

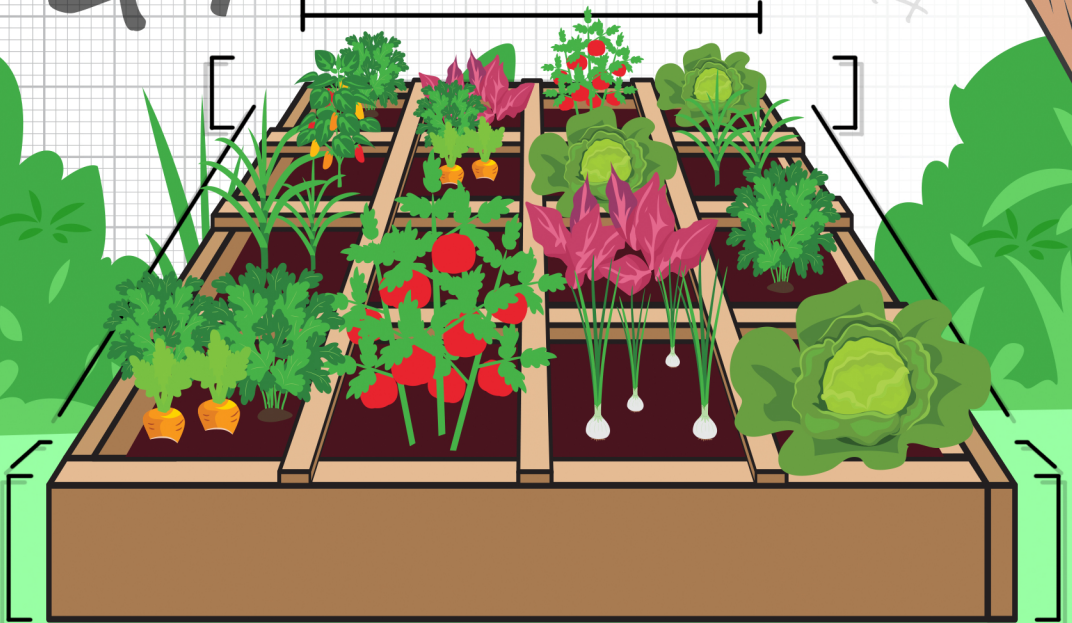
INSTANT

BOX GARDEN

BLUEPRINT

4'x4'

4'x4'



INSTANT
BOX GARDEN
BLUEPRINT



ALTERNATIVE
DAILY

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“The first supermarket supposedly appeared on the American landscape in 1946. That is not very long ago. Until then, where was all the food? Dear folks, the food was in homes, gardens, local fields, and forests. It was near kitchens, near tables, near bedsides. It was in the pantry, the cellar, the backyard.”

– Joel Salatin

Have you always wanted to grow fresh and delicious vegetables, healthy herbs and beautiful flowers but only have limited space? Maybe you live in an apartment and only have a small balcony. Don't be discouraged, it is easy to have enough food to feed your family as well as herbs, flowers and even fruit in a simple box style garden. All you need is a small space - no bigger than 6'x6' and a few supplies to make a raised box for plants. You will be amazed at how much fresh food you can grow in a very small space, how easy it is to tend your garden, and how much fun you will have growing your own food, herbs, and flowers.

The best news of all is that you don't have to have a green thumb or have ever grown a plant before in your life to be successful at box gardening. This method is so simple that your kids can do it!

What are you waiting for! Are you ready to create your very own simple box garden?



WHAT IS SIMPLE BOX GARDENING?

Traditional gardens are planted in long rows in the soil and generally require quite a bit of space and tending to be successful. You have to clear a space, amend your soil and be diligent to keep weeds away. In short, conventional gardening can be kind of backbreaking and this is why many people never create a home garden of their own.

Growing plants in a simple raised bed is also known as intensive or friendship gardening. This style of growing is based on the idea that there are a number of plants that actually like to grow close together and do better when planted this way, a simple box garden is a raised bed with sixteen one-inch growing boxes that offer the ability for crops to be planted in succession throughout the growing season. This type of gardening makes growing food for yourself and an entire family easy in a very small space. Even those with no backyard can be successful with this type of growing method.





