

BACKYARD GARDENING



Do you love gardening and are absolutely delighted to have your own crop of tomatoes and runner beans each season? No doubt gardening is one of the most satisfying hobbies and the fact that you can enjoy the fruits of your labor is a bonus. But digging the soil to aerate it can be a pain. For those people who are looking to eliminate this whole 'digging the soil' process from gardening, a no dig gardening method is just the alternative you were looking for. So what exactly is no dig gardening and can this method be employed in your own backyard?

No dig gardening was first brought into focus by an Australian gardener named Esther Deans. However, the principles of no dig gardening method have roots in the research work done by Masanobu Fukuoka in the year 1938. The no dig gardening method is a method where a garden bed is constructed without any digging. This type of no dig garden beds are used for growing vegetables as well as flowers.

By adding organic matter like compost, manure and leaves and organic household waste to the soil, the top soil is made more fertile. This organic matter works as mulch and with the assistance of worms and other living organisms, the soil becomes aerated, which enhances the structure of the soil. This form of gardening works well for soil that is too compacted or rocky which requires extensive

digging. The no dig gardening method is similar to lasagna gardening technique. Let us take a look at how to employ the no dig method for gardening.

How to Set Up a No Dig Garden

To set up a no dig garden in your backyard, you will require the materials that are listed below.

Things required

- Bricks
- Manure
- Old Newspaper
- Lucerne hay
- Organic compost
- Procedure

Build the Surround for the No Dig Garden

To utilize the no dig method for backyard gardening, first you need to find a spot in your backyard that receives plenty of sunlight. A sunny spot that is not directly below a big canopied tree is perfect for our purpose. Once you have selected the spot for gardening, make a surround for the garden bed by laying some bricks. A rectangular or square shaped surround with a minimum height of 30 centimeters works beautifully.

Layer the Surround with Old Newspaper

Once you have build your surround, you need to layer the inside with old newspaper. To do this first fill an old tub with water and soak each sheet of newspaper into the water. Allow the water to soak the newspaper sheets completely and then remove each sheet and place on the bottom of the brick surround. Make sure that the soaked newspaper fills every inch of the inside of the surround.

Once you are done layering the bottom of the surround with newspaper, you need to repeat the process until you have a good 8-10 centimeter thick layer.

Layer the Surround with Lucerne Hay

Next add a thick layer of Lucerne hay over the newspaper layer that you had placed inside the bottom of the surround. As with the newspaper layer that you had put, make sure that the Lucerne hay cover every inch of the bottom of the surround. Water the hay slightly by using a watering can. Water conservatively. You do not want to drown the hay in water.

Add Manure to the No Dig Garden Surround

Now add a layer of manure over the Lucerne hay and make sure that you add enough to cover the entire hay. Add another layer of Lucerne hay over the manure that you have just put in. Add enough hay so that you have a thick layer that is about 20 centimeters in thickness. Place a layer of manure over the hay and water lightly.

Add Compost and Plant Seedlings

Finally add a thick layer of organic compost to the no dig garden. Place seedlings into the surround and water it regularly so that the seedling can germinate and the layers of hay, compost and manure can break down. Gradually the no dig garden bed will break down into nutrient rich soil.

No dig method for gardening works well for vegetables like potatoes and lettuces. This is an excellent method for gardening if you have limited space or the quality of soil in your garden is less than desirable.