing. Mulch is also great at keeping moisture in the soil, which means less watering for you!



Step 6: Water + Feed

For the first week keep a close eye on new plants as they tend to wilt quicker than established plants with strong roots. Routine watering is a must a couple times a week but you may have to water more frequently through the hot dry summer months. It is best to feed every 7 to 14 days with a liquid fertilizer in addition to the slow release pellets you added while planting.



Step 7: Maintenance

Depending on the plants in your garden you may need to [prune, dead head](#) or cut back if they begin to look leggy. This often occurs when the plants are maturing, during the summer months. Light trimming will encourage new growth with even more blooms for a longer time period. This will guarantee they are always looking their healthiest and best.