



Square Foot Gardening

Fun facts about little gardens and how to enjoy them!

What is it?

Square foot gardening is the practice of planning and creating small, but intensively planted gardens. The practice combines concepts from other organic gardening methods, including a strong focus on compost, densely planted raised beds and biointensive attention to a small, clearly defined area. This method is particularly well-suited for areas with poor soil, beginner gardeners or as adaptive recreation for those with disabilities.



How to make one:

Divide a 4 ft. x 4 ft. bed (using untreated 1 x 6 or 2 x 6 pine boards) into one foot square units and marked out with sticks, twine, or sturdy slats to ensure that the square foot units remain visible as the garden matures. Use a "weed barrier" beneath the box, and fill it completely with a combination of one third each of peat moss, expanded vermiculite and blended compost. Different seeds are planted in each square. Common spacing is one plant per square for larger plants (broccoli, basil, tomato, etc.), four plants per square for medium large plants like lettuce, nine plants per square for medium-small plants like spinach, and sixteen per square for small plants such as onions and carrots. Plants that normally take up yards of space as runners, such as squash or cucumbers, are grown vertically on sturdy frames that are hung with netting or string to support the developing crops. The beds are weeded and watered from the pathways, so the garden soil is never stepped on or compacted. Because a new soil mixture is used to create the garden, and a few handfuls of compost are added with each harvest to maintain soil fertility over time, the state of the site's underlying soil is irrelevant. It is equally useful for growing flowers, vegetables, herbs and some fruits in only 4 to 6 inches of soil. A few seeds per square foot, the ability to make compost, to water by hand, and to set up the initial garden in a sunny position or where a container, table or platform garden may be moved on wheels to receive light is all that is needed to set up a square foot garden.