Living Greens

Hopkins Hidden Homestead

Durable Planting Solutions

Made by Homesteaders for Homesteaders

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**WHO ARE WE?**

We are Kris and Kalitta Hopkins. Along with our 6 y/o son we live on our 2-acre homestead in Wright county Missouri. Wanting to be more self-sufficient we constructed an 1,800-sf high tunnel.

I decided to let gardening be less of a chore and wanted to have raised beds within the high tunnel. After searching for metal raised beds, I came up short. The available metal planter boxes were made of very thin metal and the honest reviews told the story. I decided to build my own.

With my background in manufacturing, and help from a friend, I designed and built the raised beds for our high tunnel. Many prototypes later and almost two years after building the first raised bed, we are now making our beds available. Shipped directly to you.

**ABOUT THE GARDEN BEDS**

**Bed Sizes**
The raised beds come in two sizes: 42” by 42” and 42” by 84”. The beds are 18” tall without the wood attached to the top. This makes a comfortable working height with minimal bending. The beds were purposely designed to be 42” wide. This allows the user to reach the middle of the grow space with little effort.

**Modular**
Each bed can stand alone, connect to another, or stack on top of another. This gives the user the ability to make many shapes to better fit their garden layout. You may also decide to stack beds giving you a 36” tall grow space. This would allow easy harvesting of your bush plants and strawberries.

**Durability**
Every part on the bed is premium galvanized steel. The side panels are 22 gauge thick with 1.5” tall ribs. This means your raised bed will not bow out when filled with soil. The square bed weighs approximately 48 pounds and the large bed 65 pounds.

**Made in the USA**
More specifically, Made in Missouri.
ASSEMBLY INSTRUCTIONS

Tools Required: Assembling the beds will require a tool designed to tighten a 1/4” nut. I prefer to use a rachet with an extension and a 7/16” socket, but a wrench or plyers will work.

Basic Kit Includes:

- Side Panels (4 pieces)
- 18” Corner (4 pieces)
- Soil Blocker (4 pieces)
- Round Connecting Shim (2 pieces, used for connecting 2 beds together)
- Bolt Pack (1 piece, 32 nuts and bolts with holder)
Step 1:
Place one panel on sawhorses or something similar allowing both ends of the panel to hang over. If you are assembling the 84” bed, use the long side piece in this step. Place an 18” corner piece on one end and assemble with 4 bolts and nuts. It is important to loosely hand tighten all 4 nuts to ensure correct alignment. After the 4 nuts are hand tight, line up the edge of the side panel with the edge of the 18” corner piece then tighten the nut closest to the side you lined up. Repeat with the other side then tighten the final 2 nuts in the middle. After one end is complete, secure the 18” corner to the opposite end of the side panel.

Step 2:
Complete step 1 with two side panels. When this is complete you will have 2 side panels assembled with four 18” corners. These assembled panels can be placed on the ground and you will be ready for step 3. Be sure to pick a flat surface to set your 2 completed side panels upright. This will make step 3 easier.

NOTE: (If you are reading this manual for the person assembling the bed, be sure to tell them they are doing a good job. Maybe get them a glass of tea to show them your appreciation.)
**Step 3:** Working on one end at a time, move the remaining panels in place and secure with the provided bolts and nuts. Remember, use the instructions from step 1 to ensure the panels are even with the 18” corner pieces.

**Step 4:** After the raised bed is assembled it is time to place in your pre-determined area. When placing the bed ensure the bed is square before filling with soil. Then insert the 4 soil blockers. The soil blockers slide from the top down in the corner of the bed and help keep soil from escaping. Fill with soil or a growing media and enjoy.

Well, now you’re finished. Now you can give high fives and celebrate.

Instructions for accessories, stacking and linking multiple beds is next.
Linking garden beds is something you may decide to do. Our design allows someone to make various bed layouts using multiple beds. Whether you want to save space or make an attractive garden area, linking beds is an easy way to customize your garden.

**Linking Beds from the Side:**

Linking a bed to the side of a large bed. Before linking the beds, make sure the bolts are removed were shown. When assembling the bed in step 1 you can leave these bolts out.

**Next:**

Connect beds with 8 bolts. Leave 2 bolts out where shown. Use the 2 round shims top and bottom where shown. Shims are used to fill space between the 18” corner and the side panel of the bed you are connecting to. After connecting 2 or more beds remember to insert the soil blockers before filling with soil.

If linking beds end to end do not use shims. Remove 8 bolts from the end of each bed, set beds together and replace bolts.
Stacking beds allows the user to have a 36” tall bed. You may do this to allow easy harvest for some crops. Two beds of the same size can be stacked, or you can achieve a “stair stepped” effect by stacking a small bed on one end of a large bed. I will show you this scenario as it uses different brackets to achieve this look. If stacking two beds of the same size use 4 corner couplers.

**Stacking Kit:** This kit includes 4 corner couplers, 2 “L” shaped brackets, 2 rectangular shims and 8 bolts with nuts.

**Step 1:** Install 2 corner couplers, 2 “L” shaped brackets and 2 rectangular shims. The 2 rectangular shims are placed between the “L” bracket and side panel. Just finger tighten bolts for now.

