



GETTING STARTED WITH RAISED BED GARDENING

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Poolesville Community Garden
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Why raised beds?

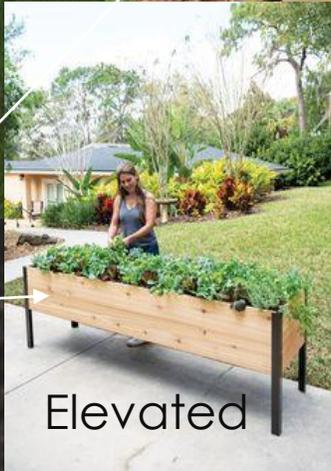
Simpler

Grow more in a smaller space

Better Drainage

Less weeding

Many types of raised beds



Cedar

Elevated



Grow Bags



Containers ranging from repurposed drawers to feed stock troughs



RAISED GARDEN BED
[SELF WATERING]



Galvanized Metal or wood/metal combinations



Build, Buy or Rent?

BUILD



“Do it yourself plans” from total wood construction or galvanized construction, to using raised bed brackets to connect wood you purchase

Resource:
Search Pinterest
Youtube videos



2" x 6" x 44 1/2"
sanded kiln-dried
Maine White Cedar
lumber.
\$13.95

May not save money depending on materials chosen and what you have on hand



Longevity Varies – Depends on materials used. Cedar, for example may be used because it naturally lasts longer but will still eventually rot and require replacement. Avoid chemically treated lumber ... you are growing food you will eat!



Brackets – Several types available in varying heights and style from a variety of retailers (Home Depot, Burpee, Gardens Alive, Gardeners Supply, etc.)

Build, Buy or Rent?

BUY



Example: **Galvanized Steel Beds**
length: 6 ft 8 in | width: 3 ft 4 in | height: 1 ft 5 in
Cost \$149.95

Resource:
www.metalgardenbeds.com



Elevated Garden Beds
Example:
2' x 8' Elevated Cedar Planter Box
Cost: \$299
95" Elevated @ Tractor Supply
Cost: \$199

Resources:
www.gardeners.com
www.eartheasy.com
www.tractorsupply.com



Cedar Raised Beds
Example:
4' x 8' Deep Cedar Bed (15")
\$299 @Gardeners.com
4'x 8' x 17.5" Deep Cedar Bed
\$206 @ Home Depot

Resources:
www.homedepot.com
www.gardners.com
www.eartheasy.com
www.tractorsupply.com



Growbag
Many shapes and sizes from various retailers.
Example: 10 gallon bag (5 pack) from Home Depot - \$25

Build, Buy or Rent?

RENT



Some community gardens offer garden space for rent, or raised beds for rent like Poolesville Community Garden



Community Gardens PROS:

- Collaboration with other gardeners
- Fixed annual fee for box – no startup costs, lower initial cost
- Some may offer access to shared tools and resources
- May provide location advantages if your yard simply has no spots with sufficient sun



Community Garden CONS:

- Less convenient than backyard for garden work
- May require some volunteer hours in the common areas of the garden

