

Educator Notes:

Making a small wicking bed



Learning and engagement approach

- This activity is designed to engage young learners aged from 7 – 13
- The activity is intended to:
 - Provide instructions about creating a small wicking bed
 - Demonstrate how materials can be upcycled
 - Create a small, productive planter-box
 - Increase awareness of water use
 - Apply principles of science, sustainability and design and technology.

Choosing a location for your small wicking bed

- Most food crops need a good amount of direct sun, so situate your wicking bed in a location that will get good sun.
 - Research the amount of sunlight your plants will need by reading the information on the seed packet or seedling labels.
- Your wicking bed will become heavy once it has been made, so make sure you build it in its final location.

Safety considerations for the activity

- Check the weather before conducting any outdoors activity. If there is going to be extreme temperatures, storms or high wind, postpone the activity.
- Ensure that everyone is wearing closed shoes, hats, sunscreen and have a water bottle handy.
- Minimise the risk of inhalation of airborne microorganisms by wetting the soil or potting mix prior to use. Use an approved dust mask when doing this.
- PVC pipe is difficult to cut. Always use a vice and proper cutting equipment that you are trained to use to cut the PVC pipe. You can ask for pipe to be pre-cut from the hardware store.
- Implement manual handling procedures when lifting soil, gravel, etc.

Sourcing the materials

- Polystyrene boxes can often be sourced from fruit and vegetable shops.
- PVC offcuts can often be sourced from plumbing supply shops.
- The remainder of the materials can be sourced from your local hardware/garden supply shop.

Cross section

Introduce the activity sheet and demonstrate how the cross-section will look as if you have made a vertical slice through the wicking bed box. Explain that the children will be illustrating each part of the wicking bed as it is built on the activity sheet. You can use the word list from the activity sheet to help.



To make a vertical cross-section, imagine slicing down through the middle of the wicking bed. You would see something similar to this:



Source: ABC Gardening Australia

This activity can be conducted as a stand-alone activity or linked to:

- Creating a Beneficial garden – planting
- [Creating a food garden – planting](#)