

### List of Materials

- pallet
- weed cloth
- staple gun
- rust-resistant staples
- light-weight potting soil (Fafard)
- slow-release fertilizer (Osmocote or Dynamite)
- small plants or seeds

### Step 1: Choosing your Pallet

Pallets can be a cheap and easy way to create a vertical garden, but there are some things you should keep in mind when selecting one for use. Pallets are used to transport a variety of goods across the world, and are treated to keep fungi and diseases from spreading with the wood. They are treated in two ways, either with heat or methyl bromide. Pallets created in the last few years for shipping overseas are required to have a marking which indicates which method was used to treat them.

Select a pallet which is heat treated, as it is the safer of the two. **Pallets which have been heat treated will be marked with HT on their surface**, usually burned or stamped onto the wood.

Spillage can also occur during transport, so try to select pallets which look 'clean'. Avoid big stains, odd smells, and creepy looking wood. Also check and make sure your pallet does not have termites!

### Step 2: Add Weed Cloth

Weed cloth will keep the dirt inside of the pallet and help keep weeds out of it. This is probably the most labor intensive part of your project. Using rust resistant staples and a heavy duty staple gun, attach the weed cloth to the back, bottom and sides of the pallet. The more staples the better. This will ensure that dirt has a hard time escaping and also make sure the weed cloth will not pull away once the plants are growing in the pallet.

### Step 3: Add Soil and Fertilizer

Use a light-weight soil. We recommend our Fafard potting soil. To make it even lighter, add a small bag or more of perlite to the mixture. Add fertilizer at this point as well. A slow release fertilizer works best. We recommend Osmocote or Dynamite.

### Step 4: Add Plants!

You can make a pallet garden with seeds or ready grown plants. When growing from seed you will need

to allow the pallet to rest on the ground or at a gentle angle until the young plants are established (usually 2-3 weeks). When merely plugging in already grown plants, just make holes in the soil and put the plants in. Allow them at least one week to root into the rest of the pallet before standing it up in your garden. Use plants which will not grow too large; small annuals, lettuces and herbs are all good choices. Also keep in mind where you plan to place the garden, and use plants which match up with the amount of sun or shade in that area.

### Step 5: Watering

The pallets here at Rockledge Gardens are on a drip system. They are watered once a day from the top, and this keeps them quite wet. As the plants in your garden grow larger and root more firmly into the pallet, you will need to ensure they get adequate water. We recommend watering your pallet garden at least twice a week. You may be able to go longer between waterings as long as your soil stays wet longer.

### Step 6: Maintenance

As long as it is getting adequate water, your pallet garden will not require much maintenance. It is difficult for weeds to get a hold in these gardens, and the plants need only occasional clipping if you select small, compact growers.

You may also want to find a way to anchor your garden so the wind does not knock it over. As seasons change and/or the plants outgrow the pallet you may need to replace them, though with the soil already in place, this requires very little extra soil or work. Simply pull out the old and plug in the new, adding soil and fertilizer as you go!

# Rockledge Gardens

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