Getting Started

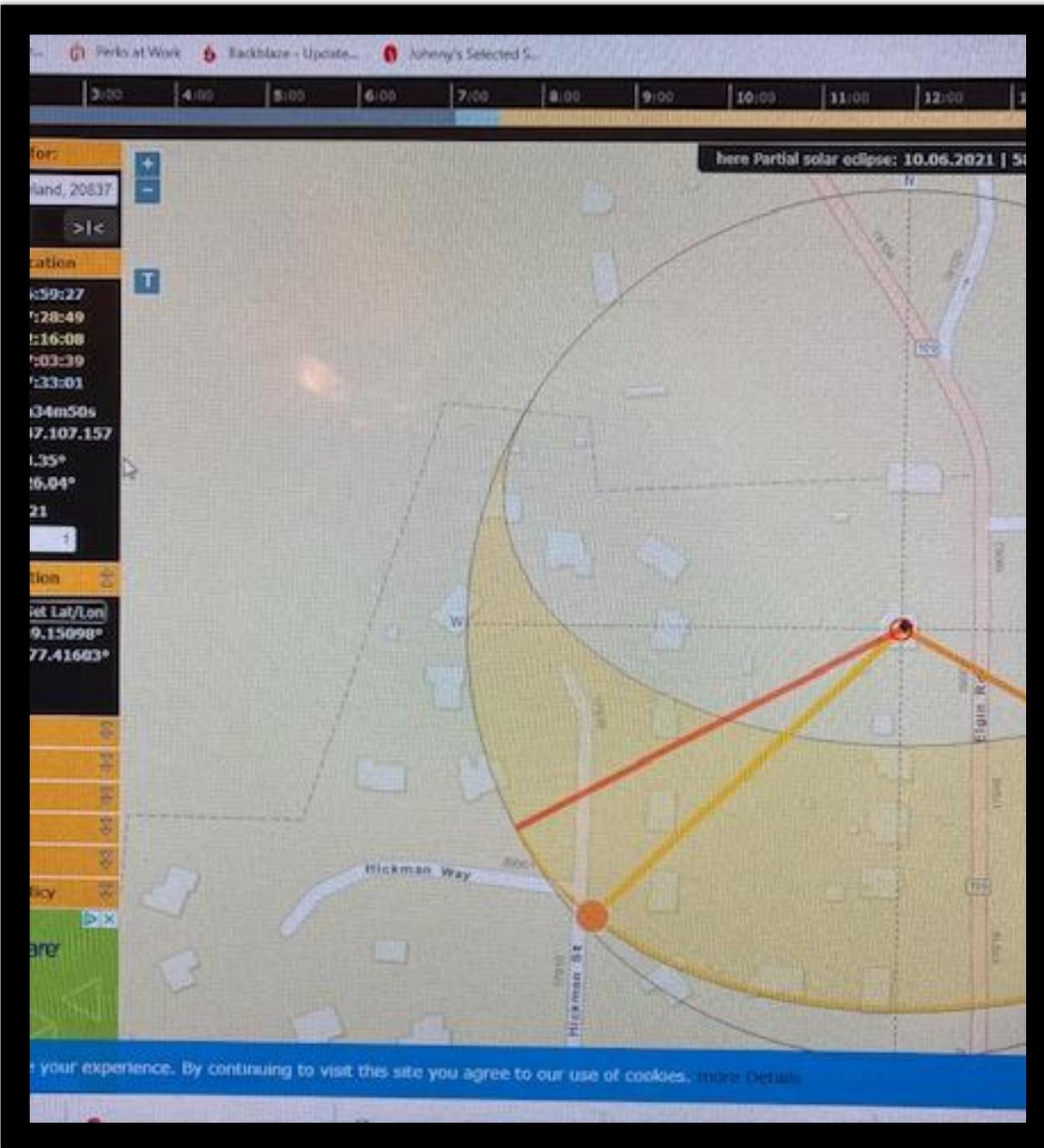
Plan

Setup

Plant

Maintain





Plan: Mistakes to Avoid #1 Choosing the *wrong location*

Minimum 6-8 hours direct sun

Place bed south facing

Walk property different times of year to see how sun falls

Resource: use www.suncalc.org for your address to see how the sun falls on your property at different times of the year



Plan: Mistakes to Avoid

#2 *Not planning for water*

Need access to water or plan to water when natural rainfall isn't enough

Irrigation – using soaker hoses or systems designed for irrigation to water plants is easiest but not required