WHAT ARE THE ADVANTAGES OF BOX GARDENING?

There are quite a few advantages of box gardening over traditional gardening methods including:

Toxic Free

Because of the nature of this small space gardening system, there is little or no need for chemicals for pest control or fertilization. The planting rotation is done in such a way as to avoid the use of anything artificial. In addition, friendship planting ensures that plants get everything that they need to be strong and robust, helping them repel pests and disease.

Convenience

As mentioned, box gardening can be done in a very small space, making it a convenient way for anyone to grow food. Even if you live in an apartment or have a tiny patio space, you can have a robust garden. If you have always been too busy in the past to tend a garden, this is the answer since it requires little time to tend. There are fewer weeds and those that do appear are much easier to pull out because the soil is not packed hard by foot traffic.



Economical

When you grow a conventional garden there tends to be quite a bit of waste. With box gardening, nothing goes to waste and each box of robust crops provides more than enough food to feed a small family. You won't miss the traditional expenses associated with conventional gardens such as irrigation, fertilizers, and pesticides. With this zero waste garden model you will use all you grow!

Accessible

One of the great things about box gardening is that anyone can do it. This form of gardening makes it easy for the young or old to grow a bountiful harvest. Gardens can be adapted and raised so that persons with back or knee problems or those in a wheelchair can also grow a garden.



Portable

The simple design of this garden makes it easy to pick up and move. If you are interested in moving a conventional garden it takes quite a bit of effort to find a new location and create a suitable growing space.

Healthy

Not only is growing your own produce awesome for your physical health but there is also a great deal of research supporting the fact that tending a garden has a host of therapeutic benefits that are enhanced by the fact that planting a garden is so easy. Spending just a little time each day taking care of your garden is relaxing and can reduce stress after a hard day's work.

Variety

Because of the rotational nature of this type of gardening, you can enjoy a variety of fresh produce all through the growing season.

Extended Growing Season

Boxed gardens are raised slightly above the ground, in some cases quite a bit above the ground. This creates favorable growing conditions for plants which allows you to enjoy a fresh harvest well after conventional gardens have petered out for the season.



Better Soil

Conventional gardening soil often requires a great deal of amending and monitoring to get it just right. One of the best things about square box gardening is that you can control the quality of the soil from the very beginning, and keeping it healthy is pretty easy. Creating your own “best” soil mixture will give your plants everything they need to be healthy and productive.

Environmentally Friendly

Growing your own food is environmentally friendly. A tremendous amount of fuel is used to harvest, store, and transport produce to your local grocery store, not to mention all the waste used for packaging etc., Not only does growing your own food provide you and your family with fresh food, but it also reduces your carbon footprint. Now that’s something you can feel good about.

One 4x4 box garden will supply enough produce for a adult to have one salad a day throughout the growing season



INSTANT BOX GARDENING SETUP

The classic square box gardening setup is so easy that anyone can do it.

STEP ONE: SELECT A LOCATION FOR YOUR BOX

If you are growing food, you will want your box to be in a place where it receives 6-8 hours of sun each day. This meets most requirements for food and you can easily construct a shade over your bed if necessary. Make sure that your location is level and away from trees and shrubs that will shade the box.



STEP TWO: BUILD A 4'X4' SQUARE BOX

The great thing about box gardening is that you can use any number of materials to construct a box. Untreated wood like cedar, pine or fir works great. Equally effective are cement blocks, bricks or composite wood.

You can build your box whatever height you would like, keeping in mind that a 6" frame is generally deep enough for most crops, but a side height of 3 feet will reduce bending over.

Note: If you want your box to be portable, you will need to construct a bottom. If you are planning on placing your box directly on the ground, be sure to lay down a weed mat first to keep weeds from growing up.



