



NO DIG GARDENS

At the risk of being obvious – a no-dig garden is one you don't have to dig! It sits above the ground and doesn't have soil. But it contains plenty of other good stuff – such as layers of organic material - which form the perfect growing environment for vegies and herbs as they break down.

No-dig gardens are easy to make...

- Pick the spot – look for somewhere that gets plenty of sunlight and that's flat. You can construct it over lawn, existing garden beds, rocky ground or even concrete.
- No dig gardens can be any style you want – making it round with a keyhole access path through the middle and a perimeter path around the outside as pictured above will make picking produce easy.

Ingredients you will need...

Straw, lucerne, manure, newspaper or cardboard, lime, blood and bone, compost and sawdust, mulch or gravel for the paths.

Method to make a keyhole style no-dig garden...

- Fix a stake into the centre of the plot. Then take a 2 metre piece of rope for the radius, draw a circle, and mark it out.
- Mark out a smaller circle for the keyhole in the centre and mark out the pathway.
- Apply generous amounts of blood and bone, lime and then water that all in. This will accelerate the decomposition process of the lawn once it's smothered with the rest of the materials. (If you are making your no-dig garden on rocky ground then make a base of leaves and twigs)
- Use newspaper or cardboard to cover the grass. This is called sheet mulching and it starves the grass of light. With the help of water, lime and fertiliser, it soon rots down - meaning no more mowing. A helpful tip is to soak the newspaper first so it doesn't blow away when you're laying it. Be sure to use plenty of paper, ensure the layers all overlap so the grass runners don't grow through. If you have vigorous grass, such as kikuyu or couch, try two layers of paper across the plot.

A no-dig garden consists of eight 10cm layers - which should be about 5cm thick



Remember to water each layer thoroughly as you go...

The layers:

1. First layer is woodchips, followed by a dressing of blood and bone.
2. Next, a layer of green weeds or grass clippings with no seeds or runners and apply lime.
3. Number three is dry deciduous leaves or straw, followed by more blood and bone.
4. Manure, sheep, cow or chicken. Lay it on 5cm thick followed by some lime.
5. Layer five is lucerne and blood and bone.
6. More manure - laid 5cm thick and lime.
7. More lucerne and blood and bone.
8. Compost –just like icing on the cake!

The paths:

To make the paths, spread wood chip mulch, sawdust, crusher dust or gravel along the keyhole path and the perimeter.

After making these layers the no-dig garden bed should be sitting about 60cm above ground. But it will settle to half this size over a week or two. It's a good idea to wait for this to happen because garden bed materials are better to plant into when they have started to break down.

If you can't wait to plant, use potting mix to get seeds and seedlings started. Just create little planting pockets, fill these with potting mix and sprinkle with a little blood and bone and rock minerals, and plant and water immediately.

You will need to occasionally keep the bed topped up with compost, lucerne and manure just to ensure it stays at about 30 to 40 cm high.

Happy Gardening!



community_garden_network@health.qld.gov.au