

Stephanie Alexander Kitchen Garden Foundation information sheet

Get Growing!

It's very easy to start a simple veggie bed at home, and bring some freshly harvested crops into your cooking. Here are a few basic tips for getting started.

What you need:

- Start small and plan a 1 metre square garden bed, crate or large pot.
- You can construct a bed with a huge range of materials, depending on your budget and what you can re-purpose.
- Recycle what you have at hand: use bricks, timber, logs, pipes, roofing tiles or hay bales for edging.
- Take a look around your neighbourhood – the main consideration is that the materials you use can contain the soil and don't have any hazardous residue.
- You can create a bed without any edging if your yard soil is healthy, just build on top and make sure you mulch the edges well. (You can create great mulch edging with hay bales.)
- No yard? Look for large pots, barrels, drums, old wheelbarrows and bathtubs, which will work fine if you remember to water them daily.

What to do:

- Think about sunshine – your veggies will need it. Place your bed where it will get at least half a day of sun.
- See our 'No-Dig Bed' sheet (overleaf) to construct a simple veggie bed with straw, newspaper, manure and compost.
- If you're building your garden on your lawn, first lay down newspaper six sheets thick to stop weeds growing through, and wet it thoroughly before stacking on your no-dig layers.
- Plant seeds or seedlings according to the season, straight into your new bed. See our planting tips or talk to your local nursery – they will love it.
- Feeling stuck? Start with leafy greens and herbs, which are fast-growing and delicious.

It's that easy!

A few hints and tips:

- Water your garden bed well as you create it and when you plant, and regularly as plants grow. The soil should feel damp. In hot weather especially, check the soil to see if it is dry, and give it a deep water if it is – potentially every day. Check often!
- Mulch: grab a hay bale and spread it around your plants. Mulching is very important for retaining water, stopping weeds and improving soil health.
- Keep an eye out for snails and caterpillars, who love new seedlings. Kids have eagle eyes and can easily remove and squash them, and snails can be discouraged by a barrier of coffee grounds or eggshells. This needs to be replaced periodically as it composts into the soil. As plants get bigger they are better at surviving attack and are less tasty for the snails.
- Caring for your soil will be rewarded with a delicious successful harvest.
- There are many websites to help you grow and develop your garden. Try our friends at Gardening Australia (www.abc.net.au/gardening/vegieguide) and Gardenate (www.gardenate.com) and of course there are plenty of resources at the Kitchen Garden Foundation (www.kitchengardenfoundation.org.au)

And finally ...

Love your garden! Just like people, gardens need regular care to thrive. Make watering, weeding and pest control part of your family's daily routine, just as much as harvesting your beautiful fresh produce and sharing it around the dinner table, together.

