

How to build a DIY veggie patch with Jason Hodges

Featuring Adbri's Miniwall®




"Growing your own fruit, vegetables and herbs is a great way of kick starting your love affair with the outdoor room while providing your family with quality produce direct from the garden to the kitchen table! Building a raised veggie patch out of concrete blocks enables you to use premium soils and mulches as well as adding dimension and aesthetics to your yard as you can be as creative as you want with the blocks! This is a great weekend project that the entire family can be involved with!"

Jason Hodges | Landscaping Expert

BEFORE YOU BEGIN

Jason's top tips for building block veggie patches!

- > Consider the area in your yard for the veggie patch – does it receive much sunlight? This will impact the fruit, vegetables and herbs you grow.
- > Consider layering your veggie patch by bringing in different heights which will add dimensions and aesthetics to your yard. This could mean building your wall at different heights or layering with the produce you plant – taller fruit trees in the centre and work out towards the smaller vegetables and herbs.
- > Consider the finished height of your veggie patch! 3-4 courses high will mean your veggie patch doubles as a great garden seat!

TOOLS REQUIRED

- > Brush
- > String Line
- > Caulking Gun
- > Measuring Tape
- > Rubber Mallet
- > Shovel/Spade
- > Small Sledge Hammer
- > Whacker Packer
- > Timber Float
- > Timber Stakes

Jason uses Adbri Miniwall® Blocks

STEP 1 - MARK OUT THE SHAPE OF YOUR VEGGIE PATCH



You need to determine what size and shape your veggie patch will be with consideration to what fruits, vegetables and herbs you wish to plant! Once you have a rough idea, mark out the shape of your veggie patch. For square shapes, set up a string line, for curved or circular areas you can use the garden hose! Once you have defined your shape, using a marking paint, mark a line around the shape.

STEP 2 - EXCAVATE A TRENCH



Remove the turf and debris from the area to avoid them growing back through your veggie patch! Then around the shape of your veggie patch which has been marked out, excavate a trench approximately 50-100mm wider than the block and approximately 200mm in depth.

TIP

Place turf in green bins but save the soil! You can reuse this in the first course of your soil mix in the raised veggie patch

STEP 3 - BRING IN ROADBASE FOR THE FOOTING OF YOUR VEGGIE PATCH



Spread the roadbase throughout your footing to a depth of approximately 50-100mm. Once you have covered the entire trench, compact the roadbase using a plate compactor (whacker – packer). Go over the area a couple of times to ensure it is well compacted and flat!

TIP

Use rebase, a recycled roadbase for your footing. It's better for the environment and could be cheaper too!

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DIY MINI WALL

STEP 4 - SCREED A SAND AND CEMENT MIX OVER THE ROAD BASE



Prepare a sand and cement mix of 4:1 and using a timber float, spread the mix over the road base to a thickness of approximately 30mm.

It is very important to get the sand and cement mix level. Use a spirit level and work in small sections through your trench constantly checking level both ways, side to side, front to back.

Your base needs to be level! If your wall starts level it will finish level so this step is important to spend your time on!

STEP 6 - CONTINUE LAYING BLOCKS



You can continue laying blocks by simply stacking them on top of one another – just like using children's blocks! Make sure you have a small hand broom to sweep dirt and debris off the top of the course below to ensure your laying blocks on a nice flat surface.

Continue laying blocks to desired height, noting the maximum unreinforced heights allowable with specified for your retaining wall.

STEP 8 - BRING IN THE NEW SOILS AND MULCH



Use a wheelbarrow to bring in your soils, mulches and potting mix. Why not try using organic soils so you're family's fresh fruit and veggies are of the highest quality. Spread the soils evenly throughout your new veggie patch. You want the soil to come to about half way up the top of your capping unit.



TIP

If you have kids at home get them involved! This is so important as if kids are involved in growing the good stuff, they will definitely eat it! It's also fantastic, uninterrupted family time in the great outdoors with natural light, no air conditioning or the distractions of TV's, phones and computers! If you're like me, some of your fondest memories will be made in the new garden, the kids will love it and you will save a few dollars on the grocery bills!

STEP 5 - BEGIN LAYING THE FIRST COURSE OF BLOCKS



The fun part! Start at one end and place blocks onto the screeded sand and cement mix. Using a rubber mallet, gently tap the blocks into position and using your spirit level, check that each block is level with the one before it, side to side and front to back.

After you have laid the first block, continue laying blocks around the trench. Blocks should be 'buted' against one another so they gently touch together. Continue laying blocks and checking for level until you finish the first course of blocks.

STEP 7 - INSTALLING THE CAPPING UNITS



The job is almost done! Using a suitable landscape grade outdoor adhesive (such as landscape liquid nails) place 4 'blobs' of adhesive on the top of each block on your top course. Once you have done this, firmly place the capping unit into place on top of the glue.

Repeat this step until all capping units are firmly secured to the top of your wall blocks. Continue to check the level on this final course. You will finish with a nice, clean, flush looking garden wall and the blocks won't be rocky or move from position.

STEP 9 - PLANTING OUT AND FINISHING OFF



Your functional veggie patch / organic pantry / personal green grocer can also look great and add a new dimension to your backyard. Be sure to consider layering things, start with taller fruit trees in the centre and work out towards your veggies and herbs which are handy in the kitchen year round!