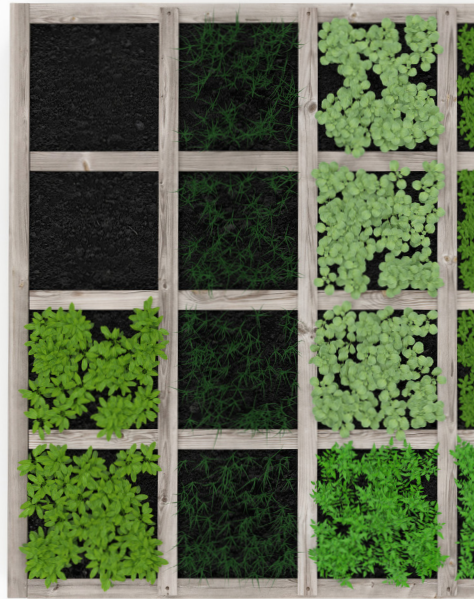
STEP THREE: FILL YOUR BED UP WITH GOOD STUFF

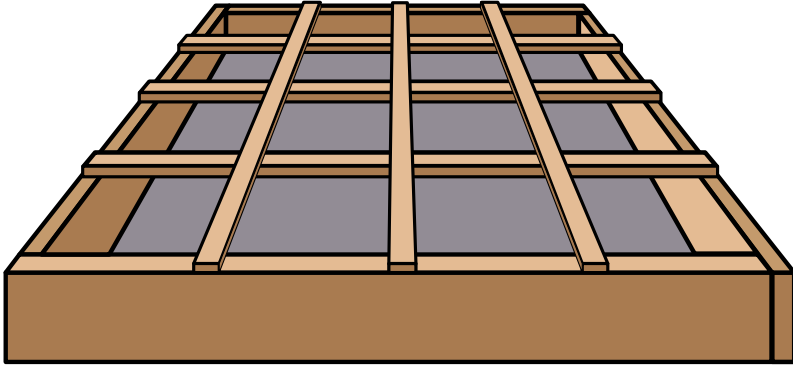
Good stuff means incredibly high-quality soil and compost that will give your plants the best nutrients possible. Here is a good ratio to follow:

- coarse grade vermiculite
- coconut coir
- organic compost

STEP FOUR: MAKE AND PLACE YOUR GRID

Don't overcomplicate this step. This grid provides 16 evenly spaced growing boxes where you will organize your seeds and plants. Whatever you do, don't skip this step! Once you have completed your grid, place it on top of the soil. Now you can clearly see where to place seeds and plants. When you are ready to plant, simply made a hole using a pencil or hand trowel and plant away!





MAKE YOUR OWN INSTANT BOX GARDEN WITHOUT A BOTTOM

What you need

BOX

- 2 pieces of 2"x6"x8' redwood, cut in half
- 8 pieces of 6" wood screws
- Drill and drill bit
- Hand stapler (not for paper)
- 4ft wide landscape fabric or thick layers of cardboard

