

Session 4 Food Friendly Yard Winter Email Gardening Course Bed Preparation and Planting Options

This week's email contains a lot of YouTube videos because there are so many ways to create garden spaces; Container Gardening, Hugelkultur, Raised Beds, Straw Bale and Sheet Mulching are all possibilities. It's up to you to determine what will work best in your situation.

What you won't see is a video on roto tilling. Mechanized tilling of the soil is no longer considered to be Best Practice. You never say "Never" because there may be a specific instance where it makes sense to till. For example, when I first started to prepare my in-ground plot at the Wagon Hill Community Garden I decided to till in lots of organic matter and manure initially because the soil was heavy clay. That was 10 years ago and I haven't tilled it since then. Too much tillage ruins the structure and damages the soil biome. Instead of tilling the soil we recommend the methods in the videos that demonstrate using natural materials to build mounds directly on the ground.

Straw Bale gardening allows you to create a temporary growing space and try it out. I use this method on an area at the edge of my driveway that always gets plowed over by the snow plow. It is impossible to grow anything directly in the ground in that spot, yet it is one of the sunniest places in my yard. For the past few years I have used straw bales in this spot to grow lettuce, beans and cucumbers successfully. At the end of the season, I take the straw and use it to mulch my perennial borders.

Building raised beds is a more permanent choice. They have the advantage of quickly providing an excellent growing medium since you can fill them immediately with good compost. Raised beds provide a structure that makes it easy to install hoops to support bed covers for extended season gardening or to protect your plants from predation.

Sheet mulching and Hugelkulture make use of brush and garden waste, cardboard, paper and vegetable scraps.

Also included in this week's email are some links to garden catalogs that offer a variety of tools, raised bed kits, containers and plant supports. One tool I particularly recommend is the Broadfork and there is a video on its use and benefits.

www.gardeners.com Gardener's Supply Company

www.gardenersedge.com Gardener's Edge

Videos

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Th0-nMd5kKE> 4
Hugelkulture mounds

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ukmr8PsQMhl> 4
Hugelkulture animated

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zn6IWlvMuJE> 4
Container gardening

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_VptBIJ_Y-o&t=82s 4
Building raised beds

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uXtylj7P7OE>
Straw bale gardening

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cY0pu336NDY>
Example of straw bale garden with raised beds

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S5wgHQtxgJw>
How to build an instant garden

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kXcC0rVhkF0>
No dig construction

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V_crd4xGUio
Using a Broadfork