FREE SAMPLE · SAGESTEAD

Raised bed soil and planting plan

Three pages from Sagestead Raised Bed Plans: how much soil each bed takes, a planting layout for a 4 x 8 ft bed on a 1-foot grid, and when to plant each crop, counted from your last spring frost.

How to use it

1. Page 2: find your bed's inside size and depth, then read the cubic feet, cubic yards or 2 cu ft bags.
2. Building another size? Inside length x width x depth in feet gives cubic feet; 27 cubic feet make a yard.
3. Page 3: tall crops and the trellis on the north side, low crops in front. Keep each crop's squares.
4. Page 4: count the weeks from your average last spring frost. A zone number is not a frost date.

Good to know

- Fill with compost and topsoil 1 to 1 or 1 to 2, or compost and a soilless mix 1 to 1 (Univ. of Maryland Ext.).
- Soil settles in the first season: fill to the top, water it in and keep a bag or two to top up.
- In the US, call 811 before you dig to level a site.

Want to build the bed too?

The full Raised Bed Plans has a cut list board by board, step-by-step drawings with part codes and an exploded view for 4 x 8, 4 x 4 and 3 x 6 ft beds, two heights each, in US Letter and A4.

On Etsy: scan the code, or type sagestead.net/go/raised-bed

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Fill: How Much Soil

Inside volume to the top of the boards, minus the posts and cleats, for every bed in this file. Arithmetic from the model, not an estimate.

Bed	Inside	Depth	Cubic feet	Cubic yards	Bags of 2 cu ft	Liters
4 x 8 ft, 2 high	93 x 45 in	11 in	26.3	0.97	14	744
4 x 8 ft, 3 high	93 x 45 in	16 1/2 in	39.4	1.46	20	1115
4 x 4 ft, 2 high	45 x 45 in	11 in	12.6	0.47	7	356
4 x 4 ft, 3 high	45 x 45 in	16 1/2 in	18.9	0.70	10	534
3 x 6 ft, 2 high	69 x 33 in	11 in	14.2	0.53	8	402
3 x 6 ft, 3 high	69 x 33 in	16 1/2 in	21.3	0.79	11	602
No-offcut 2x6, 2 high	96 x 44 15/16 in	11 in	27.1	1.00	14	767

- Bags: bagged mixes are usually sold by the cubic foot (1, 1.5, 2 and 3 cu ft are common); divide the cubic feet by your bag size. Bulk soil is sold by the cubic yard: order about 10% more than the table, for settling.
- Soil settles in the first season. Fill to the top, water it in, and keep a bag or two back to top up.
- What to fill with (University of Maryland Extension): compost and topsoil, 1 to 1 or 1 to 2, or compost and a soilless mix 1 to 1. On a hard surface such as a patio, they ask for at least 8 in for leafy greens, beans and cucumbers and 12 to 24 in for peppers, tomatoes and squash. Get a soil test from your extension office in the first year; it is cheap and it ends the guessing.

