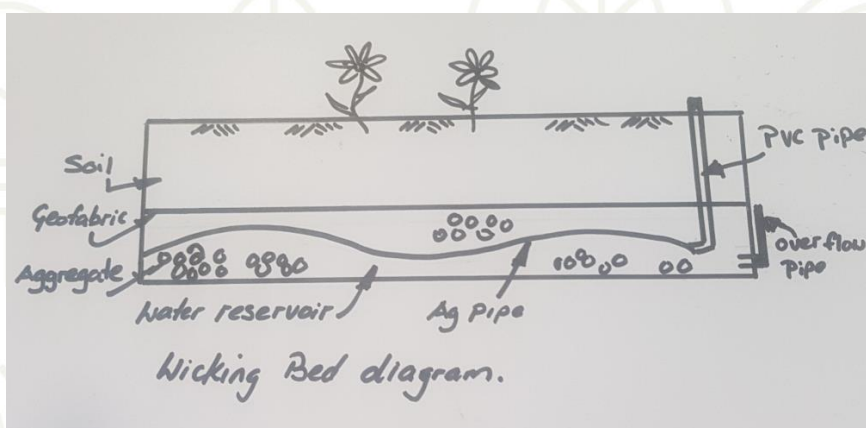


## Building a wicking bed

Growing veggies is great, however in summer this can sometimes be difficult with long periods of heat and little rain. How do you solve this problem? Have you considered a wicking bed?

### What is a Wicking Bed?

A wicking bed waters plants from below rather than above. They work in the same way as a self-watering pot. The plant draws up water through the soil via their roots from the reservoir below creating a wicking action providing ideal growing conditions.



### Getting started

You will need:

- a container – wicking beds can be created from various types of containers (in the above example a raised garden bed is used)
- heavy duty builder's plastic – to line the reservoir
- old carpet – adding carpet protects the plastic from being punctured by the aggregate
- agricultural pipe – coils around the base of the reservoir to disperse water
- PVC pipe – connected to the agricultural pipe to enable the reservoir to be topped up with water
- scoria or aggregate – reservoir fill
- overflow pipe with a cap – to prevent the reservoir from being overfilled with water
- geotextile fabric or shade cloth – located on top of the aggregate layer and under the soil to facilitate the uptake of water into the soil
- good quality organic soil – to grow your plants in!

## Setting up the wicking bed

1. Choose an appropriate location. A wicking bed requires full sun.
2. Place a layer of carpet at the base of the garden bed then cover with black plastic all the way up the sides. Add another layer of carpet to stop the plastic from being punctured by the aggregate.
3. Add about 100mm of scoria or aggregate over the carpet. Connect the agricultural pipe to the upstanding PVC pipe, then coil the agricultural pipe over the aggregate. Using something heavy to hold the agricultural pipe in place, add another 100mm of aggregate over the pipe.
4. Drill an overflow hole in the side of the container where the aggregate will meet the soil.
5. Place a layer of geotextile fabric or shade cloth over the aggregate.
6. Next add your soil to around 300mm depth.
7. Plant out your garden bed.
8. You will need to water from the top until the wicking effect happens.



For further information and resources on being sustainable at home or in the community, please visit [www.canning.wa.gov.au/sustainability](http://www.canning.wa.gov.au/sustainability) or send an email to [sustainability@canning.wa.gov.au](mailto:sustainability@canning.wa.gov.au).