

## About lasagna gardening

Question: I have been wanting to try to grow a small fall vegetable garden. I have an area of grass about 6-foot square that I plan to convert. A friend suggested I try making a lasagna garden. What is that? And, is a lasagna garden a good idea for my small space?

Answer: Fall is a great time to grow vegetables in North Central Texas. There are fewer severe storms and bugs that can ruin your plants. So, what about creating a lasagna garden for your fall vegetable plants? The bad news is that it takes about a year for the lasagna process to complete and the bed to be ready for planting. However, if you begin the lasagna garden now (late spring) with the goal of planting in the fall, you can add a 4-to-6-inch layer of completed compost on the top of the processing lasagna pile to give your plants soil to grow in.

### What is a lasagna garden?

Lasagna gardening, also known as sheet mulching, is a gardening method that does not require tilling or digging. Rather, it turns materials like cardboard, kitchen waste, straw, and newspapers into rich, healthy soil. There are several advantages to lasagna gardening. It saves money when you are able to use materials you have on hand instead of buying them. You are creating composted soil that provides plants with most of the nutrients they need. Because you have blocked weeds, your garden requires less maintenance. (Caveat: Bermuda grass is stubbornly successful in breaching your blocking layer or sneaking in from the outside.)

**How to make a lasagna garden:** The lasagna garden is created in layers.

Step 1: Lay out the area to be gardened. Using a raised bed border made of wood or stones is ideal but not essential. The advantage of using a raised border is that it keeps the materials in place.

Step 2: Cover the bottom of the area. The bottom layer is usually made with pieces of cardboard or several newspaper sheets that are laid down to completely cover the area making sure that the pieces overlay one another so that there is no space that is not covered. This creates a barrier against weeds and grass. Before adding compostable materials, wet the layer thoroughly to keep it in place.



Step 3: Add alternating green and brown layers of compostable materials. Layers should be about 2-inches thick. Continue building by layers until the depth of about 3 feet. As decomposition happens, the depth will shrink by about 50 percent.



**Green** (nitrogen) materials include:

- Fruit and veggie scraps
- Egg shells
- Tea bags, tea leaves
- Fresh green grass clippings and plant trimmings (grown without pesticides or weed killers)
- Green grass clippings
- Coffee grounds

**Brown** (carbon) materials:

- Chopped dry leaves, dried grass clippings
- Wood shavings or sawdust
- Nuts and shells
- Untreated coffee paper filters
- Pinecones, pine needles—chopped
- Shredded newspaper and other paper products
- Twigs
- Peanut shells

NEVER add fats, meat, bones, dairy products, pet poop, diseased plants, weed seeds or any materials containing pesticides or herbicides in your compost pile.

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension “Composting”:

<https://agrilifeextension.tamu.edu/library/gardening/composting/>

Step 4: (optional) add a layer of straw or cover with heavy plastic

Step 5: When the future gardening bed is full, keep it moist – but DO NOT soak – to encourage decomposition.

Step 6: wait patiently.

Lasagna Gardening info:

<http://warren.cce.cornell.edu/gardening-landscape/warren-county-master-gardener-articles/lasagna-gardening>

<https://hgic.clemson.edu/lasagna-gardening/>

(pictures) Denton County Master Gardener lasagna garden project at the Highland Village Doubletree Ranch Park in 2019.

