How to Prepare a New Garden Bed

Preparing your new garden bed means creating a healthy growing environment for your vegetables. The procedure can be long and exhausting, especially if done manually, but the rewards will be worth it if you take the time to do it right. If you are looking for the best steps to prepare a new garden bed, then consider the following suggestions.

Steps

1. **Decide where you will be planting your garden.** If you have a lot of land options, you can select the vegetables you want to grow and find the perfect spot. If you are limited with land, then the spot will determine what will grow there. Ideally, you should opt for a location that is sunny for at least 6 hours a day. Evaluate your options and select your crops accordingly.

2. **Dig out the area for your garden bed.** Begin by marking the area with a hose or string. Dig out the edge of your bed area, and then work your way in. Remove the sod with a shovel if you are digging a garden out of a grassy area. Remove any rocks and debris and turn the earth about 8 to 10 inches (20 to 25 cm) down with a shovel or rototiller.

3. **Assess the soil that you have to work with.** You will need a combination of mud, sand and clay. You should be able to squeeze your soil into a ball and then crumble it easily. Soil with too much clay will not crumble, and a soil with too much sand will not squeeze into a ball.

4. **Adjust your dirt by adding a few inches of beneficial topsoil to your new vegetable garden.** If your existing soil is not capable of growing a healthy vegetable garden, then you will need to mix in some compost and topsoil. Add the mix to the top of your garden a few inches deep, and then mix it into the existing soil.

5. **Opt for a raised bed if your soil will be difficult to maintain.** This is a good option if your soil is too moist and heavy. A raised bed will allow the water to drain well. You can use a wooden border or rocks constructed a few inches high around the parameter of the garden so that the soil is packed securely inside. With a raised garden, you don't have to dig out the area and till the soil first.

Tips

- Take advantage of what your yard has to offer when preparing your vegetable garden. Don't set yourself up to fail by trying to plant vegetables that will have a hard time growing in your yard. You can modify your soil to meet growing requirements, but if your choice of vegetables needs a lot of sun and your yard is shaded by lots of trees, understand that you will not achieve the best results.

Sources and Citations


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