

Wading Pool Gardening



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Growing Your Own Food—It's Easier Than You Think!

You don't have to be a farmer or an experienced gardener to grow your own food. You can grow your own food in a plastic wading pool with little time, space and effort.

By growing your own container garden, you can:

- Save money by growing your own food.
- Enhance your diet with healthy, delicious herbs and vegetables.
- Make use of otherwise unproductive space.
- Share your harvest with your friends and neighbors.
- Build a sense of pride and community in your neighborhood.
- Teach children about food production and encourage healthy eating.
- Add beauty to the neighborhood and reduce air pollution.

You can grow...

Basil • Beans • Beets • Broccoli •
Cabbage • Carrots • Cauliflower • Chives • Dill
Eggplant • Lavendar • Lettuce • Melons • Mint
Onions • Parsley • Peas • Peppers • Radishes
Rosemary • Sage • Spinach • Squash •
Swiss Chard • Tomatoes • Turnips

...and more!

Sponsored by St. Luke's Methodist Church

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Materials

- Plastic wading pool (typically 5'-6' in diameter and 11 – 12 inches deep)
- Vermiculite—1.5 cubic feet per pool
- Peat moss—1.5 cubic feet per pool
- Vegetable or mushroom compost— 7 - 40 lb. bags per pool
- Manure compost—7 - 40 lb. bags per pool
- Garden tools, such as a hoe, trowel, and watering can
- Seeds or bedding plants



Materials can be obtained at most home and garden supply stores (such as Ace, Menards, or Lowes).

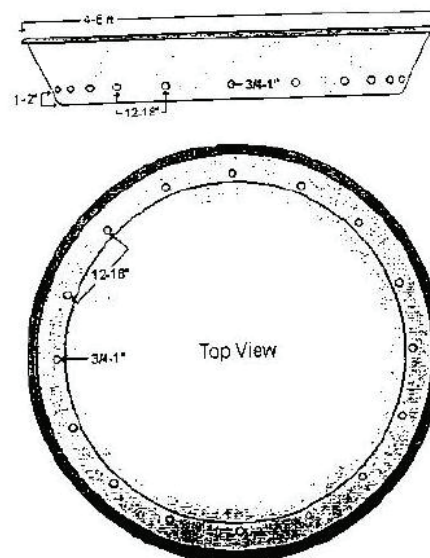
Choosing a Location

Wading pool gardens can be installed on virtually any flat surface but other factors need to be kept in mind:

- Sunlight—preferably 6-8 hours a day. If this is not possible, plant vegetables that can tolerate longer periods of shade, such as lettuce, spinach, and some types of beans.
- Access to water—container gardens dry out more quickly than in-ground gardens and thus need regular watering. Consider installing a rain barrel to collect rainwater.
- Open space—gardens need air movement to prevent against disease and insect problems. For multiple gardens, create paths that allow for foot traffic.

Set-up and Installation

1. To allow for adequate drainage, drill 3/4-1" holes every 12-18" around the circumference of the pool, 1-2" inches above the base. This will create a "pocket" where excess moisture can accumulate for use by the plants later.
2. Situate pool in desired location. When it is filled, it will be too heavy to move.
3. Fill pool with growing medium (mix of vermiculite, peat moss, vegetable or mushroom compost, and manure compost). The mixture should be at least 6" deep and leave at least 2" at the top. This way, the roots have adequate room to grow, but heavy downpours will not cause overflow and soil loss.
4. Plant seeds or transplants directly into the soil and water thoroughly. Use the spacing recommended on the plant tag or seed package.



*-Information adapted from
technologyforthe poor.com/UrbanAgriculture/Garden.htm*

Maintenance and Tips

Many vegetables and herbs can be adapted to your container garden, but there are a number of considerations you should take into account, including:

- **Preference:** What vegetables do you and your family most enjoy? Given the limited size of a wading pool garden, space is a premium. Save a small corner of the garden to experiment with different seeds or try out different varieties at your local farmers market first!
- **Value:** If you are gardening to save money, consider vegetables that are more expensive at the supermarket, such as tomatoes or squash. This way, you will get the greatest return on your investment.
- **Space:** Vine plants like squash and cucumbers can be grown successfully in a container garden but they will also take up much more space.
- **Length of Harvest:** With some modification, cauliflower and broccoli can also be grown in a container garden, but they require a great deal of space and once the head has been harvested, the plant is done for the season. Other vegetables have a longer harvest window and will produce more than one harvest.
- **General Upkeep:** Container gardens require less work than in-ground gardens but regular maintenance will help you maximize your harvest. As needed, water deeply and remove weeds.



*Installing a container garden helps achieve Dubuque's
Sustainability Principle of **Healthy Local Foods***