

# WWW.EASYGROWVEGETABLES.NET

## BUILDING SEQUENCE OF LARGE WICKING BEDS

### The bed

1. Mark-out the bed; we suggest making it 0.85 m wide or less for shorter arms. This allows 1.8 m wide fencing cloth to cover the width and the two sides of the bed, and have 5-10 cm on either side to fold over the pegs.
2. Level the bed!! This is critical. Beds can be staggered down a slope, but each individual bed must be level both ways to prevent water-logging at a low side.
3. Hammer in 750 mm long stakes evenly spaced at 50 – 60 cm apart, leaving them 40cm above ground. Use longer stakes in soft soil.
4. Cut a length of fencing cloth equal to the length of the bed plus twice its height plus 20 cm to fold over the pegs.
5. Place it on the inside of the bed, spread it along the bottom between the pegs, up the sides and over the pegs. It is better to have it a bit tight than too loose to avoid excessive bulging.
6. Nail the cloth to the top of the pegs while stretching it tightly length-wise along the top. Fold the extra cloth in the corners in and, if possible, nail that extra to the top of the middle pegs of the short sides to reduce bulging.
7. Staple the cloth to the outside of the pegs for a tidy look.

### The liner

1. Cut a plastic liner at least 800 mm wider and longer than the length and width of the bed.
2. Fold 800mm in length-wise at both sides and at the ends to make it easier to place.
3. Place it in the bed ensuring that the sides can be extended upwards evenly.

### The reservoir

1. Cut a length of 90 mm PVC storm-drain pipe about 30 mm shorter than the length of the bed.
2. Cut large (100mm) holes at regular intervals of 30 – 50cm to make sure the water spreads. These holes are to be placed face-down, facing towards the bottom.
3. Cover one end with duct-tape.

### The fill pipe

1. Cut a 600 mm length of 90 mm PVC pipe, longer if desired
2. Attach this to the open end of the pipe with a 90 degree PVC bend. This allows easy inspection of water levels.
3. Place the combined PVC pipe and fill pipe on the liner.

### The overflow

1. Start filling the bed with your soil mix working from the middle towards the sides while gently pushing the plastic up along the sides as you go. Take special care in the corners that **all** the plastic is folded up and none is horizontal and forming small channels through which water drains out. We learned that the hard way.
2. Only half fill the beds.
3. Push the plastic liner down over a length of about 30 cm to the desired level. Pick a position furthest away from the fill pipe and on the side from which the bed will be worked.
4. If you use an in-bed worm/composter place it in the centre of the bed at the right depth.
5. Then fill the bed to the top with your soil mix.

### The first crop

1. Spread an organic mineral supplement and the pre-planting fertiliser or compost over the surface and work it in.
2. Fill the reservoir with water.
3. Soak the bed from the top till water starts draining through the overflow. (Only soak the bed when new or when it has dried out completely.)
4. Plant the crop.

### The mulch

1. Cover the surface with good mulch or grass clippings. This will become food for worms and for the micro-flora in the soil.

Copied with permission from  
[www.easygrowvegetables.net](http://www.easygrowvegetables.net)