



## BUILDING NEW GARDENS

### Location

Many of your fruits and veggies would like to see 6-8 hours of sunlight daily. Observe your yard or other potential garden site to see which areas receive the most sunlight. Remember, it is easier to shade a sunny spot than it is to sun a shady spot!

Be sure to keep your distance from trees too. Not only will they grow and eventually shade your garden, but their roots will compete for nutrients in the soil.

Common garden crops will like a lot of water but need drainage to prevent root rot. Therefore, be sure to avoid low areas and wet spots where the soil stays soggy. This is also the time to consider how you will water your

garden. For example, is the garden close enough to a building to set up a rain barrel? Is the potential garden site on the opposite side of the building's hose connection? Planning how your garden will source water is as important as knowing the amount of sun it will receive.

Ideally, the garden site will also be as level as possible, this can be achieved through raking and building the soil over time. Gardeners will often tell you it helps to have the garden close to your house where you can see it from at least one window. You don't want it to be out-of-sight, out-of-mind!

### Gardener's Tip

New gardens, no matter what type, are not like new electronics or cars where you can expect things to run smoothly simply because they are new. With proper care, your garden will get better with age. Don't compare the results of your first year to your grandmother's well-established garden. The important thing is just to start!

You're not in this alone. There are trillions of microorganisms, worms, and other insects helping to make your garden flourish over time. They need a garden bed though!

### Raised Bed vs. In-Ground

Conventional gardening involves garden beds directly in the ground. Depending on your location and soil type, this can be an advantageous option.

Raised bed gardening is a popular option which involves a frame (usually wooden) filled with soil to grow crops. Both have advantages and disadvantages that require consideration given your garden location.

You can use the information in the *Raised Bed vs. In-Ground Advantages and Disadvantages* table on page 5 to help inform your decision on garden type.

### Building Your Garden

If you've decided a raised bed garden is right for you, you'll need to research the best model and materials that fit your budget and garden space.

Many gardeners choose to have multiple raised beds, or both raised beds and in-ground gardens for different purposes. There are many combinations of materials, sizes, shapes, and models available online and many hardware stores also sell kits that include everything you need.

The basic principles of garden creation are the same for both raised bed and in-ground gardens. Outline the size and shape of the bed and then prep the soil. In the fall or early spring, you can lay

## Raised Bed vs. In-Ground Advantages and Disadvantages

	ADVANTAGE	DISADVANTAGE
RAISED BED	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Easier to keep out weeds</li> <li>Contains quality soil (brought in)</li> <li>More efficient draining</li> <li>Can be easier on backs and knees due to less bending and stooping</li> <li>The soil warms up sooner so there is a potential to plant earlier</li> <li>Better ability to keep out ground-dwelling pests</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Require careful planning to ensure enough space for all plant types you want to grow</li> <li>Can be more expensive upfront</li> <li>Better drainage requires watering more often</li> <li>Depending on the materials used, maintenance will be required</li> </ul>
IN-GROUND	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>More options for shape and size</li> <li>Can have lower upfront cost</li> <li>Can grow larger variety and quantity of crops</li> <li>Usually less frequent watering</li> <li>No need to purchase and move large volumes of soil</li> <li>Doesn't require much preparation once your spot has been located and tilled.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Greater challenge of weeds and pests</li> <li>More physical and labour-intensive</li> <li>Takes up more space</li> <li>More complex and costly fencing required for pest management</li> </ul>

down tarps or some equivalent to kill existing weeds and seeds. If you don't have the time or materials for this option, you can turn over the top layer of soil, so any grass is upside-down and the soils faces upward. It is not necessary to dig deeper into the soil and in fact can harm the microorganisms which are already established there.

Layer newspaper, organic material such as fallen leaves, and then compost or manure onto your garden bed. If you're creating a raised bed, you may want thicker layers or additional soil on top to fill the beds. For in-ground gardens, be sure to poke through the newspaper when you plant. You might create a border around the garden to clearly mark it and create a weed barrier (use logs, rocks, wood planks, etc.).

### Check Your Soil

For any new garden, it is a good idea to purchase an at-home soil test kit from a hardware store or green house. This will give you some idea of the existing nutrients, or possible deficiencies, already in the soil.

Most plants like a mix of large sand particles (40%), medium sized silt (40%), and small clay (20%). Conduct an at-home test to gain a rough idea of the amount of each in the soil. Mix a handful of garden soil with water in a mason jar, shake, then let settle. The heavier sand settles to the bottom while the light clay rests on top. By looking at how thick the layers are in comparison to each other, you can judge what kind of sand, silt, clay mix your garden holds.

## Kids Can Grow

Will you be building this garden with children, grandchildren, or students? Involve them in every step! Kids that grow kale and spinach go on to eat kale and spinach.

Download Kids Can Grow for a kid-friendly version of this information from [gbbbr.ca/gardens](http://gbbbr.ca/gardens).

Also find the printable 'Green Thumb Certificate' for young, aspiring gardeners, and more links and resources for expanding children's participation in, and knowledge of, gardening.





## Preserving the Harvest

Freezing, canning, cold storage (e.g. root cellar or similar), and dehydrating are tried and true ways to keep your harvest in your kitchen throughout winter. Here are some guides help you preserve the harvest:

1. Bernardin Guide to Home Preserving by Bernardin
2. The Ultimate Guide to Preserving Vegetables by Angi Schneider
3. The Farm Girl's Guide to Preserving the Harvest by Ann Accetta-Scott
4. Homegrown Pantry by Barbara Pleasant

## ABOUT US

Georgian Bay is part of Lake Huron and the Great Lakes Basin. It is known as Spirit Lake (*Mnidoo-gamii*) by the Anishinabek peoples and was named a World Biosphere Reserve by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization in 2004.

The Georgian Bay Mnidoo Gamii Biosphere is a non-profit charity that works to protect the environment, create vibrant communities, and support a healthy economy. Working with many partners across the region, GBBR relies on grants, contracts, memberships, and donations to do our work.

Join us today! [gbbbr.ca](http://gbbbr.ca)

Sustainable food systems are an important part of being a UNESCO biosphere reserve. A key factor in sustainable food systems is knowledge sharing and building capacity for people to grow their own food. Since 2008, GBBR has led and partnered on food and garden programs with dozens of partners.

Gardening is a rewarding experience with many benefits. It is a powerful way for people of all ages to connect with nature, it can have significant environmental benefits, and can even be an economical option for fresh produce.

## ONLINE RESOURCES

1. The Georgian Bay Biosphere  
[www.gbbbr.ca/gardens](http://www.gbbbr.ca/gardens)
2. The Old Farmer's Almanac  
[www.almanac.com](http://www.almanac.com)
3. Ontario Seed Company  
[www.oscseeds.com](http://www.oscseeds.com)
4. Family, Food & Garden  
[www.familyfoodgarden.com](http://www.familyfoodgarden.com)
5. West Coast Seeds  
[www.westcoastseeds.com](http://www.westcoastseeds.com)
6. Planet Natural Guide  
[www.planetnatural.com](http://www.planetnatural.com)

## HAPPY GARDENING

Gardening on any scale is healthy for our bodies and minds. We wish you lots of luck, fun, and success with your garden!

Please take a minute to share a picture of your garden with us. We'd love to see your green thumb!



**GEORGIAN BAY  
BIOSPHERE**  
MNIDOO GAMII