

Skill Level: INTERMEDIATE Give these projects a try if you're a confident DIYer with a good working knowledge of a variety of tools. They can take a day or more to complete. If you can build a birdhouse or install a ceiling fan, your skill level is probably appropriate.

✓ MATERIALS

- 2x4 Boards
- 4x4 Post
- Tape Measure
- Pencil
- Square
- Drill with Bits
- Screws
- Circular Saw
- Dust Mask
- Work Gloves
- Safety Glasses
- Landscape Fabric
- Shovel
- Hoe
- Level
- Utility Knife
- Sawhorses
- Soil
- Wheelbarrow
- Soaker Hose
- Flowers or Vegetable Seeds

You don't need an elaborate garden to enjoy fresh vegetables and colorful flowers. Consider installing a raised garden bed. All you need are a few materials, a small space and a few hours to complete this simple project.

PREPARATION

A raised garden bed is a great alternative to traditional gardening. It allows better drainage, the soil warms more quickly in spring, and requires less maintenance than a traditional bed in the ground. And a small raised bed can be placed almost anywhere in your landscape. The raised garden bed described here is built with lumber. The sides are constructed of 2" x 4" lumber with 4" x 4" posts at the corners. The bottom is open to the ground. This is a basic container, but you can build your garden bed from almost anything—including stone, concrete blocks, logs or even just a pile of soil. Additionally, you can construct a raised bed with legs and a bottom—similar to a table—and place it on a deck for easy access. Whatever method you use, make sure you have at least 6" of soil for the plants' roots to grow.



IMPORTANT

Before you begin this project, read and follow all local building codes. If you're not comfortable building and preparing a raised garden bed, discuss the job with a Lowe's associate or call a professional for help.

- **TIP:** If you're planting vegetables, do not use pressure-treated lumber. The chemicals in the lumber can leach into the plants and make them toxic to eat. Instead use untreated wood such as pine or cedar.

SELECTING THE LOCATION

Choose an appropriate location for the raised garden bed. The location should have:

- Orientation to take advantage of the sun's path and to minimize obstructions. Watch the site for the location of the sun in the morning and afternoon. Identify the source and duration of any potential shadows that may fall on the chosen site.
 - **TIP:** Vegetable gardeners often prefer orienting rows north-south with taller plants at the north end so they don't obstruct the sunlight to smaller plants.
- Sufficient sunlight for what you are growing. Some vegetables, such as lettuce, prefer some shade during the day. Also, they can be covered with cheesecloth spread over a simple frame.
- Easy access to both sides of the bed. If you build your bed next to a house or a shed, consider making it smaller so you can easily reach the far side of the bed.



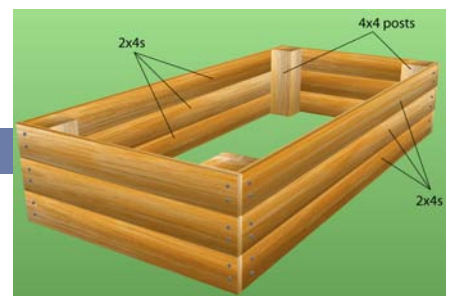
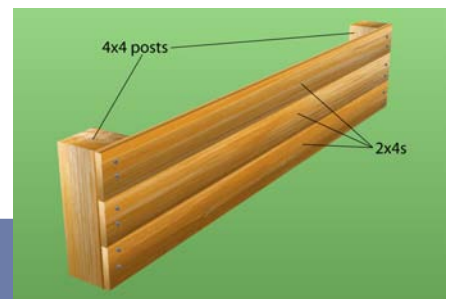
PREPARING THE SITE

- 01 Use a level to make sure that the site you select is relatively level with slight drainage away from the container.
- 02 Clear the container area of sod and weeds.
- 03 Lay landscape fabric on the ground slightly larger than the raised container.
 - You can cut off excess fabric after the container is in place.



BUILDING THE CONTAINER

- 01 Cut the 2x4s and 4x4 posts to length.
 - **TIP:** 4x4 corners aren't required for smaller raised bed containers. Instead, you can fasten corners from the inside or outside using angle brackets, available in the hardware section of Lowe's.
- 02 Attach the first side 2x4s to two 4x4s. Make sure the 2x4s are flush with the top of the post. Check it for square, then drill pilot holes near the end of the boards and attach with screws.
- 03 Build the opposite side the same way.
- 04 Add the other 2x4s to the ends of the constructed sides to form a box.
 - Use a carpenter's square to ensure the container is square.



BUILDING THE CONTAINER (cont.)

- 05 Set the container in place on the landscape fabric. Make sure that the container is level.
- 06 Once the container is in place, cut and remove the excess landscape fabric with a utility knife.



PLANTING

- 01 Add growing soil to the container.
 - If you have a compost pile, mix some into the soil. For tips on composting, watch *How to Compost* at [Lowe's.com/Videos](https://www.lowes.com/Videos).
 - You can also add special fertilizers.
- 02 Add your plants with a hoe, garden trowel or your hands.
 - Pull the dirt back, place the plant at the recommended depth and spacing, then cover the roots with soil.
- 03 Establish an irrigation plan.
 - Surface watering with a garden hose will work, but can be wasteful and requires more time and effort.
 - If you prefer surface watering, consider using recycled water from a rain barrel. You can find rain barrel installation instructions at [Lowe's.com/Videos](https://www.lowes.com/Videos).
 - A soaker hose will get water to the roots efficiently.
 - Lay it along a row of plants, and cover with soil.
 - A small landscape drip system can be installed to serve raised garden beds. For more information, refer to *How to Install a Waterwise Landscape* at [Lowe's.com/Videos](https://www.lowes.com/Videos).



Building a raised garden bed will help you enjoy fresh vegetables and herbs or decorative flowers for many years to come. For other outdoor projects, including waterwise landscaping, visit [Lowe's.com/Videos](https://www.lowes.com/Videos).

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