

SIP Planters

A **Self-Irrigating Planter** also provides a controlled and efficient system that cannot overwater plants.

SIP containers hold a reservoir of water below the plant with some kind of overflow prevention (i.e., drilled holes in the sides).

The plant can sit on a perforated shelf or in a larger pot with fabric strips wicking moisture from the reservoir to the plant's roots.

A PVC pipe can stand up at the edge of the planter so that filling up the reservoir can avoid watering the soil directly.

There are many option online to either buy or DIY!

Square Foot Gardening

Using this high-yield gardening technique in raised beds can save gardeners time, effort, space, and water.

The soil (developed by Mel Bartholomew and marketed as Mel's Mix) is key- make your own using one part coir, one part perlite, and one part compost (5 types combined).

Because of this more can be planted in a smaller area and weeds don't have room to take root.

Make sure to lay out the grid on top so your plants are accurately placed.

How many plants per square foot can be found online or in Mel's book "All New Square Foot Gardening".

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension is an equal opportunity employer and program provider. The Texas A&M University system, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and the County Commissioners Courts Cooperating.

Straw Bale Gardening

A great way to fill up a tall, raised bed.

Select the site before you buy the bale. Bring the straw (not hay) bale home and place it cut side up.

Condition the bale using high nitrogen fertilizer and water for one week and then just water for the next week.

Use a small sharp trowel to dig holes big enough for transplants in the tops and sides of the bale.

Put a handful of potting soil in the holes, along with organic fertilizer like worm castings. Plant transplants and mulch with straw.

Straw bales offer the advantage of being higher off the ground—weed and disease free--and requiring only a pruner and a trowel for tools.

Using the Square Foot Gardening technique, each bale should hold 6 squares.

At the end of the season, use the inside as compost and the outside as mulch.

Permaculture Agriculture

Plant perennial fruits and vegetables alongside annual garden plants for a no waste garden.

Use this method as you design a garden that is structurally permanent and integrated for maximum yields.

Include swales for runoff and rainwater catchment systems for irrigation.

Composting and using no-till methods is good for the soil and the Earth!

PLANTING METHODS & TIPS FOR THE BEGINNER GARDENER



Trained volunteers who provide horticultural information and help the citizens of Wood County, working through the Wood County Extension Office



For more detailed information please visit:

<http://txmg.org/woodcounty/files/2025/05/Method-Trifold.pdf>

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Earthkind® Gardening
Choose a spot, test the soil to determine recommended amendments, and then pick the plants that are best suited for your area. The Earthkind® Plant Selector database lists proven shade or sun-loving plants based on your region of Texas, to help with your gardening success!

The Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Office in Quitman has soil bags and instructions on how to collect the samples to send to Texas A&M University. This step helps you to avoid over or under fertilizing your plants.

Top dressing with compost, mulching, irrigating for low volume water use, and utilizing an integrated pest management (IPM) system helps your garden be low maintenance.

Composting
Use natural decomposition to create a nutrient-rich and natural compost fertilizer for soil and plants while saving lawn debris from going to the landfill.
Collect “brown” materials, such as leaves, straw, cardboard, newspaper, and plant debris as a source of Carbon.
Collect “green” materials, such as vegetable scraps, grass clippings, coffee grounds, and tea bags as a source of Nitrogen.
Layer these materials at a 2:1 ratio of Carbon (brown) to Nitrogen (green) to speed up the decomposition process.

Because decomposition is aided by oxygen, turn your compost pile and water it once a week.

Avoid fats, meats, pasta, dairy products, nuts, bones, weeds with mature seeds, and trimmings that have been treated with pesticides or herbicides.

Vermicomposting
Create a rich garden resource from kitchen scraps by growing a worm farm to enrich your soil with worm castings (aka worm poop).

Complete instructions can be found on our website: <http://txmg.org/woodcounty/files/2025/05/Method-Trifold.pdf>

or buy from a local nursery (call first to make sure they carry fresh).

Worm castings are a safe and natural soil enrichment, and you cannot over-fertilize using this technique.

Compost Tea/ Worm Wine: Foliar Feed
Brewing a “tea” with compost or “wine” with worm castings gives your plants an extra boost of nutrients overnight.

Tea- fill a 5-gallon bucket ¼ full with compost and add water to the top. Put lid on and set in sun for 2 weeks. Add 1 C dry molasses, 1/3 bottle of flat beer, and 1 C of Epsom salt. Strain into another bucket. Fill a pump sprayer with half tea and half unchlorinated water (rain, well or spring).

Wine- using a much smaller container, use 1 gallon of unchlorinated water and 1 C of worm castings (make a “tea bag” with old pantyhose). Let set 24 hours and then fill your pump sprayer.

Spray your entire plant at dusk (their pores are open larger).

Mulch
Mulching involves spreading a thick layer of material on the ground around plants to protect their roots from heat, cold or drought and to keep weeds at bay so they don’t rob the plant of vital nutrients.

Lasagna Layering
A very effective way to build soil without weeding, digging, or tilling.

Start with 2 layers of tape-free cardboard, then layer with the same brown and green materials at the 2:1 ratio as composting.

Water each layer as you go to stimulate decomposition. This works on open pasture or in raised beds. Make sure to mulch around plants to keep weeds away.

Container Gardens
Container gardening eliminates problems with soil- borne diseases or poor soil.

This technique starts with drilling holes in the bottom of your container. Examples that work well are cattle protein bins (also known as syrup tubs), 5-gallon buckets, stock tanks (rubber or metal) and even large pots.

Fill it halfway with organic debris, then cover it with cardboard, compost, and good potting soil (use 6” of potting soil topping for transplants or 4” topping of soil for seeds). Make sure to water in between layers.

The only drawback to this technique is that as the organic material decays, the soil compresses so you’ll need to add more compost before the next growing season.

Raised Beds
A raised bed is a container without the bottom. If you have gophers, put hardware cloth down before you start your layers.

For a short bed, use the lasagna layering method.
Far a tall bed, use the conatiner garden method.

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