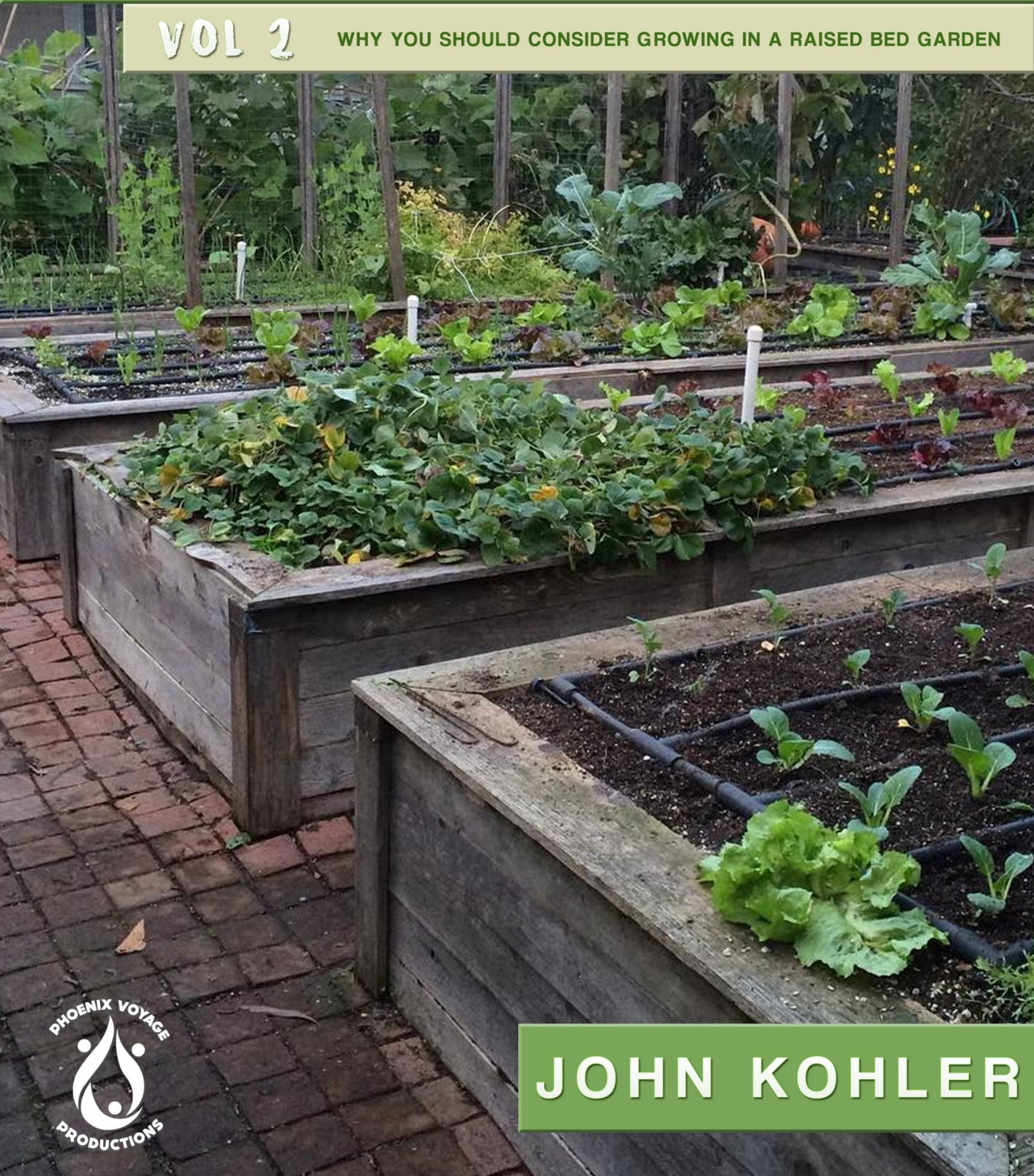


Growing Your Greens

VOL 2

WHY YOU SHOULD CONSIDER GROWING IN A RAISED BED GARDEN



JOHN KOHLER

What Is Raised Bed Garden?

