



Garden Box 101: Everything You Need to Know

Tips, ideas, and everything else you need to know to build your own garden box from scratch or from a custom kit.

Whether you are new to garden boxes or have built a few, we've got the essentials guide for you. In Garden Box 101, we share tips on everything from what materials to use for your garden box, whether a kit is the best option, where to position your garden box, and more. The best part is that garden boxes adapt to fit your space, whether you have a large yard, small dog run, or a concrete patio.

Why a Garden Box?

The garden box is quickly becoming one of the most popular forms of gardening – with good reason.

They're easy to work with: Garden boxes sit higher than your typical in-ground garden, meaning you won't have to throw out your back bending over or stain your pants kneeling on the dirt.

They yield quality crops: Garden boxes allow you to tightly control the soil quality, amount of fertilizer and water in your garden. They also help keep out pests and insects, allowing your crops to flourish.

They're easy to build: You don't have to be a master carpenter to build a garden box. All you need is some wood boards, posts, a circular saw, a power drill, a bit of planning, and some wood screws. Depending on your skill level, you can construct a brand-new garden box in a matter of hours.



Garden Box DIY Options

Building a garden box is a pretty simple affair. In fact, there are only a few materials and tools required – a power drill, circular saw, wood screws, and some wood.

Here are a few options to get those creative juices flowing:

The Standard

If it ain't broke, don't fix it. The standard garden box is a simple rectangular structure that simply gets the job done. Simply cut the side board to the size of your choosing, and get planting.

The Kit

Not everyone enjoys a full-on DIY project. For those who would rather spend more time gardening than building, affordable and easy to assemble garden box kits are available in a few standard sizes – 2'x4', 2'x6', 4'x4', 4'x6' and 4'x8'. With a garden box kit, you'll be up and running in an hour or two.

The Urban Special

Just because you live in an apartment, doesn't mean you can't grow your own food or flowers. A 2'x2' garden box may not allow you to feed a small nation, but you'll be able to grow fresh vegetables and herbs for truly homemade meals.

The Perimeter

Who needs a fence when you can have a garden surrounding your property! A large, perimeter garden box is easy to access, provides extensive gardening space and creates a gorgeous border to your property that will be the talk of the neighborhood.

The Runway

A long, rectangular garden box allows you to access your crops easily from either side, while providing ample gardening space. No more hard to reach and hard to water plants.

The Repurpose

For a pro-level DIY garden box, find something old and make it new again. An old wheel barrow or claw-foot tub would make for an entirely unique garden box.



Build Your Own Garden Box from Scratch

If you're not the handy type, or just don't like building things, there are easy to assemble garden box kits available on the market. But if you're ready to create your own custom garden box, here is a primer.

Choose the Proper Wood

When it comes to choosing wood for your garden box, you will have a lot of options. It all comes down to your own personal taste and style. Everything from exquisite hardwoods like Mangaris and Brazilian Ipe to gorgeous Cedar to workmanlike Douglas Fir are suitable for garden boxes. However, your best bet, and the most popular wood for garden boxes is California Redwood. Redwood is rot and insect resistant, so you can be confident that your structure will hold up to the elements, and your garden will thrive. It's also affordable, easy to work with and undeniably gorgeous. Redwood is generally available in both finished and rough as well as merchant grade lumber. Rough sawn and merchant grade redwood comes at a lower price, and gives your garden box the look of a true DIY project. It's also a bit thicker than finished Redwood, so it will last longer. Your local lumber distributor should have a wide variety of materials to choose from. Pay them a visit to get a feel for the type of wood that's right for you.

Important: Do not use pressure treated lumber for your garden box. The chemicals in the wood can spoil your soil and damage your crops.



Expert Tips for Building a Garden Box

Building a garden box is a simple affair. A garden box should have 90 degree angles and be a rectangular or square shape, depending on your needs. Redwood and other materials are readily available in 12"x2" boards, and can be cut to your preferred length and height by your lumber distributor, or at home with a simple circular saw.

The depth of your garden box will depend on the type of plants you plan to grow. Beets, broccoli, okra, potatoes, sweet corn, summer squash and dill prefer deeper soil, but 18" is a safe depth for just about anything you want to grow. Simple 4"x4" boards are perfect for the corners of your garden box. They will provide more than enough support and strength. The only hardware needed for a simple garden box is a handful of quality wood screws.

What you'll need to get started: 12"x2" wood boards, 2"x6" wood boards, 4"x4" wood posts, wood screws, power drill, circular saw.

Go Big! (or small)

Depending on your available space, you can build a garden box to any size you require. If you have a lot of space, why not go big? Garden boxes have an advantage over in-ground gardens because they allow you to control the soil and water contents of your garden. Both beginners and gardening vets will enjoy the garden box's ease of use and pest control benefits.

If you live in an apartment, a small garden box will allow you to exercise your green thumb in an otherwise urban setting. A simple 2'x2' box might not yield a barn full of crops, but there's nothing quite like freshly grown tomatoes and basil to impress your dinner guests.

Roll it!

Plants have very basic needs: soil, water and sun. Soil and water are the easy part. The sun, however, bends to no man's will. As a general rule, plants and vegetables grow best when exposed to 6-8 hours of sunlight per day. The position of your home and your garden may not allow for full sunlight throughout the day, unless you add wheels! Installing wheels on your garden bed is a simple procedure, and will turn it into a sun-seeking machine that delivers optimal yields.



Save Time with Custom Garden Box Kit

Building a garden box or raised bed is a pretty simple affair – but it does require planning, elbow grease, and time – as well as some general familiarity with tools. However, you don't have to be a carpenter to build an effective garden box. In fact, you don't even have to build it yourself.

There are now a variety of garden box kits that are easy to assemble and will have you gardening within an hour. Manufacturers like GroGreen offer garden boxes in a variety of sizes – including a new mini, 2'x4' box designed for small patios. These kits are available with or without legs, and even come with optional wheel kits that allow you to move your garden box into the sun throughout the day.

**Build your garden box and start eating healthy, self-grown food!
Learn more about options for gardening in small spaces, contact
J&W Lumber today or visit one of our convenient locations.**

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