

## Short Of Space?

### How to Grow Tomatoes in a Two-Liter Bottle



Choose smaller tomato varieties that won't weigh down the container.

Upside down gardening, for leggy plants like tomatoes, saves space, eliminates weed problems, thwarts most pests and diseases and helps promote greater air circulation and sun exposure for your plants. Instead of spending money for a commercial upside down planter, make one yourself with a 2-liter plastic bottle.

**1** Cut the bottom of the plastic bottle off at the point where it has the slight rim with a sharp knife. Retain the bottom of the bottle. Line the edge of the cut you just made with duct tape to prevent the plastic from stretching or breaking once you've hung the planter. Cover the container in tape or paint to help retain moisture. You can decorate your bottle with a face, stripes, flowers- whatever you think would be fun

**2** Punch four evenly spaced holes through the duct tape around the container about 1 inch beneath the edge. Remove the bottle lid and poke a few additional drainage holes around the bottle opening with a sharp knife. Drill 2 holes in the bottom of the retained bottle bottom.

**3** Choose a young tomato plant with a longer, leggy stem, wrap tissue or a coffee filter around the soil/root ball, and gently thread the top of the plant through the bottle opening. Position the plant with the root ball as close to the top of the container (now the bottom of the bottle) as possible, making sure that the first true set of leaves remains outside the bottle opening. Since your tomato will be growing upside down, positioning the root ball near the top will give the roots plenty of space to grow downward.

**4** Fill the container an inch from the top with a mixture of potting soil and compost [water retaining crystals and slow release feed can also be added to the mix] as you hold the root ball in place. Top the soil with a layer of mulch to help prevent the soil from drying out.

**5** Cut two lengths of twine a little more than twice as long as you want your planter to hang. Thread the first length in one punched hole and out the adjacent one, pulling the ends until they're even. Repeat with the other length, and tie all four ends together securely. Slot the cut off bottle into the top of the bottle so that the bottom touches the soil- this will form your watering reservoir

**6** Hang your container in an area that receives full sunlight. Water your tomato plant any time the soil surface dries out, probably every day during warm summer months. Fertilize the plant with a slightly diluted water-soluble tomato fertilizer during a deep watering every one or two weeks once your tomatoes begin to bloom

Watch in UTUBE [My Redneck Upside-down Garden: How to Topsey Turvy your garden on the cheap.](#) April 20, 2009