

Raised Bed Gardening

A Raised Bed Garden is ideal for faster growing plants, conserving water and easier maintenance.

Why a Raised Bed Garden?

- Water is applied to a smaller area, resulting in water conservation.
- Soil in beds warms up earlier in the spring stays loose and well aerated - ideal for plant roots.
- Paths around the beds keep feet clean because gardeners work in beds without walking in them; this eliminates soil compaction.
- More vegetables can be grown per unit area than in row gardens.
- Soil amendments, fertilizer and water are applied only to the beds, saving time and money.
- Weeding is easier; hand weeding and light hoeing is usually adequate.
- You can still have a garden even if with a lot of rocks and little soil.

Pathways Between Beds

- 1½ to 2-foot wide paths are comfortable walking spaces.
- For a wheelbarrow, make the path wide enough to keep wheelbarrows from damaging plants.
- Grass paths must be mowed. Measure the width of the lawn mower and make your path a size that makes mowing convenient. Grass paths work better with contained beds, as the grass will invade open mounds.
- Bare dirt paths pack down when walked on repeatedly each year.
- Mulched paths can be made with several layers of newspaper covered with bark or straw.
- Brick or cement paths provide a more formal appearance.

Shape and Size of Beds

- Squares, rectangles... even triangles or circles...
- A 4-foot wide bed is comfortable for most gardeners to reach from either side. Make the bed narrower if children are helping, or if only one side is accessible.
 - Bed width should accommodate a rototiller if desired.
 - Bed length can be as short or as long as desired, but eight feet is a convenient size.
 - Beds that are 4 x 25 feet will provide more space in larger gardens. 4 x 25 = 100 square foot area, usually the application rate for many fertilizer and garden products.

Amending the Soil

- Organic matter, peat moss, bagged steer manure or compost improves the soil.
- In the spring, spread approximately 3-4 inches of amendments over the beds and spade or rototill in 8-12 inches deep.
- After harvest, chopped up vegetable matter and leaves as well as grass clippings can be spread over the beds and spaded in 8 to 12 inches deep.

The Green Zone map is on page 2.

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Types of Beds

Open Mound Beds: unconstructed beds that do not have sides and may be raised above ground level 6 inches or more.

- Mark the bed with stakes and string. Use a rake or hoe to mound soil up in beds.
- Add soil amendments/fertilizers and spade in.
- Level the top of the bed with the back of a rake. Sides should slope at a 45-degree angle.

Contained or Constructed Beds: Build with untreated landscape timbers, cement blocks, bricks, etc. Avoid treated wood when growing edible crops since it contains dangerous chemicals that can leach into the soil.

- The height of a raised bed can vary from six inches to a height that can be reached by a person in a wheelchair.
- If additional soil is needed for these beds, "three-way mixes" can be bought from businesses listed under "Landscape Supplies" in the phone book.

Location of Beds

- Choose a location that gets at least 6 hours of sunlight per day (the more the better).
- Place the garden away from tree and shrub roots, which will compete with vegetable plants for water and nutrients.
- Lay out beds so that the length runs north to south, allowing for minimum shading of short plants.

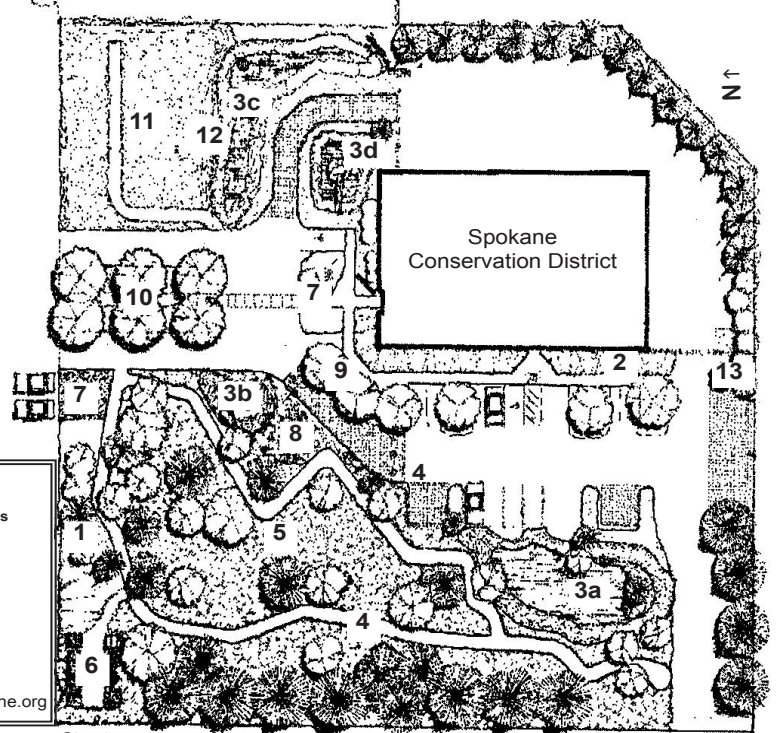
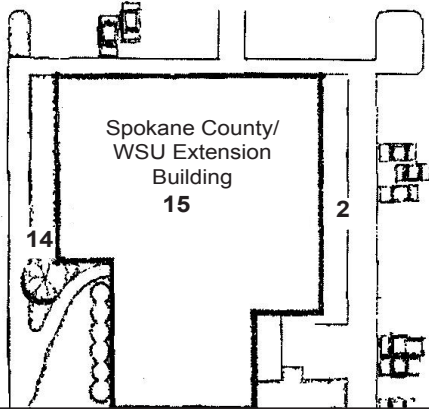
Information compiled by Susan Mulvihill, WSU Master Gardener for Publication C143. (509) 477-2181.

The Green Zone
Raised Bed Gardening exhibit
is #11 on The Green Zone map.
The Green Zone is located at the
Spokane County Conservation District and
the WSU/Spokane County Extension,
210 & 222 N. Havana, Spokane WA 99202.
(509) 535-7274 (SCCD)
(509) 477-2048 (WSU)

Raised Bed Gardening (continued)

THE GREEN ZONE

Spokane County Fair & Expo Center
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Legend

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|------------------------|----------------------------------|------------------------|
| 1. Living Fence | 5. Arboretum | 11. Raised Bed Gardens |
| 2. Xeriscape Beds | 6. Composting Demonstration Area | 12. Temporary Nursery |
| 3. Wetlands | 7. Rock Gardens | 13. Storm Garden |
| a. Scrub Shrub Wetland | 8. Ornamental Grasses | 14. Shade Garden |
| b. Wet Meadow Wetland | 9. Backyard Wildlife Sanctuary | 15. Resource Center |
| c. Forested Wetland | | |
| d. Pond | | |
| 4. Pathways | 10. Street Trees | |

Download more information on each of the areas you wish to explore -- www.thegreenzone.org

Havana Street