

**Bite
sized**

How to make a raised bed

- ✓ Raised beds create a manageable space to grow food.
- ✓ They stop people walking on the soil and compacting it.
- ✓ They are easy to mow round or create paths round.

Growing your own food is healthy, tasty and can save you money.

It can also help cut carbon dioxide gas emissions (CO₂e) and combat climate change. We calculate that a 1m² growing area of veg or strawberries can replace at least 3kg of supermarket food a year and save 1.55 kg of CO₂e.

What you'll need

- Four wooden planks 25-30mm thick, 1m long, 50mm wide (for the sides).
- Four 75mm x 75mm wooden posts, 150 mm long (for the corner posts).
- An electric drill with a 5mm wood drill bit.
- Twenty-four 4 x 65mm screws.
- Three 25kg bags of peat-free compost and one bag of topsoil, or mature garden compost



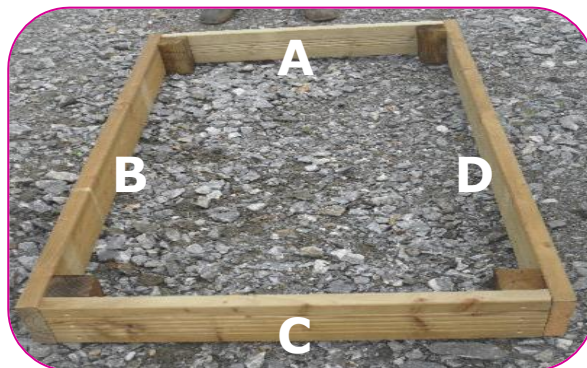
You can use any recycled boards or offcuts of wood. Treated wood will last longer than untreated wood. The chemicals used to treat wood are not as harmful as they once were. It's probably more ecological to use treated timber or decking if you can get it because it will last longer and increase the lifespan of your raised bed, but if you get hold of some free or cheap offcuts then go with that.

Safety first!

Take care using power tools and watch for trailing cables if corded. Don't work in wet conditions or near puddles or wet soil. Keep your hands out of the way of the drill and use a helper or some equipment to hold the boards safely. Keep long hair and loose clothing or ties out of the way. Wear protective goggles. If you are not experienced or confident building the raised bed, get some help from someone who is.

Instructions

1. Mark a vertical pencil line 40mm in from each end of two of the planks (A and C).
2. Mark a vertical pencil line 75mm in from each end of the other two boards (B and D).
3. Drill three holes along each line for the screws.
4. Drill 20mm from the edge on one plank and space the holes out evenly.
5. Start about 5mm lower on the board that will form the corner with this board, so the screws don't meet each other in the corner post.



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6. Lie two of the corner posts on a flat surface 1m apart and place plank A on top of them, lining up the edge of the block with the edge of the plank – see the picture under 'What you'll need'. Screw in three screws each side to secure.
7. Repeat with the other two posts and plank C.
8. Position plank B across planks A and C to make square corners.
9. Screw in the three screws on each side.
10. Turn the structure over carefully and repeat with plank D.
11. Place your raised bed on the soil, add some peat-free compost/manure/topsoil and get planting!

Variation – deep raised beds

For a double depth (300mm) 1m x 1m raised bed you'll need:

- a) Eight wooden boards 25-30mm thick, 1m long, 150mm wide (for the sides).
- b) Four 75mm x 75mm wooden posts, 450mm total length including a 150mm point on the end (for corner posts).
- c) An electric drill with a woodcutting 5mm drill bit.
- d) 48 screws 4.0 x 65mm.

Instructions

1. Mark a pencil line 40mm in from the ends of **4** of the wooden planks (Keep in a pile separately as planks A).
2. Mark a pencil line 75mm in from the ends of the other **4** planks (Keep separate as planks B).
3. Drill three holes along each line, 2 of about 20mm in from each side and 1 in the centre of the line on each plank.
4. Place two of the wooden 10cms posts, points facing towards you on a flat surface approx. 1m apart and place one of plank A on top of them, lining up the edge of the block with the edge of the plank and the top of the post with the edge of the plank. Screw in the three screws each side to secure.
5. Place another plank A next to the first, lining up the edges and screw in place.
6. Repeat with the other two planks from plank A pile and the last two posts.
7. Ask two friends to help you, each one holding one of the block-plank-block constructions vertically on the flat surface.
8. Position 1 of the plank B pile planks across the edge of the planks and block, creating a nice corner and lining up the screw holes in the centre of the block. Make sure the edge is lined up with the top of the post and that both posts are points facing towards you. Screw in the 3 screws carefully on each side.
9. Place another plank B next to the first, lining up the edges and screw in place.
10. Turn the structure carefully over and repeat with the last two of B planks.
11. Place your raised bed on the soil, tapping the points into the soil gently, add your topsoil, some peat-free compost/manure and get planting!

To make a deeper raised bed to use on a paved area or where disabled access is desirable you'll need more wood and soil. You'll need quite a lot of topsoil and compost if you make a deep bed and thicker, stronger boards. The corner posts also need to be longer and it's useful if they are pointed at one end to secure into the ground.