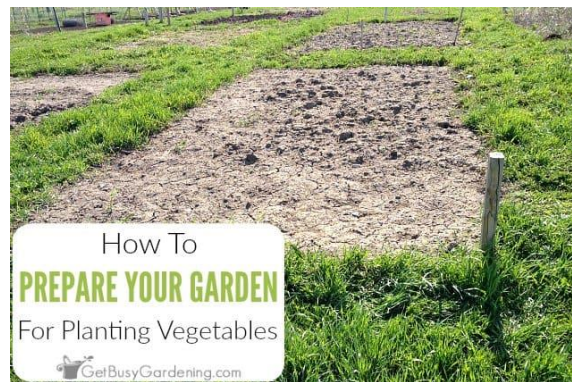


## HOW TO PREPARE A GARDEN BED FOR PLANTING VEGETABLES

Did you know that vegetable garden soil preparation is an important first step for successfully growing your own food? Below I will show you exactly how to prepare a garden bed for planting vegetables, including details about building the best soil for garden beds, and tips for adding organic soil amendments for vegetables.



## HOW TO PREPARE SOIL FOR PLANTING VEGETABLES

When you have an existing garden plot, preparing a garden bed for planting vegetables is pretty easy.

One of the community garden plots we rented last year was used before, but it was neglected until we adopted it.

The plot was pretty clean but was partially covered by a thin layer of weed seedlings, and the grass was creeping in all around the edges. Below are the steps I took to get this neglected garden plot ready for planting.

## STEPS FOR PREPARING A VEGETABLE GARDEN FOR PLANTING

**Step 1. Remove as many weeds as possible:** First I removed as much of the grass and weeds as I could. Most of the weeds in this garden were pretty small and easy to pull.

Tiny weeds will be taken care of in the following steps so you don't have to remove every single tiny little weed in this step.

But try to remove as many of the established weeds and grass roots as you can. Use a shovel to cut the garden edges and turn the soil to make it easier to pull the grass and weeds.

**Step 2. Add edging to keep the grass out (optional):** This step is optional, but it really helps keep grass and weeds from creeping in around the edges of the garden.

**Step 3. Add soil amendments for vegetables:** Once all the weeds have been removed, it's time to add organic soil amendments. I had to amend clay soil, so compost was a definite must for this vegetable garden bed.

Compost is a natural fertilizer for your garden and a great amendment to any type of garden soil. Plus, compost is pretty inexpensive to buy in bulk. I like to add enough to my garden so that the compost is 1-2" deep.

**Step 4. Till the soil (optional):** Tilling (aka cultivating the soil) is another optional step, you definitely don't need to till your garden.

Tilling mixes the soil amendments into the existing garden soil, and also helps to break it up, making it easier for plant roots to penetrate the soil.

**Step 5. Add a thick layer of mulch:** Mulch is the key to keeping the weeds down, and it also retains moisture in the soil so you don't have to water your garden as often.

It also adds more nutrients to the soil as it breaks down over time, helping to build rich, fertile garden soil.