

A REAL GARDEN. REAL PHOTOS. A PRACTICAL PLAN.

My Vego Garden

How I planned, built, filled and grew a raised-bed garden that works for me

ANNA · ARIZONA ZEN GARDEN · AZZENGARDEN

WELCOME TO MY GARDEN

I built a garden I actually want to work in

I replaced my wooden beds with Vego Garden beds in 2021. Since then, I have shaped the space around the way I garden: lots of food, flowers mixed in, vines growing up instead of out, tools nearby and paths I can move through.



Every photo in this guide comes from my own garden.



The modular shapes let the garden grow and change with me.

> “You do not need a huge yard. You need a layout that makes sense for your body, your plants and the way you want to garden.”

1 · Plan the space

2 · Choose bed height

3 · Match crops to beds

4 · Assemble the layout

5 · Fill with Hugelkultur

6 · Add trellises

7 · Compost in the garden

8 · Keep tools close

9 · Plant in layers

10 · Start your own

The beds become part of the whole garden

This is the garden in full swing: Vego beds filled with food and flowers, tall sunflowers overhead, and the in-bed worm composter working right where the plants grow.



Me in the garden among the sunflowers and Vego beds. The U-shaped Jumbo Garden Bed shown here is my favorite bed of all time, with the worm bin working inside the growing space. The hanging garden tool box on the side is another one of my Vego favorites.

Plant anything from sunflowers to food

A Vego bed can grow towering flowers, everyday vegetables, herbs and food for the kitchen - whatever earns a place in your garden.



These sunflowers grew taller than I could reach from the ground. Vego beds can grow anything from sunflowers to food.

STEP 1 · PLAN FIRST

Design the garden around access, not just looks

Before buying a bed, walk the space at different times of day. Notice sun, shade, hose reach and where you naturally enter. A beautiful bed in the wrong place becomes work.

1. **Follow the sun.** Most fruiting vegetables need your sunniest available location.
2. **Measure your reach.** If you can access both sides, a bed can be wider. If one side is against a wall, keep the center easy to reach.
3. **Protect the paths.** Leave room for a wheelbarrow, harvest basket and your own comfortable stride.
4. **Place water early.** Decide how hoses or drip lines will reach every bed before filling anything.
5. **Plan vertical space.** Put trellises where tall vines will not shade plants that need full sun.



Clear paths make planting, watering and harvesting easier.

Try the free Vego 3D Garden Planner

Sketch your space, test bed shapes and see how a layout feels before you commit.

vegogarden.com/pages/vego-3d-garden-planner

STEP 2 · CHOOSE THE HEIGHT

My two bed heights fit different garden jobs

Vego offers more height options than the two shown here. In my own garden, I use 17-inch and 32-inch beds; choose the height that gives your crops room and makes gardening comfortable for you.

17 inches

One of my two heights

Works for most vegetables, herbs and flowers. It gives roots more room than a shallow bed while keeping the garden close enough to sit or lean over.

- Good for leafy greens, herbs, peppers and tomatoes
- Enough depth for carrots and many other root crops when the top soil layer is loose
- Uses less fill than an extra-tall bed

32 inches

My taller option

Choose extra tall when reducing bending matters, when the bed sits over a hard surface, or when you want a deeper soil reservoir.

- Easier on backs and knees
- More room for roots and moisture storage
- Needs substantially more fill, so plan materials first

Think about the mature plant, not the seedling

Compact & low
Radishes, lettuce, onions, herbs and many flowers fit along edges and between larger crops.

Medium & upright
Peppers, eggplant, kale and bush beans need their own circle of air and light.

Large or sprawling
Tomatoes, squash, cucumbers and melons need generous room or a strong trellis.





My rule: Use the bed edge for the smallest plants, give medium plants breathing room, and move long vines upward whenever you can.

