

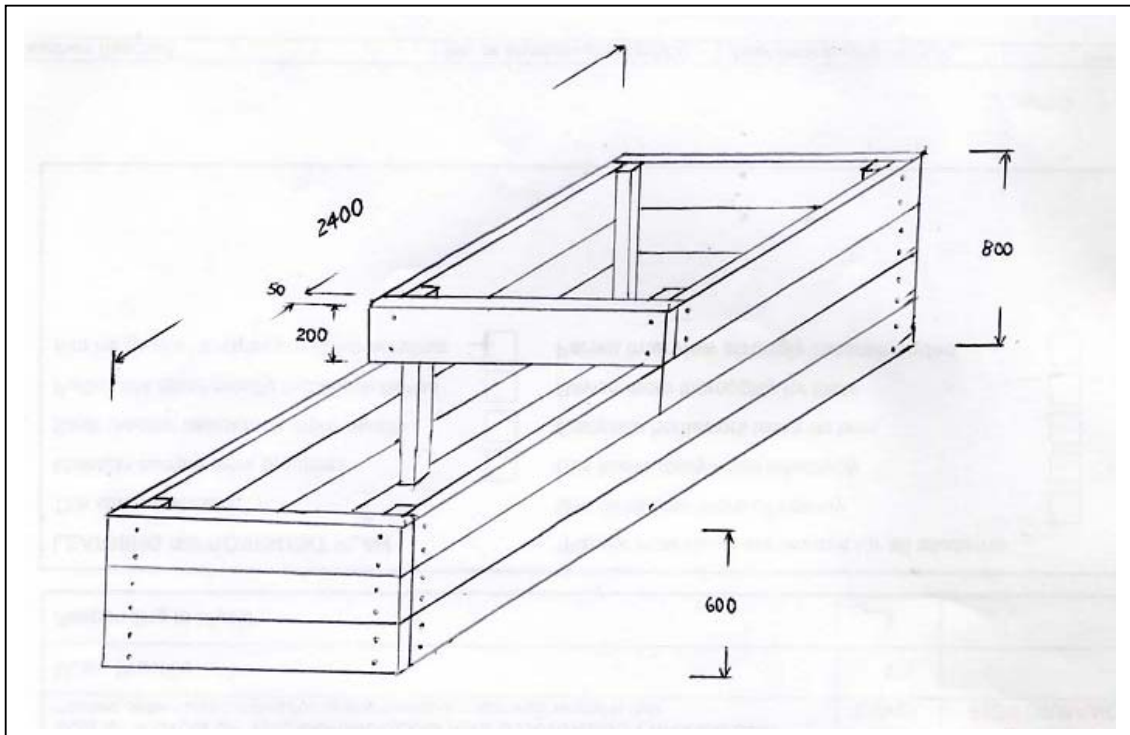
Raised Garden Beds - Fact Sheet

Raised garden beds work for people of all abilities. They come in different forms and can benefit all people. Designed for people who have trouble working at ground level, maybe due to being in a wheelchair, having back problems, frailty, etc. Raised beds are a comfortable and effective way to be able to continue gardening.

Raised garden beds are also a great way for people with sight impairment to enjoy the garden more. It is also safer as they are less likely to incur an eye/ facial injury due to bending down and hitting a garden stake.

Box style

This style of bed is built from the ground up and is excellent for people with bad backs or sight impairment. The advantage being that there is natural drainage, worm movement and deeper soil depth to allow for root vegetables and herbs. Suggested materials include cypress pine, sleepers, bricks and corrugated iron with brick or timber corners (ensure a capping over the iron so not to incur hand injuries). If using sleepers it is easy to stagger the height of the bed, for example, four (4) sleepers above ground, stepped down to three (3) and then down to two(2) if desired.



Typical 2 level Raised garden bed (All measurements in millimeters)

Dimensions for Raised Beds

Height for persons standing	750 mm – 900 mm
Height for persons sitting	600 mm
Width (access from one side)	500 mm – 600 mm
Width (access from both sides)	1000 mm – 1200 mm

Table Top Style

This style of bed allows a chair to be placed under the work space. This is better for people in wheelchairs or the frail who need to sit and not twist. The disadvantage is that the depth of soil that can be worked with is limited. This can be overcome by planting shallow rooted plants and seedlings, eg. lettuce, herbs, dwarf carrots, capsicums, etc. An alternative is to use the top as a potting table and plant into bigger pots / polystyrene containers. They can later be moved into a sunny position and freeing up the space for another project. Another advantage of the table top style, is that if they are mobile, they can be moved into the sun on sunny winter days or into the shade in the hotter months, so the garden activity can continue. These beds are relatively easy to make and we suggest using timber such as cypress pine.

Treated pine should be avoided due to the chemicals used in the treatment. The chemicals can come off on hands and can leach into the soil and for an edible garden is definitely not recommended.

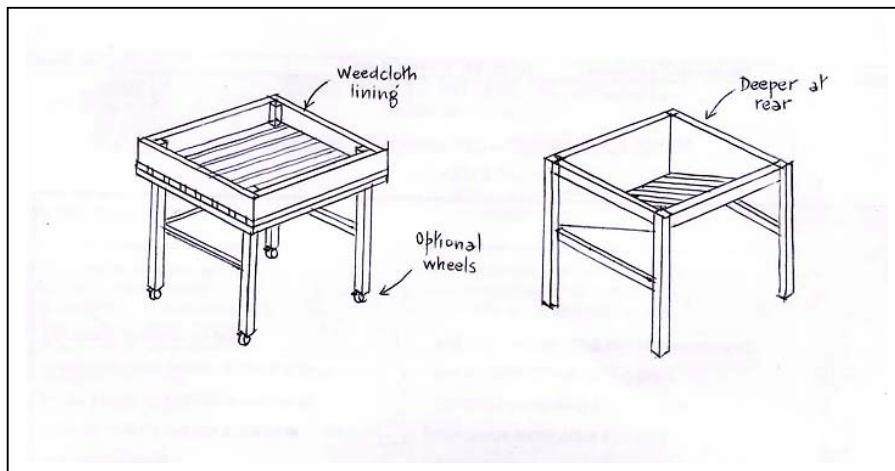


Table top style of raised bed

Other types of Raised Beds

Other options include 2 – 3 stacked tyres, these can also be grouped. Clay pipes, garden wall made out of hollow concrete blocks, old wheelbarrows, hanging baskets, old tables that potting up can be done on, half wine barrels, laundry tubs, baths, old bed frames and trampoline frames (either keeping the mat or placing some wire across the frame) for pots or polystyrene containers to be placed on.

Remember, edible gardening is all about working together, having fun and being healthy

If you find all this a bit daunting, chat to your local nursery, ask family members, neighbours or call the Horticultural Therapy Association of Victoria 03 9848 9710 for advice.



This fact sheet was developed by the Horticultural Therapy Association of Victoria