



HOW TO CREATE A GARDEN BED USING DOUBLE-DIGGING & SHEET-MULCHING

There are many ways to create a new garden bed.

*Growing Gardens uses a combination of **Double-Digging** and **Sheet-Mulching** to install gardens for people in our Home Gardens Program.*

This page will guide you through the process of creating a garden using this method.

MATERIALS:

For Double-Digging:

- Shovel(s)
- Garden fork
- Compost and/or Composted Manure (6 cubic feet per 4x8 ft bed)
- Agricultural lime (.8 lbs per 4x8 ft bed)
- Glacial Rock Dust (1.5 lbs per 4x8 ft bed)
- Gypsum (.4 lbs per 4x8 ft bed only in fall)

For Sheet-Mulching:

- Cardboard or Newspaper
- Straw
- Any other organic matter you can find (leaves, grass clippings, etc.)
- Water
- Feather meal (.3 lbs per 4x8 ft bed or roughly 2.5 cups)

REVERSE DOUBLE DIGGING/ SHEET MULCHING

The purpose of this method is to loosen the soil deep down, without too much disturbance to the soil structure and the many little creatures that make the soil healthy and productive.

- 1) Begin by outlining your garden bed with the shovel.
Beds should not be more than 4 feet wide, so the middle is reachable.
- 2) Remove sod (grass and its roots).
Put it in a pile (not on the tarp) - you will use it later.
- 3) Dig out all of the soil in the area of the bed so the hole is 1ft deep, piling soil next to the bed on a tarp.
- 4) If the soil in the hole is very compacted, till another foot or so of soil and leave in the hole.
If soil is relatively loose, there is no need to till it.
- 5) Add grass back into the hole, root side up, spreading it out in a layer and breaking it up as much as you can.
- 6) Add the straw and if possible mix with the grass. Mix in feather meal and water thoroughly.
- 7) Cover the grass and straw with newspaper or cardboard, water again.
- 8) Evenly spread the soil from step 3 on top of the newspaper. Mix soil amendments (lime, glacial rock dust and gypsum) and compost as you add back the soil, raking it in to disperse throughout soil.



Whew! You're done.