

Fit Kids of SWOK

"Creating an Active and Healthy Community!"



Raised Bed Gardening

Raised bed gardens are an ideal way to grow vegetables and small fruit. They are elevated a few inches or more above the soil level, and just wide enough to reach across by hand. Plants can be grouped together in a bed with permanent walkways on either side. The soil does not get compacted, since the soil in which plants are grown is never walked on.

The idea of growing plants in single file or "row crops," started with the use of a horse and plow to cultivate crops on a large scale. The straight rows, far enough apart to drive a horse between, made plowing easier. Wider spaces later accommodated tractors and their implements. Not knowing the reasons behind growing crops in rows, many home gardeners plant single row vegetable gardens. However, foot traffic on each side of a single row can severely compact soil by the end of a growing season. The excessive row spacing also wastes garden space that can be planted with crops.

Raised bed gardens can range from a simple rectangular plateau of soil to a more elaborate bed framed in wood, stone and mortar, straw bales or modern snap-together plastic blocks. Although more expensive and time consuming to build, permanent structures will keep soil in place during heavy rains

and will look nicer in the landscape. However, for a large garden, several beds of mounded soil are very adequate to achieve desired results. Just make sure plenty of mulch is used on the soil to hold it in place during drenching rains.

Benefits of Raised Beds

Higher Yields. Raised beds allow more garden space for growing plants, with less space utilized for walking paths. Individual plant yields may be slightly less with less space per plant than in traditional rows, but more plants can be grown in a given space. Better Soil. Amendments such as compost and fertilizer are only spread on beds and not wasted on pathways. Looser (non-compacted) soil also drains better. Frequent tillage of the garden can be eliminated.

Water Conservation.

Plants grown close together shade the soil, decrease evaporation and keep roots cooler. Water is only provided to the beds and not the pathways.

Fewer Weeds. Closely planted crops keep weeds crowded out.

Pathways can be covered in landscape fabric or mulch to choke out weeds.

Extended Season. Soil in raised beds can be worked earlier in the season, because it warms up faster than soil in traditional in-ground gardens. Rainy weather is less of a hindrance to working in the garden, since mud is not an issue.

Better Pest Control. Raised bed gardens are easy to cover with in-



sect screening fabric. Crops are easy to rotate from bed to bed — preventing a buildup of pests.

"Raised Bed Gardening." *OSU Fact Sheets*, Oklahoma Cooperative Ex-

Next Monthly Meeting

July 26th, 12pm-1pm

CCMH, Oakwood Conference Rooms 1&2

Fit Kids of SWOK

Chairman: Dr. Ben Cooper,
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Facilitator: Lori Lovett,
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Facilitator: Debra Johnson,
DebraEJ@health.ok.gov

*You can connect with FitKids
on the web!*



July 2019 Events

- July 13 8th Annual Tomato Festival and
The Great Catch-Up Fun Run! –
Lawton Farmers Market
Kayak Tour—LETRA
- July 20 Hike Fort Sill
Kayak Tour—LETRA
- July 21 Disc Golf Tournament Fundraiser—
St. Mary's Scholarship Showdown
at Elmer Thomas Park
- July 27 Movies on the Beach—LETRA

July is UV Safety Month!

Read this Sun Safety article
from the CDC:



The sun's ultraviolet (UV) rays can damage your skin in as little as 15 minutes. Follow these recommendations to help protect yourself and your family.

Shade—You can reduce your risk of skin damage and skin cancer by seeking shade under an umbrella, tree, or other shelter before you need relief from the sun. Your best bet to protect your skin is to use sunscreen or wear protective clothing when you're outside—even when you're in the shade.

Clothing—When possible, long-sleeved shirts and long pants and skirts can provide protection from UV rays. Clothes made from tightly woven fabric offer the best protection. A wet T-shirt offers much less UV protection than a dry one, and darker colors may offer more protection than lighter colors. Some clothing certified under international standards comes with information on its ultraviolet protection factor.

Hat—For the most protection, wear a hat with a brim all the way around that shades your face, ears, and the back of your neck. A tightly woven fabric, such as canvas, works best to protect your skin from UV rays. Avoid straw hats with holes that let sunlight through.

A darker hat may offer more UV protection.

If you wear a baseball cap, you should also protect your ears and the back of your neck by wearing clothing that covers those areas, using a broad spectrum sunscreen with at least SPF 15, or by staying in the shade.

Sunglasses—Sunglasses protect your eyes from UV rays and reduce the risk of cataracts. They also protect the tender skin around your eyes from sun exposure.

Sunglasses that block both UVA and UVB rays offer the best protection. Most sunglasses sold in the United States, regardless of cost, meet this standard. Wrap-around sunglasses work best because they block UV rays from sneaking in from the side.

Sunscreen—Put on broad spectrum sunscreen with at least SPF 15 before you go outside, even on slightly cloudy or cool days. Don't forget to put a thick layer on all parts of exposed skin. Get help for hard-to-reach places like your back. And remember, sunscreen works best when combined with other options to prevent UV damage.

How sunscreen works. Most sunscreen products work by absorbing, reflecting, or scattering sunlight.

They contain chemicals that interact with the skin to protect it from UV rays. All products do not have the same ingredients; if your skin reacts badly to one product, try another one or call a doctor. **SPF.** Sunscreens are assigned a sun protection factor (SPF) number that rates their effectiveness in blocking UV rays. Higher numbers indicate more protection. You should use a broad spectrum sunscreen with at least SPF 15.

Reapplication. Sunscreen wears off. Put it on again if you stay out in the sun for more than two hours and after swimming, sweating, or toweling off.

Expiration date. Check the sunscreen's expiration date. Sunscreen without an expiration date has a shelf life of no more than three years, but its shelf life is shorter if it has been exposed to high temperatures.

Cosmetics. Some makeup and lip balms contain some of the same sun-protective ingredients used in sunscreens. If they do not have at least SPF 15, be sure to use other forms of protection as well, such as sunscreen and a wide-brimmed hat.

https://www.cdc.gov/cancer/skin/basic_info/sun-safety.htm