Plan can be to hand water with a watering can – but have a plan

Water every 2-3 days if no rainfall

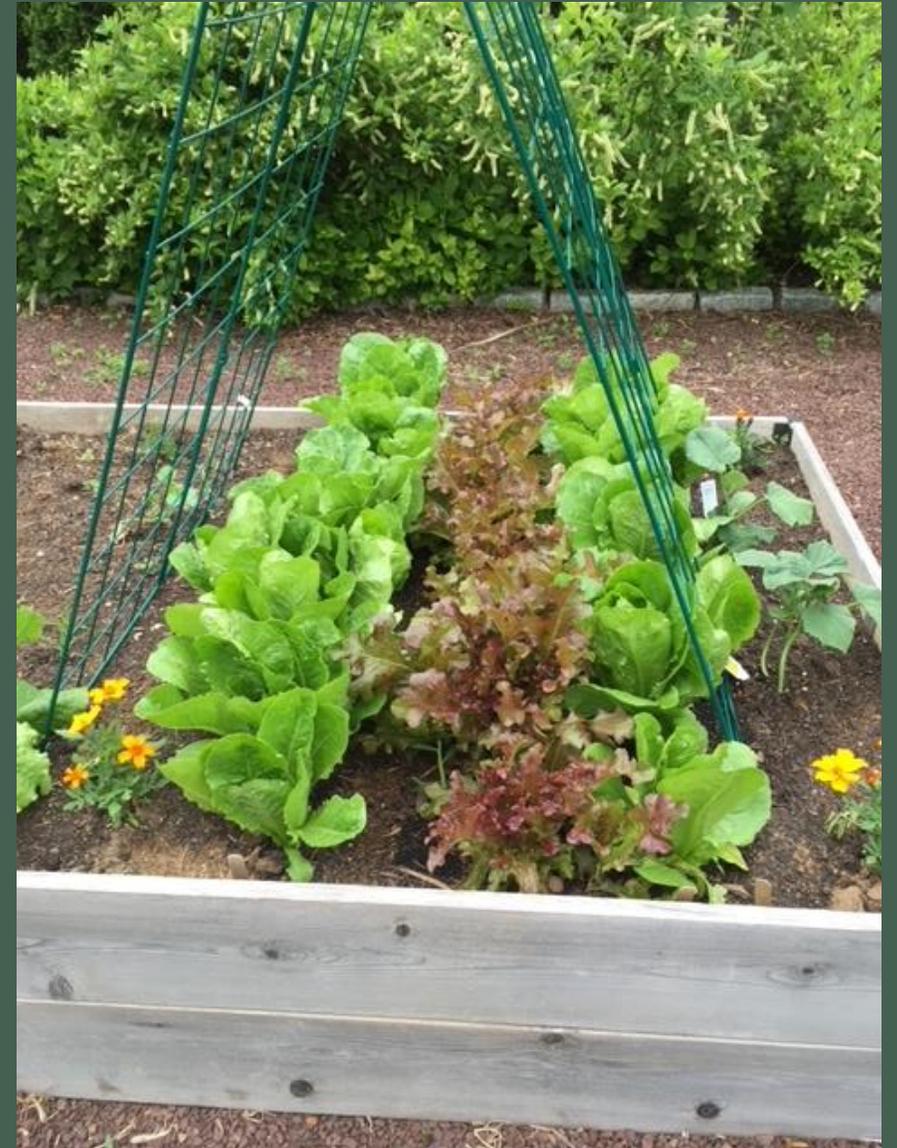
Plan: Mistakes to Avoid

#3 *Not investing in soil*

Poor soil – too impacted

Soil feeds the plants – garbage in, garbage out

Raised Bed Soil Mixes :
prepackaged or mix your own





Plan: Mistakes to Avoid

#4 Not mulching with organic matter

Mulch provides organic covering to top of soil to help retain water

Soil dries out more quickly without mulch

Examples: Shredded straw, compost, Leafgro (composted leaf mold) , low cover plantings



Plan: Mistakes to Avoid

#5 Not leaving enough space around beds



Plan: Mistakes to Avoid

#6 Poor planting strategy



Low growers on south side (example: lettuce greens)

Tall growers on back side (Trellised plants like peas, or tomatoes)

Medium growers in the middle (example: bush beans)