STEP 3 · CHOOSE THE SHAPE

Modular beds let the yard tell you what fits

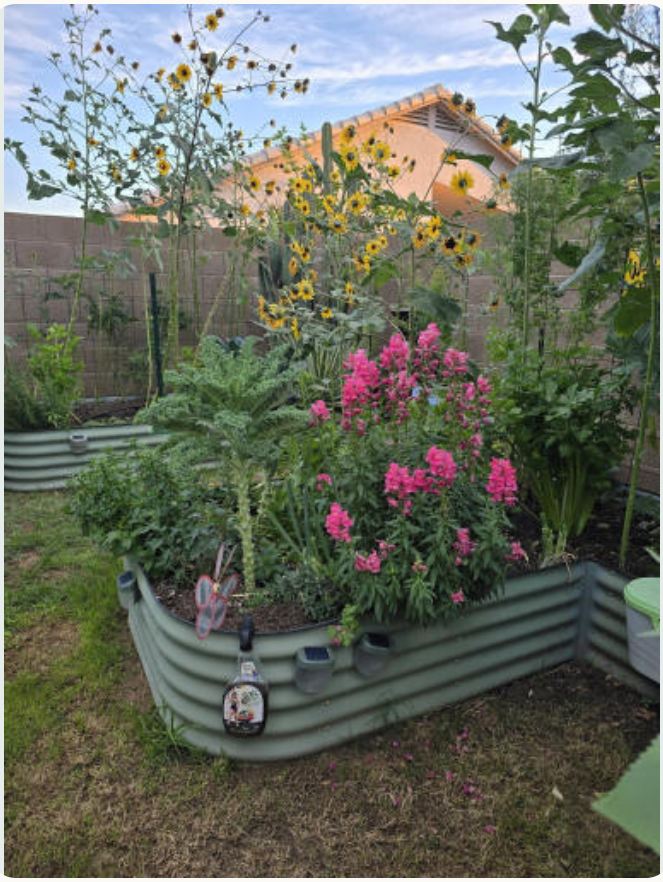
Long beds create strong rows and are simple to irrigate. Round beds make beautiful focal points. U-shaped layouts place a lot of growing area within easy reach. The best configuration is the one you can comfortably reach without stepping into the soil.

Questions to answer on paper

- Can I reach the center from a path?
- Can I move around the corners safely?
- Will a trellis block a doorway or shade another bed?
- Where will harvested produce and tools rest?
- Can the hose reach without dragging across plants?

Vegetable-size shortcut

Small crops can fill edges and gaps. **Medium crops** work in blocks. **Large crops** need anchor positions. **Vines** belong at a trellis or at an outer edge where they can spill without covering neighbors.



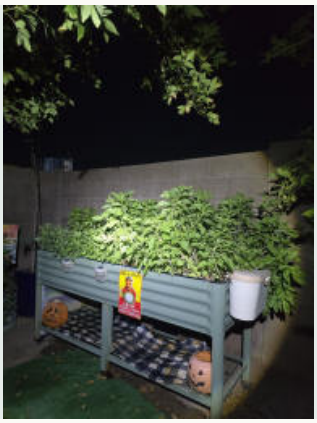
A round bed can be a productive focal point, not just decoration.





Round beds, elevated beds and planters each have a job

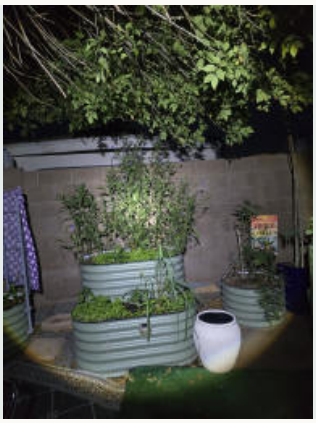
These night views show how bed height, shape, planters, paths and seating work together.



The elevated herb bed keeps a productive work area within easy reach.



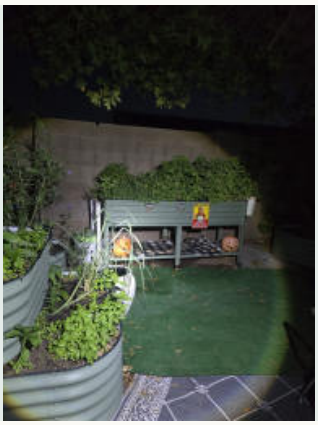
A dwarf mulberry turns a round bed into a small-tree focal point.



