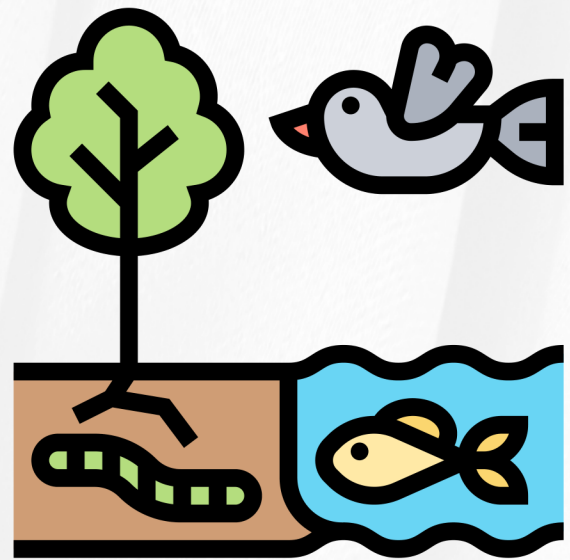


THE MAVIS INSTITUTE

NO-TILL GARDENING STYLES

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LASAGNA GARDENING

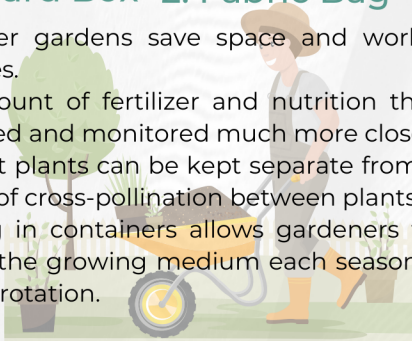
- A layer of cardboard or newspaper sheeting – do not use plastic sheeting.
- A layer of organic materials that will absorb and retain moisture such as wood chips, straw or grass clippings. Use any one or intersperse all three in a layer that's between 2 and 4 inches thick.
- A layer of organic materials that will add nutrients to the soil, including compost and organic animal-based fertilizers. It is suggested to mix in grass clippings at this stage. This layer needs to be very thick, between 4 to 8 inches. It's best to get it closer to 8 inches thick, if possible.
- Water the compost and fertilizer layer lightly. This assists in the breakdown of the organic matter in a lasagna garden, allowing the release of nutrients into the soil.
- Plant a layer of a light, low maintenance cover crops like clover or cowpea. The cover crop will keep the soil from eroding away over winter and will give the soil in a lasagna garden time to develop. The next spring, a light, nutrient-rich soil that needs no digging or tilling to prepare will be developed. Simply pull out the cover crop and start planting.

CONTAINER GARDENING

Container gardening, as the name suggests, is simply the practice of growing fruits, vegetables, and herbs in containers. It is considered a version of no-till gardening because digging into the ground to create these gardens is not necessary. All that is needed to create a container garden are pots and planters, potting soil and organic compost or fertilizer.

1. Cardboard Box 2. Fabric Bag 3. Bag Planting

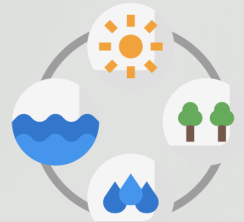
- Container gardens save space and work well on decks and balconies.
- The amount of fertilizer and nutrition that plants get can be controlled and monitored much more closely.
- Different plants can be kept separate from each other, reducing the risk of cross-pollination between plants.
- Growing in containers allows gardeners to easily and cheaply replace the growing medium each season, mitigating the need for crop rotation.



AT A GLANCE

NO TILL STYLES

- Lasagna Gardening
- Container Gardening
- Raised Bed
- Back to Eden
- Ruth Stout



BENEFITS

- Water Saving
- Less Work
- Knowing your Soil
- More Fun



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The crossroads between
Nature & Technology