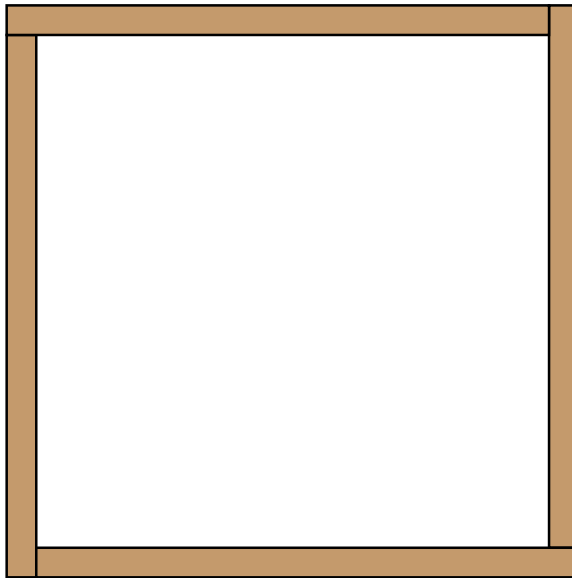
GRID

- 6 pieces, 1"x1" x 4' 1" ½" pre-cut wood
- Tape measure

To make it

BOX

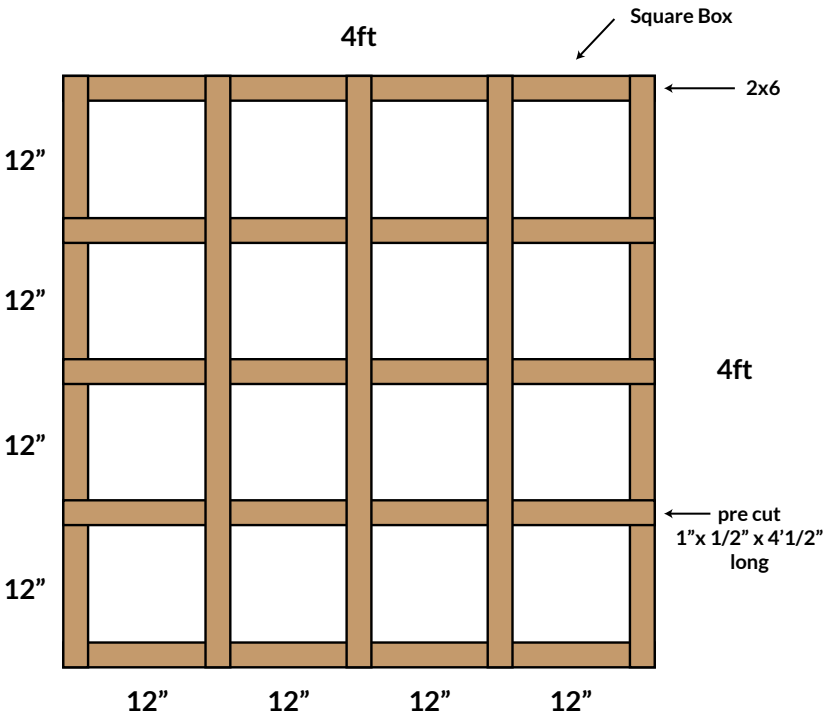
1. Lay the four pieces of wood on their sides and connect using the wood screws - to form a box.
2. Cut fabric longer 4" bigger all the way around than the box and staple it to the bottom securely.
3. Place the completed frame in a level area chosen for your garden.
4. Add soil mixture.

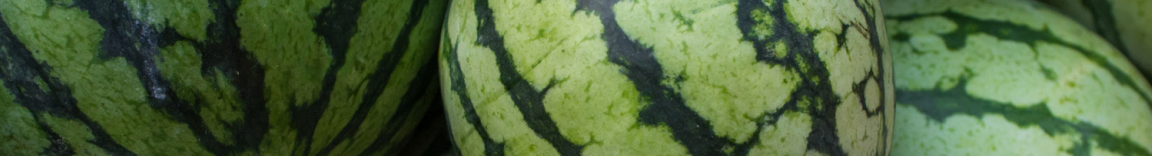


Attach Screw

GRID

1. Measure and place your grid pieces evenly across the soil to create 16 12" inch growing boxes.





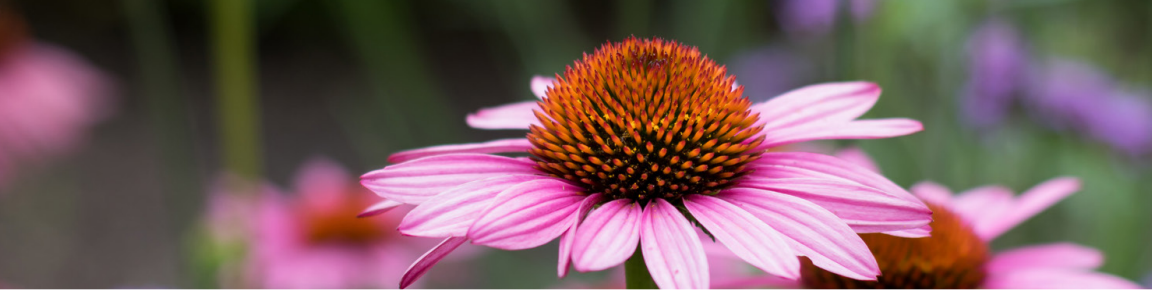
PLANTING RULES TO FOLLOW

How you organize your box garden will impact how well you use your space and what your harvest looks like. If you are a beginner, it is best to start simple and add variations as you get more comfortable with this intensive method of gardening.

