



NEBRASKA STATEWIDE  
**Arboretum**

## BLOOM BOX

# Preparing Your Garden using Herbicide



**This gardener is using a hose to make an outline.**



**Layers of cardboard or newspaper can prevent weeds without chemicals.**



**Adding compost improves the health of the soil.**

### REMEMBER...

- Preparing a new garden for planting takes 4-6 weeks, plan to start early and give yourself time to work before your plants arrive.
- If you are not ready to plant when your Bloom Box is delivered, keep your plants in a shady area outside and water them daily until you plant.

### Things You'll Need

- Rope, hose or spray paint for marking
- Herbicide, follow label instructions
- Sharp shovel or sod cutter (for converting a lawn)
- Shovel or rake
- Compost or topsoil (or both), 2-4 inches
- Mulch; 1-2 inches of undyed woodchips or 2-3 inches of weed free straw.

### Step One: Outline Your Bed

1. Make a general outline of your garden bed using rope, hose or spray paint. Broad, sweeping curves of different sizes work better than squiggly ones.

### Step Two: Kill any Weeds

2. Remove existing, unwanted vegetation within the garden bed you outlined. Treat turf grass and weeds with two applications of an herbicide like glyphosate (RoundUp) to kill it completely, this usually takes 4-6 weeks. Plan for two applications two weeks apart, a third may be needed. Then mow or rake out large debris. For lawns, use a sharp shovel or sod cutter to cut the lawn into strips and flip them over so the grass blades are facing down and the roots are facing the sky. This creates a clean bed edge.

### Step Three: Add Compost

3. Spread 2-4 inches of compost on top of the newspaper or cardboard. If it will be a few weeks before you plant, cover this with 1-2 inches of undyed woodchips or 2-3 inches of clean straw or grass clippings to keep weeds out and enrich the soil.

NOTE: compost is used to improve soil health, topsoil is used to raise the grade (ground level) or fill holes. Compost continues to decompose and only temporarily raises the level of the garden bed. Compost = food, topsoil = garden base.