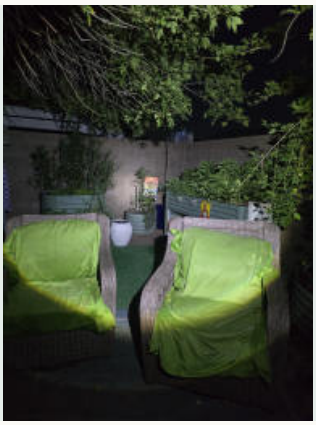
Tall plants and purple flowers build height without giving up the path.



Basil, petunias and vegetables share the same organized-chaos planting style.



Different heights create a layered garden that stays easy to work in.



A garden should leave room to sit, look around and enjoy what is growing.



My round cream Vego dragon fruit container keeps the cactus and its support together in this patio garden corner.

My pomegranate grows in a round Vego bed

This round bed gives my pomegranate its own growing space, with basil planted at the base and fruit developing on the branches.



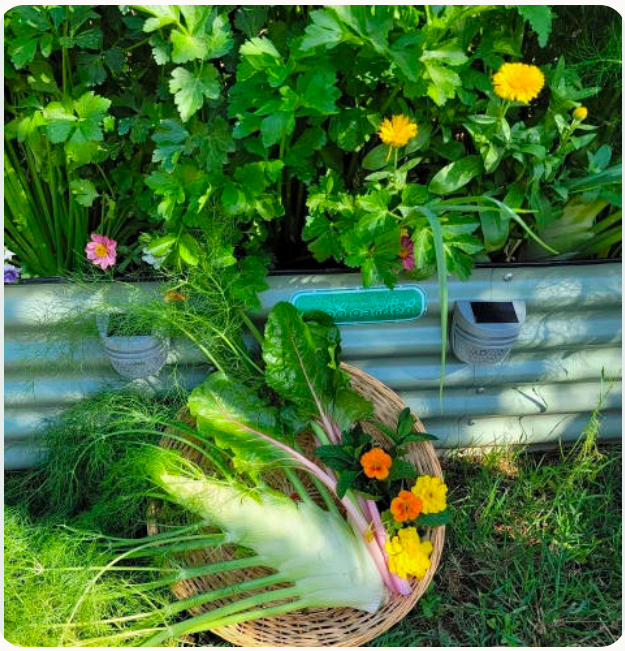
My pomegranate tree in a round Vego bed, with basil at its base, a pomegranate on the branch and the garden lamp post behind.

An elevated bed can anchor a whole garden corner

Beds are more than containers. They shape how I move through the garden, where I work, and what I bring back to the kitchen.



A cream elevated Vego bed settles into a garden corner with cactus, aloe, seating, garden art - and one of my cats nearby.



What the beds grow: a basket of fennel, chard and marigold flowers in front of the Vego bed.

Design for the harvest

Keep paths open, place tools within reach, and leave enough room beside each bed for a basket. A practical layout makes harvest days easier.

Make the corner yours

Raised beds can live comfortably with desert plants, art, seating and the everyday life of the garden.

STEP 4 · ASSEMBLE

Set the bones of the garden before you fill it



My aunt and uncle assembling the first Vego Garden bed they gifted me.

1. **Confirm the configuration.** Lay panels out in the chosen shape before tightening the hardware.
2. **Build on level ground.** Clear rocks and high spots so the bottom edge sits evenly.
3. **Start bolts loosely.** Connect the full shape, then square it and tighten gradually.
4. **Finish the top edge.** Install the protective edging completely before reaching or leaning over the bed.
5. **Recheck access.** Walk the paths with a basket or wheelbarrow before adding heavy fill.

> **Do not rush placement.** An empty bed is easy to move. A filled bed is not.



Once the paths, corners and reach feel right, the beds are ready to fill.

STEP 5 · FILL THE BEDS

Use Hugelkultur to build the bed from the bottom up

Hugelkultur uses woody and compostable materials below the planting zone. The layers break down over time, hold moisture and reduce the amount of bagged soil needed. It is especially useful in tall beds.