Plan: Mistakes to Avoid

#7 Not caring for the soil during dormant seasons

Cover

Mulch or plant cover crops; avoid bare soil



Amend

Add compost in the Spring prior to planting

Plan: Mistakes to Avoid

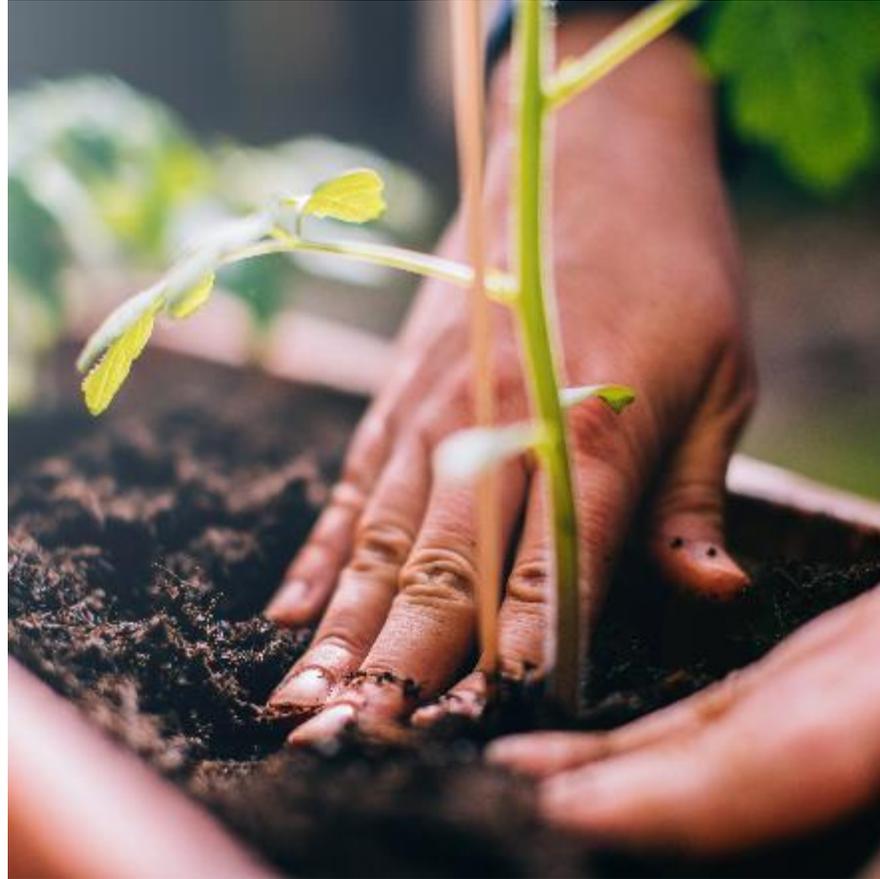
#8 *Not labeling or tracking*

Label

- We care about and manage what we track

Track

- Planting date, days to harvest



Getting Started: Set Up

**Bed: Build
or Buy**

**Soil: Buy
or mix**

**Fill: Liner
and soil**

Setup: How Much Soil?

- 4' x 4' x 15" bed holds 20 cubic feet or 514 quarts of soil
- 4' x 6' x 15" bed holds 30 cubic feet or 770 quarts of soil
- **4' x 8' x 15" bed holds 40 cubic feet or 1028 quarts of soil**
- 4' x 12' x 15" bed holds 60 cubic feet or 1542 quarts of soil

If you are purchasing your soil you need to determine how many bags to buy.

Raised bed soil is sold in 1.5 cubic to 3 cubic foot bags depending on which brand you use.

On the next slide we determine how many bags are needed to fill a common 4' x 8' x 15" raised bed.



Setup: How Much Soil?

Common Raised Bed Size: 4' x 8' x 15"

- Inches: $48 \times 96 \times 15 = 69,120$ cubic inches
- Divide the total by 1728 (as there are 1728 cubic inches in a cubic foot)
- $69,120 / 1728 = 40$ cubic feet
- Assuming you are using 1.5 cubic foot bags of raised bed garden soil, you would need:
- $40 / 1.5 = 26.66$ or 27 bags of raised garden bed soil



Setup: Mixing your own soil

Recipe: Mel Bartholomew, Square Foot Gardening

1/3 Peat, or coconut COIR

1/3 Vermiculite (less fluffy) and Perlite (fluffier)

1/3 Blended Compost – Organic Leafgro (leaf compost, compost, chicken manure, cow manure)