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No-Dig Bed

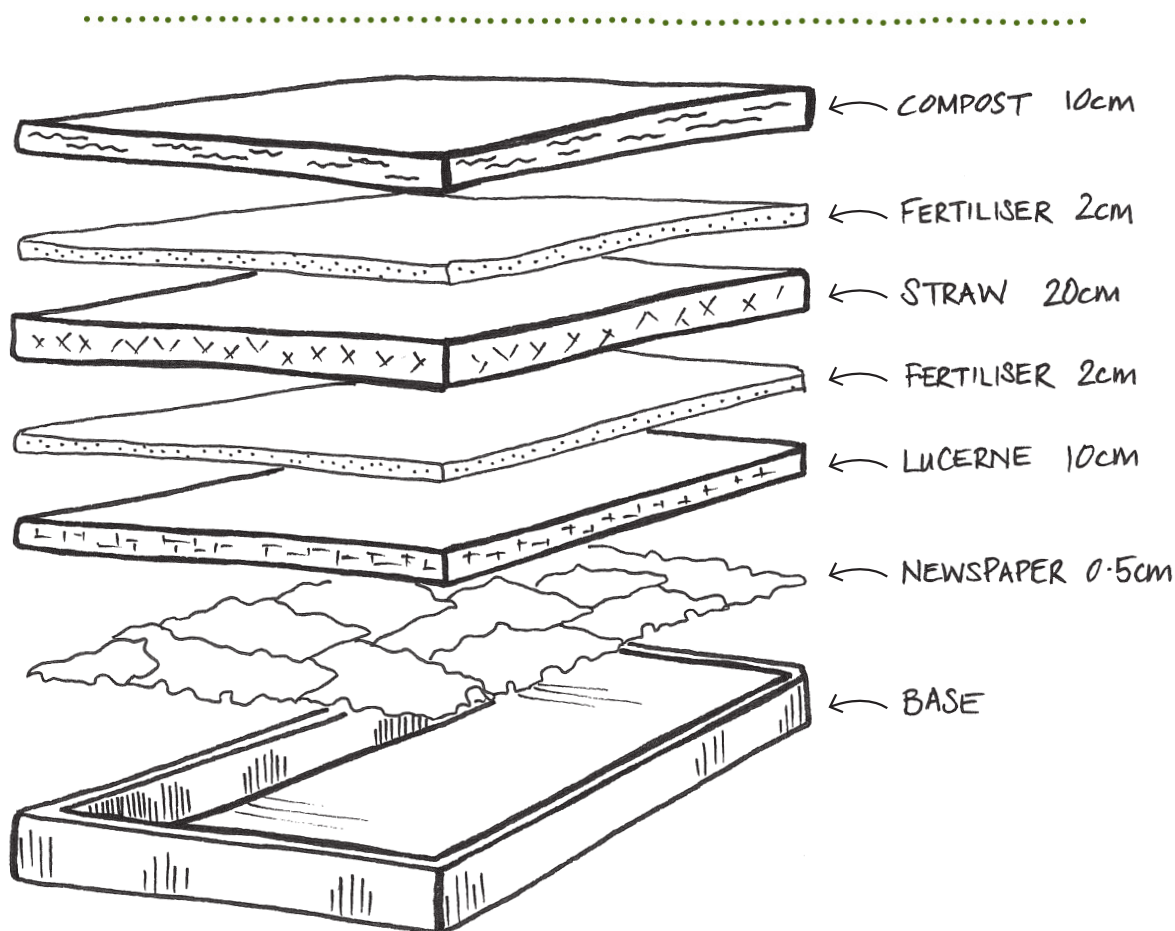
A no-dig bed makes good use of spaces that are unsuitable for direct planting.

Equipment:

- Material for garden walls (see Step 1 'What to do')
- Newspaper
- Pea straw, lucerne or hay
- Good organic fertiliser such as chook or cow manure
- Compost

What to do:

1. Build the garden walls. This can be done with sleepers, old bricks, rocks, hay bales or anything that will give you a height of 20–30 cm.
2. Cover the area with newspaper, at least 0.5 cm thick. Soak the newspaper with water.
3. Add a layer of pea straw/lucerne/hay, leaving no gaps, 10 cm deep.
4. Top with a 2 cm layer of good organic fertiliser. Chook manure is good for this layer as it is quite strong.
5. Add a thick layer (20 cm) of loose straw.
6. Add another 2 cm layer of fertiliser (organic cow manure works well).
7. Add a 10 cm top layer of compost.
8. Water the bed until it's wet but not soaking. Seedlings can now be planted, and your new bed is ready to go!



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Planting: seeds and seedlings

Planting: Seeds in punnets and trays

Equipment

Depending on the type of seeds you are planting you will need to choose from:

- Packets of seasonal seeds that require punnet sowing
- Garden gloves
- Seed trays, punnets, peat pots, or other containers. Polystyrene containers set up as wicking beds are a great option.
- Drum sieve
- Trowels
- Organic seed-raising mix
- Dibber
- Labels
- Watering can

What to do:

1. Choose and prepare your container. Fill the container with dampened seed-raising mix. Be very careful when working with potting soil, and always follow the instructions.
2. Slightly press down on the top of the soil with your gloved hand. Not too hard! You want the soil to be firm, but not too compacted.
3. Broadcasting sowing: You will need to broadcast sow fine seeds like basil, i.e. gently and evenly spread the seeds over the soil with your hand. Sow to the recommended rate per square meter. Check whether the seeds need to be covered – if they do, use the drum sieve or your hands to gently scatter a fine layer of soil over the seeds.
4. Sowing: Larger seeds like peas or broad beans can be sown individually. Using your dibber, poke a hole to the correct depth in the soil, drop in your seed and gently backfill with soil with your gloved hand or a trowel.
5. Put a clearly marked, waterproof label into the container, which states the name of the plant and the date you planted it. Make sure you use a waterproof pen!

