Covingtons Nursery Landscape Co.

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How to Create an Easy, Fast and Economical Raised Garden Bed

Materials for a 4' x 8' prepared and raised bed for flowers, vegetables, and other beautiful plants:

20 Cinder blocks (8" x 8" x 16")
1 yd. (1 scoop) Covington's Premium Bed Mix - **$90 per scoop**
(Possibly) 1 grey-print newspaper (no slick paper)
1.5 lbs. Greensand
Happy Frog All Purpose Fertilizer - **4 lbs. @ $19.99**
2 lbs. dry molasses - **3 lb. jug @ $9.99**
(As Needed) Hi-Yield Kill-Zall - **24 oz. @ $7.99** **OR** 20% Vinegar

Tools:

Wheelbarrow (2-wheel barrow is easier to use!)
Good set of gloves
Shovel
Garden rake

Preparation:

Remove grass and weeds from the new proposed bed area by digging it all out, or if the grass is growing, spray the area with either 20% Vinegar or Hi-Yield Kill-Zall to remove the weeds and grass. If you spray, give the herbicide a few days to make sure it's been applied properly and has killed the vegetation. If you're in a hurry and the season's dormant, newspaper will help prevent some, but not all, of the grass growth, so be prepared to weed more if you do this without removing existing grass first!

Place the 8" x 8" x 16" cinder blocks down three across at the head of the bed in an area with excellent sun where you can walk to all sides of the new bed. Start the sides by placing the next cinder blocks to the outside of the first three blocks, angled to start the side row. Leaving a 1/4" gap between every third cinder block, place the blocks hole side up. 20 blocks will give an interior bed area of 4' x 8'. Leave a side open to bring in the soil until the new bed is filled. No mortar or special installation is necessary unless you desire a bed which is higher than 8" raised over the surrounding area. Just set them on the ground!

Placing grey newsprint down beneath to help prevent weed growth (3 layers deep is plenty, don't overdo it) as you go, start wheeling in your soil. Our Premium Bed Mix is fine to use by itself as a bulk soil. Just shovel it into the barrow, wheel right up to the soil edge, and dump over. The soil volume listed above will mound up quite a bit in the middle of the bed to allow for settling. Add your greensand, molasses, and fertilizer at this point. Rake to even the soil throughout the bed and to work the fertilizers into the top few inches of soil - the soil will be loose and easily moved about.

This sort of planting bed is easily moved, added to, or modified later if you want to do a different shape simply by lifting up some of the cinder blocks and moving them (and perhaps adding more area), making it ideal for a beginning gardener who may wish to expand this design later as they become more comfortable with gardening. Try to make garden beds no wider than 4', with access to all sides, to make the beds easily weeded, planted, watered, and harvested. There will be no greater than a 24" reach into the soil area at any point. If a reach of 24" is difficult for you, spin one of the three blocks on the width of the bed 90 degrees to make the bed 3', 4" wide when you're creating it. (A 20" reach is easier for some gardeners. Test it for yourself before you add soil to the area.)

Feel free to raise your garden bed up another block high. The taller, the better, as you provide more loose, rich soil for the roots of your plants.

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