Raised bed gardens are gardens built atop your soil, sometimes incorporating native soil, and sometimes not. The basic idea of a raised bed is that instead of battling against poor soil conditions, you build above ground, where you have absolute control over the soil texture and ingredients. You can plant anything from herbs and vegetables, to perennials and shrubs in a raised bed. Raised bed garden can be of any form. Wooden, metal and plastic crate raised bed garden.

How to Make A Plastic Crate Raised Bed Garden

In building a raised bed garden, there are some key factors that you must first keep in mind. To make a successful raised bed garden, follow these steps:

Step One: Select Your Site

From making a movie to selling real estate, it is said that location is everything. In fact, this is true with gardening. In gardening, it is the same way. Where you place your garden will determine what kind of food you can grow and how well you will be able to take care of it. Many gardeners will choose to plant a garden without considering the surroundings. In choosing your garden site, it is important that you consider the surrounding, as many of your plants will need sunlight for a long part of the day in order to grow correctly. If you plant your garden in the shadow of a neighboring tree or the shadow of your house, plants that require light will have a difficult time growing. If you have no choice but to plant in these areas, then plan on compensating by growing food that will thrive in shade.



Another thing to consider while considering the site for your raised bed garden is the distance of the garden from your home. The closer your garden is to your home, the better it will be for you to spot any issues that threaten it, such as hungry animals, diseases and the like. The farther from the house that you plant your garden, the more effort it will take to bring water to it.

Step Two: Determine the size and shape of your garden.

Proper use of space gives our gardens maximum efficiency. In a typical row garden, the individual crop rows are spaced 3' apart so the farmer can walk between rows to pull weeds or harvest the crops. This works well in a commercial setting, as the goal is to produce a large amount of the same type of crop for sale. Just make sure that you can access all parts of the garden without stepping into the bed. Also, it is a good idea to keep the garden around four feet wide because this way you can access the middle of the bed from either side. If you're placing your bed against a wall or fence, it should be no more than three feet wide.

Step Three: Prep Your Site.

As soon as you decide the size and shape of your bed, you can get to work prepping the site. How much prep you will have to do is determined by the depth of the bed you're planning, as well as the plants you're planning to grow there. It is a good idea to dig out the existing soil to a depth of eight to twelve inches to give room for your plant root to grow well.

Step Four: Construct the Bed.

- In constructing your garden bed there is the need for a container which can be of any material, plastic, wood, bricks, rocks etc. The material does not matter, as long as it is sturdy enough to keep the soil from being washed away. Ideally, all you need is between 6" to 1' in height on each side to grow most food.
- Make the plastic container as long as you want, however, don't make it so long that you might be tempted to step through it to get to produce on the other side. Usually, most gardeners make their boxes 4' 8' and 12' long.
- Make your garden only as wide as you can reach on both sides. So if one arm on one side can reach 1.5 feet in, then you can assume that you will be able to reach 1.5 feet on the other side as well. Hence, the box should be no more than 1.5 feet on one side + 1.5 on the other side = 3 feet total.
- Using a level, make sure your frame is level in all directions. This is a necessary step because if your bed is not level, you will have a situation where water runs off of one part of the garden and sits in another. If part of your frame is high, just remove some of the soil beneath it until you have a level frame.

Step Six: Fill Your Garden.

The main objective of a raised bed garden is to get a perfect soil with no sufficient nutrients that will not be washed away by erosions. Now is the time you fill your bed with a good mixture of quality topsoil, compost, and rotted manure. Once they're filled and raked level, you're ready to plant or sow seeds. In order to have soil that is optimized for growing fast, good quality veggies, the soil must have these characteristics:

1. **Microbes** - Microbes play a vital role in plant health and growth. They are not to be feared, as they help give your garden long term health. Worms and other natural soil amendments will help keep your soil alive!

