

Could Raised Bed Gardening Multiply Your Yields?

Have you ever noticed plants growing inside rectangular wooden frames? It's called raised bed gardening. This alternative method for growing plants raises them above the garden's normal soil level. Soil may be mixed in with tilled ground below or placed directly on untilled soil.

Raised beds are popular because they are beneficial in several ways. The most amazing plus they provide is increased productivity. You expect from two to three times the produce from the same square footage of space. Essentially you eliminate the need for pathways and rows, and can devote the entire area to plant growing.

There's another benefit to raised bed gardening. You have much greater control over soil conditions. And you can improve them more rapidly. It doesn't really matter how poor your existing soil is. For example, soils with high sand or clay content can really make gardening a challenge. But with raised beds you simply add purchased or created soil to your frame and you're ready to grow!

Raised bed gardening pretty much eliminates any concerns about weeds. Finding and removing weeds in the smaller enclosed space of the raised bed is much easier. And chances are you'll have fewer weeds overall. Your added soil will have fewer weed seeds, and the existing soil is buried too deeply for weeds to sprout through.

You may not have considered this before, but there's really no limit to how high you can raise a bed. All you have to do is put a bottom on the frame. Then the raised bed can be placed on a table allowing access by those who might have trouble gardening. The elderly and the handicapped can enjoy gardening without limitations.

Raised bed gardening was popularized by a program called Square Foot Gardening. Developed by Mel Bartholomew, the associated book and TV series presented a system that only needed a fifth of the space required by traditional gardens.

This system divided the bed into sections. Plants of different sizes are assigned to different sections. Overall, the system requires fewer seeds and less water. Even better, the garden beds are organic and practically weed-free. But the primary selling point was the five-fold increase in productivity.

Other grid system raised bed gardens have been introduced. Cubed Foot Gardening operates on the same basic principles as Square Foot Gardening. It's creator, Christopher O. Bird, even won the endorsement of Bartholomew for his system.

However, grid systems like this aren't necessary to access the benefits of raised bed gardening. From herbs to vegetables to wildflowers, raised bed gardens provide a flexible way to enjoy the benefits of gardening without many of the headaches.

About the Author

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