

# Pallet Gardening

Reuse ideas for pallets in the garden are endless

- Vertical or Horizontal Planter
- A-frame garden with two pallets, connected at the top (a triangle with the ground being the third side)
  - Plant one side with sun loving plants and the other with plants that can tolerate shade.
- Raised beds
- Garden pathways
- Shelving units
- Garden furniture



# Pallet Gardening

**First think about the SAFETY of the pallets you are using**

- Pallets might have been built with chemically treated wood.  
Look for marks that show how the pallet was treated:  
HT (Heat Treated),  
MB (Methyl Bromide), or  
Kiln Dried  
Choose HT pallet, and avoid MB for use in the garden.
- Look for IPPC (International Plant Protection Convention) logo on the pallet.
- Pallets might have been used to transport harmful chemicals or food that could have transmitted bacteria to the porous wood of the pallet.
- Wash the pallet thoroughly with hot, soapy water/bleach and allow it to dry thoroughly.
- Consider painting/sealing the pallet, although the effectiveness of sealing in any harmful chemicals/bacteria is unknown.



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**Think about your SAFETY while building and planting pallets**

- Wear gloves when working with pallets to avoid injury.
- Eye protection is always a good idea when working with staple guns.
- A pallet filled with soil and plants is very heavy. Have a friend help!





### **Gather your tools and supplies**

Pallet  
Weed Block Fabric  
Plastic Sheeting  
Cardboard  
Yardstick  
Scissors  
Utility Knife  
Staple Gun  
1/4" Staples  
Hammer  
Flathead Screwdriver  
Watering Can



### **Gather your soil and amendments**

Potting Soil  
(Organic or Conventional)  
Compost  
Seed Starter  
Organic Plant Magic



### **Attach Weed Block fabric to pallet**

Lay the pallet upside down on a work surface.



For a full pallet, use a piece of landscape fabric that is 4 feet wide and 9 feet long. Double it and lay it across the pallet in the correct orientation so that it covers the back, wrapping around both sides, around the bottom and a few inches up the front of the pallet from the bottom. Make sure it is straight before starting to tack it down. You can also cut a pallet down for a smaller version.



Use plenty of staples to attach fabric, stapling across the top and down the sides first. I used 1/4' inch staples. If your staples don't staple all the way into the pallet, they are too long. You can try to tap them in with a hammer, but it is best to use the correct length staple. A screwdriver is handy for pulling out staples as needed.



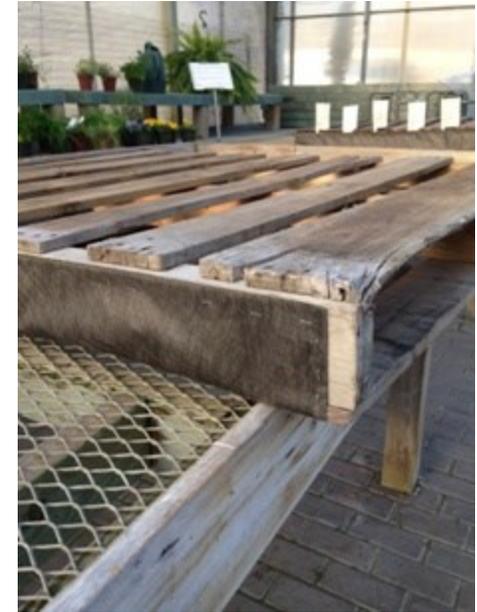
After you've stapled the fabric all the way down both sides, use a utility knife to trim off the extra fabric. Here's what the top of the pallet looks like from the front after you have attached the fabric.



After you've attached the fabric all the way down both sides and trimmed the excess fabric, flip the pallet right side up. Wrap the fabric around the bottom, folding the sides in and folding under the end to make a neat finished edge across the bottom front of the pallet. Staple across the bottom and front of the pallet.



Here's what the pallet looks like from the front at the bottom edge after you are done.



And another photo of the side of the pallet. Remember, you want to tack down the edges of the fabric, but you also want to prevent the soil from travelling around outside and behind the slats of the pallets. This edge needs another row of staples down the side of the pallet at the back edge to prevent soil from travelling outside the pallet at the sides.



After you have attached the fabric at the sides, bottom, and bottom front, flip the pallet back over so that you can attach the fabric to the slats on the back. In effect, you are creating multiple pockets of soil, rather than one huge pallet of soil. Remember, you want to prevent soil from accumulating between the fabric and the back slats.



Here's what the pallet looks like from the back when you are done.



And a final photo of the pallet from the front. It's ready to be filled!



### **Fill the pallet with soil**

Empty pallet ready to be filled. A full pallet will need almost four cubic feet of soil to fill. We have bagged soil and grow mix (organic or conventional), bagged and bulk compost, soil amendments including Organic Plant Magic, and Seed Starter Soil. It's not shown here, but it's a good idea to lay plastic sheeting under the pallet before filling to catch spills.

This pallet has been filled with soil. Notice the cardboard at the top. The scraps of cardboard are there temporarily to hold the soil in place until you are ready to raise the pallet to a vertical position. The pallet is going to be VERY heavy, so make sure you have a strong friend (or two!) to help you when you are ready to move it.

As you fill the pallet, make sure that the bottom is well filled, and that the spaces behind each slat are well filled. Any air pockets or loose soil will settle once you raise the pallet to a vertical position, so you want to fill those areas in completely.



### **Lettuce Pallet Garden—Started from Seeds**

After filling the pallet with organic potting soil, I covered the soil with a thin layer of organic seed starter mix. I watered the pallet well before planting seeds. This pallet is planted up with a variety of cool season lettuces and greens, planted according to the directions on the seed packets.

After planting, I misted the pallet to make sure the seeds were damp.

And then covered the pallet with a layer of plastic to keep the soil and seeds moist until they germinated. Once they germinated, I removed the plastic so that the emerging seedlings wouldn't rot.



About three weeks in and my seeds have germinated! I waited for a month (see next photo) before I propped my pallet up. I'm going to wait even longer, allowing the roots to develop further, before I prop it all the way up to a vertical position.



**One Month In!** Before you know it, you'll be harvesting healthy, organic lettuce and greens! These seedlings need to be thinned in order to encourage healthy growth. Notice the pansies planted at the top. They add color to your pallet garden and are edible, so can be added to your salad, too!



## An Herb Pallet Garden

I planted up this pallet with herbs. These are four-inch, conventionally grown herbs. Annual herbs here include basil and parsley. Perennial herbs (thyme, oregano, and chives) planted here might take over the entire pallet given time. We'll have to see what happens.... Maybe we'll end up pulling them out and replanting with other annuals.

Resist the urge to overplant, which is what I've done in this pallet! I wanted it to look good for the expo. If you want your pallet to perform well over the course of the season, less is more!

I popped in a few violas to add color. Pansy and viola flowers are edible, and look great in a salad or as a garnish.