

No dig vegetable garden

No dig gardens are the fastest, most delicious way to get home grown vegetables on your dinner table!

What?

- A No Dig garden is made on top of the ground, it is a layered, nutrient rich, easy to build vegetable patch
- It can be built over existing garden beds, lawns and even hard or rocky ground
- It should be positioned in a sunny area that receives at least 4 hours of sun a day and somewhere that has good drainage
- It can be any size or shape

Why?

- They're easy to build (a morning's work!)
- They are virtually maintenance free.
- They can be built anywhere, any time, to any design
- All the organic matter will help retain moisture (especially in summer) and the mulch will suppress weeds, prevent erosion, and keep the plant roots from getting too hot

How?

The 8 step No Dig veggie patch

Ingredients: To make a garden bed approximately 1.5 x 2.5 metres long you will need one bag of organic fertiliser (either cow poo or compost), one bale of straw (try and get clean straw with little seeds), a pile of old newspapers (cardboard is an option if you can't access newspaper), one bale of Lucerne hay (avoid buying loose Lucerne, bundled as a bale with string is easier to use), a garden hose, a pair of gardening gloves, access to water and a tub to soak the newspapers in

Remember to water as you go!

Method

The following steps detail how to build a simple vegetable patch. For a more diverse and nutrient rich patch steps 4-7 can be repeated, depending on how much material is available:

1. Choose the position for your patch (full sun is best, with at least 4-5 hrs p/day)
2. Prepare the site: If you are building on lawn, mow the grass where you're patch will be. If building a border create a rectangular box as the base of the garden bed. Remember, a box base is optional
3. Start with the newspaper (or cardboard) layer. Lay down a thick level of wet newspaper (soaked) making sure it completely covers the designated area. It should be at least 6mm. thick and overlap. This kills off any weeds and stops new ones growing. Don't use glossy or coloured paper
4. Sprinkle an even 20 mm layer of good organic fertiliser
5. Lay down sections or 'biscuits' of lucerne hay to a height of about 4 inches (no gaps)
6. Sprinkle an even 20 mm layer of good organic fertiliser
7. Cover with a loose bedding of straw, about 200mm thick
8. Finally insert pockets of compost in the straw where you want to put your seeds or seedlings (for most vegetables it is best to raise seeds in a tray first and transplant them into your patch once they have developed their set of second or third leaves)

Where to go?

Local nurseries and produce stores sell everything you need to set up a no dig garden

SEEDS – Certified Organic Seeds can be purchased online at www.selectorganic.com.au

SEEDLINGS – can be purchased from your local garden centre, or can often be found at local produce markets





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How much will it cost?

The cost of starting a No Dig garden will vary depending on the type and quantity of ingredients you buy. It is often cheaper to buy in bulk and there are usually ways around having to purchase all the ingredients required. For instance dated newspapers is FREE and often roadside farms sell bags of organic manure a lot cheaper than produce stores or nurseries

Troubleshooting?

Make sure:

1. Your garden bed is well watered
2. The level of mulch is topped up periodically
3. You follow growing instructions on the back of seed packets

Snails

1. Trap them...submerge to soil level traps made from old bowls, saucers, or the bottom half of old plastic bottles, fill with 1/2 beer and 1/2 water and empty every morning
2. Catch them...pay local kids 5c each!
3. Spread a layer of sand around the perimeter of your garden bed, the corrosive texture is a great deterrent

Mildews (downy and powder)

Commonly found on cucurbits, best dealt with by chopping off affected area

Cabbage White

Examine undersides of leaves and squash the eggs by hand or wipe clean with a soapy cloth

Contact Spray Pest Recipe

This mixture can be used to repel general chewing insects and aphids:

6 cloves of garlic and 2 red hot chilies chopped and mixed in a pot with one litre of water. Bring to boil, allow to cool. Store in a bottle or decant into a spray gun as a bug zapper and apply as required

Time?

Making a No Dig Garden takes no longer than 2 hours. Because they are low maintenance, there is little time spent on upkeep and once planted the results from patch to plate are both fast and exciting!

Things to do now – Start collecting the ingredients you need to build your veggie patch
Things to do in the future – Harvest home grown vegetables and extend your patch

Want to know more?

Read books, visit your local library, search the internet, ask your friends, attend a workshop run by your local council:

Camden	4654 7777
Campbelltown	4645 4000
Liverpool	1300 36 2170
Wollondilly	4677 1100
Macarthur Centre for Sustainable Living	4647 9828

Acknowledgments to:

- <http://www.organicdownunder.com/No%20Dig.htm>
- <http://www.no-dig-vegetablegarden.com/>
- The Watershed, watershed@marrickville.nsw.gov.au
- Esther Dean 'Growing without Digging'