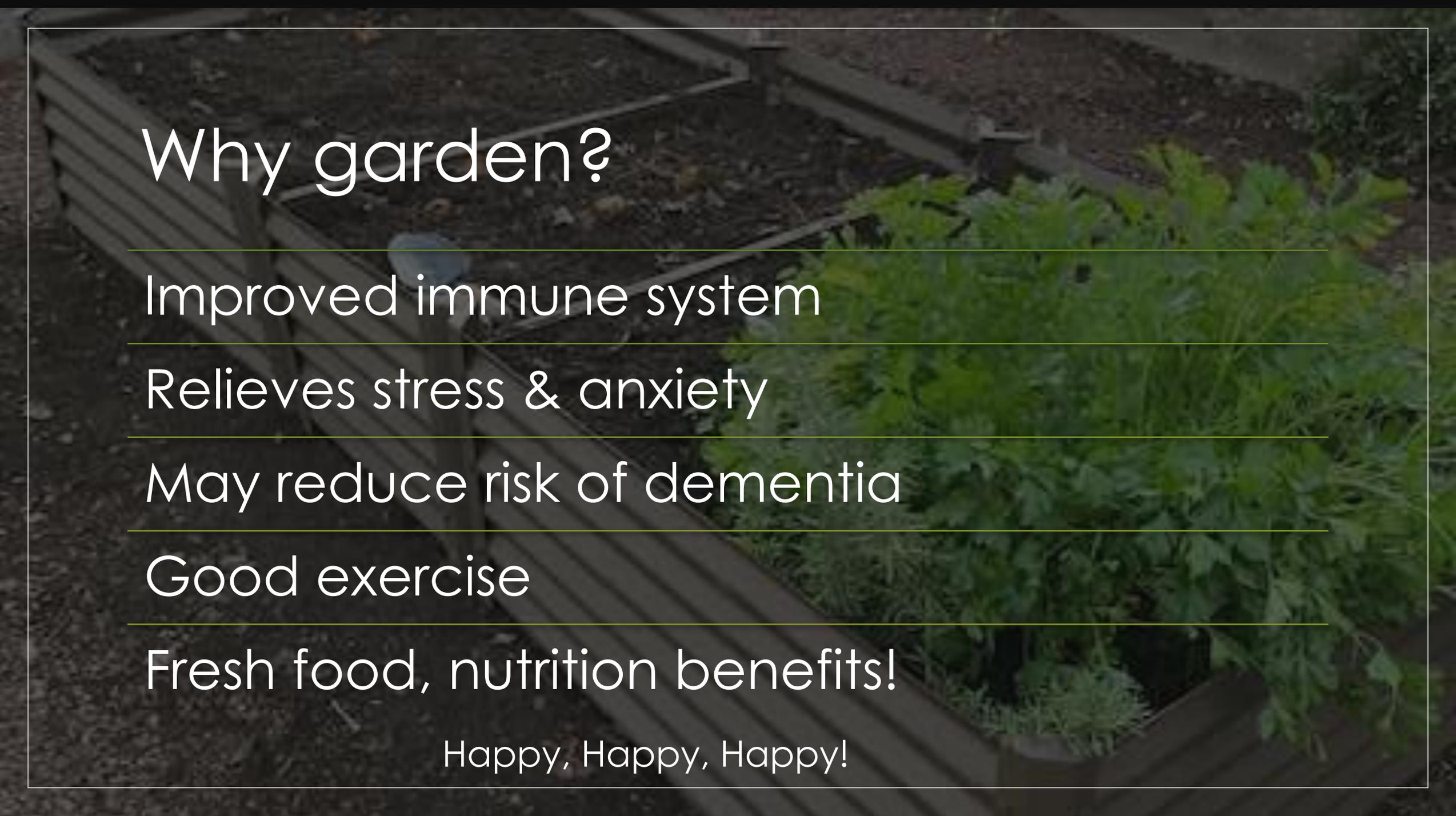




# THE JOYS OF RAISED BED GARDENING

Sarah Defnet  
Poolesville Community Garden  
May 13, 2021



# Why garden?

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Improved immune system

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Relieves stress & anxiety

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May reduce risk of dementia

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Good exercise

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Fresh food, nutrition benefits!

Happy, Happy, Happy!