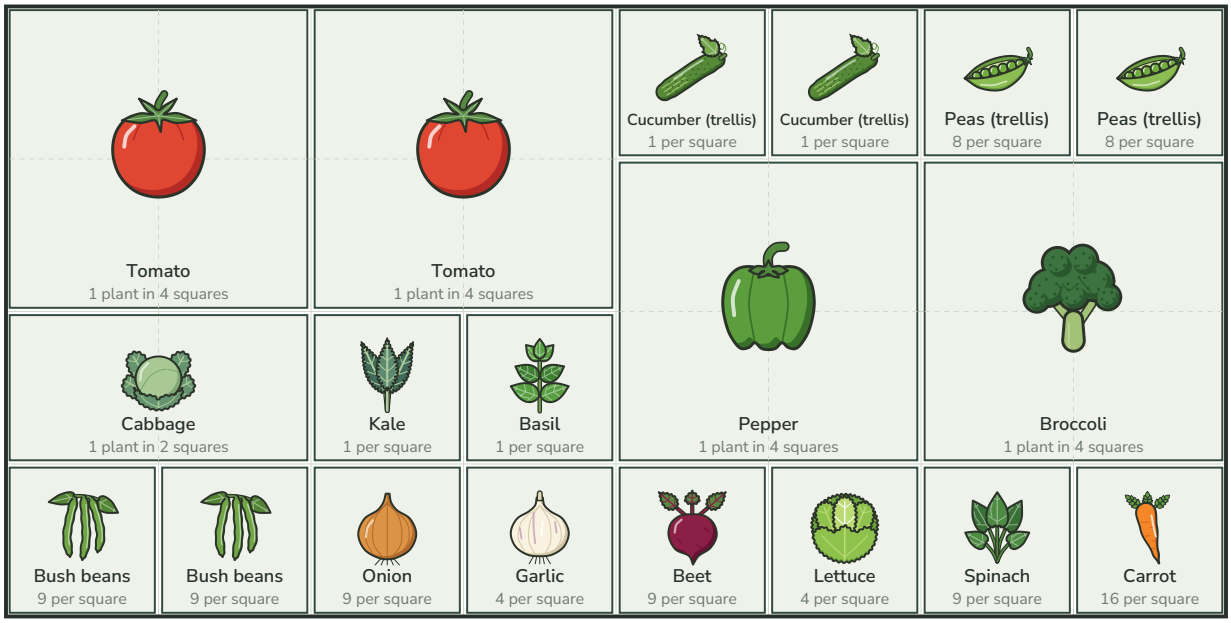
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What to Plant in It

A 4 x 8 ft bed is 32 squares of 1 ft. One planting layout on that 1-foot grid for a first summer bed: tall crops and the trellis at the back (north), small ones at the front. Every plant gets at least as much room as its spacing in the crop guides gives it, so a tomato takes 4 squares and a cabbage 2.

NORTH / BACK (tall crops; trellis along this edge)



FRONT (path side)

- Why this order: the tomatoes and the trellis for peas and cucumbers stand along the north edge, where they do not shade the rest; low crops run along the front. Stake or cage each tomato when you plant it.
- Swap freely: keep each crop's room (squares per plant, or plants per square) wherever you move it.
- Garlic is planted in fall; its square can hold radishes until then. Peas finish early; follow them with a second sowing of bush beans.

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Plant List and When to Plant

Counts from the layout. Timing is in weeks from YOUR average last spring frost. Seeds started indoors get at least the weeks the crop guides give a seedling before it goes out. Find your frost date from your county extension office or a local weather station; a zone number is not a frost date.

Crop	Squares	Plants	Spacing	Start indoors	Sow or plant out
Tomato	8	2	24 in	8 to 6 weeks before	1 to 3 weeks after
Cucumber (trellis)	2	2	12 in	-	1 to 3 weeks after
Peas (trellis)	2	16	2 in	-	6 to 3 weeks before
Pepper	4	1	18 in	10 to 8 weeks before	2 to 3 weeks after
Broccoli	4	1	18 in	7 to 5 weeks before	2 to 0 weeks before
Cabbage	2	1	15 in	9 to 7 weeks before	4 to 2 weeks before
Kale	1	1	12 in	8 to 6 weeks before	4 to 2 weeks before
Basil	1	1	12 in	6 to 4 weeks before	1 to 2 weeks after
Bush beans	2	18	4 in	-	1 to 8 weeks after
Onion	1	9	4 in	14 to 12 weeks before	4 to 2 weeks before
Garlic	1	4	6 in	-	fall planting
Beet	1	9	3 in	-	3 weeks before to 4 after
Lettuce	1	4	6 in	8 to 2 weeks before	4 weeks before to 2 after
Spinach	1	9	4 in	-	6 to 3 weeks before
Carrot	1	16	2 in	-	3 weeks before to 4 after
All squares	32				

- 'Plants' is the number of spots to fill. Sow 2 seeds per spot for carrots and spinach and thin to one. A beet seed is a cluster of 2 to 4 seeds: sow one cluster per spot and thin to one.
- Spacing is the in-row spacing from the crop guides on the Sources page. A big plant gets a block of squares with at least as much room as that spacing gives it (spacing times spacing), though a block may be longer than it is wide.
- Timing is typical for temperate US gardens from the extension guides on the Sources page; your seed packet and your frost date rule.

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