



# 4' x 10' Raised Garden Bed Building Instructions

## Material List

- 2** 2" x 10" x 10' Treated Lumber
  - 1** 2" x 10" x 8' Treated Lumber
  - 1** 2" x 4" x 8' Treated Lumber
  - 28** 2 ½" Exterior Screws Rated for Treated Lumber
- Cardboard, newspaper, or burlap (optional but recommended)
- Drill
- 1.25** Cubic Yards of Soil

*Note: These instructions are for a 4'x10' raised bed. You can use these same instructions to build a bed of any dimension. However, we do not recommend making one wider than 4'. Four feet is the maximum width of bed most people can reach everything from the edge without having to step in the bed. Also note that 8' or 10' boards are usually the longest that will fit in most vehicles and if you go longer than 12' the beds can bow significantly over time.*

## Information About Raised Beds

Raised beds are a great way to grow edible and ornamental plants. Raised beds allow you to bring in high quality soil to grow plants, which is usually in short supply around houses where good topsoil was scraped off or mixed with much lower quality clay subsoil during construction. Bringing in soil for the raised bed also allows you to minimize the possible danger of soil contaminants like lead. The added height also makes working in the bed easier while creating a nice defined border for the garden that keeps everything looking neat and tidy.

## Deciding Where to Put the Raised Bed

Remember that if you want to grow vegetables, you should put your raised bed in an area that gets at least eight - ten hours of full sunlight a day during the growing season. If your bed receives less than eight - ten hours of sunlight, you can still grow vegetables, but it will result in lower yields. You also want to pick a spot that is level.

It is fine if there is a slight slope. Fill in and level any wet or boggy areas and any holes to level the ground and help with drainage.

Once you have a general idea of where you want the raised bed to go, you can decide exactly where you want it. Although you can put the bed against something like a fence or wall, having at least 4 feet on each side will allow you to easily reach everything in the bed and provide enough space to get a wheelbarrow around all sides. Some gardeners recommend orienting the 10-foot side of the bed on the east west axis so that you can plant more tall plants without shading other shorter plants.

If desired, you can draw a sketch of your lot and move around a piece of paper representing the bed to decide where it looks best before you start assembling it. Be sure to make your sketch and bed to scale to avoid surprises.

## Assembling the Raised Bed

*Note: It is usually much easier to assemble the bed at its final location than to try and move the bed once assembled.*

### Step 1 - Cut and Assemble End-Boards

Cut the 2" x 10" x 8' board into two 4' long sections, these are the end-boards. Then from the 2" x 4" x 8' board cut four 9" long pieces, these are the corner support blocks. Using the 2" x 4" pieces you have left over, place the 2" side flush with the end of the 2" x 10" x 4' piece as a spacer. Then, using two screws, attach one of the corner support blocks to the end-board. This can be seen below with the circles on the support block representing approximately where the screws should go.





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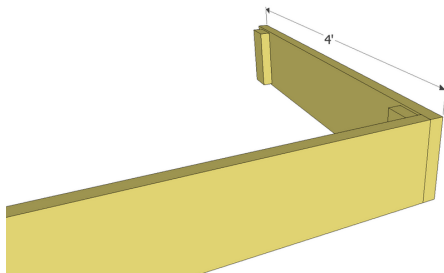
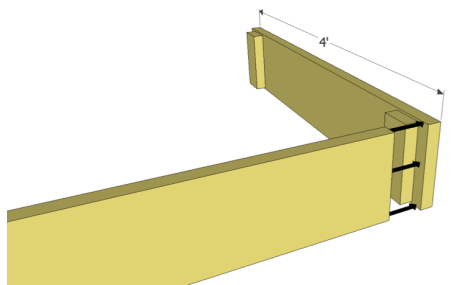
Repeat this on the other side of the end-board so there is a support block on both ends of the end-board, as shown below.



Repeat this on the other 2" x 10" x 4' board you cut in order to complete both end-boards.

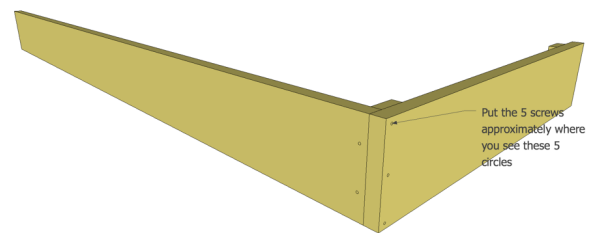
## Step 2 - Attach Support Blocks to End-Boards

Put the side-board flush with the support block on the end-board so that the tops of the side-board and end-board are flush with each other like the images below.



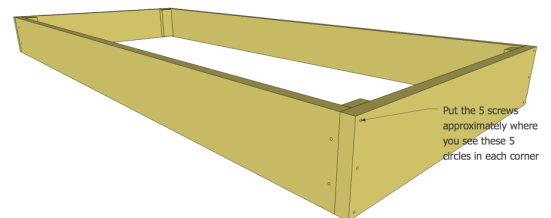
## Step 3 - Attach End-Board to Side-Board

Secure the side-board to the support block of the end-board with two evenly spaced screws, as shown on the left in the image below. Next secure the end-board to the side-board with three screws through the end-board into the side-board, as shown on the right side of the image below. It is helpful to have one person using the drill and a second person squaring the corners to keep all boards flush.



## Step 4 - Assemble Side-Boards

Repeat step 2 for the remaining three corners of the raised bed, finishing the raised bed assembly.





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## Filling the Bed

Once the raised bed is assembled and placed where you want it, we recommend lining the bottom of the bed with some sort of decomposable material to smother grass and weeds. Good materials for this are cardboard, several layers of newspaper, or even burlap bags. We do not recommend weed mat or plastic as these materials can restrict water flow and root growth.

Fill the bed with soil, mounding the soil over the top of the bed height since the soil will settle over time. Each 4'x10' bed will require 1.25 cubic yards of soil. Note: If you build a different size bed St. Louis Composting has a calculator to figure out how much soil you need. We recommend the "Garden Mix" soil from St. Louis Composting or an equivalent product.

You can continue to top off your bed each year with compost, composted manure, leaf mulch, or another source of organic matter to maintain the fertility and keep the bed nice and full.

That's it. You are ready to start growing!

## Resources

### Lumber Source

Most of GGI's lumber for raised garden beds is purchased from:  
Fehlig Brothers Lumber Company  
1909 Cole Street  
St. Louis, MO 63106  
Phone: (314) 241-6900 Fax: (314) 436-0315  
<http://fehligbrotherslumber.com/>

### Soil Source

St. Louis Composting  
(636) 861-3344  
<http://stlcompost.com>  
Call or see their website for locations in the St. Louis region

