

## **LASAGNA GARDENING: A NO-TILL WAY TO GET VEGGIES**

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. “Brown” layers are things like newspaper, cardboard, dried leaves, hay, or straw. The “brown” material provides carbon. The “green” material, things like vegetable peelings, coffee grounds, composted manure, and plant clippings (without seeds or herbicides), provides nitrogen. Like composting, 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. However, if you prefer, you can dig the desired area down about 18” and layer until the mound is a little taller than the top of the hole.

Put down a “brown layer” of newspaper, 4-6 sheets deep, 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 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 on top to discourage pests.

Here is the cool thing. You can start making your lasagna ANY time of the year. The layers will decompose slowly 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 be ready to go for next spring planting. If you want to plant immediately, make the top layer of compost and garden soil. 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 E 15<sup>th</sup> St., Tulsa, OK.

### **Sources:**

Oregon State University Extension Service

University of Florida IFAS Extension

Clemson University College of Agriculture, Forestry and Life Sciences