



Self-watering Bucket Instructions

By Extension Agents Trevor Hylton
and Molly Jameson

What You Will Need

- Two 5 gallon buckets **OR** one 3 gallon bucket and one 5 gallon bucket (see next slide for explanation)
- One 2' 1" PVC pipe
- Ratcheting PVC Cutter
- One 16 oz wicking basket – purchase at a hydroponic supply store or make your own (container of cottage cheese, butter, etc. with holes)
- Drill with $\frac{1}{4}$ " drill bit
- Hole saw kit
- Two 1" screw nails

Why Use Different Size Buckets?

- The advantage of a 3 gallon bucket inside a 5 gallon bucket is that you will have more bucket space for water and can water less frequently
- The disadvantage is that you only have 3 gallons of growing space, instead of 5 gallons with the two 5 gallon bucket method
- If you want to maximize your growing space (such as growing a large tomato plant), use two 5 gallon buckets, knowing that you will need to water more frequently

Tools



Drill

Ratcheting PVC Cutter



Hole Saw Kit

If using 3 and 5 gallon buckets, drill holes into 3 gallon bucket



Hole for 1" wide PVC pipe



Hole size may vary by
wicking basket size



Be sure wicking basket will not fall through hole

Hole for wicking basket



Place bucket with holes into 2nd bucket



Use PVC cutter to make diagonal cut



The cut will allow water to
freely enter lower bucket



Insert PVC pipe and wicking basket



(If you made your own basket, drill holes in the bottom and along the lower sides)

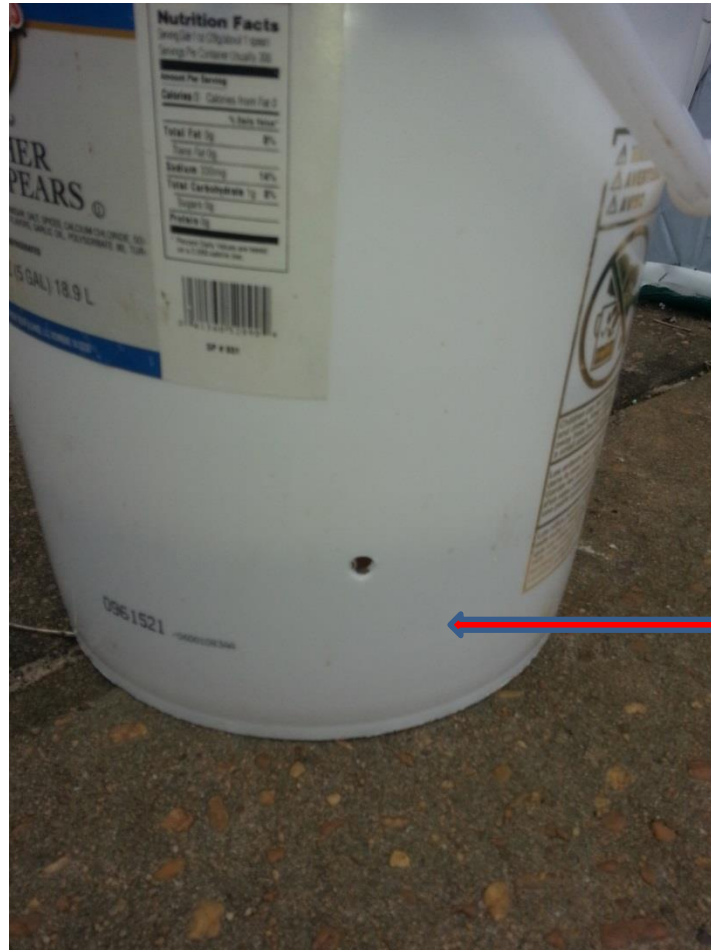
Wicking basket will be filled with soil and will soak up water for the roots



Drill $\frac{1}{4}$ " hole in outer bucket, just below bottom of inner bucket



This is the drainage hole



Water is stored
in lower
portion of
outer bucket

Drill nail into outer bucket and PVC pipe



Drilling through
lower bucket into
PVC pipe will secure
PVC pipe and help
keep buckets locked
together

Nail should be visible in PVC pipe



Make more secure with second screw on other side of outer bucket



Add pre-moistened soil mix and plant!



Pour water into PVC pipe...



...until it begins to drain out of hole



Optionally, remove outer bucket handle



Optional lid



A lid can help slow evaporation losses and decrease weed pressure, but could increase risk of fungal diseases, is difficult to remove once plant has grown, and cannot be used if growing multiple plants in one bucket

Let it grow!

