

Lasagna Gardening (No Major Digging or Tilling) Monarch Waystations



Small gardens at homes, schools, or businesses can be started by using lasagna gardening. Lasagna gardening requires a layer of wet newspaper, mulch, and soil for seeds and wet newspaper and mulch for planting plugs and plants. It requires no tilling or major digging whatsoever.

Preparing the Area:

1. Mow the grass as short as possible and leave the clippings on the ground. Spread the clippings out so there are no huge clumps.
2. Lay down 8 sheets (thick, layered together) of wet black and white newspaper (no colored sheets) over the mowed grass (the grass will compost and the newspaper will compost).
3. Put some hardwood mulch on top of the wet newspaper as you lay it down or it will blow away.
4. Put down a 2-3 inch layer of hardwood mulch and then add 2-3 inches of soil over the hardwood.
5. Sprinkle seeds on top of the soil.
6. Step on the soil or tap it down. If planting with children, have them do the "wildflower dance" so the seeds can make soil contact. Lightly walk around the whole area moving your hands. Perhaps you can sing the seeds a song to put them in a good mood to grow tall.
7. Spread a small amount (1/4-1/2 inch) of soil on top and tap the soil down with the blunt end of a garden rack or hoe.
8. If it doesn't rain, then water once a week.

Preparing an Area to Plant Plugs or Plants:

The lasagna method may be used to plant plants and plugs with a bit of variation.

1. Mow the area as short as possible, leave grass clippings, but spread them out so there are no huge clumps.
2. Dig holes for plants or plugs. Be sure to make the hole wider than the plant or plug.
3. Plant the plants (you may need to amend the soil with compost, but this depends on the quality of the soil and the requirements of the plant (soil type)).
4. Layer the wet newspaper and then add 2-3" of mulch on top of the newspaper. This step does not require that soil be added to the top of the mulch.
5. If edging is added, it will help keep the weeds from creeping back into the beds.
5. Water deeply once a week, if it doesn't rain.

Tips:

- Do not place hardwood mulch too close to your house, as it may attract termites.
- If your ground is very hard then after you mow, water the area for at least two hours. Soaking the ground the day before you plan to plant will soften the ground and make it easier to dig holes to plant plants or plugs.
- A battery operated drill with a bulb planting attachment can be used to make holes to plant small plants and bulbs. They can be purchased online or from places like Merrifield Garden Center. Make sure you buy the 12" short variety. The longer ones do not work well.
<http://www.rittenhouse.ca/asp/Product.asp?PG=336>
- Loudoun Compost: <http://www.loudouncomposting.com/> A great place to buy compost to amend your soil. You can also use compost to amend soil in the planting hole when planting plants.

For more information visit: www.loudounwildlife.org