HOW TO BUILD A VEGETABLE BOX

A BASIC GUIDE FOR NAMIBIAN LEARNERS

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Personal details

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Grade : _____

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Introduction

This manual is designed for Namibian learners to help them build a simple wooden vegetable planting box made from pallets using recycled materials.

Step-by-Step Guide

1. Selecting and Preparing Pallets

- Choose wooden pallets that are sturdy and free from rot.
- Remove any nails or splinters carefully.

2. Disassembling the Pallets

- Use a hammer to detach boards from extra pallets.
- Try to keep boards intact to avoid unnecessary cutting.

3. Constructing the Base

- Arrange strong boards horizontally to form the base.
- Nail them together securely.

4. Building the Side Walls

- Attach four upright corner boards to provide structure.
- Nail horizontal boards along the sides to complete the walls.

5. Lining the Box

- Staple or nail plastic sheeting to the inside walls.
- This helps prevent soil from leaking out and protects the wood from moisture.

6. Choosing the Right Location

- **Sunlight Exposure:** Choose a location based on the sunlight needs of the crops you plan to grow. Leafy greens like lettuce need partial shade, while tomatoes require full sun (6-8 hours per day).
- **Flat and Stable Ground:** Ensure the area is level so that water distributes evenly and the box remains stable.
- **Drainage Considerations:** Avoid low spots where water may collect.
- **Accessibility:** Place the box close to a water source and in a convenient location for easy maintenance.

7. Ensuring Proper Drainage

- Place thick branches or twigs at the bottom.
- This allows water to drain while keeping the soil aerated.

8. Minimizing Cutting and Material Waste

- **Use Pallet Dimensions:** Measure the pallets before disassembling to see how they can be used efficiently without excessive cutting.
- **Utilize Full Boards:** Try to use full-length boards for the base and sides to avoid unnecessary sawing.
- **Align Side Walls to Pallet Width:** If possible, build the box to match the natural width of the pallet slats, reducing the need for trimming.
- **Use Offcuts for Reinforcement:** Any small leftover pieces can be used to strengthen corners or support weak joints.

Safety Tips

- **Wear Gloves:** Protects hands from splinters and nails.
- **Use Tools Carefully:** Ensure proper handling of hammers and saws to prevent injuries.
- **Work in a Clear Space:** Avoid clutter to prevent tripping or accidents.
- **Check Pallets for Nails:** Remove or hammer down any protruding nails before use.
- **Ask for Help:** If handling heavy pallets, lift with a partner to prevent strain or injury.

Personal Notes

Memory Quiz: Test Your Knowledge!

1. **Why should plastic sheeting be used inside the vegetable box?**
   a) To make it look nicer
   b) To prevent soil from leaking
   c) To stop water from entering

2. **What is the purpose of placing branches at the bottom of the box?**
   a) To keep the soil dry
   b) To prevent weeds
   c) To help with drainage

3. **Which tool is essential for removing boards from pallets?**
   a) A rake
   b) A hammer
   c) A watering can

4. **Why should you wear gloves when building the vegetable box?**
   a) To keep your hands warm
   b) To protect against splinters and nails
   c) To look professional

5. **How can you minimize wood waste when building the vegetable box?**
   a) Cut all boards to the same size before starting
   b) Use the natural size of the pallets as much as possible
   c) Throw away any extra pieces

6. **Why is it important to choose the right location for the vegetable box?**
   a) To ensure the plants get the right amount of sunlight
   b) To make the garden look nice
   c) To keep pests away