

Gardening Basics

All About Lasagna Gardening

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 can 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

Eggshells

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



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

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.

Sources & Resources

“Composting.” Texas A&M AgriLife Extension. <https://agrilifeextension.tamu.edu/library/gardening/composting/>

“Lasagna Gardening.” Cornell University, Warren County Master Gardeners. <http://warren.cce.cornell.edu/gardening-landscape/warren-county-master-gardener-articles/lasagna-gardening>

“Lasagna Gardening.” Clemson University. <https://hgic.clemson.edu/lasagna-gardening/>