



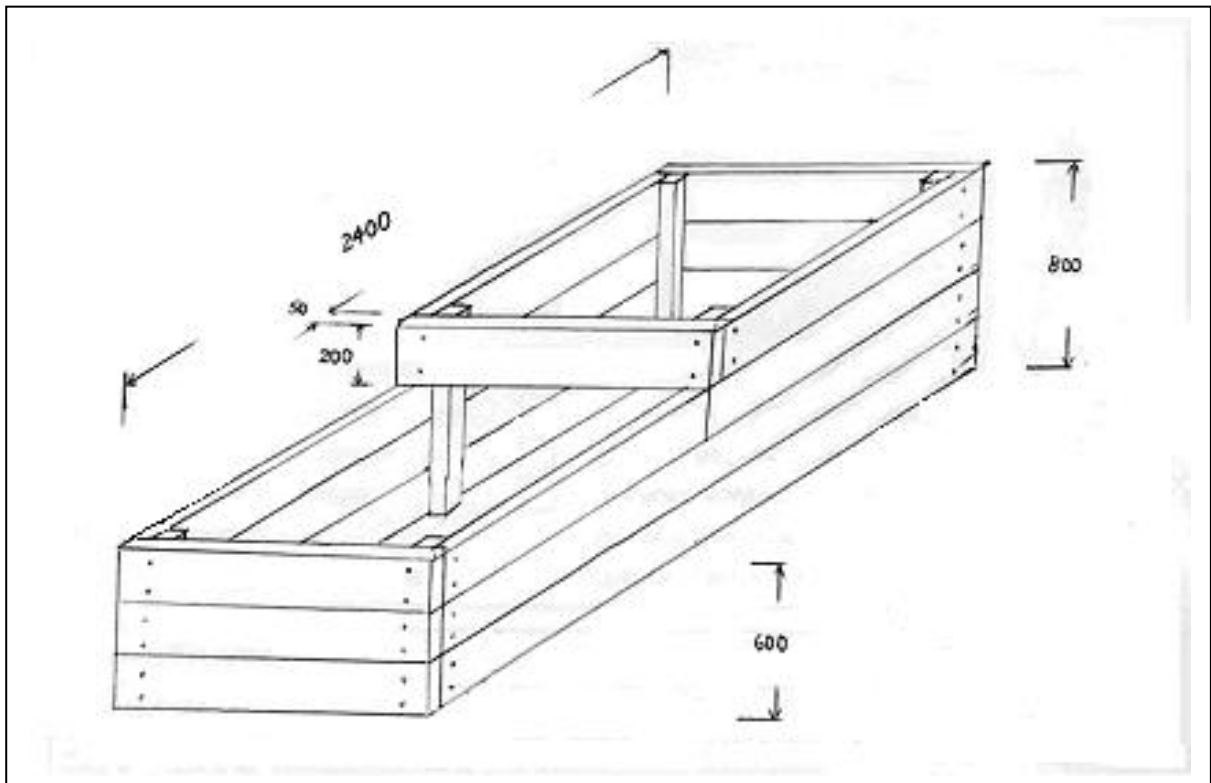
## Raised Garden Beds

Raised garden beds work for people of all abilities. They come in different forms and can benefit all people. They are primarily designed for people who have trouble working at ground level, maybe due to being in a wheelchair, having back problems, frailty, etc. Raised beds are a comfortable and effective way to be able to continue gardening, but can also assist by making gardening easier and more accessible.

Raised garden beds are also a great way for people with sight impairment to enjoy the garden more and may be safer as they are less likely to incur an eye/ facial injury due to bending down and hitting a garden stake.

### **Box style**

This style of bed is built from the ground up and is excellent for people with bad backs or sight impairment. The advantage being, that there is natural drainage, worm movement and deeper soil depth to allow for root vegetables and herbs. Suggested materials include cypress pine, sleepers, bricks and corrugated iron with brick or timber corners (ensure a capping over the iron so not to incur hand injuries). If using sleepers it is easy to stagger the height of the bed, for example, four (4) sleepers above ground, stepped down to three (3) and then down to two (2) if desired.



