

## **Garden Guy Article: Square Foot Gardening**

Square foot gardening has become the hot new movement in gardening. The idea is that each square foot of a garden can be used to produce a crop, based on the recommended plant spacing. As an example, a 2x2 garden can be used to produce everything needed for wonderful salads during the growing season, 16 carrots, 4 lettuce, one tomato plant, and one bell pepper plant. My new [Raised Garden Bed](#) is ideal for your square foot gardening needs. Measuring 2.5' x 2.5', it is the perfect size for small backyards, or you can place a few side-by-side if you are interested in building a larger square foot garden. The greatest part about the raised garden beds are that they are simple to protect and are transportable if you decide to relocate your garden. In the summer months you can create a shade structure to protect your garden from the strong summer sun, and in the winter you can use the same structure to provide your frost barriers. Chicken wire can also be wrapped around the raised garden bed to protect your plants from those pesky animals that see your prized plants as their afternoon snack.

After setting up your raised garden bed I recommend filling it with approximately 20% lava sand and 60-80% compost (Garden Guy compost...coming soon!). Next, try to pre-plan your needed crops and look towards purchasing the healthiest looking, in-season, plants, and/or heirloom seeds if available. Heirloom seeds are open-pollinated, meaning that the seeds these plants produce can be replanted next season to produce the same type of plant. Hybrid seed varieties, which are the most common, produce second generation seeds that cannot always be counted on to produce sustainable plants, or even grow at all. If heirloom varieties are unavailable you may still use hybrid varieties to produce a sufficient crop, but you will want to look towards purchasing new seeds to plant during the next growing season. When planting your seeds/plants I recommend following the directions listed on the plant labels, or for seeds you can normally follow the rule of 1.5- 2 times deeper than the seed itself. Once you have planted your seeds/plants I always recommend placing labels in the garden. Finally, fertilization is key to growing strong and healthy plants. My [Extreme Juice](#) and [Extreme Plant Foods](#) are a wonderful organic source of the vital nutrients your plants need to for proper growth and sustainability.

For ideas on the best crops to plant and their growing seasons see [The Low Desert and Planting Calendar](#)