# But isn't gardening a lot of work?

Raised beds lighten the workload

Reduces the amount of lawn to care for

Tools exist to support gardening as we age



# Why raised beds?

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Simpler

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Grow more in a smaller space

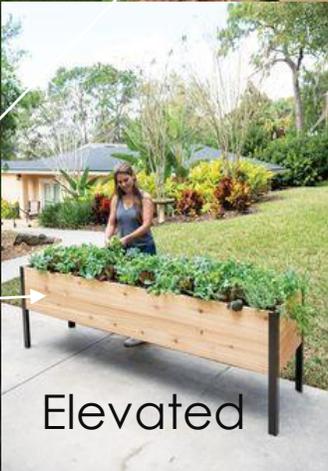
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Better Drainage

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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



# Many types of raised beds

Collards growing in a barrel planter (2021)



Patio Planter privacy wall



Raised wood/metal planter (growing herbs)



Potatoes growing in barrels



Elevated

Adapts well to patios,  
decks and porches

# 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



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](http://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](http://www.gardeners.com)  
[www.eartheasy.com](http://www.eartheasy.com)  
[www.tractorsupply.com](http://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](http://www.homedepot.com)  
[www.gardeners.com](http://www.gardeners.com)  
[www.eartheasy.com](http://www.eartheasy.com)  
[www.tractorsupply.com](http://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

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Plan

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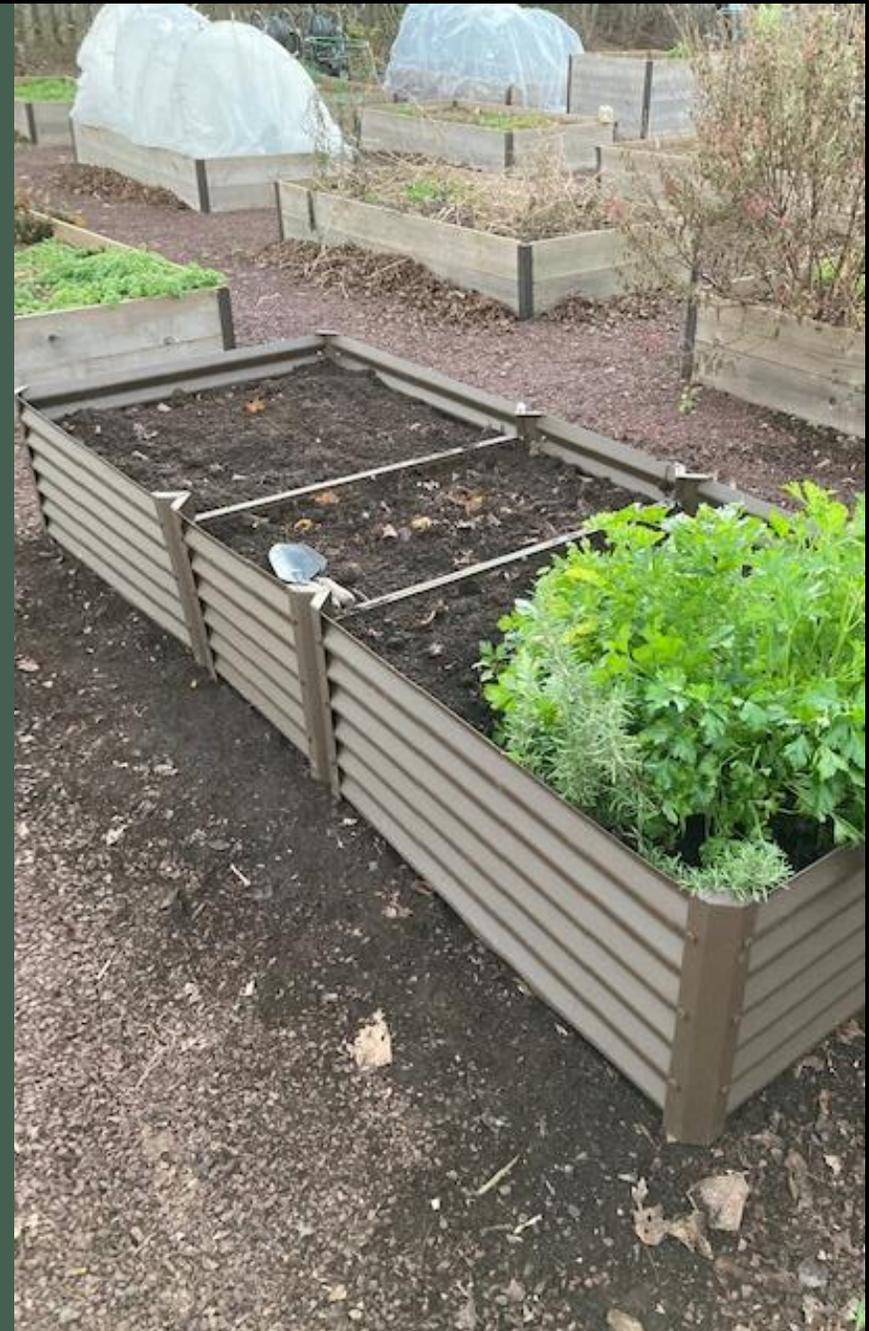
Setup

