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## Wicking beds

If you are someone that is either very time poor or actually have nothing but a concrete backyard I can still help you with getting an edible garden off the ground. Wicking beds are like a great big self watering pot and can pretty well take on any shape or form. The most popular are generally made from the old fruit boxes that Orchards use to store apples in etc. These timber boxes are then converted into wicking beds by placing a waterproof liner that has an agricultural pipe (slotted pipe) put into the bottom of the box from one corner to another on a 45degree angle and then bent upright to sit above the side of the box by about 50mm. The bottom of the box is filled with a little washed sand enough to cover the bottom by about 15 -20 mm so that when you continue to fill it with scoria so that the scoria does not pierce the liner. It is imperative that the liner is not compromised to at least half way up the height of the box where an overflow pipe is installed through the liner and out through the timber structure of the box. Once the box reaches the overflow pipe (about half way) a sheet of geo-textile fabric is inserted to completely cover the scoria.

Then you continue to fill the box with a veggie blend soil or well draining compost 290mm high on top of the scoria. At this stage the basics are complete. The final touches are a 200 x 25 treated pine lip around the top of the box that covers over the liner and nailed into place, and the excess liner cut off under the newly nailed on lip. The reservoir holds about 200litres and directly feeds to the plants roots as they need it so very little or no evaporation takes place.



The next step is to fill the reservoir in the bottom of the box so grab a hose and poke it into the agi pipe in the corner turn the hose on and fill until the overflow pipe starts to run, that way you will know you are half way there. Then plant out your Bed with whatever Vegetable and herb you would like to grow. You will notice the blue caps on the agi-pipe they end to be fitted so that the mosquito's can't get back down the pipe to lay eggs. These wicking beds are a wonderful way of growing food as the plants wick water from their root zone and to be honest there is no better more efficient way of watering than allowing the plant access the the exact amount of water when it needs it, and the results of the crops generally are outstanding. You do need to water the young seedlings initially for a few days until the wicking starts, and you also need to keep an eye out on the amount of water that is in the reservoir at the bottom by taking off the cap and poking a stick of some sort that will ace like a dip stick and give you an idea of where the water level is at and alert you to make an adjustment if necessary. If it happens to rain for weeks on end, no need to worry, there is an over flow half way up so that it is drained. These are a very practical water saving device, and for those whom have no room, nor soil, and or no time! These are for you.

