

Introduction to Straw Bale Gardening

Fall Garden Day - October 1, 2016

Supplies needed:

Straw Bales

Fertilizer- Traditional (Lawn fertilizer) or Organic (Bloodmeal, bonemeal, potash)

Hand Trowel

Access to water – soaker hose or drip line hose set up – warm water preferred

Additional supplies:

Meat thermometer for recording bale temperatures (optional)

Poles – wooden or metal (steel T posts)

2-3 ml plastic or row cover fabric

Wire or twine to support plants (electric fence wire is recommended)

* Set bales in place before conditioning

Must have 6-8 hours of sun

Do not place bales on plastic, however plastic can be used between rows

* Follow below conditioning schedule for fertilizing and watering

* Keep journal

* Planting can be early, but if before frost dates, row cover needs used

* Water regularly to keep bales from drying out

* Fertilizer with balanced blend of nitrogen-phosphorus-potassium (10-10-10)

* Monitor for diseases and pests as in traditional garden

Day Traditional Fertilizer Organic Fertilizer Water

Day 1 ½ cup 3 cups Water to saturation

Day 2 Skip Skip Water to saturation

Day 3 ½ cup 3 cups Water to wash in fertilizer

Day 4 Skip Skip Water to saturation

Day 5 ½ cup 3 cups Water, warm is best

Day 6 Skip Skip Water, warm is best

Day 7 ¼ cup 1 ½ cups Water, warm is best

Day 8 ¼ cup 1 ½ cups Water, warm is best

Day 9 ¼ cup 1 ½ cups Water, warm is best

Day 10 1 cup 10-10-10 fertilizer ... 3 cups Water to wash in fertilizer

Day 11 Skip Skip Skip

Day 12 Plant today Wait 5 days to plant Water all new plants

Note: Regardless of traditional or organic, fertilizer should have no additives and be high in Nitrogen, such as a 29-0-4 (suggested). Granular fertilizer is best. On Day 10, note the change in fertilizer used.

Straw Bale Gardening Resources

Books: Search on Internet for *straw bale gardening*.

Straw Bale Gardens Complete by Joel Karsten:

<https://strawbalegardens.com/store/>

Growing Vegetables in Straw Bales by Craig LeHoullier:

<https://www.craiglehoullier.com/>

Available from various sites online

Webpages:

Joel Karsten's website: www.strawbalegardens.com

For articles, search site on straw bale gardening: www.finegardening.com

(a limited number of articles per month if not signed up on their site)

<https://joegardener.com/podcast/gardening-in-straw-bales/>

Joe Lamp'1, The Joe Gardener Show

Photographs: Search on Internet for *straw bale gardening images* for layout ideas.

Pinterest:

www.pinterest.com - search for "straw bale gardening"

Lots of photos of different layouts for the bales.

Facebook:

Facebook.com search for: Learn to Grow a Straw Bale Garden.

"Like" page to receive updates and photos.

Youtube.com: Ssearch for "Straw Bale Gardening" for numerous videos

Clemson University Resources:

<https://hgic.clemson.edu/factsheet/straw-bale-gardening/>

A factsheet that goes into detail about conditioning bales and planting.

Alabama A&M and Auburn Universities:

<https://www.aces.edu/blog/topics/lawn-garden/straw-bale-gardening/>

Blogs:

www.essentialstuff.org

Walter Reeves, the Georgia Gardener: www.walterreeves.com

<http://itsasmalltownlife.blogspot.com/2011/05/straw-bale-gardening.html>

<http://veganslivingofftheland.blogspot.com/search?q=straw+bale>