PLANTING ZONE	10-12+ inches of quality soil
COMPOST LAYER	finished compost or aged organic matter
SMALL ORGANICS	leaves, trimmings, straw and small twigs
WOODY CORE	logs and branches, packed into gaps
LEVEL GROUND	cardboard optional over weedy soil

My practical filling sequence

1. Place untreated logs and branches low in the bed. Fill large air pockets with smaller material.
2. Add leaves, garden trimmings and other brown or green organic matter.
3. Add compost, then water the layers deeply so dry wood does not steal moisture from the root zone.
4. Finish with at least 10-12 inches of quality soil; give carrots and other long roots a full foot of loose, rock-free soil.
5. Slightly overfill, water and let the bed settle. Top up before planting and add compost as the bed sinks over time.

In hot, dry gardens

Keep woody material fully buried, soak each layer as you build, and mulch the finished surface. The goal is a moist reservoir below the roots, not a dry wooden sponge.

Keep out

Painted or treated lumber, glossy materials, diseased plants, invasive weeds with seed, and anything contaminated with chemicals.

Expect settling

Decomposition lowers the soil level. That is normal. Add compost and fresh mix to the top as needed.

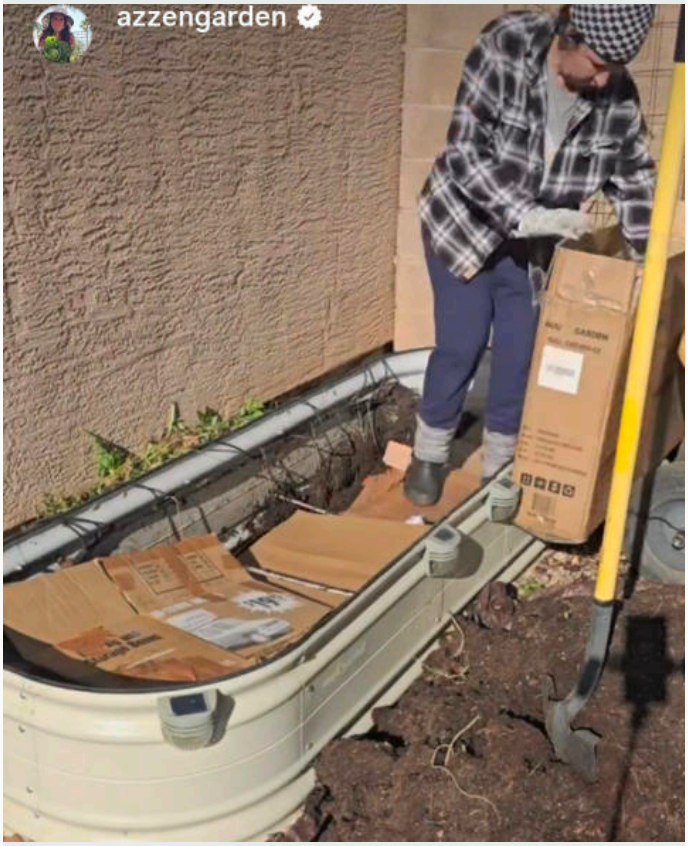
STEP 5 · FILL THE BEDS

Reuse the garden-bed packaging in the layers

I recycle the cardboard packaging from my garden beds by laying it inside the beds as part of the Hugelkultur base.



The molded cardboard packaging goes back into the garden instead of into the trash.



I lay flattened garden-bed boxes across the base before adding the next organic layers.

Reuse what arrives with the bed. Plain cardboard packaging can become part of the brown layer. Remove plastic, tape and glossy labels before burying it.

