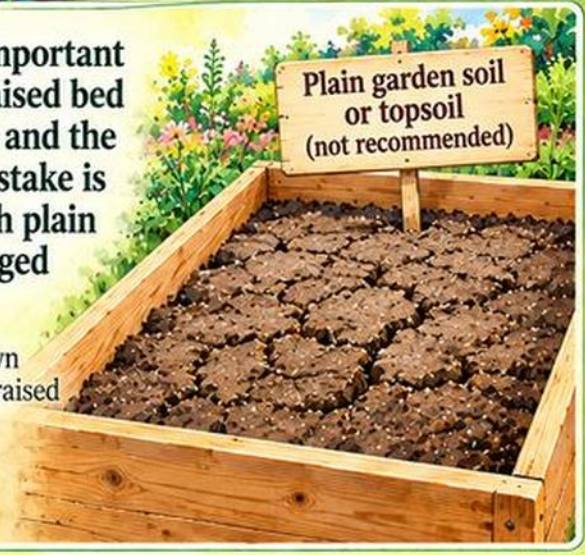
Soil for a Raised Bed Garden

Soil is the most important investment in a raised bed vegetable garden, and the most common mistake is filling the bed with plain garden soil or bagged "topsoil."

On its own it packs down into a dense block in a raised bed and drains poorly.



Use One of These Instead:

1 Mix your own.



Equal parts compost, peat moss or coir, and coarse vermiculite or perlite. Use several kinds of compost if you can (garden compost, aged manure, mushroom compost, worm castings).

2 Buy it bagged.



Look for "raised bed mix" or "square foot garden mix."

3 Buy it in bulk.



For large beds, a local landscape supplier's blended "garden mix" (topsoil blended with plenty of compost) is far cheaper by the cubic yard. Many will deliver, or load it into your own truck. Ask what's in it; you want compost in the mix, not just topsoil.

4 Feed at planting time.



Use a balanced fertilizer, about one pound of 6-6-6 per 100 square feet, or water with a liquid fish fertilizer every two to three weeks through the season.

5 Add lime only if needed.



Add lime only if a soil test calls for it; the usual rate is two pounds of dolomitic lime per 100 square feet, worked in a week or two before planting.

6 Top with compost every spring.



Every spring after that, spread two to three inches of fresh compost across the top.



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