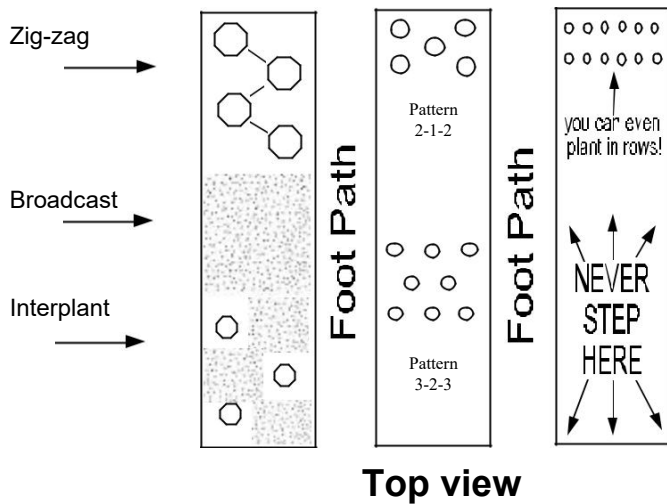# Planting Schemes

Zigzag: Use this pattern for larger plants such as tomatoes, corn and squash. Other zigzag planting schemes include "1-2-1" and "3-2-3" (see illustration) which creates an efficient triangular use of space when setting out seeds or plants.
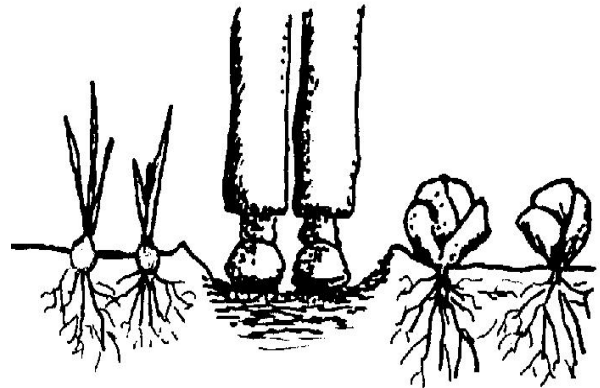
Broadcast: This is where you scatter the seed uniformly over the bed as if you are planting a lawn (only not as thick). If you sow too thickly you will have to do a lot of thinning. This type of planting works best for root crops like carrots or leafy crops like lettuce.

Interplant: This is where you mix the zigzag and broadcast methods. It usually works best where you are planting larger slower growing plants such as squash or tomatoes in the zigzag with a fast maturing plant such as lettuce or radishes broadcast in between (see illustration).

Be Creative: Your rows don't have to be straight, try to serpentine them or curve them with the landscape. You can also try mixing flowers and herbs with your vegetables. If you wish, you can even plant narrow rows in these beds. Just don't step in the wide beds.

Wide-Bed Gardening for Easier Gardening and Higher Yields

Zig-zag →

Broadcast →

Interplant →

Foot Path

Pattern 2-1-2

Pattern 3-2-3

Foot Path

o o o o o o
o o o o o o

you can even plant in rows!

NEVER STEP HERE

Top view

Garden Tips from the Cheyenne Botanic Gardens
Support the Gardens with your membership
710 S. Lions Park Dr.
Cheyenne WY 82001
www.botanic.org

What is wide bed gardening?

Your garden is set out into 3 foot wide beds with a 2 foot walk paths surrounding each bed. The soil in the beds is dug deeply and prepared loose and fluffy. After preparation, you should **never step in these beds again** throughout the gardening season. Access to these planting beds is done by standing in the walk paths and reaching into the beds.

You should be able to reach comfortably into all areas of the bed from both sides to do the required planting, cultivating and harvesting. Adjust the width to suit your reach.

Wide bed gardening works best with overhead sprinkler irrigation or drip irrigation.

Why garden this way?

In a nutshell, your soil is less compacted than with the traditional "skinny" row gardening. Soil stays lo ose all season in wide beds because you walk only in paths. Loose soil means faster root growth. All in all wide bed gardening will:

- Make more total space productive.
- Adapt to a variety of planting schemes.
- Cause roots to grow faster in loose soil so your **plants grow faster**.
- Create a living mulch that slows the evaporation of water and the uncompacted soil holds more water so you can **use less water**.
- Cause more shading of the soil as plants mature which means **fewer weeds germinate**.

**It all adds up to more yield with less work!**

Bed Width.

Your beds don't have to be exactly 3 feet wide. That is just a good average for most folks. It all depends upon how far you can comfortably reach. Short people may prefer narrower beds.
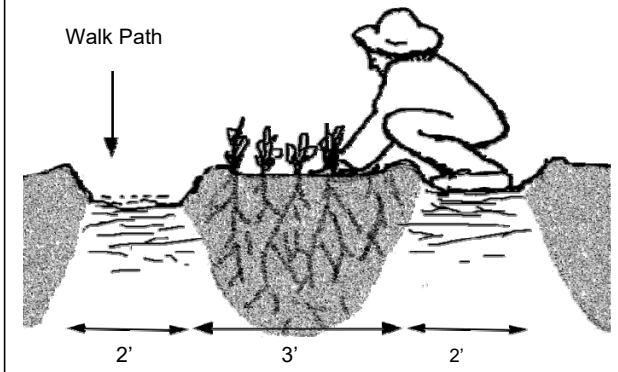
Raised Beds?

Don't worry about how high your bed is raised above the walk paths. By having loose fluffy soil and always walking only upon the foot paths the beds will naturally look raised. A slight ridge on the sides of the prepared bed made with a rake will help the water soak in better.
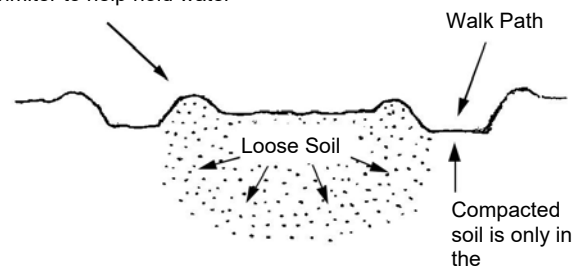
Foot Paths?

To enable you to work in your garden even when wet place straw, wood chips, rock, bricks, old carpet or grass clippings in the path area. This will also keep your feet from getting muddy!