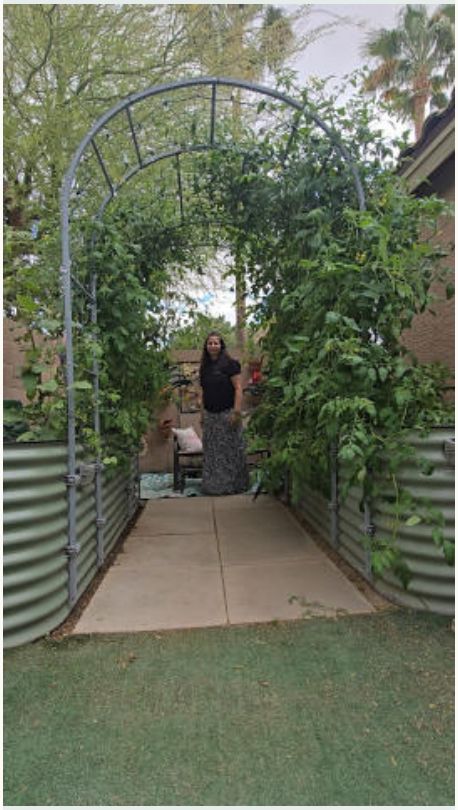
STEP 6 · GROW UP

Trellises turn paths into productive space

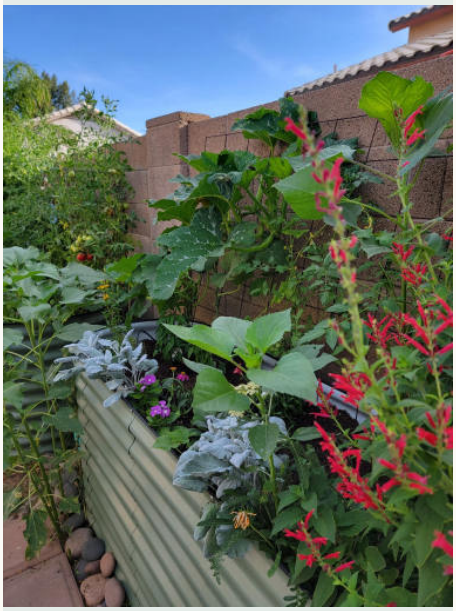
When vines climb, the garden gains room, airflow and easier harvests. An arch also turns an ordinary walkway into one of the most beautiful places in the yard.



An arch makes use of the air above a path.



Keep the center tall enough and the path wide enough to move through comfortably.



Panel supports keep tall growth organized along a bed edge.

Great crops for vertical growing

Cucumbers, pole beans, peas, indeterminate tomatoes, small melons with support, and flowering vines.

Place the trellis with purpose

Think about summer sun direction, prevailing wind, mature vine weight and how you will reach both sides for pruning and harvest.

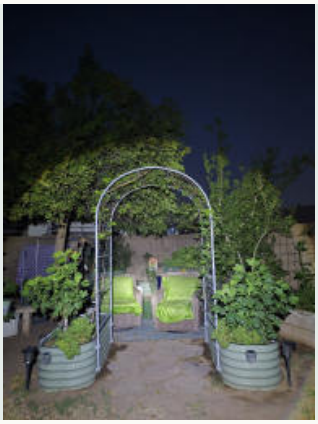
Train early. Start guiding young vines before they sprawl. Soft ties and frequent check-ins are easier than wrestling a mature plant back onto the trellis.

Support shapes can solve different growing problems

These are Anna's real garden supports. Product names are intentionally omitted where they are unknown; the useful lesson is how each form works in the space.



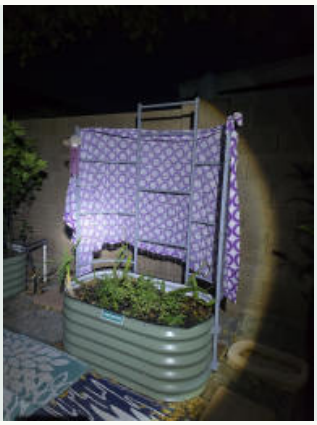
Grape vines use an arch to turn a path into productive overhead space.



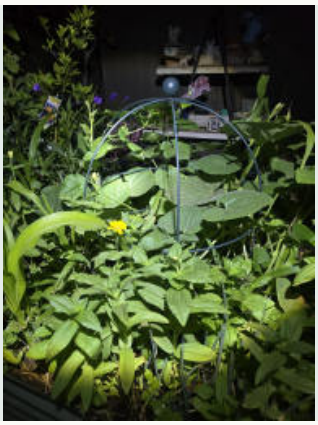
The walkway stays open for access beneath the vines.