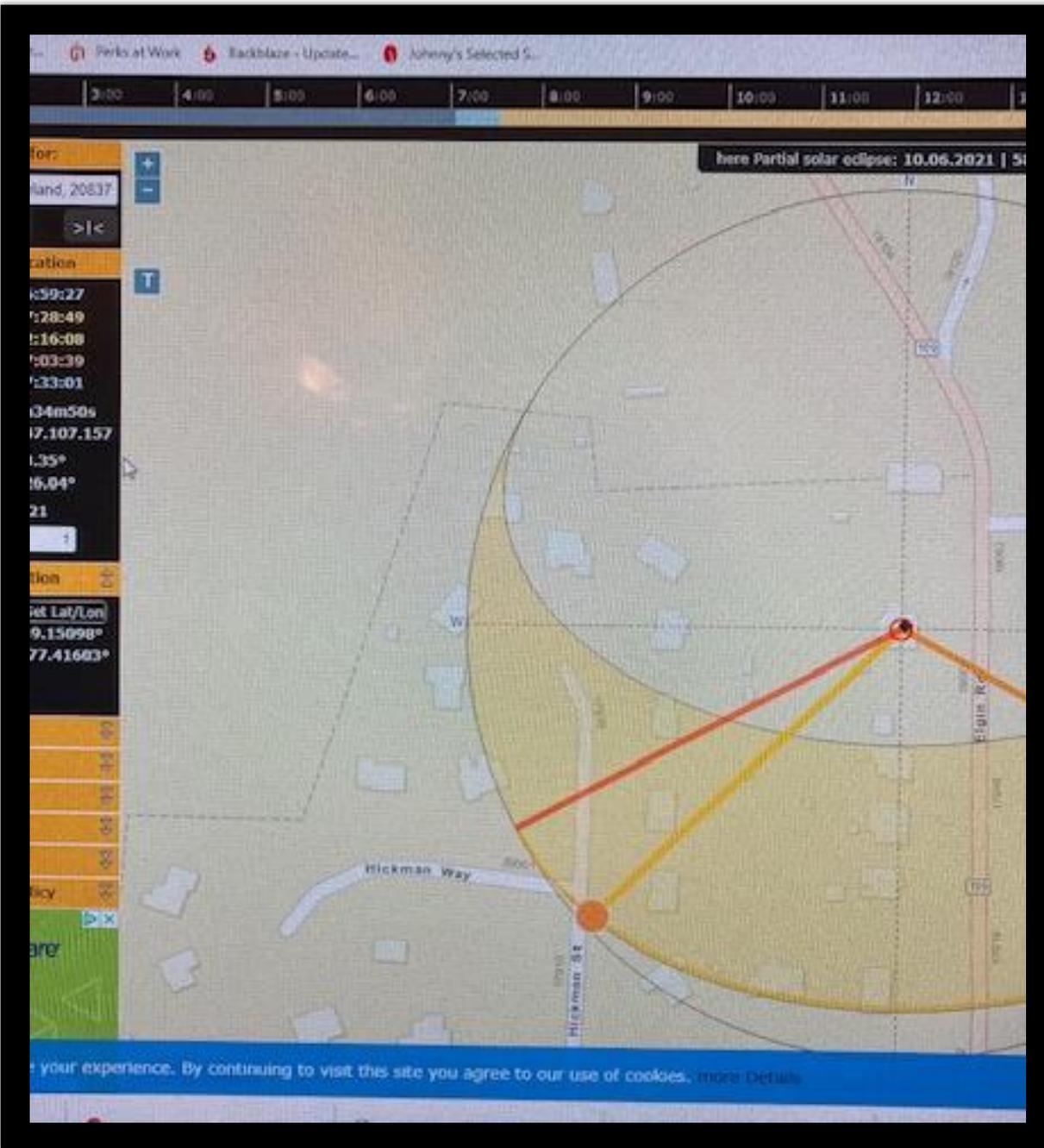
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Plant

