



Desert Raised Bed Ideas

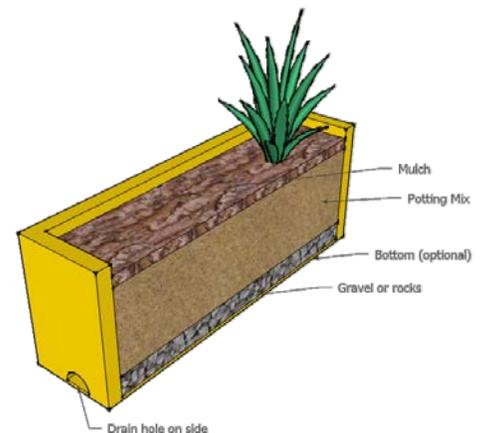
Anything will work that's not toxic and sturdy enough to hold the soil.

It should meet these criteria:

1. 12" or more in depth, but more than 18" is probably a waste of material
2. Filled with good soil, rich in organic matter (at least 1/3 organic matter)
3. It must drain excess water out the bottom (holes on side are great)
4. No wider than 48" but as long as you want
5. If you have salty, caliche soil, keep that soil and your bed separate, but it's still a good idea to break up the caliche and improve drainage. If your soil is mediocre, you can blend it gradually with your raised bed and increase the root zone for free.
6. Salt in soil will wick up as a bed dries. If soil is very sodic (Na) then you probably want a barrier between your bed and the soil like a container would have.

Potential Building Materials:

- Tires
- Cement Blocks
- Earth bags / Sand Bags
- Straw Bale Gardening
- Lumber / Wood / Logs
 - Avoid creosote and petroleum preserved woods
- Plastic construction fencing (that orange barrier fence)
- Corrugated metal
- Rocks
- Concrete
- ???



Plan "B"

In some places where the caliche is near the surface and not too deep, desert gardeners break out the caliche and replace it with good soil. This is a sunken bed. It is cheap but requires a lot of work.

Water

Water needs to be applied in enough volume to keep the salts leached out of the growing zone. If your water itself is salty this is very important to avoid buildup of salts. For those with clean water, you will be fine unless your bed's soil is in contact with native salty soil. In this case the salts will wick into your bed. Deep irrigation can mitigate the problem.

This is complicated issue. Contact us if you see salt damage for help.