

Raised Bed Building

Build contained, improved-soil growing beds above ground level

DIFFICULTY Easy–moderate

TYPE One-off build

TIME A weekend per bed



DIFFICULTY
Easy–moderate



TIME
1 day/bed



COST
Moderate



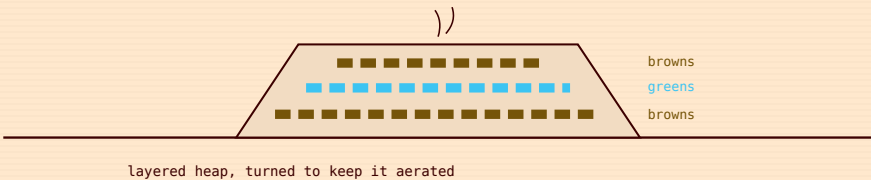
BEST SEASON
Any time, ideally
before a planting
season



FREQUENCY
Built once, used
for years

01 Layered fill, not just topsoil

A well-filled raised bed uses layers — coarser material at the base for drainage, then a quality soil/compost mix on top — rather than simply filling the whole depth with bagged garden soil.



02 What you'll need

- Untreated timber, corrugated metal, or another edging material
- Screws or brackets for corners
- Cardboard or weed mat for the base (optional, for weed suppression)
- A soil/compost mix to fill the bed

04 Troubleshooting

- **Bed drains poorly** — check the base isn't compacted, and that the fill mix has good structure, not just fine soil.
- **Timber rotting quickly** — avoid treated pine in contact with edible soil; choose naturally rot-resistant timber or a non-wood edging material instead.
- **Soil level dropping over time** — normal as organic matter breaks down; top up with compost each season.
- **Weeds coming through from below** — the cardboard/weed mat base wasn't thorough enough; overlap generously when laying it.

06 Tips & variations

PAIRS WELL WITH

No-Dig Gardening

Building Healthy Soil

COMMON MISTAKES

Using treated timber that can leach chemicals into edible soil

Filling entirely with fine soil, resulting in poor drainage

PRO TIP

A bed no wider than 1.2m lets you reach the centre from either side without ever stepping on and compacting the soil.

03 Method

1. Choose a level, sunny site and mark out the bed dimensions.
2. Build or assemble the frame from your chosen material.
3. Lay cardboard or weed mat at the base if building on grass or weedy ground.
4. Fill with a quality soil and compost mix, leaving a couple of centimetres below the top edge.
5. Water in well and let settle for a few days before planting.

05 Timing & maintenance

BEST TIME	Any time, though building ahead of the main spring planting season is common.
DURATION	A single bed typically takes a day to build and fill.
MAINTENANCE	Top up soil level and add compost each season as it settles and breaks down.
SIGNS OF SUCCESS	Good drainage, easy digging, and strong plant growth compared to the surrounding native soil.