

# Gardening Basics

## LESSON 1:

## PLANNING YOUR GARDEN

A first key step to getting started on your gardening is considering what type of garden structure you will use (in ground vs. raised bed vs. container), how much light your garden will get, and what types of plants will grow best in your conditions.

### In Ground Beds Advantages:



- Uses existing soil
- Less costly than bringing in soil to fill raised beds or container
- Less watering
- Easier irrigation
  - If you plan to run irrigation line, long rows of in ground beds are often easier
- Less start up work
  - Sometimes! This depends on what you are starting with



### In Ground Beds Disadvantages:



- Low to the ground
  - Much more bending down to weed and harvest
- Chance of compaction
  - In ground beds are often prepared using a rototiller, which breaks up the soil before planting. Tilling the soil breaks up the soil structure, and can cause the soil to compact
- More weeds and weeding
  - Using existing soil means that weeds in the soil will still be there
- Beds that are in the ground make it easy for neighboring weed seeds to blow in and germinate
- Sometimes existing soil is poor quality
  - Not all soil is created equal! Rocky soils or heavy clay soils make it difficult for plants to grow

### Raised Beds Advantages:



- You control the soil you grow in
- Makes adding fertilizers and amendments simpler
- Less bending over to harvest and weed
- Creative and unique options for shape and border materials
- Upcycled and natural materials make great borders
- Using a barrier like landscape fabric or cardboard on your raised beds means that weeds in the existing soil can't get through
- Higher beds help prevent weed seeds from blowing in

### Raised Beds Disadvantages:



- Need more water
  - Raised beds usually dry out much faster than in ground beds
  - Plants can't access groundwater
- Need to accommodate root depth
  - When planting root vegetables like carrots or depths, they need a lot of space
  - Raised beds can end up needing to be fairly deep to make space for deep rooted crops
- Buying soil can be expensive
  - Filling large raised beds takes a lot of soil



# Gardening Basics

## LESSON 1:

## PLANNING YOUR GARDEN (CONTINUED)

### Container Garden Advantages:



- Containers can be as large or as small as you like
  - Great for balconies or small areas
- Less weeds
  - Raised containers make it difficult for weed seeds to blow in
- Easy to manage
  - Like raised beds, less weeding and higher up means less bending over when weeding and harvesting
- Versatile
  - They can be any design you like!
  - Pallets, pots, tubs are just a few designs you might try
- Portable



### Container Garden Disadvantages:



- Dry out quickly
- Smaller containers will need watering more frequently than larger ones
- Space - not every crop will grow in a small pot
- Can be expensive depending on what type of container you choose
  - Buying pots from the store is not cheap, but there are lots of recycled or upcycled ways to make containers

## How Much Sun Does Your Garden Get?



Prefers Full Sun



Tolerates Partial Shade



Tolerates Full Shade

### Less than 4 hours = FULL SHADE

- Limited crops will grow in full shade, but there are some!
- Try leafy greens like **kale, spinach, lettuce,** and **arugula**

### 6 or more hours = FULL SUN

- Heat loving plants will need full sun to do well
- If you grow it for the roots or the fruits, it needs full sun
- Try **tomatoes, beans, cucumbers, pumpkins/squash, peppers, carrots,** and **beets**
- Full sun gardens will need a lot of water!