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INFO SHEET: SQUARE FOOT GARDENING METHOD



Gardening Toolkit

Gardening in your yard (even a rooftop), school, and community can be an educational and rewarding experience. This Info Sheet introduces the Square Foot Gardening (SFG) method and the [SFG Foundation](#), and it describes how the SFG method is applicable to individuals, schools, community gardens, senior centers and more.

The Square Foot Gardening (SFG) Method

The Square Foot Gardening (SFG) method saves gardeners time, effort, tools, space and water. It is being used by schools across the nation, and by international humanitarian groups around the world, making inroads against poverty and hunger. When compared to single row gardening, the SFG method is estimated to cost 50% less, use 20% of the space, 10% of the water, 5% of the seeds, and 2% of the work of traditional row gardening. Additional benefits are: virtually no weeds, no digging or rototilling, and no heavy tools are necessary.

While there are many more details, tips and applications in the [SFG books](#), the basics are very simple. In addition, the [SFG website](#) offers in-depth information about this revolutionary gardening method, including tips on building SFG boxes, making the Square Foot Gardening soil known as Mel's Mix (completely organic), and how to plant using the SFG method. Visit www.squarefootgardening.org for more information. Here is a brief overview:

Anyone can be a successful gardener using the Square Foot Gardening method. Once a spot is chosen that has good drainage and receives 6 - 8 hours of direct sun per day, there are three simple steps:

Step 1: Build a box. You can use many materials to build your 4' X 4' box such as: UNTREATED Cedar, pine or fir. If treating wood only treat the outside of the box so there is no direct contact with Mel's Mix. You can even use brick, cement blocks, vinyl or recycled plastic to build your box.

Step 2: Fill with SFG "Mel's Mix." This tested organic formula is easy to make at home. (Note: These ingredients will be in equal volumes not by weight, see chart.):

- 1/3 Coarse Grade Vermiculite (Mel's preferred medium)
- 1/3 Sphagnum Peat Moss (You can also use Coconut Coir or replace with straight organic compost)
- 1/3 Blended Organic Compost (Mel recommends 5 different composts)

Step 3: Add a grid and start planting! Grids can be made inexpensively from venetian blinds, wood lath, or even natural bamboo stakes. An example of what one 4' X 4' Square Foot Garden can yield in one Spring season: 1 head of cabbage, 1 head of broccoli, 1 head of cauliflower, 4 heads of romaine lettuce, 4 heads of red leaf lettuce, 16 scallions, 5 lbs of sugar peas, 8 bunches of Swiss chard, 9 bunches of spinach, 9 turnips, 16 short carrots, 16 beets, 16 long carrots and 32 radishes.

Start a Square Foot Garden in your Pod Community and become a Certified Square Foot Gardening Instructor. Square Foot Gardening is not a hobby...it's a lifestyle!

SOIL CHART: AREA x DEPTH EQUALS CUBIC FEET
Multiply the length of your box by the width, then multiply by 0.5 feet to figure out how much volume your six-inch-deep box will hold:
$(4 \times 4) \times 0.5 = 8$ cubic feet
$(4 \times 8) \times 0.5 = 16$ cubic feet
$(4 \times 12) \times 0.5 = 24$ cubic feet
$(4 \times 16) \times 0.5 = 32$ cubic feet



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History & The Square Foot Gardening Foundation (SFGF)

Mel Bartholomew invented Square Foot Gardening in 1976, as a simple alternative to wasteful, labor intensive and inefficient row gardening. Mel's first book, *Square Foot Gardening*, was published in 1981 and became the largest selling garden book of all time. It was followed by the popular PBS and Discovery Channel television series. Since that time, additional SFG books include the popular *Cash From Square Foot Gardening*, *SFG With Kids*, *All New SFG Cookbook*, *SFG Answer Book*, *Growing Perfect Vegetables*, and *ALL NEW Square Foot Gardening 3rd Edition*.

Humanitarian Projects

Mel Bartholomew founded the Square Foot Gardening Foundation, a 501(c)3 nonprofit, in 1996 to pursue the mission of solving world hunger by teaching people around the globe how to grow nutritious produce with limited resources, expertise, time and effort.

The SFG Foundation has worked with many other Humanitarian and Aid Organizations around the world in an effort to eliminate world hunger by teaching people how to grow their own food, no matter their circumstances. Certified Instructors have projects in India, Africa, South & Central America, Haiti, the Philippines, and many other third world countries. Visit www.squarefootgardening.org for more information.



Schools - SFGF has a program known as "A Square Yard in the School Yard," specifically designed to teach children in the classroom, whether it is a public, private or home school. This program helps children learn science, math, writing and art in a hands-on, fun learning environment and uses the SFG Classroom Lesson Plan. For more information, visit their website: www.squarefootgardening.org

Community Gardens - can make a difference in the health and well being of local neighborhoods. Creating a community garden with fellow Pod members and friends, using the Square Foot Gardening method can take place in places of worship, shelters, senior living facilities, and will save precious resources to help fight climate change.

Recommended Resources:

- This link contains a short video of Mel Bartholomew explaining his Square Foot Gardening method: https://youtu.be/N5Lu-7Flj_g
- SFGF recommends *All New Square Foot Gardening 3rd Edition*, Cool Springs Press. Visit the website: www.squarefootgardening.org and please feel free to email SFGF at: info@squarefootgardening.org for more information.



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