

## How to Build a Raised Bed

There are many ways to build a raised bed. Here is just one simple way to do it. You will need to adjust your materials to the size and shape of the raised bed you want to build.

### Materials needed to make an “L” shaped 8’x8’x4’x4’x4’ raised bed

- 8 – 2” x 6” x 8’ pieces of redwood lumber
- 1 – 4” x 4” x 8’ redwood post
- 50 – 3” long deck screws
- Rebar (if your bed is going to be over 8’ long in any one direction).
- Small sledge hammer
- Stakes
- String
- Optional\* Linseed oil and a paint brush to coat inside and all 4 edges of 2” x 6” and entire 4” x4”. Helps extend the life of the wood. Two or three coats is best.

### Tools:

- Miter or Circular saw
- Framing square
- Battery powered screw driver (minimum of 12 volts)
- 4’ level
- Pick Mattock
- Flat Shovel and / or bow rake

### Step 1. Find the right spot for your garden bed

Decide placement of your raised bed (refer to Garden Planning for Beginners Part 1 on our website [gardenshare.webstarts.com](http://gardenshare.webstarts.com)). Mark a line of flour or sand outlining where you will place your raised bed. Leveling the ground first makes it easier to build your raised bed and keeps it in good shape longer because there’s less stress on the wood. We use the flat part of the Pick Mattock to create a level channel to place the bottom board and the 4x4 in.

### Step 2. Determine the height of your raised bed

Start with four 4x4 posts cut to the desired height of your raised bed. The ones we are using are 11” tall. It’s easiest to simply set your anchor posts on top of the soil with the frame; sinking them in the ground isn’t necessary.

### Step 3. Build the wood raised garden bed frame

- Build the frame by attaching an 8-ft.-long 2x6 piece of lumber with 3-in. deck screws to the sides of two of the 4x4 posts making sure that the 2x6 is flush with the edge of the 4x4. Check to make sure your board is level.
- Repeat with the other 8-ft.-long 2x6s, remember to check level.
- Next, cut two 2x6’s in half and attach the 4-ft. 2x6’s to the other three 4x4 posts (making sure that the 2x6 is flush with the outer edge of the other 2x6) to complete the bottom row checking level on every piece.

#### Step 4. Attach the rest of the boards

Now that your bed frame is in place, repeat the process for the second row stacking the 2×6s on top of the first row. If first row was level second row should be level.

#### Step 5. Reinforce the frame.

Hammer an 18” piece of rebar about 10” deep three feet from each corner of the long sides of the raised bed (only necessary if your raised bed is longer than 8’). These will reinforce the frame when it’s filled with soil. See picture below.

#### Step 6. Fill your raised bed with soil

Next, fill the box with native soil on the bottom half. For how to fill the top half refer to How to Prepare Soil class video on our website [gardenshare.webstarts.com](http://gardenshare.webstarts.com). Soil may settle the first season, so water it in thoroughly and give it a couple weeks before planting if you can, then top off if you need to. Now you’re ready to plant!

#### FAQ’s

- **Can I use pressure treated wood?** A: It is not recommended to use pressure treated wood.
- **Can I use painted wood?** A: We do not recommend using wood that is painted on the soil side.
- **Can I use 1” x 6” boards (fence boards) for my raised bed?** A: You can if you’re building a very small bed (ie. 2’ x 4’ or similar.), otherwise it is not recommended.
- **Do you have to put wire mesh, weed fabric or cardboard at the bottom of the raised bed?** These are optional. Weed fabric or cardboard are helpful in preventing weeds and wire mesh is good if you have moles or gophers.
- **Do I need to line it with plastic?** A: No
- **Do I have to dig into the ground?** A: It is helpful and preferred to do so specially if your ground needs leveling.
- **Do I have to stain it?** A: You can stain or paint it on the outside.
- **Can I use nails?** A: As long as they are galvanized but deck screws are much preferred.
- **Can I make it taller than 12”?** A: Yes you can. Just know that it’ll cost more and need more reinforcement and more filler.

Drawing of how to reinforce your raised bed.

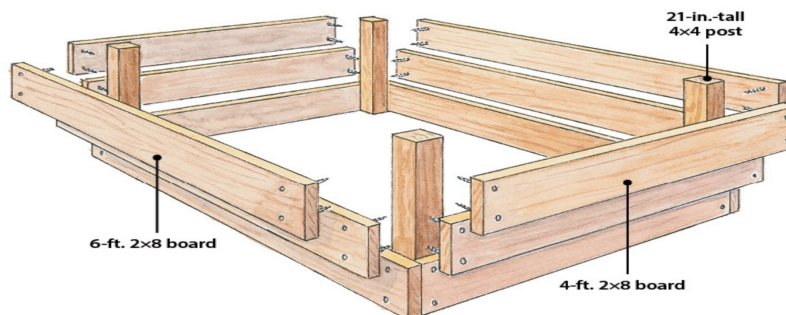
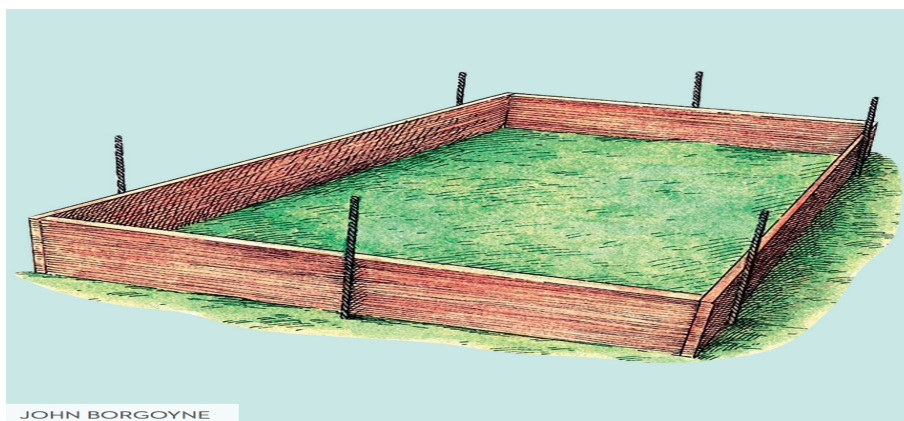


Illustration by Carlie Hamilton.