

# **First Thursday**

## **SEMINARS**

FREE TO THE COMMUNITY!

### **Backyard No-Till Gardening** — Sustainable Permaculture —

Learn how to grow your own food without pesticides  
and commercial fertilizers



# WELCOME

Presenters: Wendy & Jim Childers

April 2, 2026

## Raise Your Own Provisions

The Lord desires His people to move into the country, where they can settle on the land, and raise their own fruit and vegetables, and where their children can be brought in direct contact with the works of God in nature. Take your families away from the cities, is my message.—[Selected Messages 2:357, 358 \(1902\)](#). LDE 99.3 [↗](#)

Again and again the Lord has instructed that our people are to take their families away from the cities, into the country, where they can raise their own provisions, for in the future the problem of buying and selling will be a very serious one. We should now begin to heed the instruction given us over and over again: Get out of the cities into rural districts, where the houses are not crowded closely together, and where you will be free from the interference of enemies.—[Selected Messages 2:141 \(1904\)](#). LDE 99.4 [↗](#)



# Why We Are Here Today?

---

- We were Condo living in West Nashville.
- God led us to the county we moved to Whitwell, TN 2.5 Acres.
- Eventually led to Dayton Mountain 15.5 Acres
- Move into the country and out of the city .

# This Evenings Discussion & Activity

---

- Sustainable Permaculture
- No-Till Gardening Methods
- Effective Permaculture Approaches
- Building Healthy Soil
- Composting & Mulching Tips
- Finding Cost-Effective Materials
- What to Plant, When & Where
- While you are doing this it will be without pesticides and commercial fertilizers
  
- Hands-On Activity “GET YOUR HANDS DIRTY!” and Plant your own Strawberry starter to take home!



# Let's Define: **Sustainable Permaculture**

- 
- **SUSTAINABLE** – CONSERVING AN ECOLOGICAL BALANCE BY AVOIDING DEPLETION OF NATURAL RESOURCES.
  - **PERMACULTURE**- THE DEVELOPMENT OF AN AGRICULTURAL SYSTEM OR METHOD INTENDED TO BE SUSTAINABLE AND SELF-SUFFICIENT.
  - This topic you can go out and do hours of research on find many experts on YouTube which we have. The best way to describe this is what God does naturally on the forest floor. Go and scrape up the leaves in the forest/woods, and you will dig down to the best soil ever.
  - Does God use a Plow or a rototiller?



# Let's Define: Sustainable Permaculture “God’s Method”

- God gave us this method in the forest, and so many do not pay attention. Things grow just fine in the forest without any help from man. The leaves, pine needles, pinecones, and sticks fall to the ground and begin the natural process of composting.
- This wonderful compost is full of microorganisms that help break these materials down into nutrient-rich soil
- As Wendy would say, “Makes Dirt”. If you ever go into the “Woods” and start scraping up the layers of untouched materials, you will see what we are talking about. You will find the most nutrient-rich soil ever under all those layers.
- God proves there is no need to till by studying what he does in the forest.



# Benefits Of: Sustainable Permaculture “God’s Method”

- **Protects Soil Structure** – When we till, we are chopping up all the good stuff like the soil fungi that help roots absorb nutrients. No-till preserves the natural architecture of the soil, and plants establish faster and grow stronger.
- **Reduces Weed Pressure**-Tilling brings weed seeds to the surface, giving them light and air to germinate. No-Till keeps them dormant underground, and we smother them with mulch. Over time, there is little weed pressure.
- **Attracts Earthworms & Beneficial Insects**- Once you stop turning the soil over, new life starts in your soil. Life starts rushing back. Earthworms love a no-till environment; their burrowing aerates the soil, bringing oxygen to plant roots. They are also crucial to breaking down organic material into rich, usable nutrients.
- **Better Moisture Retention**- Tilled soil tends to dry out. No-till with the layers holds water like a sponge.
- **It encourages natural nutrient cycling**- When you allow all your plant materials to decompose in place, how little fertilizer is needed. Just keep layering the soil is alive and working in balance. Once you get a system going, it is self-sustaining. You feed it by layering
- **Reduces Erosion & runoff**- Tilling disrupts the “natural skin” of the soil, leaving it vulnerable to erosion from wind and rain. No-till solves this by keeping it intact and covered.



# No-Till Gardening Methods (Our Experiences & Experiments)

- Today, we will be using the term No-Till we want to say there are many names and “versions” of this. Below are a few:
- **Back to Eden** – YouTube – Paul Gautschi – “God created nature to be so simple and so balanced.” Created it to be completely self-Sustaining.
- **Lasagna Gardening** (Layering materials) - YouTube – David The Good – Is a good reference. This is a great way to put in an instant garden
- **Ruth Stout** (straw mulching) - Common with Sweet potatoes and potatoes. Many YouTube references
- **Hugelkultur** (using buried wood)-YouTube – Maritime Gardening does some good videos on this. He is also a great reference overall on No-Till. Also talks about Ruth Stout.