Planting: Seedlings

Equipment

- Garden gloves
- Rake
- Seedlings in pots or trays
- Old teaspoon
- Trowels
- Watering can
- Labels

What to do:

1. Check your garden bed by raking it over to ensure the surface is even.
2. Work out what distance your seedlings will be planted at – you might use a ruler or hand-widths to measure the correct spacing.
3. Remove your seedlings from the container – if they are in soft plastic punnets then gently squeeze the bottoms to pop the seedlings out. If they are in trays you will need to carefully scoop them out – an old teaspoon is a great tool for this job. Always be very careful not to damage their roots.
4. Sometimes more than one seedling will grow in a space, and their roots become entwined. Gently separate the seedlings by pulling them apart, trying to make sure you don't damage any part of the plant.
5. Using a trowel, or a dibber for small seedlings, create a hole large enough for the seedling.
6. Place the seedling in the hole, roots down, and gently backfill with soil. The plant should be planted so that it sits at the same depth as it was in its original pot.
7. Gently press the soil down around the seedling, but not so much that it becomes compacted. You simply want to ensure that there are no air gaps in the hole you have just filled.
8. Using a watering can with a watering rose or a hose with a fine spray, water the seedlings in well.
9. Mark the seedlings with a sign that states what they are.



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Mulching

It is very important that you mulch your vegetable garden, to help the soil maintain moisture and to protect the soil surface from scorching weather or frosts.

There are two types of mulch that are mainly used in vegetable gardens – pea straw or sugar cane mulch. Both are excellent mulches, will gradually break down and, in the case of the pea straw, add nutrients to the soil.

Bark or woodchips or old newspapers are not recommended for your vegetable garden.

And remember – do not mulch over your onions! The onion bulbs do need to be able to break the top of the soil and ripen in the sun.

Equipment:

- 🍅 Garden gloves
- 🍅 A bale of either pea straw or sugar cane mulch
- 🍅 Scissors
- 🍅 Hose or watering can



What to do:

1. Make sure your bale of mulch is close to the area being mulched, so most of it ends up on the garden and not spread across paths or other areas.
2. Before using, wet the bale thoroughly to dampen down any dust (it's important not to breathe in any particles). You may need to repeat this when you get to the middle of the bale.
3. Use scissors to untie or open the bale.
4. You will find the bale naturally breaks up into portions – take a portion you can carry and, standing over the area you want to mulch, gradually tease out all the straw so it becomes light and fluffy.
5. Spread the straw over the soil, to a depth of about 5–8 cm.
6. Do not pile mulch close to plant stems, as this can cause them to rot, but instead make a nest around each plant. Continue to spread the mulch until you have covered the whole area.

Note: Cover small seedlings with a pot while mulching to protect them – remove the pot when you have finished spreading the mulch.



kitchengardenfoundation.org.au

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Planting chart for temperate & cool regions

January

Amaranth	Chillies	Potatoes
Asian greens	Chives	Radish
Basil	Corn	Rocket
Beans	Cucumbers	Rosemary
Beetroot	Dill	Sage
Broccoli	Kohlrabi	Silverbeet
Brussels sprouts	Leeks	Sorrel
Cabbage	Lettuce	Spring onions
Capsicums	Mint	Swede
Carrot	Oregano	Thyme
Cauliflower	Parsnip	Zucchini
Chervil		

February

Amaranth	Chives	Rocket
Asian greens	Corn	Rosemary
Basil	Kohlrabi	Sage
Beans	Leeks	Shallots
Beetroot	Lettuce	Silverbeet
Broccoli	Mint	Sorrel
Brussels sprouts	Oregano	Spring onions
Cabbage	Parsnip	Swede
Carrot	Peas	Thyme
Cauliflower	Potatoes	Turnips
Chervil	Radish	

March

Amaranth	Chives	Rosemary
Asian greens	Kohlrabi	Sage
Asparagus	Leeks	Shallots
Beetroot	Lettuce	Silverbeet
Broad beans	Mint	Sorrel
Broccoli	Oregano	Spinach
Brussels sprouts	Parsnip	Spring onions
Cabbage	Peas	Swede
Carrot	Radish	Thyme
Cauliflower	Rocket	Turnips
Chervil		

April

Asian greens	Chives	Shallots
Asparagus	Garlic	Silverbeet
Beetroot	Kohlrabi	Sorrel
Broad beans	Leeks	Spinach
Broccoli	Oregano	Spring onions
Brussels sprouts	Peas	Swede
Cabbage	Radish	Thyme
Carrot	Rocket	Turnips
Cauliflower	Rosemary	

May

Asian greens	Lettuce	Rosemary
Asparagus	Mint	Shallots
Broad beans	Oregano	Sorrel
Cabbage	Peas	Spinach
Carrot	Radish	Spring onions
Garlic	Rhubarb	Thyme
Kohlrabi	Rocket	Turnips