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RAISED GARDEN BEDS

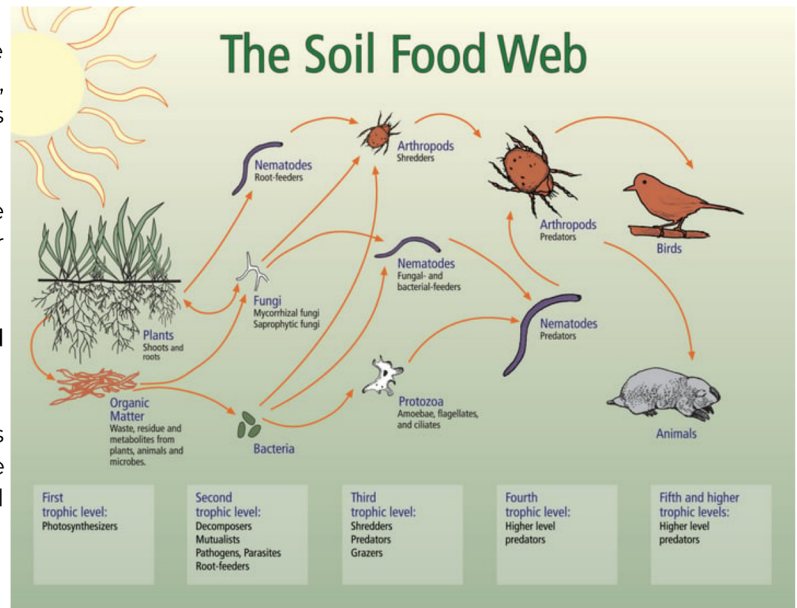
- Raised beds are a great option for pretty much any garden situation, especially if you only have a small amount of space. Raised beds are often more productive than beds in the ground because the soil is less compacted, has better drainage, and warms earlier in the spring, meaning that plants will start to grow earlier in the season. Raised beds are also often easier to maintain, particularly for people with limited mobility, and generally have less perennial weed pressure.
- The main disadvantages are that they tend to require more frequent irrigation and have a high initial cost of construction. Those obstacles aside, raised beds can be a great choice for almost anyone interested in vegetable gardening.

BACK TO EDEN

Basically the Back to Eden gardening method is all about recreating the environment in which plants already thrive in nature.

Setting up A Back To Eden Garden Bed

- **Decide where to put your bed.** You can do it where you have an existing bed, or you can do it where there is grass, dirt, rocks, or whatever. You don't have to till up the soil for this method.
- **Cover the spot with 3-4 inches of compost.** Make sure whatever you get contains nothing you would object to your food growing in...
- **Cover the compost with 4-6 inches (6 inches is best) of wood chips.** Be very careful about what you get for this step!
- **Start planting!** We scraped back the top layer of wood chips and planted about 1-2 inches deep. If you want to prep the beds early and let them rest for a full season, then the soil will be amazingly rich when you go to plant!



RUTH STOUT METHOD

Understanding your soil

- If you're starting a Ruth Stout garden from scratch, you need to factor in the type of soil you'll be working with. For example, if your garden has clay-heavy soil, it will be too hard and thick for vegetable roots to get through. It will also have poor drainage. In this case, it's best to till it first, then add your hay. Similarly, if your garden has very sandy soil, all the nutrients from the hay mulch will leach through it during the rain, and the substrate will retain less water. In this case, work in a bit of leaf mold and compost to facilitate moisture and nutrient retention, then add the hay. The good news is that you'll only need to put in a bit of extra work in the first year. By the second year, the hay will create a thick layer of mulch that's loose enough to allow you to ditch tilling and digging.
- For best results, Ruth Stout recommended preparing the garden in late summer or fall. This allows the hay mulch to break down and become compost, suppress weeds, and keep the soil warm enough for an early spring sowing.
- Traditionally, Ruth Stout used old, spoiled hay to mulch her garden. You can use regular hay, as well as a mixture of old leaves, straw, grass or lawn clippings, pine needles, and vegetable kitchen scraps. Hay is thinner, breaks down easier, and contains more nitrogen, but it also contains grass and weed seeds. Straw is coarse, takes longer to break down, contains little nitrogen but plenty of carbon, and is free of weed and grass seeds.
- Simply spread the mulch in an 8-inch thick layer. The layer needs to be thick enough to suppress weeds, but not so thick that your seeds will be growing in nothing but hay. The mulch will reduce to half the thickness by spring. If you're spreading the hay mulch in rows or beds, make sure that they're oriented from north to south. Plant your taller crops on the northern side, and the shorter ones on the south side. This will ensure that all your vegetables receive enough sunlight throughout the growing season.
- Ruth never did any actual sowing. Instead, she just sprinkled the seeds in rows, then gently patted the mulch by hand until the seeds fell through the hay. However, she did cover her seed potatoes to prevent them from drying out in the sun.
- As your seeds sprout and plants begin to grow, you will need to add more hay. This will help retain moisture, increase nutrient availability, and smother any weeds that might sprout in the mulch. After you harvest your vegetables, allow the plants to die down, then cover them with another 8-inch layer of hay. Over the next few months, they will break down, building a layer of mulch that will then become healthy, organic, nutrient-rich soil.