FREE BUILDING PLAN · GARDEN PROJECTS

Simple 4 × 6 ft Raised Garden Bed (11 in tall)

A beginner-friendly wooden bed built from four 2×6 boards, one 4×4 post and ordinary exterior screws. It's 6 ft long, 4 ft wide and two boards high, and this page has every cut, quantity and assembly step.

Design reviewed, not yet built

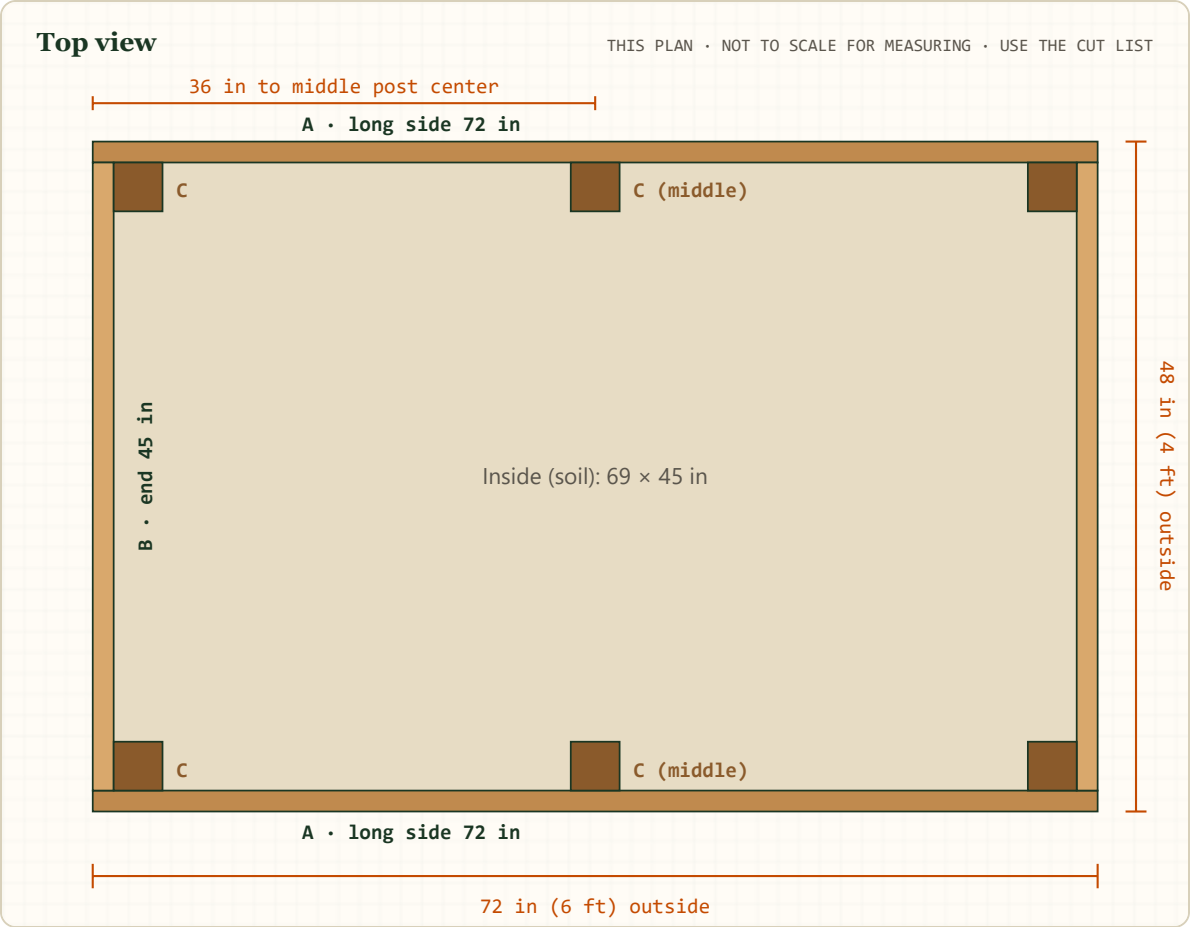
Verification status: design reviewed, not yet built. Practical Maker DIY has not yet built this bed or tested it in use. Its dimensions, cut list and quantities have been checked on paper. Measure your lumber before cutting, and if something doesn't fit, stop and let us know.

