



**FREDERICK DOUGLASS  
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL  
GARDEN LAB**

**Raised Bed Gardens**

Overall dimensions:  
4 ft. wide by 8 ft.3 in. long  
by 16½ inches high

We bought our Western Cedar from Tart Lumber in Sterling, Va. Six 12 ft. long by 6 in. wide by 2 inches thick boards can be cut to make the two 8 ft. long sides & the two 4 ft ends. Center bracing needs to be used on the 8' long sides to prevent bowing. Though we used metal corner posts, 4" x 4" x 24 " cedar corner posts would work as well & are less expensive. All wood components should be fastened with #8 rust proof deck screws.

*See following pages for material list, cut list and directions.*

**Material list:**

**6** – 2 in. x 6 in. x 12 ft. Cedar boards  
Each cut into an 8 ft. & a 4 ft. length.

**1** – 2 in. x 6 in. x 8 ft. Cedar board  
for center vertical bracing boards

**1** – 4 in. x 4 in. x 8ft. Cedar board

**120** minimum - 3 in. #8 rust proof deck screws to fasten sides and ends to one another and to the interior corner posts

**18** minimum – 2 ½ in. #8 rust proof deck screws to fasten 2 center vertical bracing boards to inside of side boards

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**Cut List:**

**6** – 2 in. x 6 in. x 8 ft  
3 boards for each long side of bed

**6** – 2 in. x 6 in. x 4 ft.  
3 boards for each end of bed

**2** – 2 in. x 6 in. x 16½ in.  
1 center vertical bracing boards for each long side

**4** – 4 in. x 4 in. x 2 ft.  
interior corner posts

## DIRECTIONS

- (1) Dig approximately 7½ in. deep holes for each of the interior cedar corner posts. Leave the holes wide enough for the posts to be moved when squaring the bed once the structure has been assembled.
- (2) The longer 2x6x12 ft. boards should each be cut into an 8 ft. and a 4 ft. board. Three 8 ft. lengths are required for each long side. Three 4 ft. lengths are required for each end. Each of the end boards should be fastened to the ends of the longer side boards with two 3 in. screws and then to the interior corner posts with three 3 in. screws. Fastening in this fashion will extend the total length of the bed to 8 ft. 3 in.
- (3) Fasten each of the 8 ft. side boards to the interior corner posts with three 3 in. screws.

- (4) Once the structure is assembled with the posts in the pre-dug holes, the structure must be squared and leveled with the bottom boards resting on the ground or slightly depressed into the soil in order to level it. Once the diagonal measurements are the same, the structure will be square. Use a level to level all sides, and make necessary adjustments to the depth of the post holes.
- (5) The post holes can then be filled with well tamped soil or dry Quickrete (optional) that will harden and hold the structure firmly.
- (6) Fasten the 16½“ bracing boards to the inside center of each 8 ft. side with 2½“ screws using three screws to fasten each of the three side board to the center brace.
- (7) If you want to use the metal corner posts, which are 16½ inches long and secured with metal pipes, they may be purchased from Mellinger Manufacturing Company, Inc., 367 Millwood Rd., Willow Street, PA 17584. Metal post will cost around \$30 each. Send Mellinger a copy of the above picture for pricing information, so they know exactly what you want.
- (8) Cover the bottom of the bed with black and white newsprint or weed barrier cloth, and fill the bed with a good organic growing medium. At Frederick Douglass we used Miracle Grow raised bed soil mixed with Black Cow sterilized and composted cow manure. Be sure to fill the bed to the top because it will settle over time. After a growing season or two you will need to add compost to the growing medium to raise the level and refresh nutrients. We have not had to replace the growing medium since the beds were installed in 2013, but we do add compost every year. If you have composted leaves they are excellent and usually free.
- (9) Feel free to email Pop with questions that you may have or Mary Kirk Cunningham, the FDE Garden Lab Coordinator.

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