

Comparison and Success Factors

Traditional Dirt Garden	Container Garden	Straw Bale Garden
Best spot for a garden in your yard may not be where the sun shines best.	Move the garden to the sunniest spot in your yard.	Move the garden to the sunniest spot in your yard.
Sweat generated when digging, weeding (throughout the season), preparing rows, and planting holes.	Sweat generated lugging bags of planting mix, filling the containers, and more frequent watering and feeding.	Sweat generated putting the bales into place, and more frequent watering and feeding.
Drainage issues depending on garden location and substructure.	No drainage issues (as long as there are drainage holes in the containers).	No drainage issues.
Less watering, less feeding.	More watering, more feeding.	More watering, more feeding.
Diseases and critters residing and building up in the soil.	Start “clean” with new potting mix.	Start “clean” with new straw bales, but be sure of your source; avoid bales with persistent herbicides.
Lower cost of goods.	Higher to much higher cost of goods (containers, planting mix, more water and food).	Higher cost of goods (bales, more water and food).
Easier to manage vining or tall plants (stakes can be pounded into the soil).	Creative thinking needed to support vining or tall plants.	Creative thinking needed to support vining or tall plants.
Cooled soil at root zone (especially if clay) can slow down plant growth and crop maturity.	Elevation of root zone means faster start and fewer days to maturity (sun shining directly on containers).	Elevation of root zone means faster start and fewer days to maturity (sun shining directly on straw bales).
Yield of crops dependent on season, garden location, spacing, and care throughout the season.	Yield of crops on par with traditional dirt garden, as long as the cultivar is correctly sized for the capacity of the container.	Yield of crops can equal or exceed those from dirt gardens or containers, because of the 40-gallon-capacity equivalence of a straw bale.