These techniques involve nourishing the soil without turning it over. They improve the soil health, retain moisture, and reduce weeds by maintaining soil structure.

Note: There are no real rules; you can combine techniques that fit your needs. We have done so and will discuss our method.

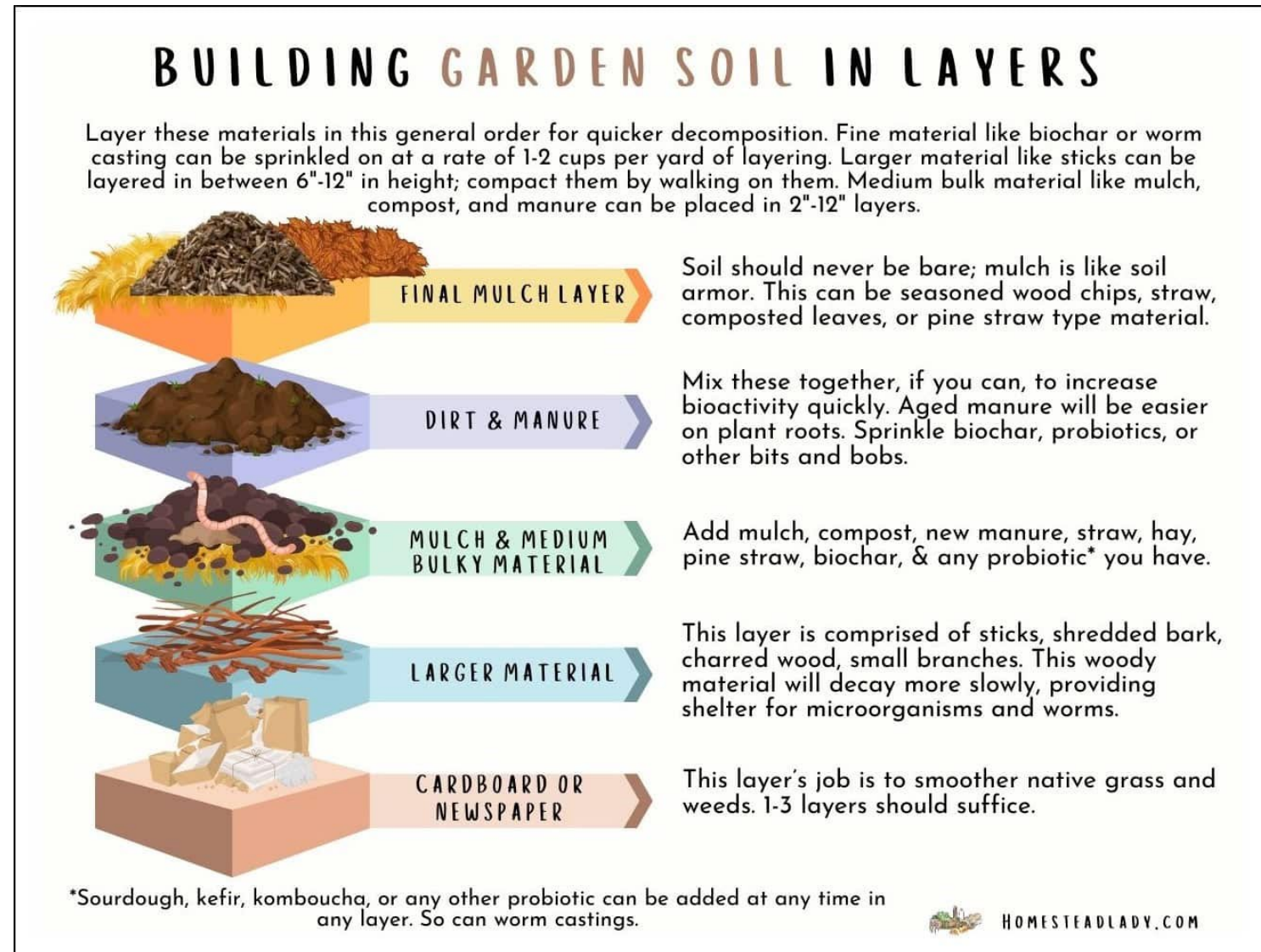




Why We Ended Up Doing  
No-Till

# No-Till Gardening Methods (Our Experiences & Experiments)

- There are no solid rules
- We have followed various methods and combined and used what works best for us.
- Use what materials you can find and have access to.
- This method can be scaled up and down to fit your needs.
- The key is stay with it.
- Plus you are being resourceful and using other materials available to you.