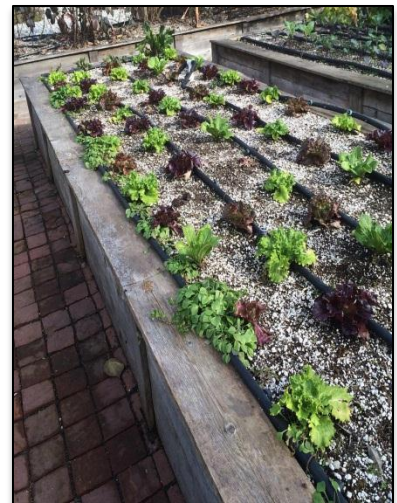
2. **Water retention** - Ability of the soil to hold the optimum amount of water. This balance is important so that you don't waste water or create a mix that actually repels water! The following ingredients will help water retention of the soil Vermiculite, Perlite, Pine Bark
3. **Drainage** - The ability of the soil to let water flow freely through it so the water does not stagnate and rot the roots.
4. **Friability** - A good soil will be light and fluffy, with air pockets which allow oxygen to get to the plants more readily and allows them to grow quickly. Ingredients that make your soil more friable include Peat Moss and Coconut fiber (Coco Peat).
5. **Support** - The structure of the soil needs to be small yet strong so plants will be able to push their roots through it quickly.

Step Seven: Watering

Having a strong and healthy plants requires effective watering; but, there are two problems when dealing with watering a garden.

1. Water is expensive.
2. We tend to over water our gardens, thus killing the plants.

The solution to both of these problems is a drip irrigation system. It will save you over half the amount of water as compared to watering by hose or sprinkler, and since it is precise watering, in combination with our raised bed system, you will never over water your plants again!



Step Eight: Maintaining a Raised Bed Garden

Properly raised beds require very little maintenance. For each spring or fall, it's a good idea to top dress with fresh compost and manure, or, if your bed only holds plants for part of the year, go ahead and dig the compost or manure into the top several inches of soil. As with any garden, mulching the top of the soil will help retain moisture and keep weeds down. Moisture retention is important because raised beds tend to drain faster than conventional beds.

“My garden is my most beautiful masterpiece.” — Claude Monet

Benefits of a Plastic Crate Raised Bed Garden

Plastic crate raised bed gardens have various advantages over traditional gardening. Some of which include:

- **Better water use:** One of the most frequent ways that gardeners kill their gardens is in too much watering. The water rots the roots or drowns the plants. Raised beds come with built-in drainage and will prevent you from overwatering your garden.
- **Extension of the gardening season:** Since raised beds are above the ground, the exposure to the air allows the soil to till faster for earlier planting. Also, raised beds can be covered, if necessary or desired.
- **Improved soil:** Using your own soil will immediately give you the ideal soil right now. Unlike Normal soil that can take up to 7 years of constant nourishment in order to become ideal for gardens.
- **Protection from elements:** All your enriched soil can be washed away very quickly with a good rainfall. As such raised beds keep the soil from washing away.
- **No Tilling:** Normal soil not only contains massive amounts of weed seeds (which no one wants in a garden), is also not very conducive to rapid plant growth. Raised bed soil never needs to be tilled because the soil remains loose, the few weeds that do sprout are easily removed, and roots of plants are able to grow better in the loose soil because oxygen can reach the plants easier.
- **Better use of space:** Most of us don't have a large tract of land for gardening. Raised beds condense the space necessary for a successful garden into a small space that can fit on any yard or even on a rooftop, or a small apartment terrace.

When we think of growing food, many people envision large tracts of cultivated land in neat rows. This is how large scale farming has been done for many years.

Families think this is how gardening needs to be done, so they have tried to copy this concept, albeit on a small scale. As many of us have learned, this is back-breaking work that is very time consuming.

Therefore, there is a need for a better and more efficient method of farming, which can be accomplished by using plastic crate raised bed gardens. They are efficient, free to use, and easy to build! Change up your garden today!

About the Author

In 1995, John Kohler began his gardening journey when he almost lost his life to spinal meningitis, according to his doctor. This caused him to shift his diet, focusing mostly on fruits and vegetables to heal from the complement immune deficiency.

The focus of his research since has been obtaining the highest level of health for himself. He determined fifteen years ago that in order to do this, he needed to grow his own food to provide the highest quality and widest diversity. After all, the agriculture industry was designed to maximize profits, not to maximize nutritional quality of the food that it produces.

John started teaching gardening online in 2009 via his channel on Youtube.com. Now the most popular garden teacher online, he is followed by over 350,000 people. To aid in their gardening efforts, new videos are released every 3 to 4 days. The main goal is to help inspire and teach others how to properly grow their own food.

This passion has led to the creation of over 1,200 gardening videos that have been watched over 50 million times. You can watch these videos free online 24 hours a day, 7 days a week at: www.GrowingYourGreens.com

