

# Raised Bed & Container Gardening

*A guide to growing vegetables and perennials in compact environments*



## Location

Full sun: 6 – 8 hours of sunlight will be best for most annual and perennial vegetables. Some backyard fruits, like raspberries and grapes, will also work in in-ground beds. Certain plants thrive in a more shaded spot. Choose a location that will meet the needs of each plant.

Terracing or leveling may need to be done to the proposed raised bed site.

## Size

There are virtually endless size options, however, the most recommended in-the-ground bed is no more than 4 ft wide. This avoids soil compaction by allowing access to the center of the bed without stepping into the bed. The length of such beds is at your discretion according to the space available.

Frame height is not to be confused with ground soil depth. The depth of the frame is irrelevant, as long as plant roots are able to develop into the depth of the ground soil. Plant perennials, plants that regrow each year, only in attached-to-the-ground beds and containers. The roots need the soil depth to protect them from harsh winter conditions.

Free-standing containers of all sizes allow flexibility, mobility, and space utility appropriate to your specific landscape. Keep the mature size of each particular annual plant in mind when choosing a container size. Anytime there is a bottom in this style of container, the depth of the container and soil is an important consideration.

## Soil

It is wise to keep the density of plant grouping and their nutrition needs in mind when choosing soils. Dense plantings need more nutrient-rich soil. Potting soil or raised bed soils are great choices when there is a bottom to the bed or container. Garden Soil is a great choice when adding to an in-ground bed. Always mix and introduce different soils to each other, especially when adding amendments, composts, or specific soils like garden or raised bed soils to ground soils.

## Water

Plants in a condensed area require routine monitoring and possible adjustments to the amount and frequency of water application, depending on the season and root sizes.

Choose any method of watering. Two methods that provide less water loss and more efficient application are drip irrigation and the soaker hose method.

# Mulch

Mulching soils is a beneficial step to regulate soil moisture, and soil temperature, and also provide weed control. Straw is a great mulch, it is easy to place near plants without covering or damaging the plant. Soil Pep or shredded cedar are also fine options, keeping in mind not to smother young plants. Move mulch off to the side when working the garden and replace it as a ground cover.

# Fertilizer

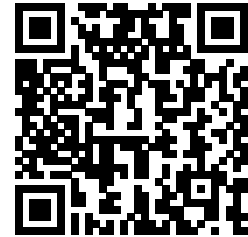
Add fertilizer according to each plant's needs. There are many choices available. Feed according to the growth stage and plant variety. There are also choices of application methods: Granular, liquid, and powder. Always follow the manufacturer's label.

# Season Extension

Colorado is known for its unpredictable weather. Raised bed frames make it quite easy to attach or reinforce a variety of protection options like fabrics and other materials. Some examples of these are frost blankets, hail cloth, shade cloth, and sometimes even a micro-mesh. Free-standing pots and containers are also easily covered or relocated away from the elements.

# Further Learning

[1839 – Raised Vegetable Bed – PlantTalk Colorado \(colostate.edu\)](#)



[1845 – Raised Bed Gardening – PlantTalk Colorado \(colostate.edu\)](#)

