

No-Dig Gardening

For the home and community gardener

NO DIG GARDENING:

- prevents damage to soil structure that can cause compaction
- is an ideal solution for clay soils
- is suitable for those who have trouble bending
- encourages worms to work their magic in your garden
- provides faster results than a conventional dug garden

BED PREPARATION

Choose a location that is protected from strong wind and that receives a minimum of four to six hours of sunlight a day. Cut long grass, clear stones and other unwanted materials such as dried seeds and weeds, so they do not grow in the mulch. Cut grass can be left on the ground. Mark out garden bed. To stop grass invading your garden, use edging such as timber or bricks.

1st Layer - WEED BARRIER

Cover the garden with well-moistened newspaper about 10 pages thick. If you have invasive grasses such as kikuyu or couch that spread by stems that grow horizontally, lay a thicker layer of newspaper to block light and discourage growth. Overlap pages by one-third their

size to discourage weeds

2nd Layer – BULK: carbon layer

Spread lucerne hay or sugar cane mulch to cover the paper. This will act as a slow release fertiliser and will become available to the plants over time.

3rd Layer - FERTILISER: nitrogen layer

Lay well-rotted stable sweepings, animal manure, food scraps, lawn clippings etc. A thicker layer is alright. Repeat nitrogen and carbon layers if needed. (See box)

2nd Top Layer - COMPOST

Add a layer of garden compost, or organic soil.

Top Layer - MULCH

Thick layer of sugar cane mulch as the final layer.

PLANT SEEDLINGS AND SEEDS

Plant seedlings. Large seeds such as peas and beans can be sown directly into the bed. Make holes in the mulch to the depth of the compost, fill with more compost and plant the seedling or seed into this.

WATER

Give the garden a thorough watering

Re-using materials

No-dig gardening reuses waste paper. Food and garden wastes are made into compost. Recycled materials such as crushed concrete, bricks, pavers, wood chip and sawdust can be reused to make paths and garden edges.

The benefits of mulch

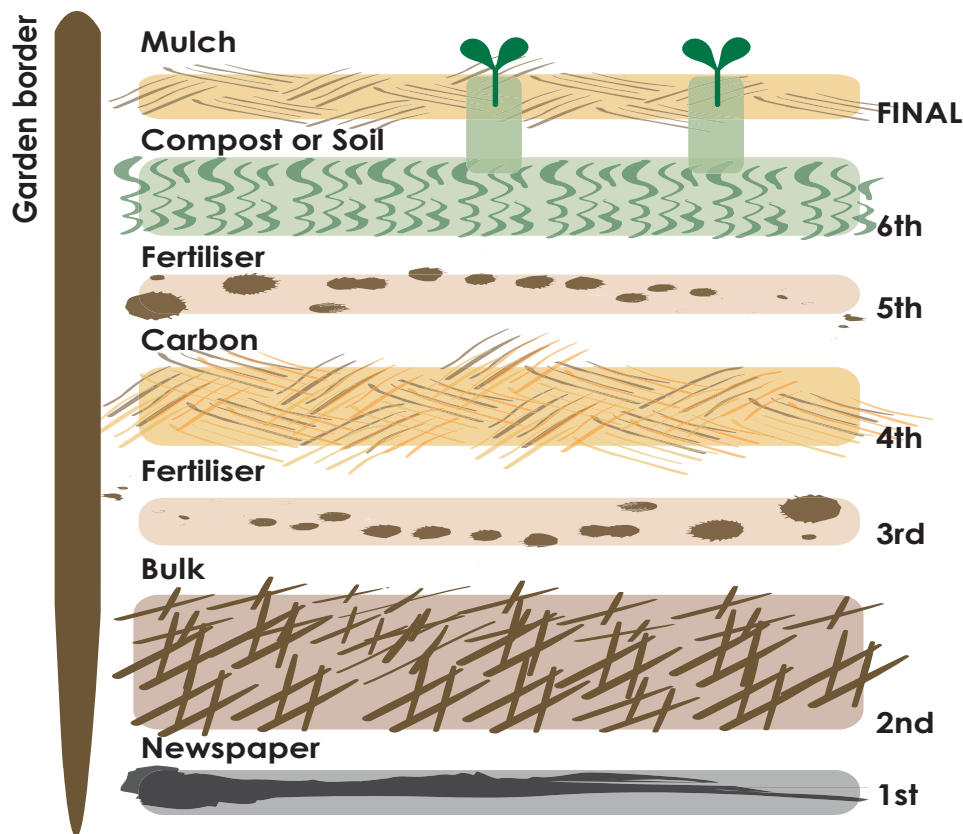
When we make a no-dig, mulched garden in which to grow our vegetables and fruit trees, we copy nature. The mulch layer is like the leaf-litter in the bush. It provides the same benefits.

Mulch in our no-dig garden:

- reduces soil moisture loss, weed growth and temperature extremes
- breaks down into nutrients that feed our plants
- protects garden soil from heavy rain, water runoff, sun and wind damage.

When first made, the amount of mulch you use might appear excessive but, as it weathers, it will compact down.

The no-dig method lays straw mulch over a thick layer of waste newspaper. Once the weeds are mostly eliminated from your garden you can simply apply compost, stable sweepings or straw when rejuvenating your mulched garden, rather than more newspaper.



MATERIALS YOU NEED

CARBON (Anything crisp and dry)

- Newspaper
- Sugar Cane Mulch
- Dry leaves

NITROGEN (Anything fresh and moist)

- Lucerne hay
- Stable sweepings
- Animal manure
- Comfrey leaves
- Food scraps
- Compost
- Grass clippings
- Blood & bone

OTHER

- Mushroom compost
- Compost worms