



Objectives

To learn about affordable gardening techniques:

- Bed Preparation
- Double Digging
- Sheet Mulching
- Straw Bale Gardens

Bed Preparation

1. Map your raised beds: find the sunniest spot in the yard, north-south orientation, mark your borders, 3'-4' wide.
2. Get a soil test and amend your soil as needed.
3. PLAN! Gather any materials such as border items, soil, leaves, grass clippings, bark chips, coffee grounds, burlap, compost, etc. that you will need.



Why Double Dig?



Because it aerates the soil and encourages healthy root development.

Double Digging

How:

1. Start at one end of your bed and dig out a 1-1.5" length of a section of soil the width of your bed, about 10" down. Fill a wheelbarrow with this top soil. Set the wheelbarrow aside as it will be used to fill the last section of your garden.
2. Fork the trench another 8" down to fluff the soil.



Double Digging

3. Mix compost in with the fluffed layer.
4. Move to your next section and place this top soil in the first trench that was dug.
5. Repeat for the entire length of your bed.



Why Sheet Mulch?

It is less labor intensive than digging and is a quick way to convert your lawn to a garden.

Organic gardens are much safer for our water supply than fertilized lawns.



Sheet Mulching: Lawn to Garden Conversion

How:



1. Create a border.
2. Add a weed barrier: damp cardboard, newspaper, or all natural carpet. Overlap 6" and layer 10 sheets thick.
3. Add a carbon layer: straw or shredded leaves. (4")

Sheet Mulching: Lawn to Garden Conversion

4. Add a layer of organic fertilizer: chicken manure, a mixture of seed meal, kelp meal, minerals, etc. (2")
5. Add another carbon layer: straw or shredded leaves. (4")
6. Add a layer of compost and plant seedlings or starts. (1-2")



Why Straw Bale Garden?

- It's inexpensive.
- It provides garden access for those with physical limitations.
- It self-composts in a few years.
- It adds height to a garden.

Straw Bale Gardening

1. Arrange your straw bales – cut edges up, twine facing the outside - and water thoroughly.
2. Sprinkle an organic, high nitrogen fertilizer over the top of the bed, about $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of fertilizer per bale. Water thoroughly.



Straw Bale Gardening

3. Add 6"- 8" of compost and garden soil on top of the fertilizer and water thoroughly.
4. Cover the beds with burlap sacks or black plastic to hold in moisture and heat.
5. Check the temperature daily. When the bed is below body temperature, it is safe to plant!

