

GARDEN TOWER® INSTRUCTIONS

Congratulations on your purchase of a Garden Tower! Your Garden Tower can be planted now with vegetables, flowers, and herbs, and in late summer for the fall season. Cool weather crops that do well in the Garden Tower include kale, cabbage, broccoli, lettuce, arugula, chard, fennel, salad greens, bok choy, spinach, cilantro, parsley, and mint. Thanks to the Tower's insulating design, many of these crops will grow well into the winter months.

*---- DO NOT CUT the heavy duty black zip ties
to the compost tube! ----*

With just a little care, your Tower will provide you years of abundant vegetables, flowers, and herbs. Here are some suggestions to help you get the most out of your Tower. Detailed instructions with visual aids are also available on our website at: <http://gardentowerproject.com/resources>.

1. Installing the Legs. A short bench chair or stool will assist the installation.

Tools needed: 2 - ½ " wrenches or a combination of two of any of the following; (1/2" ratchet, wrench, vise-grip,) Pliers will not tighten bolt sufficiently.

Place the barrel upright on bench/chair/stool, so you can view the bottom through the lowest pockets. Using provided hardware, Each leg is labeled a,b,c match each leg appropriately to marked location on the bottom of the tower. Starting with the first leg, place one washer on bolt and insert bolt through leg and into corresponding hole in tower. Reach through opening into tower place one washer then nut onto end of bolt. Using selected tools, tighten nut to bolt with one hand inside & one hand outside. Tighten each bolt as tight as possible until each leg is affixed snugly, with **NO** wiggle-room AT ALL. Repeat with remaining legs and you Tower is ready to plant!

2. Plug - There are two compost tube plug styles; both come with the handle/handle-nut preinstalled. Hold the plug in one hand and turn the handle clockwise to expand/tighten the plug. Place plug into the bottom of the Tower & tighten until plug is snug, as a bug in a rug.

3. Location. Location is very important. Choose a place that provides good sun, easy accessibility, some protection from deer if possible, and stability. It's best to place it on a hard surface; if that's not possible, place a brick or piece of plywood or cinderblock beneath each leg to keep it level and to keep it from sinking into the ground.

4. Soil. Choice of potting soil is also very important. A quality organic soil will be best for the plants and worms, and will optimize both drainage and aeration. Detailed suggestions are on our website resource page (www.gardentowerproject.com). Experienced gardeners may want to experiment with their own soil/compost/sand mix. Fill your tower with soil up to the top (about 8-9 cubic feet), keeping in mind that it will settle after watering. Water thoroughly with a showerhead nozzle and add soil back to the top after settling.

5. Planting. A great variety of vegetables, herbs, and flowers will flourish in your Garden Tower. A partial list is available on our website at <http://gardentowerproject.com/index.php/faqs>. Seasonality, size, and personal preferences will help determine your choices. Some basic rules-of-(green)-thumb:

- Large plants such as tomato and pepper do best on top.
- Trailing vines such as squash and ornamental sweet potato do best on the bottom row.
- Try to choose plants with roughly similar mature size for the side pockets so that plants won't shade each other out.

- You can begin with seed, but we recommend small starts, available at garden centers and the Farmers Market.
- When planting starts, be sure to tuck the root-ball completely and firmly in the pocket.
- Water thoroughly when done planting. Really drench your tower.
- For the first month, weekly application of an organic liquid fertilizer as you water is recommended to get plants off to a good start. As the central compost tube begins to produce its own fertilizer, this will no longer be necessary.

6. Worms and Compost! The central vermicomposting tube is a key feature of your tower. Red wiggler worms, available online and at baitshops, will quickly break down your kitchen scraps as you place them in the central tube and will distribute their castings throughout the tower to nourish your plants. Vegetable and fruit scraps (avoid citrus), leaves, shredded paper and cardboard, old wood chips, grass clippings are all great fodder for the worms. Avoid greases and all animal products except eggshells. With the central compost tube 1/3 full of scraps, place a half cup to a cup of red wiggler worms in the tube, close it, and let the worms do their work. Within two to three months, you will have rich, black vermicompost to spread back into your tower or onto other gardens (see below).

If you choose not to use the central tube for composting, you can simply fill it with potting soil as you fill the rest of the tower; just be sure to maintain a regular fertilizing schedule for your plants.

7. Compost Tea! As your tower saturates with water, it will drain compost tea through the holes on the bottom. Place a receptacle beneath the holes, and return your compost tea to the top of the tower or to other plants in your garden. This tea is very nourishing to plants, and is even known to repel many noxious bugs!

8. Ongoing Care of Your Tower. As a self-contained, self-fertilizing system, the Garden Tower requires very little care. Keep it well watered for the first two weeks, drenching it from the top and sides with 4-8 gallons of water every 2-3 days during the active growing season. By watering with a container (instead of a hose) you will learn quickly how much water is ideal. **Water wicks up the tower via evapotranspiration, so the best place to test the soil for dryness with your finger is a pocket in the lowest row. If the soil feels dry, a heavier watering is required (5-9 gallons), if the soil feels slightly moist a maintenance watering is all that is required (2-4 gallons).** A layer of mulch on the top level will help maintain constant moisture. Tend your garden as you would a regular garden, removing dead or damaged leaves, cutting back unruly growth, replacing harvested plants. Over the course of a growing season you will learn what works and what doesn't. When winter arrives, you can move your tower to a heated greenhouse, or just leave it outdoors and replant in spring. New worms may need to be added to the compost tube.

9. Harvesting Compost. Your Garden Tower will produce rich, black vermicompost for you to use. After two to three months of adding scraps to the central composting tube, it will be ready to harvest. Place a tub beneath the tower, remove the bottom plug by *loosening but not removing* the Handle-nut, pull out the plug completely, and push the contents of the tube down from the top (visual instructions are on the website resource page). Replace the plug and refill the tube with scraps. Removal of vermicompost is not required if this step is found difficult.

MANY QUESTIONS ARE ANSWERED ON THE FAQ & RESOURCES PAGE OF OUR WEBSITE,
WWW.GARDENTOWERPROJECT.COM

PLEASE CHECK THESE RESOURCES FIRST IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS. IF YOU HAVE ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS, PLEASE CONTACT: tom@gardentowerproject.com

Happy Gardening and a bountiful Tower to you all!
 Colin, Joel & Tom