A compact support adds structure beside the dwarf mulberry.



My own purple shade cloth - a DIY addition, not a Vego product - helps protect this bed when Arizona heat reaches 120 degrees.



A dome shape supports growth over the center of a round bed.



This Vego Garden obelisk keeps a climber upright in a small footprint.

The dwarf mulberry has its own character after dark

The full view shows the dwarf mulberry, its support and the round garden bed nearby - plus the “RIP Scared E. Cat” decoration at the edge.



My dwarf mulberry after dark, with its support and garden decoration.

The Vego obelisk can steady tall flowers



The Vego obelisk keeps the sunflower stems together while letting the flowers lead the view.

The Vego obelisk does not need to dominate the bed. As plants fill in, its structure fades behind the leaves and flowers.

Why the Vego obelisk works

- Give tall stems a steady framework before they lean.
- Leave enough space for air to move through the foliage.
- Keep ties loose enough for stems to thicken.
- Check the structure after wind and heavy watering.

Choose by function: The Vego obelisk gives tall flowers a steady framework in a small footprint while leaving room to tend the plants.

Install early. It is much easier to guide young growth than to add a support after stems are already tall and tangled.

Two simple systems, one healthier garden



The in-ground worm composter sits inside a raised bed, where worms can move through the openings.

The worm bin handles small kitchen scraps right inside the raised bed. Bury the lower part in the soil, add damp bedding and red wigglers, then feed a little at a time. The worms break scraps down and carry castings into the surrounding bed.

1. **Start with bedding.** Use damp shredded paper and dry leaves.
2. **Feed small.** Chopped fruit and vegetable scraps break down faster than large pieces.
3. **Add balance.** Crushed rinsed eggshells and dry leaves help diversify the bin.
4. **Check moisture.** Contents should be damp, never flooded or bone dry.
5. **Let worms travel.** The openings allow worms to carry castings into the surrounding bed.

Worm bin: small + steady

Best for regular kitchen scraps: vegetable trimmings, fruit in moderation, coffee grounds, crushed eggshells, shredded paper and dry leaves.

Regular compost: bigger batches

Use the larger bins for leaves, plant trimmings and mixed brown-and-green material. Keep meat, dairy, oily foods, pet waste and treated plants out.

The easy split: Small kitchen scraps go to the worm bin. Larger garden batches go to the regular compost bins. Both systems turn waste into food for the soil.

Regular compost turns garden leftovers into soil food

Add leaves and garden trimmings in layers, keep the pile lightly moist, and let time do the work. Finished compost goes back on top of the raised beds.



Two compost bins make it easier to separate stages or materials.



The bins sit together in a dedicated corner for quick garden access.



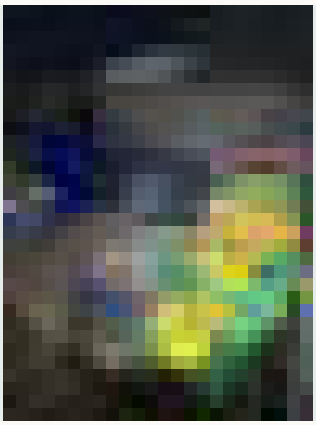
A wide top makes adding larger garden material straightforward.



Keeping the systems together makes the routine easier to maintain.



Bagged soil and woody fill are staged close to the beds.



The compost corner holds the ingredients for topping up and rebuilding soil.

Start with bedding, then balance browns and greens

These close views show the dry bedding layer at the bottom. Add green material as it becomes available, and keep the contents damp - not soggy.



The interior begins with a bedding layer that can hold moisture and air.



A second view shows how the bedding spreads across the base.



The bedding should stay damp rather than flooded or bone dry.

Simple formula: Browns add dry carbon, greens add fresh nitrogen, water keeps the pile active, and time turns it all into finished compost for the beds.

Keep the tools you use where you use them



Hori Hori + hanging tool boxes

The accessory tool boxes hang directly on the sides of the beds, so my Hori Hori and everyday hand tools stay right where I use them. That saves trips across the yard.



