



Riverton Organic Growers Fact Sheet | www.sces.org.nz

RAISED - NO DIG BEDS

The perfect way to keep your soil really alive producing wonderful plants. Soil is a very special ecosystem made up of millions of tiny microorganisms and hundreds of larger insects.

THE SOIL ECOSYSTEM REQUIRES:

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| <p>AIR raised garden beds are never stood on the soil structure becomes soft and loose.</p> | <p>BREATHES in: elements, minerals, dust out: waste products, odour, gases This occurs with seasonal and temperature change</p> |
| <p>MOISTURE Nice damp conditions prevail in a mulched raised garden without extremes of wet and dry.</p> | <p>HEALTHY ACTIVITY Soil micro-organisms are most effective, they can even cause transmutation where plentiful elements are broken down and recreated into elements that are lacking.</p> |
| <p>"FOOD" A good sheet compost to begin with then a variety of mulches added regularly provides plenty of raw materials.</p> | <p>DIGESTS The soil organisms break down incoming materials providing perfect food for plants. If there is a continual supply of new material these organisms stay around in full force.</p> |
| <p>STATUS-QUO Raised beds require no digging or use of tools. The soil disruption is kept to a minimum.</p> | <p>BALANCED LAYERS The oxygen loving micro-organisms can stay where they prefer; the anaerobic ones can remain deeper down. Their numbers remain high.</p> |

If we provide the right conditions Nature does the rest.

For example raised gardens are full of earthworms, which aerate the soil as they work and worm castings are 7x higher in potash, 5x higher in nitrogen and 3x higher in magnesium than the soil the worms digested.

USE NO CHEMICALS – Any artificial chemical of fertilizer destroys at least one part of this delicately balanced natural system and the general health of the ecosystem is drastically lowered and takes weeks or months to fully recover.



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HEALTHY SOIL HEALTHY PLANTS HEALTHY PEOPLE

If the soil is Healthy, plants are less susceptible to disease; if we eat healthy food our immune system are also stronger!

OTHER BENEFITS:

- Soil is warmer you can plant out earlier, never waterlogged
- Less need for watering
- Easier to manage for elderly or less able folk
- Paths clean and pleasant
- Fewer weeds that are easily removed (best if they are left lying where they grew.
- Mimicking nature with new layers of mulches or green crops is light work
- Gardens can be built on top of any soil type, concrete, tables etc. Even on roof tops.

YOU NEED:

- Lots of old newspapers or plain cardboard
- Wood planks 20x3 cm approx – 2 double the length of your arm span
2 as long as your garden plot (for each plot).
- Sawdust or bark chips for paths
- Large collection of compost materials
- A few small wood stakes to hold it in shape.

And remember always keep the soil covered – nature does! – (it keeps the weeds down!)

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| STEP 1 Cover base 'as is' with 3mm thick paper (overlapping). | STEP 2 Place frame on and stake. | STEP 3 3cm thick of sawdust on paths. Sheet compost bed to about ½ metre high. | STEP 4 Cover with old sacks or similar and wait 2 weeks. | STEP 5 Small plants can be nestled into the top layer. Add a sprinkle of soil for seeds. |
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