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Maintain





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

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Minimum 6-8 hours direct sun

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Place bed south facing

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Walk property different times of year to see how sun falls

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Resource: use [www.suncalc.org](http://www.suncalc.org) for your address to see how the sun falls on your property at different times of the year

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## Plan: Mistakes to Avoid

### #2 *Not planning for water*

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

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

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

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Water every 2-3 days if no rainfall

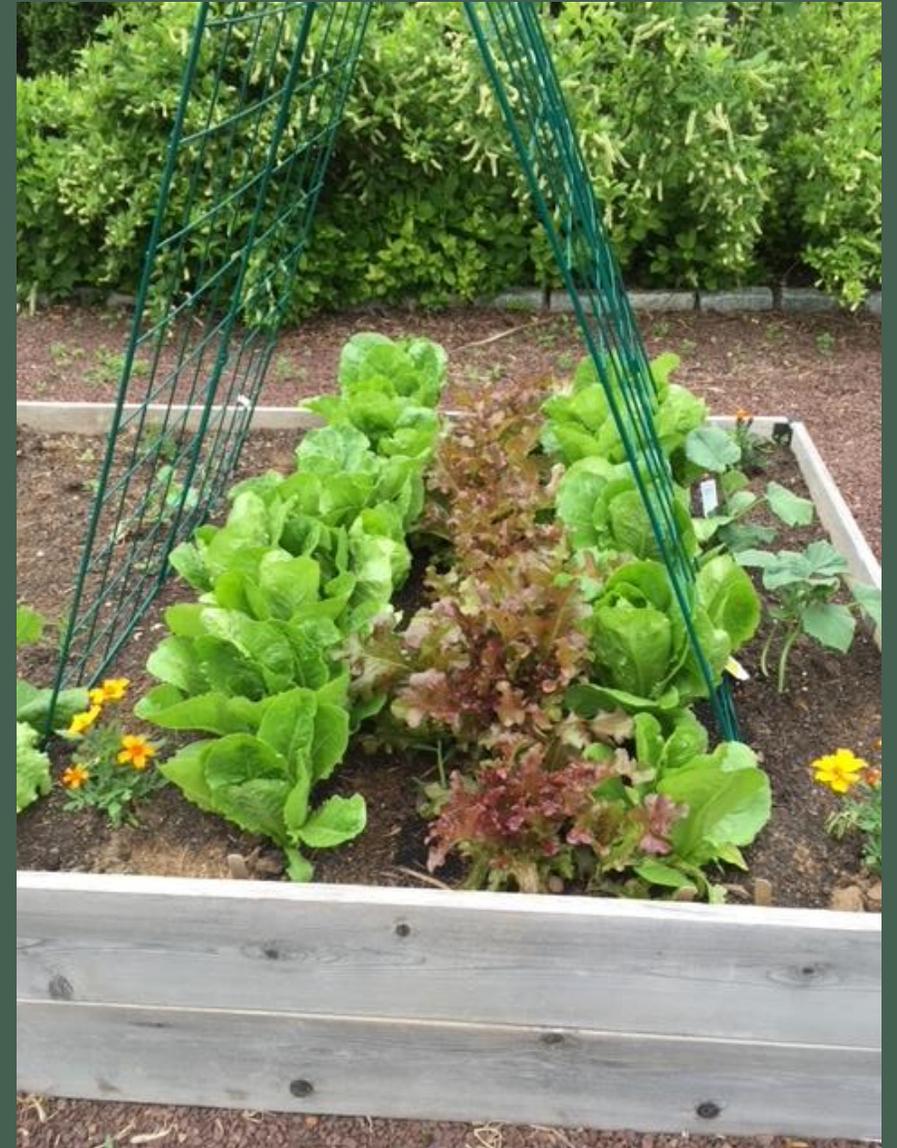
# Plan: Mistakes to Avoid

## #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*

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

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Soil dries out more quickly without mulch

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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)

