

Earthworms:

Garden Tillers

Lift something up that has been laying on your grass in your lawn. . . see the little tunnels? You are actually seeing lasagna gardening at work. Those little tunnels are the work of earthworms. . . which just happen to be a gardener's best friend for soil building. The tunnels are made in their quest for food and go several feet into the earth. . . even in heavy clay soil. Even in full clay and rocks, an earthworm can penetrate. Their tunneling loosens the soil so air and water can penetrate.

Lasagna Gardens are full of earthworms. Lasagna Gardens provide the conditions worms thrive on: moderate temperature, darkness, and moisture, organic matter for feeding on. Under the layer of newspaper or cardboard, earthworms are drawn up to the cool darkness. . . ingest the paper and other organic matter. As they digest the leaves, grass, and other mulch material, they deposit castings, a humus-rich soil amendment.

You build the right environment. . . provide the food. . . the earthworms will come and do the rest!!!

Encourage the Worms

Earthworms are indicators of a healthy garden soil. If there are no earthworms, your soil may be low in organic matter or treated with pesticides. Just laying

chopped leaves and grass clippings over an existing garden will make a significant difference in worm activity. Full-scale Lasagna Gardening will greatly encourage earthworms.

You can actually buy worms (common earthworms or night crawlers) and dump them in . . . right under the paper layer or between the mulch layers. They will begin eating, tunneling, reproducing, and improving your soil immediately.

Cooking your Lasagna Garden

One good thing about Lasagna Gardening is the instant result. You can create a garden and plant it all in the same day. However, you may want to 'cook' your Lasagna first. This will help to reduce the height of the beds and will give you loose, crumbly soil. It does take a little planning to get the right balance of organic materials to encourage heating. Fall is the bountiful season. Leaves are the backbone of a new lasagna garden. Put approximately four times more brown material such as peat moss, hay, straw, chopped leaves, stalks and twigs; as you would green material such as grass clippings, kitchen scraps, and fresh manure. Apply each layer adding a sprinkle of organic supplements if needed to adjust pH. Cover your Lasagna with black plastic. Leave the plastic on over the winter or about six weeks. Most of the material will have broken down into a

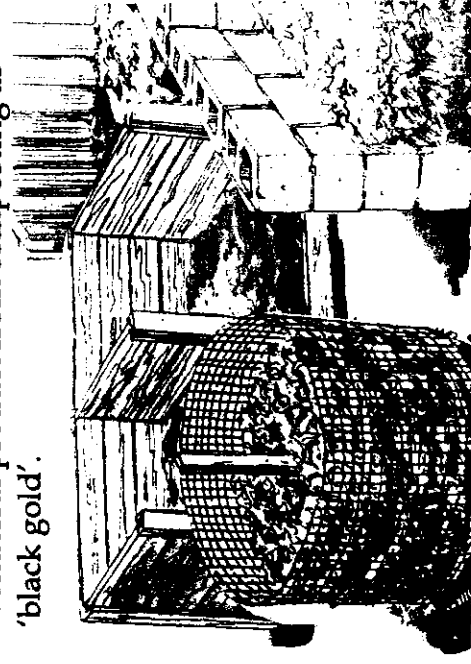
dark, crumbly soil that is a joy to plant in.

Create great compost

The kitchen is a great place to start gathering organic matter. Collect vegetable peelings, fruit skins and cores, tea bags, coffee ground, egg shells, and other scraps. However, never add bones, fat, fish or meat scraps; these will begin to smell bad and attract critters you don't want. You can actually add the helpful scraps directly onto a layer of a Lasagna that you are building.

Some gardeners have a compost pile going at all times. Place your pile on a level, well-drained soil in full sun. Adding kitchen scraps, grass clippings, manure, leaves, bits of sod, ashes, spent flowers, dirt from containers, hay, straw, etc., etc. on a regular basis therefore, always having ready compost for a new Lasagna!

Some gardeners will refer to this wonderful product from composting as 'black gold'.



Lasagna Gardening

Gardening

Why isn't Everyone Lasagna Gardening?

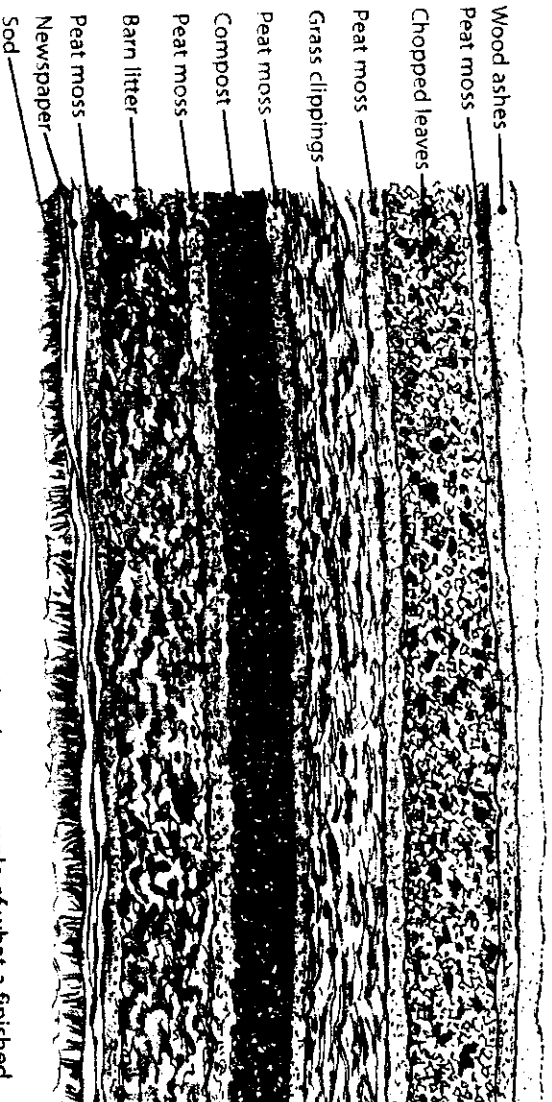
This method is amazingly simple and successful, so why isn't everyone doing it?

- Some think they don't have time to garden
- Some think gardening is too hard
- There is no such thing as a no-work garden. . . lasagna gardening is close
- Some think they are too old to garden
- Some have physical disabilities and have set limitations on themselves
- Some have the interest but just don't know where to start

Start with: what do you want to grow and where do you want to grow it?

You may want to choose the site first. Do you have the nice sunny location or the more challenging shade?

Think about where you enjoy sitting in your house for your morning coffee or afternoon tea. Look out the window....



Lasagna Garden Layers. Here's an example of what a finished lasagna bed might look like in cross section, with alternating layers of peat moss and organic materials. The exact materials you use to create your own lasagna beds will probably be different, depending on what you have readily available.