

HOW TO BUILD A TOMATO BOX

Robin and I went to our daughter's house this past week-end and on her deck was this awesome tomato box her husband had built; the tomatoes in the box were only six weeks old. The pictures show how to build the box. It is for anyone who is plagued with deer eating their vegetables.

– Pam Franklin



Here are the parts of a box I already had cut out. Start with an 18 gal. tote – I got mine at Wal-Mart for less than \$5. Cut out the middle part of the lid so it will fit in the box near the bottom:



Cut 2 holes in one side the same size as 4" sewer pipe, and drill a few more drainage holes in the section. Cut four 4½" sections of the 4" pipe and attach as shown (2 of the sections are only to support the insert). Drill several holes in the pipe to allow water to enter the pipes.



This picture shows the top side of this section of lid with the two holes and sewer pipe installed. The other two sections of sewer pipe are fastened underneath with wire ties for support.



Cut a section of PVC pipe to use for adding water, and drill a hole in the side of the container just below the level of the insert. This is to allow excess water to drain out:



This setup works by “wicking” water from the reservoir below and therefore only enough water needed by the plant is brought up. But you will be surprised how much water is needed for 2 large tomato plants. Here is the completed box:

Fill the container with potting soil (I used a 2 cu. ft. bag – it takes the entire bag). Make sure the dirt fills the 2 open pipe holes in the bottom of the box. You might want to go ahead and dampen the dirt in these 2 holes before adding the rest of the dirt. This will ensure that the “wicking” action starts. Mix some pelletized lime (about a cup) in the top 2 inches of soil. Make a shallow furrow in the soil on the opposite side away from the plants all the way across the box. Pour about 2 cups of 13-13-13 fertilizer in the furrow and cover with dirt. This should last the entire growing season. Plant the 2 tomato plants directly over the 2 holes. You can cover the top with plastic or weed fabric and use the cut-out lid to hold it down to prevent weeds from popping up and also prevent rain water from leaching out the fertilizer too quick. Make sure to put in full sun. Here is my growing plant (over 4 feet tall already):

