

RAISED GARDEN BEDS

With spring around the corner, now is a great time to start preparing your beds for planting season. At the Randall County Extension Office we are doing just this and adding a new garden feature as well. In addition to the beautiful perennial and rose gardens, there will be three raised vegetable beds made out of tractor tires. During the 2016-2017 school year, our office partnered with local 3rd grade elementary schools in the Learn Grow Eat Go (LGEG) program and these beds will demonstrate the Grow portion of this curriculum. The raised beds will consist of a lower layer of straw that accomplishes three things.

- Provide organic material that will break down over time
- Allow good drainage for the soil above, and
- Is an economical way to take up space when creating tall raised beds



The next layer is top soil mixed with compost. This is the layer we will plant our future seeds in. The top layer will be standard tree mulch, about three inches thick. By maintaining a 3 inch mulch layer on the vegetable beds, the organic material is constantly replenished and mimics a forest floor. This renewable supply of nutrients will help fertilize the vegetables during their growth and return extra nutrients to the soil for upcoming growing seasons. We will begin planting spring vegetables into the garden in March. These plants, like broccoli and cabbage, will be able to take the cooler night temperatures. As the temperatures become too warm for these plants, this bed will transition into the tomato and pepper bed. Another bed will consist of okra and herbs and the third bed

will contain squash, pumpkins and melons. We hope to learn and take a lot of notes from these raised beds. As we learn, we hope to better assist the public with gardening questions and concerns. Right now is a wonderful time to get started. Hold off on planting anything for a little while longer (these unseasonably warm temperatures can be deceiving). Remember that our average last freeze is between April 15th and April 20th and this is just the first part of March. Feel free to come by and see the tractor tire vegetable beds and as always, happy planting.