

Hay Bale Gardening

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Three interesting
ways to use hay
bales.



But how about a hay bale garden?

A garden that:

Is elevated on top of hay bales

Is nearly weed free

Is fertile based

Gives you control of planting mix

Is easy to maintain by nearly anyone

A Simple Plan Of Action

Set up hay bales

Water

Add fertilizer

Add soil

Plant

Grow

Enjoy

Harvest!





Not just vegetables –
flowers flourish in bales,
too.







Every hay bale garden is as unique as the person who creates it.



Initial Set Up of Hay Bale Garden: Days 1 through 3

Procedure:

Arrange hay bales in their permanent position as the bales are **too heavy to move** once watering has begun.



- For 3 days, water each bale until it runs through – approximately 10 gallons per bale.



Days 4 to 6

- On Day 4 sprinkle $\frac{1}{2}$ cup fertilizer (20-20-20 or ammonium sulfate – 21% N) on top and water in well. Repeat on days 5 and 6.

Hay bales set up in desired layout and
water/ fertilization is started.
Garden is guarded by “Kit” the watchcat.





Heavy
watering
along with
fertilization
is the secret
to hay bale
garden
SUCCESS!

Days 7 through 8



- On Day 7 water well and allow the bales to set till day 9.



- On Day 9 top bales with a mix of garden soil and good compost. Water in.
- Add more soil if some melts into bales.

Day 10



- Day 10 - Plant seed or small seedlings and

The Fun Begins!!

Start seeds using the seed packet information on spacing. With seed or transplant, elevated beds make gardening far less physical.



Plants per bale:

- Each bale can hold two tomato plants, four pepper plants or two squash plants.



- All vegetables require different spacing. I use the square foot gardening spacing guide (seed packet directions for spacing). Some examples would be six to eight cucumbers, two yellow squash or 10-12 bean seeds per bale.



- Lettuce could be spaced 6 inches apart or thinned after sprouting for larger heads.



What is a hay bale garden?

**A garden that is:
Elevated**

Hay bale set ups make it easy for the less mobile and for youngsters to garden!



Elevation has many advantages:

- Less Bending
- Easier access
- Better vision (insects, crops, stray weeds)
- Flexible layout – Anything goes!
- Unusual and interesting
- Easily reached by kids or those with physical limitations.
- Neat and orderly – few weeds!

What is a hay bale garden?

A garden that is:
Nearly weed free

Weeds are greatly reduced because the garden is elevated above soil level and the weeds that sprout are easily be removed.



Virtually weed-free gardening IS Possible

Should sprouts of hay or wheat seed occur,
they are easily sheared off.

The major source of weeds is by wind
distribution. Elevation helps prevent
them.

In this case, the gardener chose to leave the wheat sprouts on the outer edges.



What is a hay bale garden?

**A garden that is:
Fertile base**

A simple set up that includes heavy fertilization yields:

- The base (hay bales) is rich and will help plants flourish.
- Eliminates the need for any additional fertilization.
- Facilitates easy water retention and dispersal.
- Flowers, vegetables, herbs, berries, melons – any garden will be exceptional.

Fertilizer and extensive watering create a near perfect growing medium.



What is a hay bale garden?

A garden that has:

Controlled planting mix

With your choice of soil mixes, you control the soil content

- In this case, rich compost and garden soil were combined
- The mix had good tilth, lots of organic components, a good balance of open texture and richness.
- Water absorption was good (important)

Planting mix is applied on bales approx. 6 inches thick. This allows seedlings soil enough to grow and expend roots into the bales.



What is a hay bale garden?

A garden that is:

Easy to maintain by nearly anyone



Sacramento, CA
Slow Food Nation
event where all ages
participated in hay
bale gardening.



With seed or transplant, elevation of beds makes gardening far less physical.

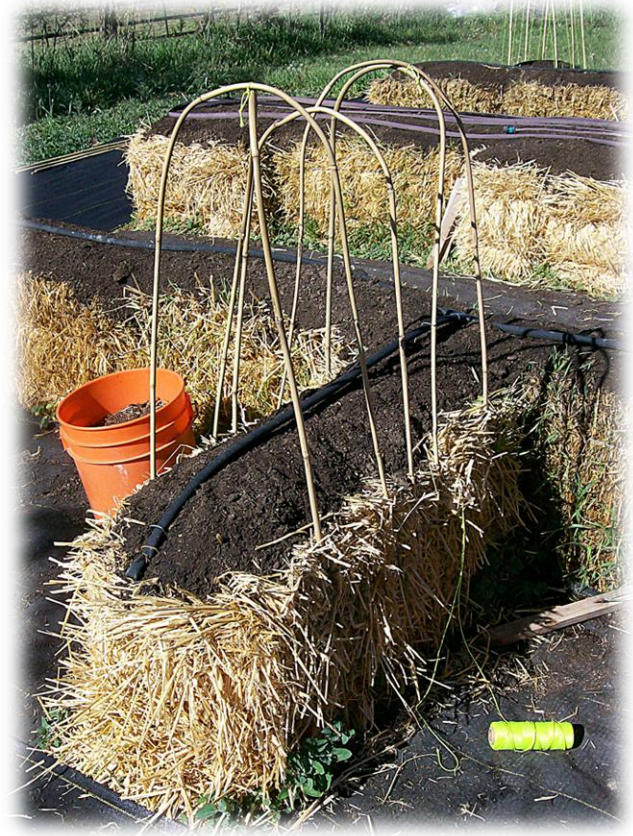


Cool stuff:

Trellises are easily created for even better use of garden space.



Bamboo Cucumber Trellis



Bamboo hoop Squash Trellis

Trellises, buckets, hoops...your garden becomes whatever you want it to be.



Tiny seedlings and transplants take root and the garden begins to grow.



Gardening with hay bales is:

Easy

Fun

Less Physically demanding!

Inexpensive

Productive

Unusual