

Advantages of Lasagna Gardening

- saves time - no heavy digging
- ground stays cool and damp under layers of mulch reducing time spent watering
- uses waste plant material from kitchen and yard
- chemical free
- encourages worms to "cultivate" the soil

Making a Lasagna Garden

- choose site, taking into consideration sun and shade, water and wind
- decide on plants you want to grow
- do a soil test to ascertain soil pH
- gather lasagna ingredients
 - peat moss; animal manures ; shredded leaves; compost ; household waste,(coffee grounds, veg & fruit peelings, hair); grass clippings ; neighbour's yard wastes ; sawdust ; wood ashes ; hay, straw
- assemble the lasagna garden

Assembling a Lasagna Garden

1. **First Layer** - something heavy to smother existing grass and weeds thick pads of wet newspaper, wet cardboard. Overlap layers of newspaper/cardboard slightly to keep weeds/grass from getting through.
2. **Second Layer** - two to three inch layer of peat most to cover paper on growing areas only; use four inches of wood chips on paths. (Make sure peat moss is moistened before applying).
3. **Third layer** - a four to eight inch layer of organic mulch.
4. **Fourth layer and beyond** - two to three inches of peat moss, covered with another layer four to eight inch layer of organic mulch. Continue alternating layers of peat moss with organic mulch until the garden bed is 18 to 24 inches high.

Planting the Garden

- Garden can be planted right away or left to "cook" before planting
 - *"cooking" the lasagna garden reduces the height of the beds, and causes the ingredients to combine into loose crumbly soil*
 - *once bed has been built up to 18 24 inches, cover with black plastic and weight down edges with bricks; leave plastic on for about six weeks*
- pull layers apart with your hands and set the plant in the hole; put mulch back around roots and water
- seeds: spread fine compost or damp peat moss where the seeds are to go and place on the surface; cover with more organic material and press down; when the plants have two "true leaves" pull some coarser mulch around them to hold in moisture and keep weeds down.

Composting in Northern Climates

Info in books and the internet - not usually northern

Natural degradation time is longer

Compost pests can be different

Implications for Making Compost

Two or three-year cycles work better

AND/OR

Use finer-textured materials i.e. cut up kitchen wastes

Protect compost from bears

Small-Scale Composting

Small yard?

- Composting in a can e.g., trash can cut off bottom and drill holes in sides
- Get a plastic compost bin from EcoSuperior
- Get mulch from John Street dump (use resulting compost just for flower beds)
- Get material from neighbours or green space e.g., leaves, pesticide free grass clippings

No yard, just a balcony?

Buy bagged compost dark brown or black with a loose texture

Edging and Pathways

Edging

- to start a garden cut a strip through the grass 4" wide along the edges
- lift the turf and put in compost
- lay newspaper and construct lasagne layers in the interior garden area
- keep the edging free of grass by cutting down into the edge every year

Pathway Ideas

- use garden hose to mark edges for curved paths or strings on posts for straight paths
- lay newspaper or landscape fabric along path route and cover with 3" shredded bark
- add some new bark each year

Lasagna Gardening in Containers

What do you use?

- Use very fine-textured materials not kitchen wastes or straw
- Heavy emphasis on compost
- Small amount of garden soil OK 10% - adds weight for stability
- Buy potting mix with organic components
- Peat moss

How to Make a Container Lasagna Garden:

1. Move container to its final desired location.
2. Put 2 sheets of wet newspaper in the bottom
(prevents material leaking out the bottom)
3. Decide whether to fill the container with soil
 - if it needs weight fill with soil
 - if, not put lightweight filler in bottom with newspaper on top of filler
4. Begin layering peat moss, potting mix, compost in 3-6 cm layers in container.
Also consider chopped leaves, grass clippings and sand for plants needing drainage
5. When container is full, pull back layers and set in plant top with compost or potting mix
6. Water container thoroughly and mulch with grass clippings or chopped leaves or bark