Solar lights

Bed-mounted lighting helps define edges after dark and lets the garden stay beautiful at night without adding cords through the paths.



A nearby work surface

A place to set tools, pots and harvest baskets keeps messy jobs out of the house and makes quick garden tasks easier.



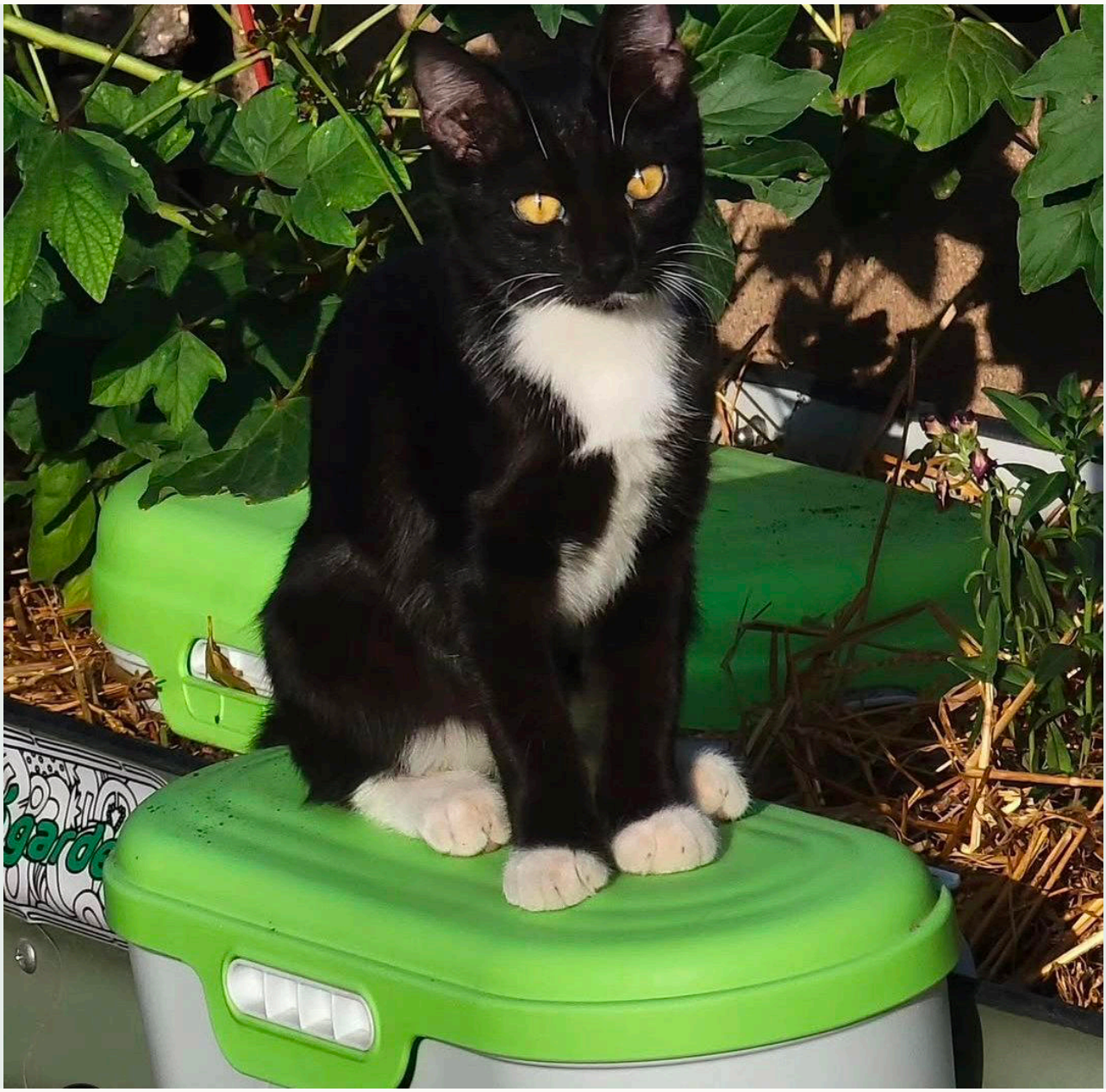
Water management

Keep the hose easy to reach but out of the walking path. A tidy hose station protects plants from being dragged or crushed.