Finally, set the small bed in place and secure with 6 more bolts. Tighten all bolts then place soil blockers in place.
WOOD KIT

The wood kit consists of brackets for mounting the wood to the top of your bed and decorative corner covers. The corner cover also helps hold your wood together at the joint. The wood top is for sitting and allows the user to sit while they garden. The wood kit contains 4 corner covers, 8 wood brackets and 8 bolts with nuts.

**Step 1:**
Attach all 8 wood brackets to the top 18” corners. Ensure the top of the wood bracket is level with the top of the 18” corner.

**Step 2:**
Place the bed where you intend to use. Insert soil blockers in the four corners. You can lay the four pieces of wood on a flat surface then install the four corner covers to make the border for the top of the bed. Use 4 pieces of wood cut to 49.5” for the small bed. Use 2 pieces of wood cut to 49.5” and 2 pieces cut to 91.5” for the large bed. This will allow the wood to overhang the wood brackets by ½” on every side. After building the wood top attach it to the top of the bed using 2 screws per wood bracket. #8 wood button head wood screws are included with the wood kit. If using a hard wood, you may need to pre-drill holes in the wood. If you are making a custom shape out of multiple beds, measure ½” past the wood brackets for the correct length. All miter joints are cut at 45 degrees.
Linking Beds with Wood Tops:
If you wish to top linked beds with wood you can. It takes a little imagination and measuring but you can have a great look. The drawing below is a 42” and a 84” bed linked in the shape of an “L”. I provided measurements for this scenario. Be sure to use stock sizes 2 by 6 lumber sold at your local hardware store or purchase from your local sawmill. If you are purchasing from a sawmill, specify the wood to be cut at 1 ½” by 5 ½” by your required length.

There are many different ways someone could link beds together. This is only hindered by the imagination. If you encounter problems with figuring your wood dimensions please feel free to email me your custom layout and I will draw your design with dimensions and send it to you.
LEVELING KIT

The leveling kit can be used to level your new bed on uneven ground. You can adjust each corner of the bed in increments of \(\frac{1}{2}\)" with a max adjustment of 5". The kit includes 4 leveler brackets and 8 bolts with nuts. To install, place bed in final position. Lift the corners of the bed, to make level, then prop up with scrap wood or rocks. Place the level bracket in the corner(s) then secure with hardware as shown. Be sure the level brackets are resting on a hard surface or place a small rock or piece of wood under the bracket to stop the bracket from sinking in the ground.

*Note: These bolts are close together so the nuts will need to be tightened with a wrench or a pair of pliers.

You may decide to level the bed with rocks, bricks or something different. This is fine to do but only place the item being used to level the bed directly under the corners.

As writing this manual I cannot help but think of other things I would rather be doing. My eyes wander to my left. I see my wife sewing a quilt. Hmmm... looks like fun. Maybe I stop for a moment and watch. Oh wait, my son is watching a new cartoon. Maybe I can watch and take a break.

More to Come:
We will be introducing hoops for the beds in the future. The hoops will be made of galvanized tubing. The hoops will connect to the tops of the beds, with or without using wood tops, and will be rigid. You can use a plastic cover, shade cloth or bird netting over the hoops. You may also decide to trellis plants using the hoops as a support.
SOIL/COMPOST/GROWING MEDIUM

I know little when it comes to soil. My background is in manufacturing, but I have come into contact with people who I can speak to and gain knowledge from concerning this subject. I have learned through trial and error; you get out what you put in. The following is an option I have used.

I have used Curt’s product and have enjoyed growing in it. Once watered in there is virtually no compaction and roots are free to move through the medium.

To get the best results from your new raised bed garden, fill it with a quality growing medium.

When you look at the back of most seed packets they recommend planting in a loose, well drained, pH balanced soil. There are many options available from local topsoil to home produced compost. Without lab testing these products you may or may not have a quality growing material for your plants.

One option we have found is Garden 4 Life growing medium. It is a blended organic composted material that stays loose, well drained and is pH balanced. When combined with the Garden 4 Life Essential Elements (a natural 5-5-5 fertilizer), you will have a wonderful growing environment for your plants. These products can be found at [www.garden4life.us](http://www.garden4life.us)

Author: Curt Rankin

GIVING CREDIT WHERE CREDITS DUE

A word of thanks to Clyde Majerus. Clyde was there during the development of our business. He was a valuable sounding board which I used on a regular basis. Clyde has also developed a useful slide chart used by gardeners everywhere. The chart is inexpensive and is a great tool for any grower to have. Clyde’s Vegetable Planting Slide Chart can be found on his website [www.clydesvegetableplantingchart.com](http://www.clydesvegetableplantingchart.com) or on Amazon. Thanks Clyde!

I hope you have found this manual useful. Please share photos of your raised garden designs with us at hopkinshiddenhomestead@gmail.com
“Rethink your garden......set yourself up for success”