

## New to Gardening?

The following information should help you in making a successful garden. We have broke down the barriers of the different types of gardens that people most usually go for. Whether you are doing a Garden by the foot, Patio Garden, Large Gardens, we will address each one. Lets look at the ABC's of Gardening.

### Garden by the Foot



Most gardens are planted in long rows separated by three foot aisles. This means 80% of your garden (*that you water, weed, and fertilize*) grows nothing. You just walk on it. The square foot method eliminates that 80% of your garden that you don't use by planting in blocks.

Using the square foot gardening method, you divide a 4 x 4 box into sixteen 1 foot square gardens. You then can plant a different crop in each of the squares. For example, you might plant 16 carrots in one box, four beans in another, and one cabbage in another. That leaves you with 13 other boxes to fill! I think it's a fantastic system, but I'll let you decide for yourself. Here are some of the reasons why I love square foot gardening.

## #1. Perfect Dirt

It doesn't matter what kind of soil you have, because you won't be using it. Acidic or alkaline - it doesn't matter. Rocky or sandy - it makes no difference. **You build your own perfect soil.** And it's all really rather simple. It requires just three ingredients.

- Peat Moss
- Compost

- Vermiculite



Just mix these three ingredients in equal proportions and you have the finest soil you could imagine. It's light and loose (*thanks to the peat moss*), it retains moisture very well (*thanks to the vermiculite*), and is full of the nutrients your plants need (*thanks to the compost*). And all these ingredients can

be found at you local garden center.

## #2. No Weeding

Yup, thats right. Since you're making your own soil, there will be no weed seeds in there to start with. Plus, any weed seeds that might happen to blow in are easily removed because the soil is so light and loose. I think I might have pulled out five weeds from my garden last year.

## #3. Less Space Required

Your square foot garden takes up only 20% of the space required by a traditional garden. That means you can be more productive with the space you have. It also means you only need to do 20% of the work.

#### **#4. Inexpensive**

I just built two square foot gardens this spring and here were my costs:

- Lumber: Free (I used scrap)
- Vermiculite: \$20
- Peat Moss: \$8
- Compost: \$20

Total: \$48 for two - \$24 each.

Of course with your own lumber and your own compost, you could cut that cost down to \$14 each. And once your initial garden is set up, you only need to add a little compost each year. You'll never again need fertilizer or weed killers.

**Convinced yet? Ready to build your own? Here • fs how!**

#### **Required Materials**

- (4) 4" x 2 x 6 boards
- (6) lattice strips (I ripped 1/4 inch thick strips off a 2 x 6)
- (8) 4" nails or screws
- (12) 1" nails or screws
- Cardboard, newspaper, or landscape fabric for weed control
- 60 litres of vermiculite (preferably coarse)
- 60 litres of peat moss (about 2 cubic feet compressed)
- 60 litres of compost (at least three different types - I used steer manure, sheep manure, and mushroom compost)

#### **Building the Square Foot Garden**

Attach your 2 x 6 boards together with nails or screws to form a four foot square box.



Lay down your newspaper, cardboard, or landscape fabric on the ground where you wish to place your gardens. This will prevent existing grass or weeds from pushing up into your garden. Lay your box on top of the newspaper, cardboard, or landscape fabric.



Mix the compost, peat moss, and vermiculite together in equal portions. An easy way to do this is to pile the ingredients on a large tarp and roll them back and forth in the tarp. Then carry the tarp to your garden and pour it in. (Note: You may want to water down the ingredients as they are rather dusty when dry.)



Once the soil has filled the box to the top, place the lattice on top, nailing each piece of lattice in place so that there are sixteen equal squares.



And there you have it. You're ready to plant!



Pretty simple, isn't it? If you've got any questions about how to make your own square foot garden, ask away!