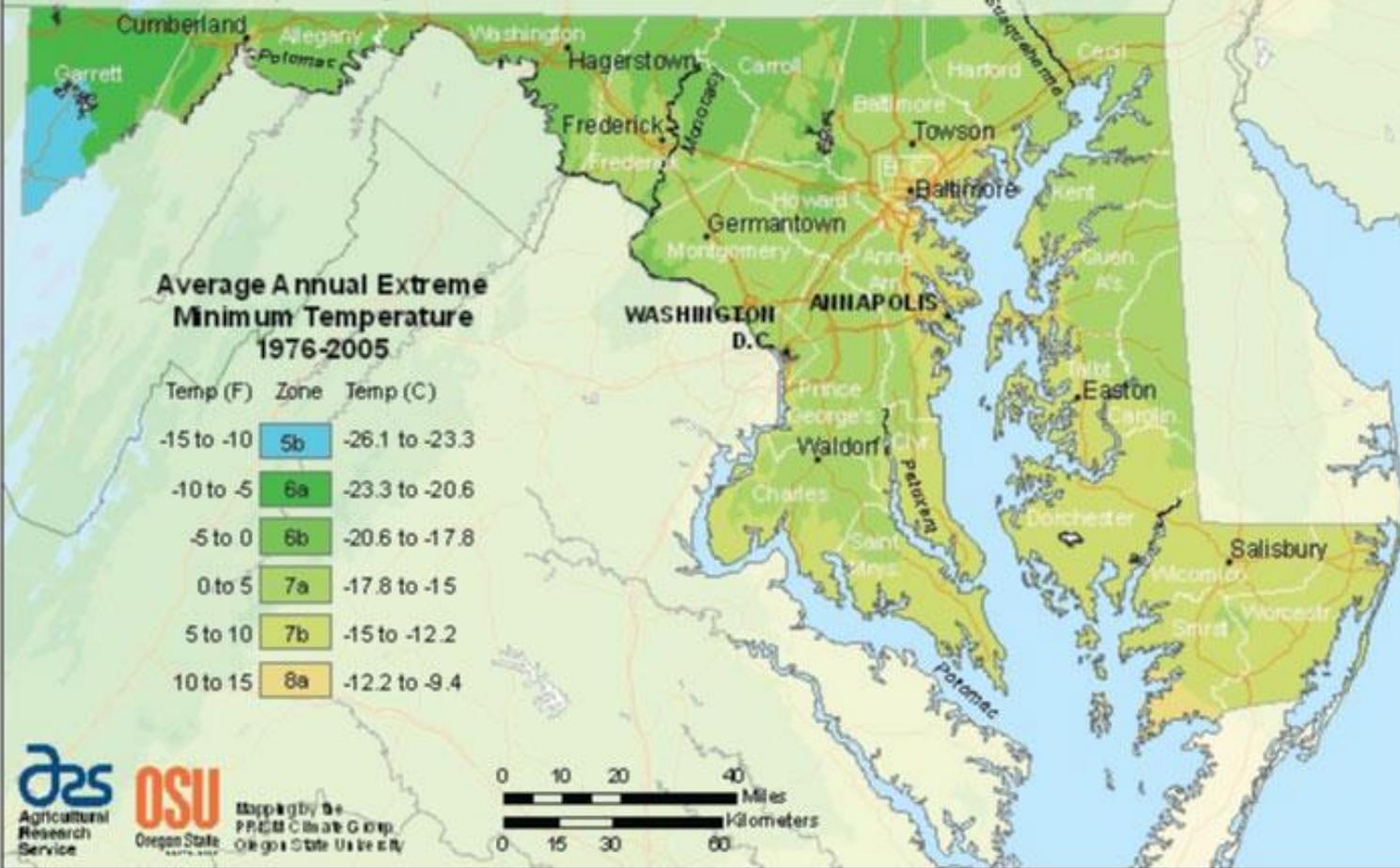
When filling an elevated raised bed that does not have an elevated bottom, the bottom of the bed can be filled with brush, sticks, compost, grass clippings, leaving 15"-18" of soil mix at the top.

*Another popular recipe:*

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



# Maryland & District of Columbia



# PLANT

*Determine  
your  
planting  
zone*





# PLANT

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**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.**

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**Spinach, Chard – 4 per foot**