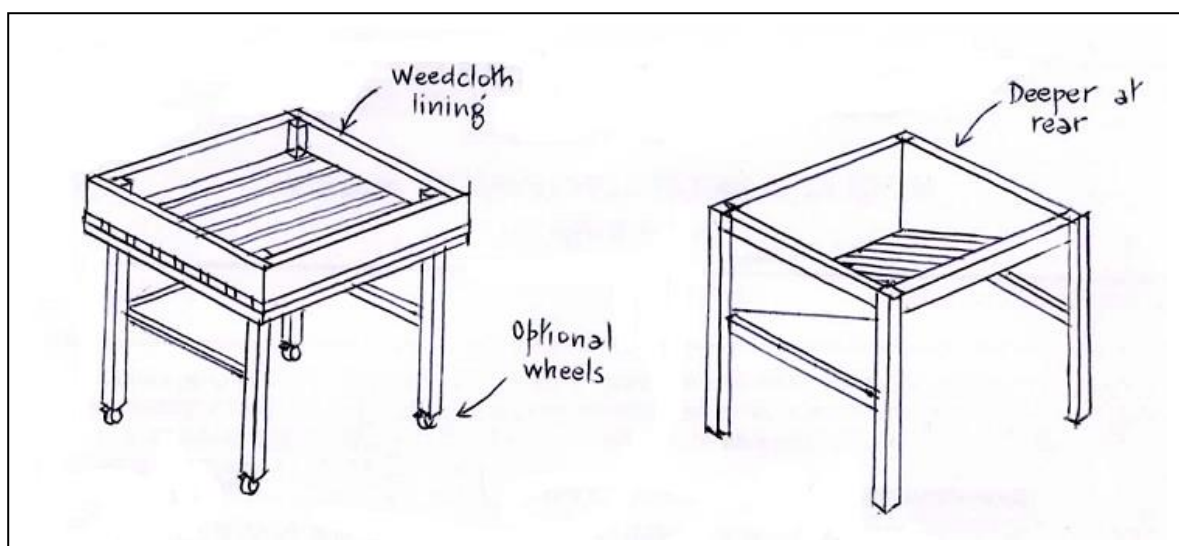
**Typical Two-level Raised garden bed (All measurements in millimeters)**

## **Table Top Style**

This style of bed allows a chair to be placed under the work space. This is better for people in wheelchairs or the frail who need to sit and not twist. The disadvantage is that the depth of the soil that can be worked with is limited. This can be overcome by planting shallow rooted plants and seedlings, eg. lettuce, herbs, dwarf carrots, capsicums, etc.

An alternative is to use the top as a potting table and plant into bigger pots / polystyrene containers. These can later be moved into a sunny position and freeing up the space for another project. Another advantage of the table top style, is that if they are portable, they can be moved into the sun on sunny winter days or into the shade in the hotter months, so the garden activity can continue. These beds are relatively easy to make and can be made with non-toxic timber such as cypress pine.

*Treated pine should be avoided due to the chemicals used in the treatment. The chemicals may come off on hands and can leach into the soil and for an edible garden is definitely not recommended.*



**Table top style of raised bed**

## **Dimensions for Raised Beds**

<b>Height for persons standing</b>	<b>750 mm – 900 mm</b>
<b>Height for persons sitting</b>	<b>600 mm</b>
<b>Width (access from one side)</b>	<b>500 mm – 600 mm</b>
<b>Width (access from both sides)</b>	<b>1000 mm – 1200 mm</b>

## **Other types of Raised Beds**

Other options include clay pipes, a garden wall made out of hollow concrete blocks, old wheelbarrows, hanging baskets, old tables that pots or polystyrene containers can be placed on, half wine barrels, laundry tubs, baths, etc.

If you find all this a bit daunting, chat to your local nursery, ask family members, neighbours or call the Horticultural Therapy Association of Victoria 03 9836 1128 for advice.