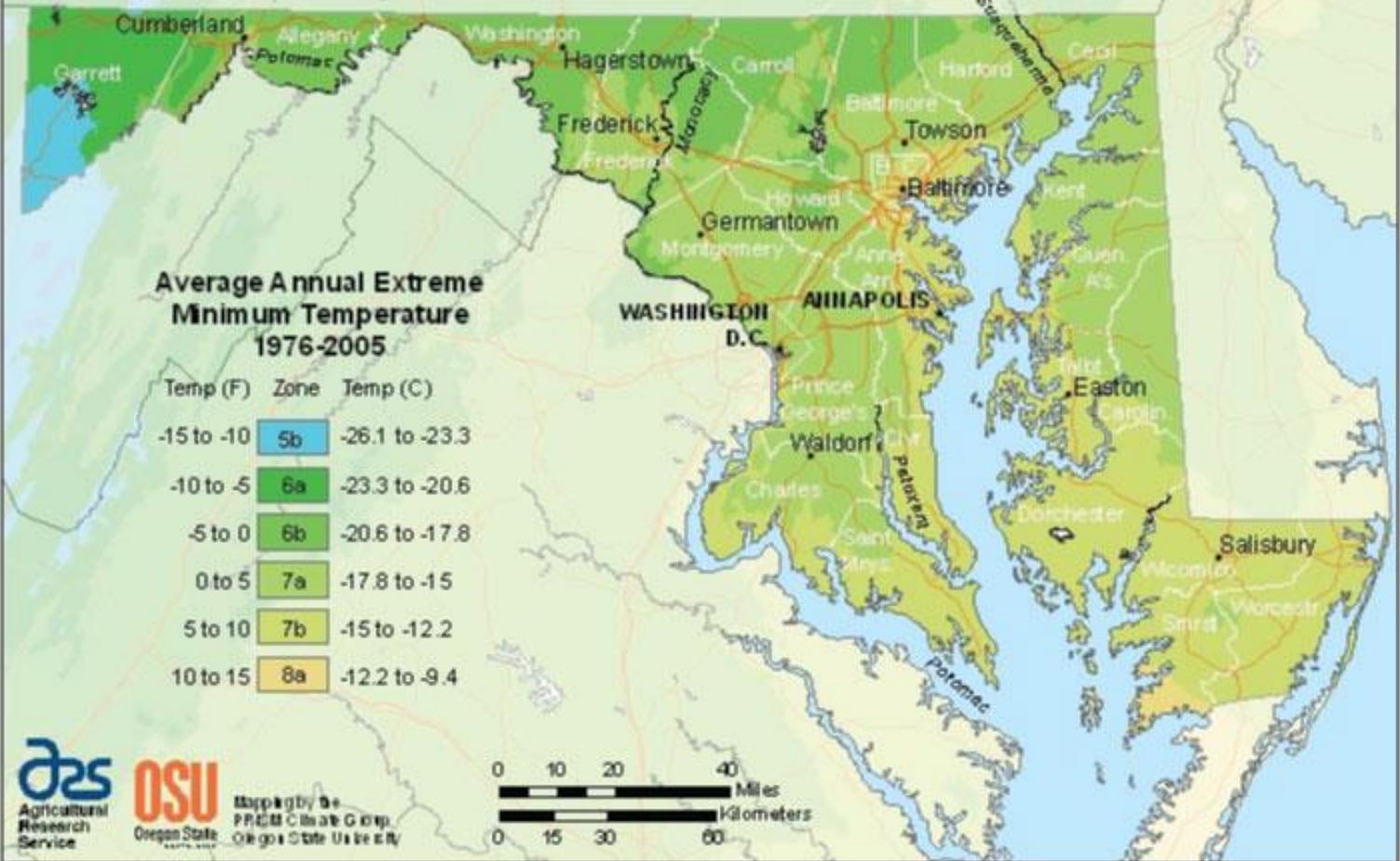
When filling an elevated raised bed that does not have an elevated bottom, the bottom of the bed can be filled with brush, sticks, compost, grass clippings, leaving 15"-18" of soil mix at the top.

Another popular recipe:

- 50% topsoil 25% compost 25% other organic matter like manure



Maryland & District of Columbia



PLANT

*Determine
your
planting
zone*



PLANT

Mel Bartholomew – Square Foot Gardening

Divide space into one foot grids.

Plant each grid according to the spacing required in the directions for each seed or plant.

Spinach, Chard – 4 per foot

Radishes – 16 per foot

Cabbage – 1 per foot

Leaf Lettuce – 16 per foot

Tomatoes – 1 per foot

Peas – 8 per foot

Beets – 9 per foot

Carrots – 16 per foot

Maintain

Water and harvest regularly

Feed plants, manage pests

Cover bed with organic matter/compost end of season, or plant cover crop

Resources:

Your local library

Youtube – so many videos on every topic. Tour raised bed gardens. Learn how to build a bed. Learn how to mix your soil.

— Check out Epic Gardening on Youtube —

Pinterest – search on a topic and get links to great resources on the internet. When you are done growing, visit Pinterest to get great food recipe ideas!

<https://extension.umd.edu/hgic> The University of Maryland Extension Office for home gardening.



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