



Petaluma BOUNTY

Healthy Food for Everyone

A program of Petaluma People Services Center

www.petalumabounty.org

RAISED GARDEN BED GUIDE

BEFORE BUILDING, IMPORTANT POINTS TO CONSIDER:

- How much optimal growth space are you working with? (Good sun, good drainage, minimal root competition from nearby trees)
- Location, location, location-Is there easy access to water? The closer the garden is to your door, the more likely you are to check it regularly. But it's also important to discuss location if the garden will be impeding other yard activities (kids playing, dog's potty area, etc)
- What are your production goals?

THE ADVANTAGES FOR PLANTING IN RAISED BEDS ARE NUMEROUS AND WELL DOCUMENTED. A BRIEF SUMMARY OF REASONS TO USE RAISED BEDS IS BELOW:

- Better drainage and faster warming of soil in Spring
- Easier weeding and ability to keep grasses and pests out
- Clearly defined bed boundaries minimizes stepping and compaction
- Depending on material used, can be easier to attach trellis, cold frame, bird/cat netting, gopher wire

POINTS TO PONDER WHEN CHOOSING MATERIALS:

- **Are the materials you are considering toxic at any point of their lifecycle?** Pressure treated wood and certain wood treatments and paints have demonstrated toxicity and are unsuitable for edibles. Degrading plastics and used tires may put undesirable elements into the soil, though there is less concrete data. Do your research ahead of time.
- Will you need to fix trellising, cold frames, or gopher wire to the garden bed? If so, it's easier to adhere these items to a wood frame.
- What do you already have in abundance?
- What materials are easily accessible in your area? Are you near construction sites that may have extra scrap material (ask first), is your neighbor redoing her fence or sidewalk? What's offered on Craigslist, Freecycle, or the Recycle Town? Do some research and be creative!
- Do you have any size requirements? Do you have limited mobility that would make higher raised beds easier to maneuver? How about width - how far do you regularly want to be reaching? Typical bed widths are 3-4 feet .
- How often do you want to reconstruct raised beds? Frames made of some natural materials (straw bales, rice wattles) tend to decompose more quickly than certain wood and stone work.

DON'T FORGET - WHEN YOUR GARDEN STARTS PRODUCING IN ABUNDANCE, YOU CAN SHARE YOUR ABUNDANCE WITH YOUR NEIGHBORS AND DONATE TO LOCAL GLEANING ORGANIZATIONS. SEE IGROWSONOMA.ORG FOR MORE INFORMATION.