**Radishes – 16 per foot**

**Cabbage – 1 per foot**

**Leaf Lettuce – 16 per foot**

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**Tomatoes – 1 per foot**

**Peas – 8 per foot**

**Beets – 9 per foot**

**Carrots – 16 per foot**

# Maintain

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Water and harvest regularly

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Feed plants, manage pests

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

# Make gardening easier



Faucet grip



Kneeler & garden seat



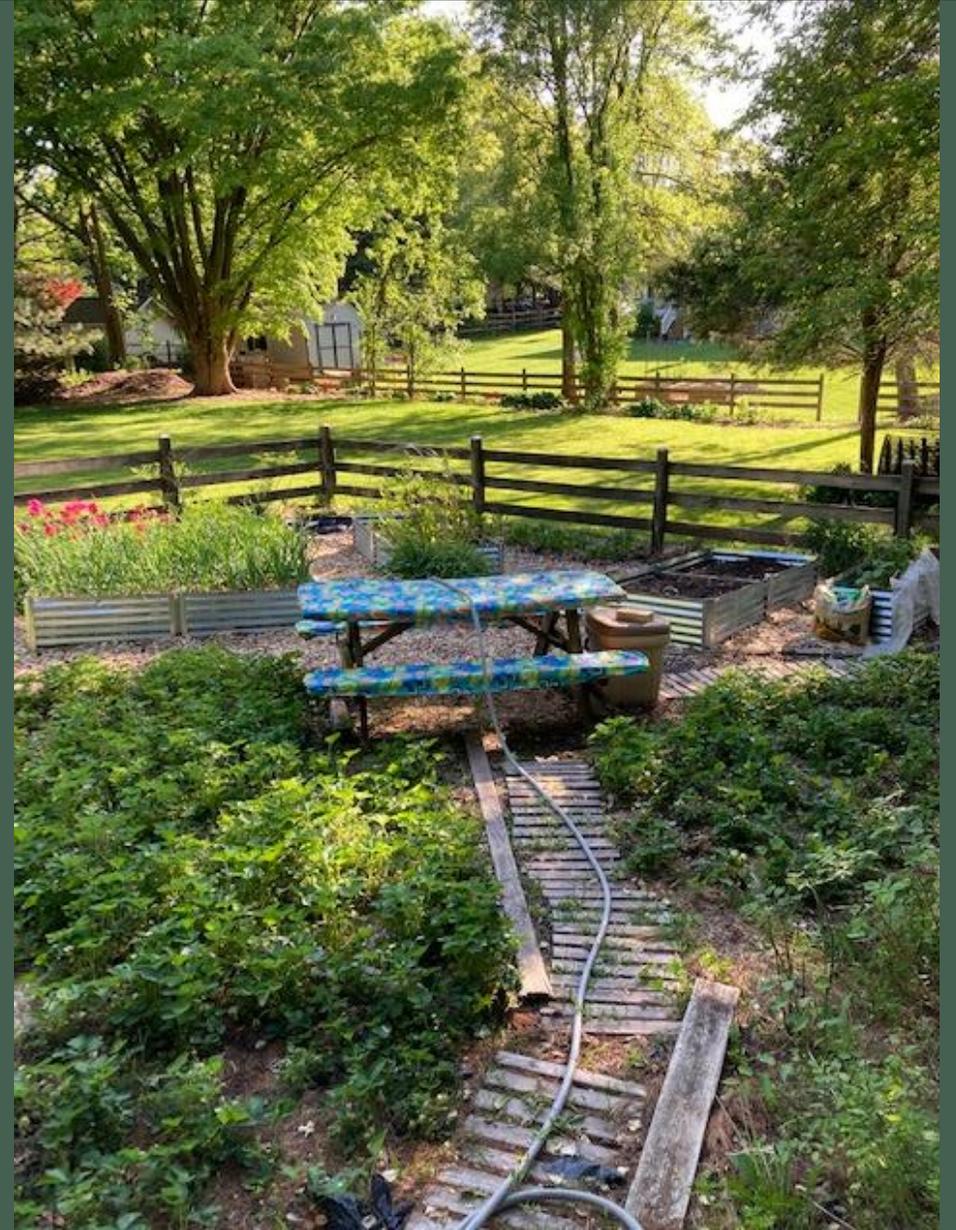
Elevated raised beds



Garden scoot



Raised  
Bed  
Garden  
Gallery





Raised  
Bed  
Garden  
Gallery



# Resources:

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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 —

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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.

Poolesville Community Garden ([poolesvillecommunitygarden@gmail.com](mailto:poolesvillecommunitygarden@gmail.com)) We maintain the Poolesville Community Seed Library and collect seed saves from gardeners to share, and distribute seeds to gardeners (free)



# CONTACT US

poolesvillecommunitygarden@gmail.com

For more information about the Poolesville Community Garden,  
or to find a copy of this presentation, visit:

[http://www.poolpres.com/H5\\_comm\\_garden\\_info.php](http://www.poolpres.com/H5_comm_garden_info.php)