



## Rectangular Raised Garden Beds: Supplies and Cost Estimates

Dimensions for a typical raised bed: 8' (long) x 3' (wide) x 1' (deep).



We recommend that your raised bed be a maximum width of 3 feet to allow students of all ages to easily reach the middle of the bed from either side of the garden. A depth of 12 inches (two 6" boards) ensures that your plants will have sufficient room to grow a healthy root system regardless of the surface (asphalt or grass) on which you place your beds; if, however, you are placing your garden beds on a prepared surface of soil, where grass turf has been removed and soil has been tested for heavy metals, a depth of 6" can suffice.

Typical GUO raised beds at Earl of March  
Secondary School

### Why untreated cedar lumber?

Non-pressure treated lumber is best for building raised beds as it is free from harmful chemicals that could seep into the soil and affect your edible plants. Both red and white cedar are good choices because of cedar's durability and inherent resistance to rot. Red cedar is typically sourced from Canada's west coast, while Eastern White Cedar is available locally. If you are purchasing Western red cedar, ask your supplier if their product is certified sustainable by the Forestry Stewardship Council (FSC).

### How to choose your soil

Good soil is essential to a successful garden. When building your first garden, choose mixes that incorporate compost and topsoil. Most nurseries or garden supply stores will carry a mix with suitable proportions and guaranteed weed free. Soil is typically measured in cubic feet and yards (27 cubic feet to a yard). To calculate your soil needs in cubic feet, multiply your garden length by width by depth (in feet); remember that soil will settle with time and rain so best to buy more than too little. Delivery of garden soil in the Ottawa area typically costs about \$100.00.

## Materials (one raised bed)

- 4 8' x 2" x 6" untreated cedar lumber
- 4 3' x 2" x 6" untreated cedar lumber
- 8 5" metal corner brackets
- 1" screws
- Biodegradable weed barrier; or landscaping material (if placing bed on asphalt)
- 1 cubic yard garden mix soil (blend of compost, black loam and topsoil)

## Tools:

- Set of screwdrivers\*
- Scissors
- Staple gun (if using landscape fabric)

\*It is our experience that allowing students to use a set of screwdrivers, rather than a power drill, allows more students to work at once, helping each other with the tasks at hand (a power drill often steals the stage!).

## Costs

Costs for a raised bed garden will depend on a number of factors. If you are able to cut your own lumber to size (this requires a circular saw), you may be able to source "un-planed" or "rough cut" cedar lumber from cedar mills – this will reduce your costs by 25-50% over planed lumber available at hardware stores. Similarly, if you are able to transport your own soil with a trailer or pick-up truck, you will be able to save a considerable amount (usually in the range of \$100.00) on soil delivery.

Lumber costs (rough lumber)	\$89.00
Soil	\$33.00/yard
Soil delivery	\$90.00
Weed Barrier (geotextile)	\$10-17.00
Hardware (Metal brackets and Screws)	\$20-25.00

## Supply Sources

We have listed below a number of independent local businesses in the Ottawa area that carry garden supplies for building raised beds. Metal brackets and screws, along with any tools, can be found at your local hardware store.

### *Lumber*

The Wood Source  
Ottawa Cedar Lumber  
Home Depot; Rona; Home Hardware Building Supply.

### *Soil*

Manotick Gardens  
Ritchie Feed and Seed  
Greely's Sand and Gravel  
Artistic Landscape

### *Weed Barriers*

Lee Valley  
Ritchie Feed and Seed  
Local Hardware stores