Buy for a real problem. Add-ons earn their space when they reduce bending, prevent clutter, save steps or make the garden safer to use.

The tool box works for tools - and cats

Boots found another perfectly good use for the green Vego Garden tool box.



Boots made the final call: this garden tool box is good for tools - or for cats who want the best seat in the bed.

Garden-tested, cat-approved. The tool box keeps everyday tools close, although Boots may have other plans for it.

The hose reel arrived ready for the next garden upgrade

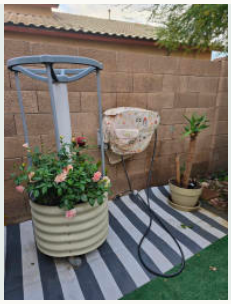
Keeping the hose contained and close to the beds is part of making daily watering easier and protecting the paths from clutter.



The Vego Retractable Hose Reel Set, 100ft Hi-Flow, just delivered to my doorstep.

My practical goal

Put water where it is easy to reach, then keep the hose out of the walking path and away from tender plants.



Hanging by the roses

In this garden view, the Vego hose reel is hanging on the wall behind the roses. It keeps the hose close to the plants and off the walking path.

Johnny at the Vego potting bench

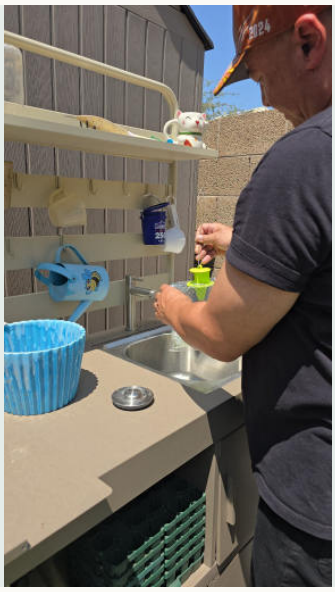
The workstation keeps tools, planting supplies, storage and sink-side garden jobs together in one practical spot.



Johnny beside the Vego potting bench while we set up the workspace.



The bench keeps tools, pots and supplies in one station.



Johnny filling a fly trap at the potting-bench sink.



The sink, work surface and storage make messy jobs easier.

Build a garden in layers, not perfect rows

My style is organized chaos gardening: food and flowers sharing space, vines climbing, lower crops filling gaps and pollinators always invited.



Flowers soften the structure and help make the garden feel alive.

Back or trellis

Place climbers and the tallest crops where they can be tied, pruned and harvested without stepping into the bed.

Middle layer

Use peppers, eggplant, kale, bush beans and medium flowers to build the main canopy.

Edges and gaps

Tuck in lettuce, radishes, onions, herbs and low flowers where they can receive light.

Pollinator layer

Mix flowers throughout rather than saving them for one corner. They add color and bring movement to the garden.

Do not plant at seedling size

Picture every plant at maturity. Leave an access lane to tomato stems, keep squash from swallowing small crops, and make sure vines can find their trellis.



The goal is not a magazine-perfect row. It is a garden that keeps giving you something to harvest.

STEP 10 · MAKE IT YOURS

Your quick-start Vego garden plan

- [ ] Measure the site and mark sun and shade.
- [ ] Choose a height that fits your body.
- [ ] Match bed shape to reach and pathways.
- [ ] Reserve room for mature vegetables.
- [ ] Place arches or trellises before planting.
- [ ] Assemble and level every bed.
- [ ] Gather Hugelkultur filling materials.
- [ ] Finish with a deep, quality root zone.
- [ ] Plan irrigation before the bed fills out.
- [ ] Add compost and mulch as the bed settles.

Plan it free

Use Vego Garden's 3D tool to test the layout.

Open planner

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Official references: Vego Garden: How to Fill Raised Garden Beds and Save Money · Vego Garden: Raised Bed Depth Guide · Vego Garden: In-Ground Worm Composter

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Start with the space you have. Build it so you can reach it, care for it and enjoy it.

