

Making Pallet Gardens

By Dr. Leigh Whittinghill, Assistant Professor of Urban Agriculture

Material

For one horizontal pallet garden, you will need:

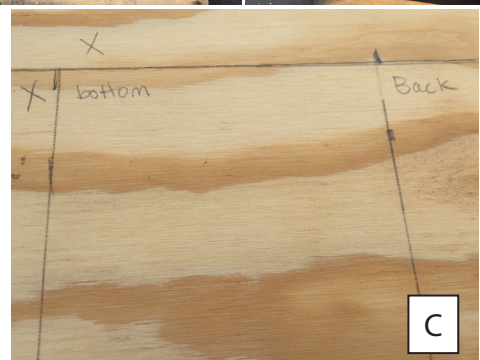
- 1 pallet. Be sure that the wood is safe to use. Refer to Kentucky State University Fact Sheet “What Wood is Safe to Use in My Garden” for more information.
- Enough landscape fabric or weed cloth to cover the bottom, sides, and ends of the pallet.
- Scissors
- A staple gun and staples.
- Enough potting mix to fill the pallet. How much you need will depend on the pallet size and how densely you fill the pallet. For one 40 x 48-inch pallet (standard size) you may need up to 5 cubic feet of potting mix.
- Plants.

For a vertical pallet garden, you will also need:

- Plywood for the back and bottom of the pallet.
- You may need a skill saw and saw horses to cut the plywood to fit the pallet.
- Screws (look for ones labelled for outdoor use) to secure the plywood to the pallet.
- Chicken wire. This is an option for the front of the pallet to help stabilize plants.
- Depending on where your vertical pallet garden will be displayed, you may also want brackets or feet to stabilize the pallet and prevent it from falling over.

should be placed first (A). Fabric for the back should be large enough to cover the bottom with about 1-inch overlap of the sides for a vertical pallet or the front for a horizontal pallet garden (B). Depending on the size of your pallet and the dimension of the landscape fabric, you may need to use two pieces.

2. Use the staple gun to secure the landscape fabric in place. Make sure to secure the corners and any seams on the back (for a horizontal pallet go to step #7).
3. Optional: cut chicken wire to fit over the front of the pallet and secure with staples.
4. Measure the plywood to fit the back and, if desired, the ends (top and bottom) of your pallet (C).

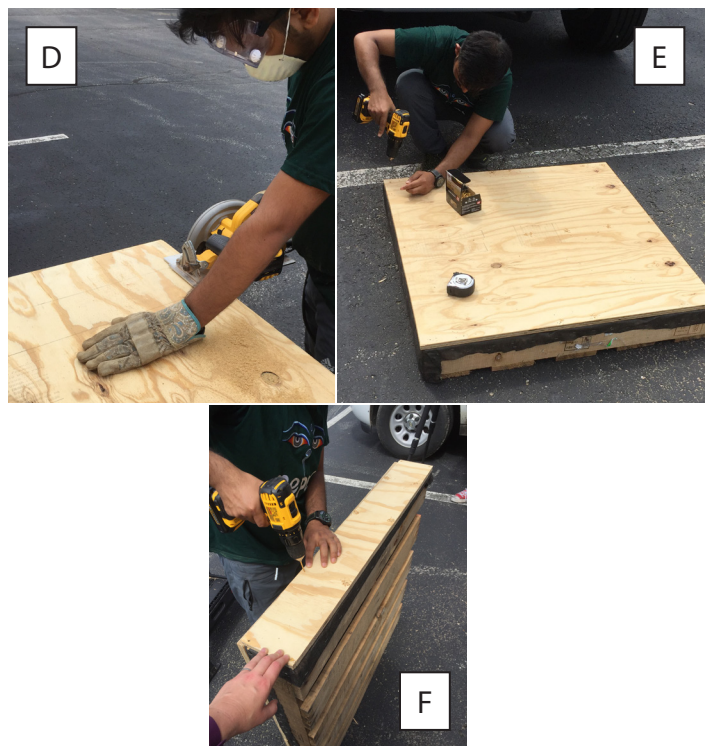


Instructions

The front of the pallet garden is the side larger side that plants will go in. Opposite this is the bottom in a horizontal and back in a vertical pallet garden. In a vertical pallet garden the top and bottom are the two open smaller edges.

1. Measure the landscape fabric or weed cloth to fit your pallet. Fabric for the front is optional and

5. Cut the plywood. Be sure to use proper safety precautions (D).
6. Attach the plywood back and, if desired, ends (top and bottom) using screws (E and F).
7. Move the pallet near the location it will be placed.
8. Fill the pallet with potting mix until it is about $\frac{3}{4}$ full.
9. Add plants to the pallet (for a horizontal pallet, skip to step #13).
10. If needed, add additional potting mix around the plants to fill gaps.
11. Turn the pallet to a vertical position and secure it in place.
12. Check for soil gaps and fill any that you find.
13. Water the plants and soil thoroughly.



Tips for mounting vertical pallet gardens

- You may want to mark placement of the brackets to keep the pallet garden in place before you add the weight of the extra plywood.
- If you are mounting against the wall of a house or other structure, add a thick layer of plastic or waterproof barrier to the back of the pallet in addition to the landscape fabric. This will help protect the structure from moisture seeping out of the pallet garden soil.
- If you are not mounting the garden on a wall or fence, be sure that any feet you construct will be sturdy enough to support the weight of the garden.
- If a lot of potting mix spills as plants are getting established, return the pallet to the horizontal position and allow the plants to grow a little bigger so their roots can help stabilize the soil. Alternatively, you could apply landscape fabric to the inside front of the pallet before adding potting mix and planting (cut cross-shaped holes in the fabric to make room for the plants when planting).

Plant Suggestions

Anything that can be grown in a shallow container will work well in a pallet garden. This includes herbs, strawberries, peppers, beans, greens, and many bedding annuals.

References:

“DIY Pallet Garden; How to Make Raised Wood Pallet Garden Bed” Busy Creating Memories. Available at: <https://busycreatingmemories.com/diy-pallet-garden/>. Accessed August 27, 2019.

“How to make a Pallet Planter” Better Homes and Gardens. Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bPcXoOuDA-I>. Accessed August 27, 2019.

Lamp'l, J. “Creating a Pallet Garden-Step by Step Instructions” Growing a Greener World. Available at: <https://www.growingagreenerworld.com/creating-a-pallet-garden-step-by-step-instructions/>. Accessed August 27, 2019.