

## **LASAGNA GARDENING**

Lasagna gardening, also known as sheet composting or sheet mulching, is an organic gardening method that results in rich soil with very little effort. It is a no-till method that uses yard waste, kitchen scraps and other compostable items that would often be thrown away.

The name “lasagna gardening” refers to the layers of “brown” and “green” organic materials that break down to create nutrient rich soil to help your plants thrive. The “Brown” material are things like newspaper, cardboard, dried leaves, hay, or straw. The “brown” material provides carbon. The “green” material are things like vegetable peelings, coffee grounds, composted manure, and plant clippings (without seeds or herbicides). The “green” material provides nitrogen. Avoid using meat, bones, or dairy products, as these will attract scavengers and pests.

### ***Here's the recipe . . .***

If moles and gophers are a problem in your area, first put down wire mesh to help keep them out of the garden. You do not have to dig to create a lasagna garden. You can build it right on top of the ground to create a raised bed. If you prefer, you can dig the desired area down as much as 18” and layer until the mound is a little taller than the top of the hole.

Put down a “brown layer” of newspaper, four to six sheets thick, and wet it thoroughly. This will help kill any weeds and grass. Use only black and white newspaper because colored inks and shiny ads contain metals which can harm the worms and other beneficial organisms that turn waste into

great soil. A single layer of cardboard with no tape on it can be used for this step as well.

Next, add 2-4" of "green" material. Follow this with another "brown" layer and another "green" layer. Alternate "brown" and "green" layers to a depth of about 18". It is best to end with a "brown" layer to discourage pests.

You can start making your lasagna any time of year. The layers will decompose slowly, thus creating compost all through the growing season. At the end of the growing season, add a few more layers to your lasagna and cover it with a "brown" layer or loosely with plastic. It will then be ready to go for spring planting next year. If you want to plant immediately, make the top layer compost and garden soil.

There you have it. Lasagna gardening is a no-till, easy-to-build, and easy-to-maintain garden.

You can get answers to all your gardening questions by calling the Tulsa Master Gardeners Help Line at 918-746-3701 or by emailing us at [mg@tulsamastergardeners.org](mailto:mg@tulsamastergardeners.org), or come see us at our Diagnostic Center at 4116 East 15<sup>th</sup> street in Tulsa.

### **Sources:**

Oregon State University Extension Service  
University of Florida IFAS Extension  
Clemson University College of Agriculture, Forestry and Life Sciences