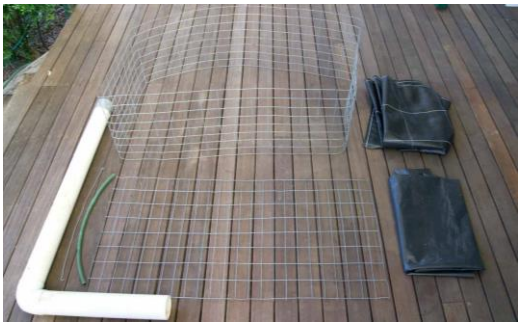
BUILDING SEQUENCE IN DETAIL – SMALL WICKING BEDS

three at a time.



Walls, weed mat, reservoir with fill pipe, (option A), stabilising wire, piece of garden, hose, bottom plate and liner.

C-clip around bottom plate and wall.

The frame complete but without the stabilising wire.

The frame

1. Cut three lengths of 600mm (8 squares along the top) of mesh as bottom plates, 1,200x600mm.
2. Cut one length of 3.6m mesh (48 squares along the top).
3. Cut this into three lengthwise. This gives three walls, two 400mm high and one 300mm high. (2x50mm is lost due to the two cuts).
4. Clip the ends of each wall together.
5. Clip the walls to the bottom plates.

The weed mat

6. Cut three lengths of weed-mat 3,850mm long providing for 250mm overlap.
7. Fold the lengths in harmonica folds for easier unfolding in the bed.
8. Place the weed mat in the beds and unfold it, making sure that:
   . the bottom of the bed is covered completely with some overlap,
   . the weed-mat is hard up against the corners and smooth against the side, and
   . the weed-mat is folded neatly over the top in a straight line around the bed.
9. Clip the end of the outside of the weed-mat with a C-clip tightly to the wire to prevent it from flapping and unravelling.

The stabilising wire

10. Cut a 660mm piece of 10 gauge wire and bend the ends sharply so it is 600mm long.
11. Cut 590mm piece of garden hose as cover for the stabilising wire, with a V at one end.
12 Slide the wire through the garden hose.

The plastic liner

13. Cut two pieces of 1,800mm x 1,200mm plastic liner and one of 1,600 x 1,000 for the lower bed.
14. Fold the sides of each piece as an envelope, the size of the bottom plate.
15. Place the plastic liner evenly in the beds, the smaller piece in the lower bed.
16. Place the stabilising wire at the top of the wall in the middle of the long sides.

NB. When making all three reservoirs at the same time, it pays to drill the holes before cutting the pipes. That requires exact measuring and marking of holes and cuts, then drilling the holes and cutting last. A strip of linoleum wrapped around the pipe will give a clean straight circle for cutting.

The steps below are for making a single reservoir. Option A is for when using 90mm drain pipe as fill pipe, option B for when using 40mm PVC as fill pipe.

The reservoir, option A

17A Cut a 1.15m length of 90mm PVC pipe for the reservoir for each bed.

18A Drill three 100mm holes in the 90mm PVC pipe. These will let the water out into the surrounding soil. They do not fill up with soil as they are face down on the plastic.

19A Cut a 500 mm length of 90mm PVC drain pipe as fill pipe for each bed.

20A Attach the fill pipe to the reservoir with a 90 degree PVC bend.

21A Close the other end with duct tape.

Or option B

17B Cut a 1.15m length of 90mm PVC pipe for the reservoir.

18B Drill three 100mm holes in the 90mm PVC pipe. These will let the water out into the surrounding soil.

19B Drill a 40mm hole at the opposite side of the 100mm holes for the fill pipe.

20B Cut a 500 mm length of 40mm PVC conduit as fill pipe.

21B Fit the fill pipe to the reservoir. File the hole out to make a snug fit for the fill pipe.

22B Cover both ends of the 90mm PVC pipe with duct tape.

23 Place the reservoir in the bed on top of the liner.

The overflow and mulch

24. Fill the bed to 150-200mm by carefully placing soil against the plastic liner making sure that there are no corners left lying flat causing leakage; all the plastic must be upright against the wall.

25. Push down part of one side of the plastic liner to the water level you want in the pot - no less than 100mm from the bottom but it can be higher. The weed-mat is sufficiently open-woven to ensure proper drainage above this level.

26. Fill the bed to close to the top, ensuring the weed-matting remains smooth against the side. Leave enough space for mulch. Avoid pushing soil down too hard to prevent bulging of the mesh. Let the soil settle during the initial watering in of the first crop.

The finished bed ready for transport and planting.

Placed on bricks and a strong base for possible relocating with a fork lift.