OUTSIDE SIZE	HEIGHT	SKILL LEVEL
72 × 48 in (6 × 4 ft)	**11 in (two 2×6 boards)**	**Beginner**

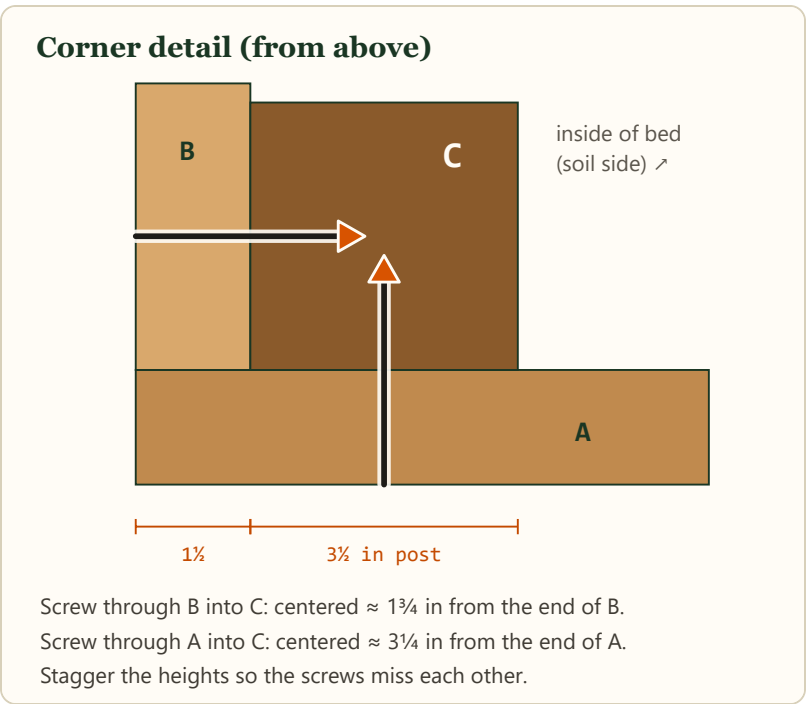
TIME	SOIL
About 2 hours, plus filling (estimate)	**About ¾ cu yd (calculate yours)**

How the bed goes together

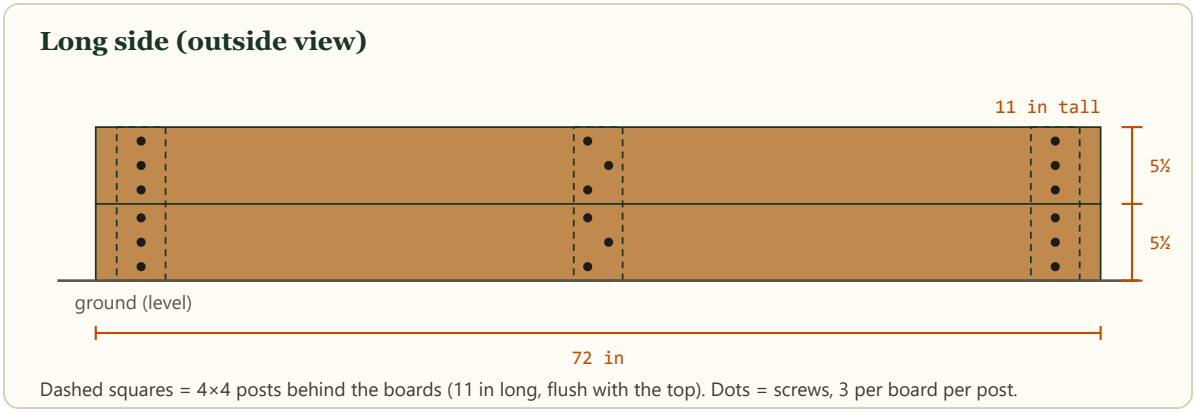
Each long side is two 72 in (6 ft) boards stacked on edge. Each end is two 45 in boards that fit *between* the long sides, so the outside of the bed measures exactly 6 × 4 ft. A short 4×4 post sits in each inside corner and in the middle of each long side. The boards screw into the posts. The posts are the same height as the bed and rest on the ground.



Top view of this plan's design. Letters match the cut list. Diagrams are for understanding; take measurements from the cut list.



How each corner fits together.



A long side: two boards, three posts behind them.

