



How-To: LASAGNA GARDENING

Description: Lasagna gardening simply means creating a garden with layers of organic material. Though the layers are made up of materials like leaves, grass clippings, compost, or manure (rather than cheese, pasta, vegetables, and sauce) the result is a garden bed with layers of goodness, just like lasagna!



PREPARING A NEW GARDENING SITE AT BRADDOCK FARMS, WITH CARDBOARD, AMENDMENTS, AND MULCH



A HOME GARDENER PLANTS IN A LASAGNA GARDEN BUILT THE PREVIOUS FALL



STRAW, CARDBOARD, AND COMPOST ARE COMMON MATERIALS USED TO CREATE A LASAGNA GARDEN

WHY?

Creating a garden bed using organic materials is an efficient way to create a garden space where there wasn't one before. This method eliminates the need for sod removal or tilling. Lasagna gardens start out right, with lots of organic materials and fertility right where they are needed. And with lasagna gardening it is easy to create a bed in any shape or size to fit the space you have available.

How?

Like many gardening activities, creating a lasagna garden is part art, part science, and part resourcefulness! It's a good idea to start in the fall so your garden will be ready to plant in the spring.

Begin with a layer of cardboard over the sod, which will create a barrier to light and eventually decompose. Then, alternate layers of "browns" and "greens" like in a compost pile, so the organic matter will break down efficiently. The thickness of the layers can vary widely and still create a successful garden. But in general, shoot for layers that are about 2-3" deep, with a total bed height of at least 10-12".

Layering these materials creates an on-site composting situation. By the spring, the organic matter will have begun to break down and the layers will be merging. Any sod underneath the bed will be decomposing as well. It will intermix with the soil below and organic matter above. Incorporating the sod into the bed harnesses the nutrients in the grass and its roots and puts them to good use in the garden.

When spring rolls around, simply dig into your pile and transplant directly into the holes. If you built a bed with lots of rich layers, the soil you plant into will be dark and loamy and smell like earth. If it stinks, give it a little more time before planting. If there are still lots of leaves or other brown material visible, go ahead and dig a hole and add plenty of finished compost before planting. To direct seed in your new bed, rake off any large materials on top of the bed and add a layer of compost or potting mix to create a fine seedbed.

MATERIALS

- CARDBOARD: PLACE AS A BASE LAYER ON THE SOD
- LEAVES: MOWED IS BEST, BUT UN-MOWED WILL DO
- GRASS CLIPPINGS
- WEEDS: WITHOUT SEEDS
- COMPOST: FINISHED OR UNFINISHED
- HEALTHY SPENT PLANTS PULLED FROM THE GARDEN
- VEGETABLE SCRAPS FROM THE KITCHEN
- ANIMAL MANURE (IF PLANNING TO ALLOW BED TO SIT SEVERAL MONTHS BEFORE PLANTING)
- SOIL AMENDMENTS: ROCK PHOSPHATE, LIME OR SULFUR (DEPENDING ON pH OF SOIL), GREENSAND, ETC.
- NEWSPAPER: SHRED OR MAKE THIN LAYERS
- SAWDUST: FROM UNTREATED WOOD – MAKE VERY THIN LAYERS