- **Vertical growing** - Create vertical space using a trellis system to accommodate upward growing plants like pole beans, cucumbers, squash, melons, and even tomatoes.
- **All season harvest** - Each square in your garden can be replanted for a second and sometimes a third harvest. Of course, some grow boxes will produce all through the growing season - these you leave alone. However, for those that ripen and are harvested in a short like spinach, plant in a grow box that you can access for easy replanting.
- **Good Organization** - Organization is a big part of box gardening. It is important that taller plants don't tower over shorter plants and this is generally where a trellis system comes in handy. Tall species such as tomatoes are best on the northern side of the box while intermediate plants should go in the middle and small plants towards the south.

















There are endless variations in planting that can be done using this method of growing. The sample below is a great planting schedule for beginner gardeners living in a moderate climate and will produce a huge healthy harvest that will surprise even the most experienced gardeners.





EASY PEESY VARIETY BOX GARDEN

Although the sky is the limit as far as box planting, it is best to start small and simple if you are new to gardening. For the beginner, this garden will produce plenty of produce, herbs and beautiful flowers and give you a chance to grow your gardening confidence.

 1	 2	 3	 4
 5	 6	 7	 8
 9	 10	 11	 12
 13	 14	 15	 16





These plants correspond to the growing boxes (see diagram on previous page).

1. Pumpkin x 1
2. Purple Coneflowers (4)
3. Watermelon x 1
4. Sunflower x 1
5. Broccoli x 1
6. Eggplant x 1
7. Tomato x 1
8. Marigold x 4
9. Basil x 4
10. Lettuce x 4
11. Spinach x 9
12. Beets x 9
13. Bush beans x 9
14. Onions x 16
15. Carrots x 16
16. Radish x 16





TIPS FOR SUCCESS

Once you get the hang of box gardening, you will be hooked and ready to create more amazing gardens. Here are some tips to ensure your success:

AVOID WET AREAS

Avoid placing your garden box where it will be easily saturated with water. Not only will too much water compromise the structural components of your bed, but it will also spoil your gardening fun and plant quality. If you have no choice, add some sand to raise up the area where you wish to place your garden box. You can also build it off the ground by adding a bottom and some blocks or legs.

WATER

Garden boxes require less water than conventional gardens. Keep a five-gallon bucket of water next to each box and add one cupful of water per square per day unless you live in a very arid climate. If you have several boxes, consider a drip irrigation system.





BOX BOTTOM

If you need to build a bottom for your box use exterior $\frac{3}{4}$ inch thick sheathing grade plywood and cut it to fit the outer perimeter of the box. Attach with 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ " deck screws and drill $\frac{1}{4}$ " drainage holes evenly spaced every foot.

REPLANTING

In most but the coldest climates, you will be able to get two to three crops per year out of each grow box in your garden. Consider the two types of crops - cool-weather crops do best in early spring and the fall but not great in the heat of the summer. Warm, or hot weather crops need the heat to survive and don't do as well in the early spring and fall. One of the best things about box gardening is that you can grow a full crop of cool-season vegetables then a warm season crop and follow that up with a cool season fall crop. Do your homework when planning out your garden to maximize the space you have for an ultimate harvest.

PLANTING FROM SEEDS

Of course, you can plant from seeds or sow transplants. If you live in an area with a short growing season, transplants are recommended to save time. If you are new to gardening, it is best to wait until you have some experience to use seeds.

SET TRANSPLANTS CORRECTLY

For the healthiest plant, set transplants following these easy steps.

- Mark the grid for planting.
- Create a hole large enough for your transplants - sometimes a pencil works to make the hole. For larger plants, use a hand trowel.
- Remove transplant from the container being careful not to damage the roots.
- Place the transplant into the hole and gently pat down the soil to hold it in place.
- Create a small dip around the base of the plant that will hold water.
- Water the transplants gently and keep moist for several days until established.
- If you live in a very hot climate - provide a shade cloth for hot afternoon sun until transplants are established.

PLANT A COVER CROP

Don't let your box garden sit empty all winter but plant a cover crop at the end of the season such as a barley, oats or winter rye. This will put nutrients back into your soil.



THE SKY'S THE LIMIT

As mentioned earlier, the sky's the limit when it comes to the types of garden boxes and the theme of each box. There are dozens of adaptations of the basic box to suit every need, and you can grow food, herbs, flowers, and even succulents in a simple box garden.

Hopefully, you are excited and ready to take on your very first box garden! Your harvest awaits!