June

Asian greens	Lettuce	Shallots
Asparagus	Mint	Sorrel
Broad beans	Oregano	Spinach
Cabbage	Peas	Spring onions
Chervil	Raspberries	Tarragon
Garlic	Rhubarb	Thyme
Jerusalem artichokes	Rocket	Turnips
	Rosemary	

July

Asian greens	Jerusalem artichokes	Peas	Shallots
Asparagus	Lettuce	Potatoes	Sorrel
Beetroot	Mint	Raspberries	Spring onions
Broad beans	Oregano	Rhubarb	Strawberries
Cabbage	Parsley	Rocket	Tarragon
Chervil	Parsnips	Rosemary	Thyme
Garlic			

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Planting chart for temperate & cool regions

August

Asian greens	Kohlrabi	Rosemary
Asparagus	Lettuce	Sage
Beetroot	Mint	Shallots
Cabbage	Oregano	Silverbeet
Capsicums	Parsley	Sorrel
Chervil	Parsnips	Spring onions
Coriander	Peas	Strawberries
Dill	Potatoes	Tarragon
Eggplant	Radish	Thyme
Fennel	Raspberries	Tomato
Globe artichokes	Rhubarb	
Jerusalem artichokes	Rocket	

October

Amaranth	Coriander	Potatoes
Asian greens	Corn Cucumbers	Pumpkin Radish
Basil	Dill	Rhubarb
Beans	Eggplant	Rocket
Beetroot	Fennel	Rosemary
Broccoli	Globe artichokes	Sage
Cabbage	Kohlrabi	Silverbeet
Capsicums	Leeks	Sorrel
Carrots	Lettuce	Spring onions
Celeriac	Melon	Strawberries
Celery	Mint	Thyme
Chervil	Oregano	Tomato
Chillies	Parsley	Warrigal
Chives	Parsnips	Zucchini

September

Amaranth	Coriander	Potatoes
Asian greens	Corn	Pumpkin
Asparagus	Cucumbers	Radish
Basil	Dill	Rhubarb
Beans	Eggplant	Rocket
Beetroot	Fennel	Rosemary
Broccoli	Globe artichokes	Sage
Cabbage	Kohlrabi	Silverbeet
Capsicums	Leeks	Sorrel
Carrots	Lettuce	Spring onions
Celeriac	Melon	Strawberries
Celery	Mint	Thyme
Chervil	Oregano	Tomato
Chillies	Parsley	Warrigal greens
Chives	Parsnips	Zucchini

November

Amaranth	Coriander	Parsnips
Asian greens	Corn	Potatoes
Basil	Cucumbers	Pumpkin
Beans	Dill	Radish
Beetroot	Eggplant	Rocket
Broccoli	Fennel	Rosemary
Cabbage	Globe artichokes	Sage
Capsicums	Kohlrabi	Silverbeet
Carrots	Leeks	Sorrel
Celeriac	Lettuce	Spring onions
Celery	Melon	Thyme
Chervil	Mint	Tomato
Chillies	Oregano	Zucchini
Chives	Parsley	

December

Amaranth	Celeriac	Kohlrabi	Radish
Asian greens	Celery	Leeks	Rocket
Basil	Chervil	Lettuce	Rosemary
Beans	Chillies	Melon	Sage
Beetroot	Chives	Mint	Silverbeet
Broccoli	Coriander	Oregano	Sorrel
Brussels sprouts	Corn	Parsley	Spring onions
Cabbage	Cucumbers	Parsnips	Thyme
Capsicums	Dill	Potatoes	Tomato
Carrots	Eggplant	Pumpkin	Zucchini
Cauliflower	Fennel		

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Basic pasta dough and pesto recipe

Fresh from the garden: basil, eggs, garlic

Equipment for pasta dough:

metric measuring scales and spoons
 mixing bowls – 1 large, 1 small
 plastic wrap
 clean tea towels
 cook's knife
 chopping board
 pasta machine
 pastry brush

Equipment for pesto:

metric measuring scales and cups
 grater/fine grater
 frying pan
 food processor
 spatula
 serving bowl

Ingredients for pasta dough:

400 g plain flour, plus extra for dusting
 2 tsp salt
 4 eggs (70 g eggs)

Ingredients for pesto:

½ cup pine nuts (or substitute pepitas or sunflower seeds)
 4 garlic cloves, peeled and chopped
 2 large handfuls of fresh basil
 120 g parmesan, grated
 ¾ cup olive oil
 salt, to taste



What to do:

To make and rest dough:

1. Combine flour and salt in large bowl and create a well in the middle of the flour.
2. Crack eggs into small bowl, then pour into flour well.
3. Use your hands to mix eggs into flour until dough clings together and feels springy.
4. Tip dough onto clean, dry bench and knead for a few minutes until smooth and elastic. Wrap in plastic wrap and rest for an hour at room temperature.

