

Tips from Local Experts

Base Layer Tips

It can be difficult to moisten large quantities of newspaper, so plan ahead and start soaking it a day or two in advance of making the garden. Any container large enough to hold your materials will work for the soaking. As an alternative base layer material, consider cardboard. It doesn't need to be soaked since it doesn't move around as easily. - Lee Jones, Stranger's Hill Organics

Autumn Leaves

Leaves make a wonderful mulch layer for lasagna gardening. Try adding leaves to your beds in fall and letting the garden overwinter. By spring the leaves will have broken down into a rich mulch layer. - Lucille Bertuccio, The Center for Sustainable Living

No More Yard Waste

If you use (non-weed containing) yard waste as a mulch material for your garden, you can save money by not having to purchase city yard waste stickers. - Shelby Walker, Bloomington Sanitation Department

Extra Weed Protection

Placing a newspaper layer just under your top mulch layer can help prevent wind-borne weed seeds from establishing themselves in the organic matter below. This works best when putting established plants into a lasagna garden rather than starting plants from seed.
- Rhonda Baird, Sheltering Hills Designs



Above: Bloomington lasagna garden with flowers by Lee Jones. Front Cover: Bloomington lasagna garden with vegetables by Diane Jung.

Sources

- 1 Lanza, Patricia. *Lasagna Gardening: A New Layering System for Bountiful Gardens: No Digging, No Tilling, No Weeding, No Kidding!* Emmaus, PA: Rodale. 1998.
- 2 Stout, Ruth. Foreward by Charles Elliot. *Gardening Without Work: For the Aging, the Busy, and the Indolent.* New York, NY: Lyons Press. 1998 (1961).

Thanks

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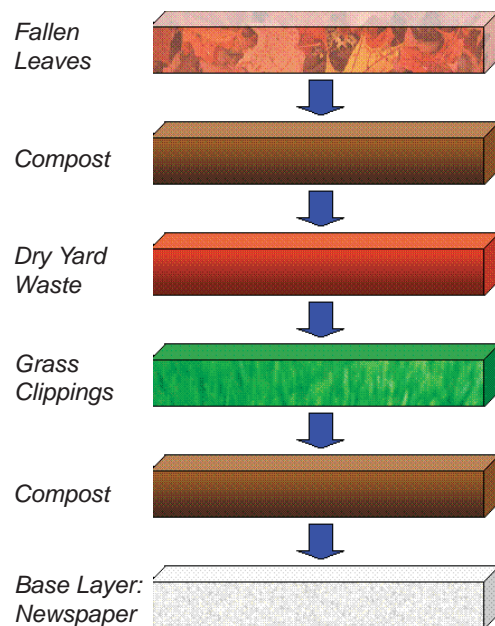
Lasagna Gardening



CITY OF BLOOMINGTON
Environmental Commission

What is Lasagna Gardening?

Below: A sample order for layering of materials in a lasagna garden.



Lasagna Gardening is...

A no-digging, no-tilling method of gardening in which plants or seeds are planted into layers of organic material that have been built up on the ground to create a rich growing environment.

Based on the idea that healthy soil means that plants are grown without the use of chemical fertilizers or pesticides.

Also known as deep mulching or sheet composting.

You Will Need...

A variety of both green (nitrogen-rich) and brown (carbon-rich) mulch materials. Use animal manures, compost, grass clippings, vegetable kitchen scraps, leaves, sawdust from untreated wood, chopped non-weed plant stalks, straw, or worm castings.

Benefits

Takes less labor and time than traditional gardening, making it perfect for busy people and those with limited physical mobility.

Creates a loose, moist soil that is easy to maintain and needs less frequent watering.

Leaves roots and beneficial soil microbes undisturbed, promoting plant health.

Getting Started

1. Choose a site for your new garden. If it is currently covered in sod, don't worry about pulling up the grass. Just layer your organic materials directly on top. If other plants are growing on your site, cut them down and leave the debris as a mulch layer.

2. Cover the area with a thick layer of damp newspaper, being sure to overlap the sheets so as to smother any plants underneath.

3. Build up layers of organic material until the mulch is at least 8 inches thick, using about 4 parts brown material to 1 part green material. The mulch layers will eventually settle and condense.

4. To plant, pull back the mulch layers with your hands, insert plants or seeds, and tuck the mulch back around the plants.

Tip: Consider avoiding the use of peat as a mulch supplement for sustainability reasons.

Lawn Makeover!

Consider converting part of your lawn into a lasagna garden. Lasagna gardens are low maintenance and can be a source of beauty and food crops for your home.

Lasagna gardens and other forms of pesticide-free landscaping are healthy for you and the planet. For more ideas, visit: bloomington.in.gov/documents/viewDocument.php?document_id=261

Where to Learn More

The Center for Sustainable Living
simplycsl.org

Offer lectures and workshops on a variety of topics, including lasagna gardening.

Hilltop Garden & Nature Center
bloomington.in.gov/peoplesuniversity

Learning and volunteer opportunities for all ages.

The People's University
bloomington.in.gov/peoplesuniversity

A wide range of gardening courses are available year-round. Register today!