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Interstate Commission on the Potomac River Basin

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1. Mark the garden area

- Outline the shape and size of the garden in your design, using hoses, extension cords, or rope.
- Use flags or spray paint to mark the outline.

Needed supplies:

- Your garden design
- Tape measures
- Hoses or something else for the outline
- Flags or spray paint.



2. Remove the grass layer

- Use shovels to remove the grass (turf), including the roots of the grass and weeds.
- Pile the removed turf on a tarp or in buckets. It can be planted in areas that are eroding.

TIPS:

- The removed turf can be planted in areas that are eroding.
- Avoid walking in the garden area to prevent compaction of the soil.



3. Reduce Weeds the Easy Way

Cover the plot, using black plastic or a combination of cardboard and newspaper about month (or longer) before planting.

- This kills the plants. Why?
- Optional, but highly recommended.
- Weigh down the covering with bricks.
- After removing the cover, dig out any remaining weeds, no matter how small.



4. Prepare the Ground in Your Plot

- Break up the soil:
 - Dig down about 5 to 6 inches.
 - Break the dirt into small clods with a shovel, hoe, or 3-tined cultivator.
- Add compost in one of the following ways:
 - Spread over the soil (about 2 inches deep); then blend into the soil with a shovel, 3-tined cultivator, or rake.
 - *Or wait until you plant.*



5. Organize and Lay Out The Plants

Students will organize the plants on the garden site according to the design.

- Make sure the plants are spaced appropriately.
 - For plants two feet high or smaller, space about them 1 foot apart
 - For larger plants, space them about 1.5 feet apart.



6. The Art of Digging A Hole

Dig a hole **two times the width** of the plant's root ball.

- Shape the hole like a large bowl. Avoid vertical sides.
- Put the removed soil *next* to the hole.
- Mix the soil with a cupful of compost (optional).



Hester Branch



7. Remove the plant from the pot

- Squeeze the container on all sides to loosen the root ball.
- Using your hand as support, turn the container upside down to let the root ball slide out.
- Loosen the soil a bit with your fingers.
- When roots are tightly bound together, pull them apart gently.



8. Plant the plant

- Place the root ball in the hole. The plant's soil level should be level with the ground or existing soil.
- Fill in the hole using the mixed soil.
- Pat soil down gently, making sure the plant is not leaning.



9. Reduce Weed Growth with Cardboard

Optional

- Cardboard or newspaper can be put under mulch to help reduce weeds.
- The cardboard will decompose.
- Keep the cardboard 3 inches away from your plant.



10. Apply mulch

- Apply 3 inches of shredded mulch over the garden area.
- Mulch should not be right next to plant stems or tree trunks.
 - Keep it 2-3 inches away from the plant.
 - It will look like a ring around the plant.
 - Why do you think the mulch should not be right next to the plant?



The mulch should cover the cardboard and newspaper – because it's prettier that way!



11. Water the plants

- Water each of the plants in your garden after installation (and during installation if it is a hot day).



12. Finish the installation

- Fill in more mulch, if needed.
- Water the entire garden again, if needed.
- Pick up piles of weeds and compost them, if possible.
- Plant containers can be recycled or given to a nursery.



13. Have a celebration!