To roll dough:

1. Set up pasta machine next to clean dry space on bench. Spread clean tea towels next to rollers to catch pasta on.
2. Unwrap dough and cut into six pieces. Keep one piece out and fold others back in plastic wrap to stay moist.
3. Roll dough into ball and press down on board. Flatten and shape it into a rectangle about 8 cm wide.
4. Pass dough through widest setting of pasta machine.
5. Fold dough into three, then turn it 90 degrees and roll through again. Do this three or four times, folding as necessary to keep edges from getting too ragged.
6. Set rollers to next thinnest setting and pass the pasta through.
7. Continue changing settings and passing dough through until dough has passed through second thinnest setting.
8. If dough starts to stick, sprinkle a pinch of flour onto your hands and smooth onto dough.
9. If dough gets too long, cut into two or three pieces and roll each piece separately.
10. Cover pasta with tea towels to stop it drying out. Your pasta is now ready to cut into spaghetti, linguini, etc.
11. Clean pasta machine by brushing with dry pastry brush. Never wash pasta machine with water as rollers will rust.

To make pesto:

1. Dry-fry pine nuts (or substitute as suggested in the ingredients list) in frying pan over a medium heat until golden.
2. Add garlic to food processor along with toasted pine nuts.
3. Process mix until you have a rough paste.
4. Add basil leaves (not stems) and parmesan.
5. Keep food processor running while slowly adding olive oil.
6. Taste for salt and season if necessary.
7. Using the spatula, scrape pesto into the serving bowl or directly onto cooked pasta.

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Salad of the Imagination recipe

You'll love making 'Salad of the Imagination' as there are so many possible combinations, and so much experimenting to do. You can use this basic recipe and technique throughout the year, using whatever fresh produce is in season at the time, plus some basic items in your kitchen cupboard. Seasonal staples include:

- 🍅 Spring: avocado, carrots, cucumber, radish, snowpeas
- 🍅 Summer: capsicum, celery, corn, green beans, tomatoes, zucchini
- 🍅 Autumn: capsicum, celeriac (grated, raw), mushrooms, onions, tomatoes
- 🍅 Winter: beetroot (grated raw), cabbage (sliced thinly), carrot, fennel, peas, snowpeas

And always think about herbs like basil, chives, parsley, mint and thyme, as well as green leaves like rocket, spinach and loads of different lettuces that grow all year round.

Equipment:

metric measuring cups, jug, spoons
 clean tea towels
 chopping board
 cook's knife
 bowls – 1 small, 1 large
 whisk
 citrus juicer
 salad spinner
 tongs
 serving platter

Ingredients:

4 cups mixed salad leaves
 2 cups mixed small leaves and soft-leaved herbs
 Garnishes and other ingredients such as:
 croutons (plain or garlic-rubbed)
 grated vegetables (beetroot, carrot, celeriac, radish)
 hard-boiled eggs (sliced or chopped)
 raw fruit (apples, citrus, pears)
 seeds (pumpkin, sesame, sunflower)
 shaved or crumbled cheese

For the dressing:

acids (lemon juice, vinegar: you can experiment with different vinegars)
 oils (olive oil is best to start with; buy the best you can afford)
 other flavour ingredients such as honey, mustard and minced garlic
 salt and freshly ground black pepper

What to do:

1. Choose your ingredients, thinking about what is in season, which flavours go together and how they will feel in a salad (it's always nice to have something crunchy along with the soft green leaves).
2. Wash and dry the leaves and herbs gently. Tear or snip them into bite-sized pieces. Remove tough stems.
3. Make the dressing. The most common ratio is 1 part acid (such as lemon juice or vinegar) to 4 parts oil. Combine your acid with your oil in the small bowl. Whisk lightly to combine.
4. Whisk in additions, such as honey, mustard or spices. Add a pinch of salt and pepper, and always TASTE and adjust as you like.
5. Prepare any other ingredients for your salad, such as croutons, seeds, cheese, grated vegetables or hard-boiled eggs. Add them to the large bowl.
6. Tip the salad leaves into the large bowl with the dressing, then very gently turn them in the dressing with tongs or your hands.
7. Serve on platters and scatter with garnishes, if using.