Material list

Qty	Item	Used for
4	2×6 boards, 10 ft long (actual size about 1½ × 5½ in). Cedar, redwood or lumber labeled for **ground contact**. See Choosing lumber. No 10 ft boards at your store? Six 8 ft boards also work (see the cut list).	4 long sides (A), 4 ends (B)
1	4×4 post, 6 ft long (actual about 3½ × 3½ in), same wood type as the boards. An 8 ft 4×4 also works.	6 posts (C)
60	3 in exterior-rated wood or deck screws (#9 or #10). If you use treated lumber, choose screws the maker rates for treated wood, such as stainless steel or hot-dip galvanized. Buy a box of 75 or more, or check the count on a box sold by weight.	3 screws per board at each post (20 joints)

Optional

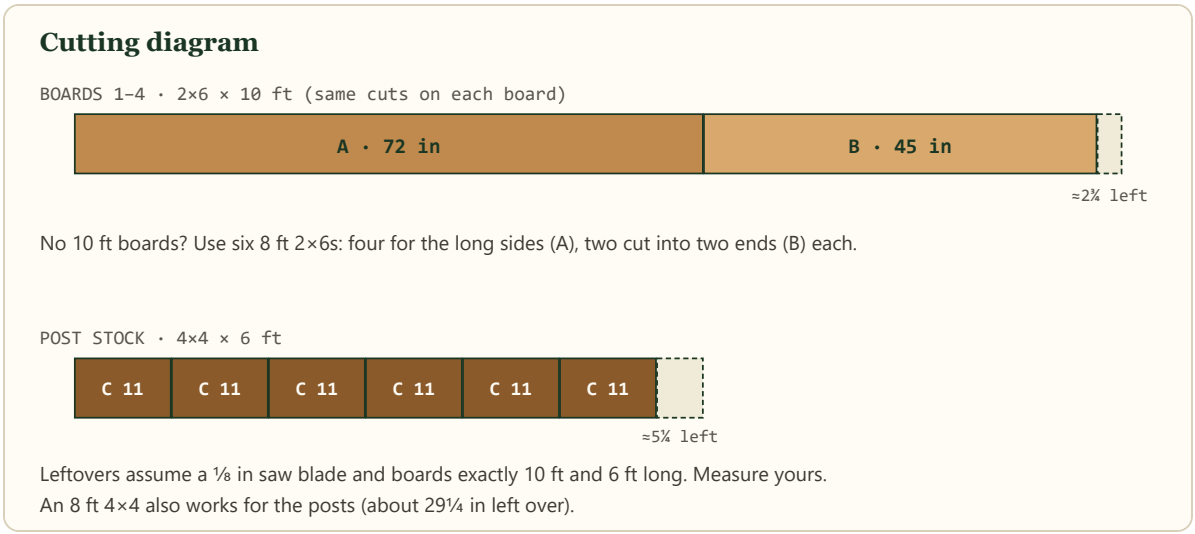
- Cut-end preservative, if you use pressure-treated lumber. The treatment doesn't always reach the center of a board, so seal fresh cuts, especially the post ends that sit on the ground. Follow the product label.
- Plain cardboard (no glossy print) to smother grass under the bed. It breaks down within a season, so roots can grow into the soil below.
- Galvanized hardware cloth where gophers or moles are a problem. Lay it on the ground inside the frame so it reaches the boards on all sides (step 7).
- Soil: about **0.73 cu yd** fills the bed (inside 69 × 45 × 11 in = 19.8 cu ft). With 10% extra for settling, buy about **0.81 cu yd**: 15 bags of 1.5 cu ft, or 1 cu yd bulk. You may still need to top up

after the first few waterings. The soil calculator works this out for any size and compares bag and bulk prices.

Cut list

Part	Qty	Length	Cut from
A Long side board (2×6)	4	72 in	One from each 10 ft board. Keep all four exactly the same length.
B End board (2×6)	4	45 in	One from each 10 ft board, after A (about 2¾ in left over per board)
C Post (4×4)	6	11 in	1 post (about 5¼ in left over from 6 ft; 29¼ in from 8 ft)

Why 45 in? The ends sit between the long boards: 48 in − 2 × 1½ in = 45 in. If your boards are not exactly 1½ in thick, cut B to 48 in minus twice your board thickness. Each 10 ft board needs at least 117¼ in of usable length for one A and one B; leftovers assume a ⅛ in saw blade. With 8 ft boards instead: cut one A from each of four boards, and two B from each of the other two. If 10 ft boards won't fit in your vehicle, ask the store to cut each one about 73 in from one end; then cut A and B to exact length at home.



One way to cut all the parts from the material list.

Tools and safety

Tools

- Tape measure, pencil and a speed square
- Saw: circular saw, miter saw or handsaw (a 4×4 takes two passes with most circular saws)

- Drill/driver with a bit to match your screws
- Drill bit for pilot holes (often ⅛ in; check the screw box)
- Two clamps (helpful, not required)
- Level, shovel or flat spade, and a rake

Safety

- Wear safety glasses when cutting and drilling, and hearing protection with power saws.
- Wear a dust mask and gloves when cutting. Cut outdoors.
- With pressure-treated wood: wash your hands after handling it and before eating, clean up sawdust and scraps, and never burn treated wood. Follow the safety sheet or tag that comes with the lumber.
- Support boards fully while cutting, and keep hands clear of the blade path.

