

INSTALLATION GUIDE

How to Build a Raised Bed with Railway Sleepers

Each installation guide is written with best practice in mind. It is strongly advised that any questions raised from the guidelines are directed to our technical team on sales@sure-green.com.

Materials

[2.4m railway sleepers](#) (x8)

[1.2m railway sleepers](#) (x4)

[150mm sleeper screws](#) (x16)

[250mm sleeper screws](#) (x8)

[Hex driver bit](#)

[Weed control fabric](#)

[Compost or growing media](#)



Method

1. Choose the right railway sleepers for your space

There are various types of [railway sleepers](#), and each have their own set of characteristics, making them ideal for different jobs and garden aesthetics. When building a raised bed, we would recommend using new sleepers over reclaimed sleepers, as these will not only blend well into most garden designs, but they are also easier to cut, stack and secure. If a rustic look is preferred, our [charred brushwood sleepers](#) are a great option, as they have a similar patina to reclaimed sleepers, but are easier to use and stack as they have straight edges.

2. Choose the size and position of your raised bed

Depending on the size of your garden or allotment and what you are looking to grow, will depend on the size and position of your raised bed. If you are building more than one raised bed, it is important to consider your access requirements between the beds, such as making them wide enough to wheel a barrow or accommodate special needs such as wheelchairs. As

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a rule, 30cm (1ft) is the minimum width suitable for walking and 45cm (18in) is the minimum width for wheelbarrows.

3. Lay the sleepers on the ground and fasten them together

To begin constructing your raised bed, lay 2 x [1.2m sleepers](#) and 2 x [2.4m sleepers](#) on a level section of ground in a rectangular shape, with the narrowest sides on the ground and facing upwards. Many people lay sleepers down directly on the earth, grass or concrete, however, some landscapers will often consider a foundation of [concrete](#) or [hardcore](#). Next, use two [150mm timber screws](#) at each corner to attach the sleepers together. 50mm of the length of the screw needs to drill into the adjoining sleeper to create a solid connection.

4. Add another layer to the raised bed

Now you have secured your first layer, it is time to add a second layer so that the raised bed is deeper from the ground. Some people may choose to stop at one layer, however, a 2-layer raised bed is often the preferred choice. To create the second layer, we recommend individually laying each of the sleepers on top of the box you have created, overlapping the joins as if you are bricklaying. Create one corner and screw these together before adding the remaining sleepers to create the same rectangular shape.

Next, attach the layers together using [250mm timber screws](#), drilling down from the top to secure the two layers together. If you want more layers, simply repeat this stage until you have achieved your desired height.

5. Attach a plastic membrane to the raised bed

Some gardeners and landscapers choose to fix a [plastic membrane](#) on the inside of the raised bed, to create a barrier between the wet soil and the railway sleeper. If you are positioning the raised bed directly to the ground, we recommend using [weed control fabric](#) to suppress weed growth without the need for harsh chemicals.

6. Fill your raised bed with soil and add your choice of plants

Before you fill your raised bed with [compost, topsoil or manure](#), it is worth considering placing cobbles or hardcore at the bottom of the bed to improve drainage.

One of the many benefits in using raised beds is that you can fill them with the soil that best matches your planting. By filling raised beds with ericaceous compost, for example, lime-hating plants can be grown even where the underlying soil is alkaline. To improve moisture in the bed, apply a top surface such as a [bark mulch](#) or [slate chippings](#).

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