

HUGELKULTUR (HOO-GUL-CULTURE)



What is it?

- German translation: “mound culture”
- Wikipedia: “composting process employing raised planting beds constructed on top of decaying wood debris and other compostable biomass plant materials”



Hugelkultur bed basics



Why do it?

- Using raised garden beds filled with rotten wood to retain moisture and provide nutrients.....
- Supposed to eliminate or reduce need for irrigation
 - ▣ Depends on the mass of wood
 - ▣ Need 6-7' bed to start to last all year?
 - ▣ A 2-3' high bed will provide moisture for 3-4 weeks
- Nutrients vary during decomposition
 - ▣ Initial nitrogen demand by decomposing carbon, use cover crop
 - ▣ Better source of nutrients as it ages

How to do it



- ❑ Don't use cedar, black walnut or black locust
- ❑ Try hardwoods or decomposed conifers
- ❑ Better vertical?
- ❑ Water thoroughly
- ❑ Cover with dirt
- ❑ Cover with branches, sod, cover crop – something to prevent erosion

Supposed Benefits

- Soil building structure.
- Semi-permanent planting bed.
- It creates microclimates.
 - ▣ U-shape as sun concentrator?
- Lifting the soil surface towards the sun and that adds degree days.
 - ▣ ??? or composting process adds heat to bed

Think about

- Use on steep slopes for terraced gardens – but don't create a flood hazard by blocking water flow
- Windscreen?

- Discussion
 - ▣ Potential research project at Hayfork wetlands