



building a wicking bed

Wicking beds are another way to grow vegetables and herbs productively in a small space. Wicking beds require less water and imbibe water passively through the soil media to the plants growing in the bed. The soil is moist but not wet. Soil moisture and nutrition is held in the planting media and is readily available to plants to use as they need. More productivity is attained from a smaller garden space that wicking beds can provide.



1. Your site must be level for good water distribution, so take time to prepare the foundation. Ensure that the site is level and free of deleterious material like roots and rocks.



2. Spread a thin layer of coarse bedding sand over your prepared level site, this will prevent the membrane of the reservoir being punctured by anything unseen that is sharp.



3. Set your reservoir assembly into position ensuring that the frame of the reservoir is level with only a slightest of fall to one side.



4. Slide the main raised garden frame over the reservoir section. This is a snug fit and should end up being absolutely level.



5. Place the filling tube in position across the bed, lying it on the black plastic liner. This should end-up being flat and level, so it will distribute the water across the bed evenly.



6. The slots of the filling tube face the base of the bed. This stops the coarse bedding sand back filling into the pipe, but allows water to exit the full length of the filling tube.



7. Add 200mm of coarse bedding sand to fill the reservoir void and create an aquifer.



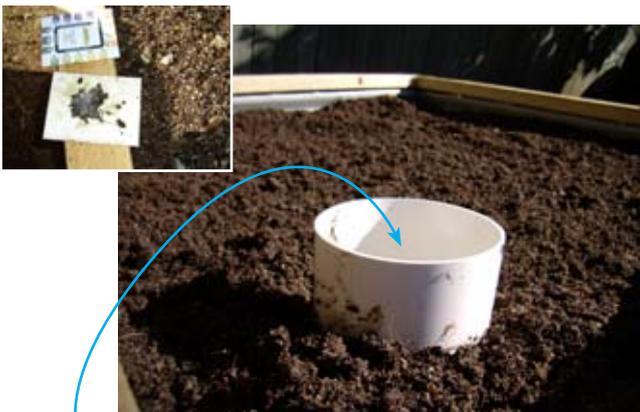
8. Gently spread and then screed the coarse bedding sand in and around the filler pipe **flat to the frame** of the reservoir. Do not compact this sand.



9. Place geo-textile fabric over the coarse bedding sand. This will prevent the soil media and bedding sand mixing.



10. Gently add soil media over the geo-textile fabric. This consists of equal parts garden soil (sandy loam), coconut fibre, coarse bedding sand and bagged five-in-one compost.



11. Fill soil media to the top of vegetable bed and check soil PH. Add water, aiming to fill the aquifer in the water reservoir to about 200mm deep.



12. Plant seedlings and add your mulch around the plants. Hand water with seaweed extract to start the seedlings off.

Note: Keep an eye on the depth of water at the base of your pipe. When the plants look as though they need water, take note of how far the water level has dropped and how long this has taken. This will establish a benchmark for for the next time your wicking bed needs water. Adjust with the seasons and the crop. Any additional rainfall is held in the reservoir below, the bed is designed to overflow during heavy or prolonged rain.

