



**Nurture Nature Center**, located in Easton, Pennsylvania, created an Urban Garden in a small parking area using recycled and found materials to demonstrate low-cost growing techniques for small urban areas (walls, balconies, small paved spaces). This fact sheet is part of a series that features information about demonstrations in the garden that are easy to replicate and implement in a variety of urban spaces.

## Raised Bed Gardening

### Description:

In a raised bed, soil is raised above the ground surface, and often enclosed by a frame of wood, bricks or blocks. It is constructed small enough so that a person can maintain it without stepping into the growing area, thereby preventing compacted soil. For small-space gardening, raised beds offer a way to grow a variety of crops that are densely planted, which helps suppress weed growth and conserve moisture. For more deeply-rooted crops, deeper raised beds allow space for roots to go down, instead of out.

### Planting in Raised Beds:

Raised beds can be installed in the traditional sense with constructed frames and then filled with soil. If building this kind of raised bed on compacted soil typical in urban places, be sure to build the raised bed deep enough to hold 12-inches of soil. If it sits directly on a paved surface, consider a deeper bed. You can also use deep containers to create a raised bed, such as crates, sturdy shopping bags or deep dresser drawers.

If you're gardening on a balcony or rooftop, weight can be an issue and it's best to avoid loam-based potting mixes, since these are heavier. Instead use a good quality soilless potting mixed combined with bark mulch to help retain moisture. You will have to water this kind of soil more often!

Different crops require different depths of soil. So what you want to grow will determine how deep your bed will be. For example, plants that are shallow rooted (lettuce, beans, radishes, edible flowers, etc.) will require a bed about 6-inches deep. Potatoes, carrots, beets, and other more deeply-rooted plants need deeper soils (8-12 inches). As with any garden site, full sun is ideal. A minimum of 6-8 hours of sunlight is required for most vegetables.

For more information related to Nurture Nature Center's Urban Garden Project, see <http://nurturenaturecenter.org/garden/>

### Resources:

<https://www.extension.purdue.edu/new/ho-200.pdf>  
<http://www.aces.edu/pubs/docs/A/ANR-1345/ANR-1345.pdf>



### Tips:

- Soil can easily be amended in a raised bed garden.
- Group vegetables together based on their maturity time or their length of productivity to get the most production out of your raised bed.
- Raised beds can be made at any height for those gardening with different physical abilities.