**Use as a general guideline; we found what works best for us, and we do change it up depending on what materials we have available.**



# Our Experiences & Experiments

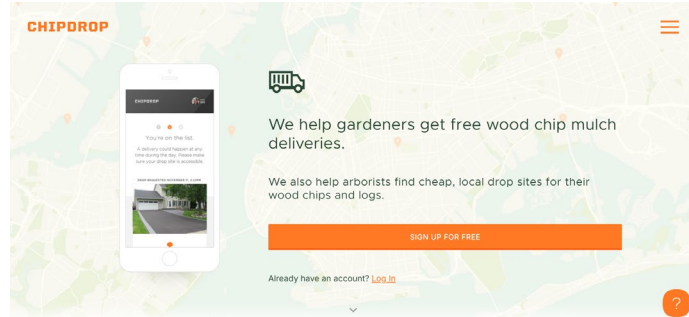
## Heavy Cardboard Layer

- Heavy cardboard layer as your first layer.
- Holds down initial weeds and grass.
- Holds moisture.
- Encourages earthworms.
- Breaks down into compost.

### Tips from experience

- Remove tape, it does not decompose, you will have a mess in your soil later as the cardboard breaks down
- **Do not use glossy coated cardboard, as** it is water-resistant, which slows down the decomposition process.
- Amazon boxes with their tape are the best because the tape is biodegradable.

# How Do You Acquire Your Materials?



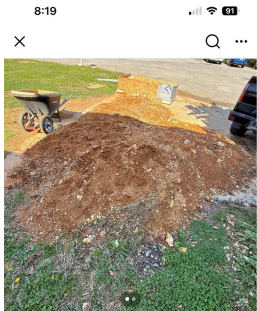
**Cardboard** – Save your cardboard from your Amazon shipments; they are the best. They use biodegradable tape. You can go to grocery stores and get boxes. (Types to use- Do not use Glossy Printed and remove tape)

**Sticks & Logs** – Pick them up in your yard and save them. Ask friends and neighbors to save. Pick them up on hikes or walks in the park.

**Mulch** – Sign up for “Chip Drop” – or talk to your local tree service. If you bag your lawn clippings, you can use them. If you bag your leaves in the fall they are excellent mulch. Use your neighbor’s lawn waste what they think is scrap is gold to us. Some people put it out to the curb for the city to haul off, and ask if you can take it. (We have stories)

**Dirt & Manure** – Watch Facebook marketplace, you would be amazed how much is free or close to free out there. We found within a few miles of our house 3-year-old seasoned horse manure.

As far as dirt, we have always started with some soil/dirt from our land. Many times, working with what we had may not have been the best, but what we dug up from one project or dumped from this planter and mixed with manure and compost eventually made it into good soil.

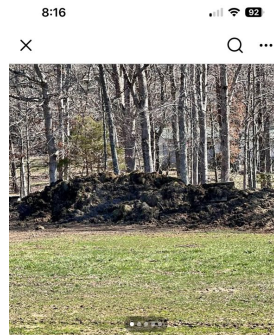


**Free Dirt**

Free

👍 🗨️ 📌 🔄

Message seller  
Hi, is this available? Send



**HORSE MANURE**

Free

👍 4 🗨️ 📌 🔄

Message sent to seller  
See conversation



Be resourceful



Build a compost pile or bin



You start looking at items differently, can I use that for mulch?



Look at Market Place



“Networking”



Materials are easier to obtain than you think just have to plan ahead.



Ask around and “think outside the box” What can I use instead of this.



Repurpose repurpose repurpose



Where to plant This Method?

Raised Bed?

On Ground?

In Container?

- The Answer is YES to ALL!
- You can use this method any way you would like, just scale it up or down to fit your needs.
- We have used it in containers and raised beds for the most part. This year we are building our first open beds.



Where to plant This Method?

Raised Bed?

On Ground?

In Container?

- Be creative.
- Use what you have if you can.
- It is all about soil preparation.
- Start thinking what can I use or I can use that?





# New Layered No-till Bed Straight on hard-packed ground



Cardboard



Soil



New Tree Mulch in  
walkway and border



Top with Mushroom  
Compost



Final layer 1 year old  
composted tree mulch





- **Compost Bin or pile is Highly Recommended**





# Commercial Fertilizer & Pesticides?



## **COMMERCIAL FERTILIZERS**

You Do Not need Commercial Fertilizers using this method with natural composting.

Plants thrive in this environment.

Natural fertilization.

We may add several-year-old Mushroom Compost if available for free, still a natural material.

## **PESTICIDES**

We do not believe in Pesticides on our food.

When you follow organic principles, you have insects but not major problems.

If you have healthy, pesticide-free plants, you will attract beneficial insects that will deter or eat the bad insects.



















# Cherish Wright

★ 5.0 (47)

Joined Facebook in 2009

Message Follow

View profile

Meta AI · Summary

Cherish has had an



## Strawberry Plants

\$1

6 likes, comments, shares

Message seller

Hi, is this available?

Send

Plant Fruit

Type

Common Strawberry

Plant

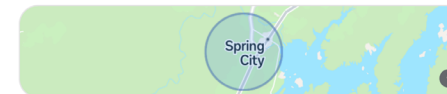
Name

Light Full Sun

Requirement

ent

### Location



Spring City, TN

Location is approximate

In Fellowship Hall



It's time to  
plant your  
Strawberries

