



Make and Plant a Bucket Garden

Two 5-gallon buckets stacked together can be used to create a simple but effective self-watering container.

This method allows plant roots to grow into a water reservoir while excess water and nutrients are caught in an overflow vessel. This overflow can be used to water that same container, so nothing is wasted.

Grow tomatoes, peppers, eggplants, and herbs.



Construction Materials

- * 2 food grade, 5 gallon buckets
- * Mesh screen
- * 6-inch section of ½ inch (inside diameter) plastic tubing
- * 1 ½ inch wood or decking screw
- * Empty 1-gallon milk jug



Planting Materials

- * Growing mix (50% compost and 50% soil-less media)
- * Vegetable transplants or seeds
- * Water
- * Fertilizer



Step 1

Drill several 1/2 inch holes in the bottom of one bucket.



Step 2

Cut a round piece of mesh screen to fit in the bottom of the first bucket. This helps keep the growing media inside.



Steps 3 & 4

Drill one 3/4 inch hole in the side of the second bucket 3 inches from the bottom. Cut a 6 inch piece of plastic tubing and insert it into the hole.



Steps 5 & 6



Drive a screw through the tubing (inside the bucket) to keep in place. Cut an "X" with a knife into the shoulder of a 1-gallon milk jug. Insert the end of the tubing into the milk jug and raise the bucket 8 inches by setting up on blocks or bricks

Planting and Care Instructions

Fill your bucket with about 4 gallons of a moistened medium, plant your seeds or plants, add a small amount of fertilizer, and 2-3 gallons of water. The reservoir will fill with water and the excess will travel through the tubing into the milk jug. Fertilizer can be added as needed during the growing season.

If it doesn't rain, your bucket will need to be watered regularly— every day in July and August if it's in the full sun each day. It will take 1-2 quarts of water each day to fill the reservoir. Before adding new water, simply pour back the water that collects in the milk jug.

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