Assembly steps

1 **Pick and prepare the spot**

Choose a sunny, level area with room to walk and kneel all the way around the bed, and room to get a wheelbarrow to it if you'll use one. Mark a 6 × 4 ft rectangle and make it as level as you can now; it's easier than levelling the finished frame. Remove sod, or plan to cover it with cardboard.

2 **Cut and label the parts**

From each 10 ft board, cut one 72 in long board (A) and one 45 in end board (B). Cut six 11 in posts (C). Mark each piece with its letter. If the wood is treated, brush cut-end preservative onto the fresh cuts.

3 **Build the two end panels**

Lay two B boards flat, edge to edge, to make an 11 in tall panel. Put a post under each end, flush with the board ends and with the top and bottom edges. Drill pilot holes, then drive three screws through each board into each post, centered over the post (about 1¾ in from the board end) and spaced up and down the board. That's 12 screws per panel.

4 Attach the long sides

Assemble near the final spot. Stand the end panels up about 6 ft apart, posts facing in. Hold a long board (A) against the posts so its end is flush with the outside face of the end panel and its top is level with the top of the posts. Drill pilot holes, then drive three screws through A into each corner post, about 3¼ in from the board end. Place these screws at slightly different heights from the end-panel screws so they don't hit each other inside the post (see the corner detail). Add the second board below it, then repeat on the other side.

5 Add the middle posts

On the inside of each long side, set a post centered 36 in from either outside end (its edges at 34¼ in and 37¾ in), flush with the top. If your long boards came out slightly shorter than 72 in, center the post at half their actual length. Drill pilot holes, then drive three screws through each board into the post: 12 screws for both middle posts.

6 Check the frame and level it

Measure both outside diagonals, corner to corner. They should match closely (about 86½ in each). If they don't, look for a board that isn't tight against its post or a cut that's off, and fix that rather than forcing the frame. Then check level along each side and dig out or add soil under any low spots so the bed sits evenly on the ground.

7 Line and fill

If you use hardware cloth, lay it on the ground inside the frame so it reaches the boards on all sides. Then cover the ground inside the frame with plain cardboard, overlapping the pieces, and wet it. Fill to the top with a raised-bed soil mix, water it well, and top up as it settles.

Screw count: end panels 24 + corner joints on the long sides 24 + middle posts 12 = 60.

Choosing lumber

- **Cedar or redwood** resists rot naturally but costs more.
- **Untreated pine or fir** is cheapest but rots soonest.
- **Modern pressure-treated lumber** labeled for **ground contact** lasts longer at moderate cost. Check the tag on the end of the board. If you'd rather not use treated wood around food crops, choose cedar or redwood.
- **Avoid** old salvaged lumber that might be CCA-treated (an older arsenic-based preservative), as well as railroad ties and wood treated with creosote or penta.
- **Pick straight boards.** Sight down each board and skip ones that are twisted, bowed, cracked or have large loose knots, especially near the ends where the screws go.

- **Nominal vs. actual size.** A "2×6" is really about 1½ × 5½ in, and a "4×4" is about 3½ × 3½ in. Rough-sawn or wet lumber can be larger, so measure before cutting the end boards.

Assumptions and limits

- Sizes assume standard dry, surfaced lumber (2×6 = 1½ × 5½ in; 4×4 = 3½ × 3½ in) and boards exactly 10 ft (2×6) and 6 ft (4×4) long. Measure yours.
- The bed sits directly on level ground. This plan doesn't cover slopes, decks, patios, rooftops, legs or use as a retaining wall.
- Posts are flush with the top and rest on the ground. This plan doesn't cover setting posts into the ground.
- **Middle posts and reinforcement.** This plan uses a 4×4 post in each inside corner and one in the middle of each long side. The middle posts tie the two boards on each side together, but they aren't anchored in the ground, and this plan doesn't add other reinforcement. Don't make the bed longer or taller without adding support. Wet soil pushes outward on the sides, so after filling, and again after the first few heavy waterings, sight along each long side. If a side is visibly bowing, stop adding soil and get advice from someone experienced, such as a local builder, before going further.
- This is a quantity and assembly guide, not a structural design or an engineering check. Practical Maker DIY has not yet built or tested this bed. Follow lumber and fastener makers' instructions and any local rules.
- Time and soil figures are estimates. Prices are not included because they vary by store and region.

Planning and assembly information only — not a structural design. Design reviewed, not yet built. Updated November 2026. © 2026 Practical Maker DIY.