



Building Raised Beds

There should be sufficient daylight to enable the successful growing of a wide variety of fruit and vegetables.

The design uses side boards 200mm high.

Generally beds are constructed using two boards to be 400mm high.

For users with difficulty bending, 600mm and wheelchair users 800mm.

Only about 0.4m of topsoil is required, so to minimize the cost of top soil for deeper beds a local tree surgeon has been willing to deliver wood chippings free of charge. These are stomped down to compact before the filling with topsoil. Some horse manure is added if available. The level overall is about 10cm from the top of the bed after settlement.

The diagram below shows a layout approximately 3.7m long by 1.1m wide, built of 47mm x 200mm pressure treated rough sawn wood. There are four corner posts and one similar post on each of the long sides. The posts are 75mm x 75mm.

The 4.8m side boards are cut into 1.1 and 3.7m lengths, and fixed in the staggered pattern shown below with the long woodscrews going into the vertical post – not the end grain of the touching side board, as this would easily pull out.



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At the mid-points of the long side we attach vertical posts, and use one or two short lengths of side board, to tie the two verticals together. This avoids the bed barreling out with time as the soil settles.

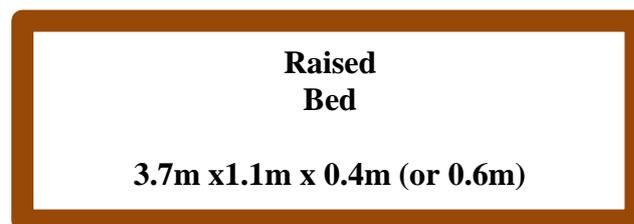


We sometimes create an access pathway about 1.0m wide around the bed consisting of a stretch of weed proof landscaping fabric (1.0m wide) which will be pegged to the ground and then covered in a layer of woodchip.

The woodchip surface would be unsuitable for wheelchair users and may not be suitable for anyone who is unsteady on their feet. A hard surface would be better in these cases.

There is no necessity to clear a site that is currently laid to grass. Beds can be constructed directly on to the grass surface, levelling as required.

Proposed Layout of the Raised Bed. (Not to scale)





Materials Required and Estimated Costs

To grow vegetables in a raised bed requires a depth of about 300mm of topsoil. So a bed of 400mm (two boards) high is quite sufficient for most purposes. For wheelchair users and for people who have difficulty kneeling or bending, we have found that a height of 600mm (3 boards high) provides better access. Below are comparative costs for the two options.

These costs are budgetary estimates based on recent experience, and we can confirm these once it has been decided on the design and dates for construction. Food4Macc has found it better for both parties if F4M sources the materials from the local suppliers, arranges for delivery, and then raises a single request for reimbursement, backed up with receipts for the purchases.

Note Prices as April 2021 have since increased significantly

Option 1: For 1 raised bed of 3.7m x 1.1m x 0.4m :

5 of	47mm x 200mm x 4.8m pressure treated boards	£110
1 of	75mm x 75mm x 2.4m pressure treated posts	£10

Wood Sub-Total £120

Zinc Plated Screws	100 of 100mmx5mm	£15
2.5 tons of screened topsoil - delivered		£120

Other Sub-Total £135

Total Cost Estimate for bed 0.4m high **£255**

Option 2: For 1 raised bed of 3.7m x 1.1m x 0.6m :

7 of	47mm x 200mm x 4.8m pressure treated boards	£154
2 of	75mm x 75mm x 2.4m pressure treated posts	£20

Wood Sub-Total £174

Zinc Plated Screws	100 of 100mmx5mm	£15
3.5 tons of screened topsoil - delivered		£145

Other Sub-Total £160

Total Cost Estimate for bed 0.6m high **£334**