



STRAWBERRY TUB

INSTRUCTIONS

The "Victorian" Strawberry Planter provides a system for growing delicious strawberries in a limited space such as a patio or balcony.

ASSEMBLING YOUR VICTORIAN PLANTER

It may be helpful to have the assistance of a second person for easier assembly.

Assemble the parts as shown in the diagram overleaf.

1. Open up the planter and press roughly into an octagonal shape before assembly.
2. Insert the planter into the base, making sure it is the right way up (see diagram overleaf). Press well home (Fig A).
3. Push on the top ring, making sure the four wide slots are in line with the four narrow slots in the base. Press home (Fig B).
4. Fit the four tensioning wires as shown in (Fig C). Make sure they are the correct way up with the "S" end at the top, and the "C" end at the base. Fit them from the inside in opposite corners, passing the "C" end through the narrow slot in the base and turning it through 90° so that it hooks over the rim.
5. Click in the 24 cups from the inside as shown, making sure they are correctly positioned (Fig D).
6. Take the watering tube and straighten out any curve by over-bending it the other way. Push the tube into the central hub of the base (Fig E).
7. Assemble the net support pole as shown in the diagram (Fig F). The pole stands in the watering tube when you are ready to use it.

CHOOSING A SITE FOR YOUR PLANTER

The "Victorian" Strawberry Planter is very heavy when it is planted up, so we suggest choosing a permanent site in a sheltered, but sunny position. If you wish to move the tub, we suggest standing it on a wheeled platform or a square of strong timber. **Note: Place the barrel in its permanent site BEFORE you add the compost.**

COMPOST

Choosing the correct compost mixture is fundamental to success. Dissappointing results will follow the use of unsatisfactory mixtures. The ideal compost mixture is one that retains water and nutrients for a long period but does not become waterlogged through overwatering. The mixture should consist of two thirds by volume of a proprietary soil-less general purpose potting compost to one third of vermiculite, perlite (20 litres) or coarse grit (20 litres/25kg). These ingredients are obtainable from most garden centres. There should be no deviation from this mixture otherwise there could be plant failures, particularly if the compost has been overwatered. The incorporation of garden soil or home made compost must never be considered. If the peat based compost does not already contain one of the slow release fertilizers such as "Ficote 140" or "Osmacote", this should be obtained if possible and added to the mixture. The incorporation of either one of these fertilizers will save the need for liquid feeding during the first growing season of the plants. Some sand/peat composts are so dry that the mixture runs out of the holes of the tub. This may be prevented by moistening the mixture with a moderate amount of water.

The planter will hold 32 strawberry plants – 24 in the cups and 8 in the top. Fill the planter with the compost mix to a level of 5cm (2") above the lowest ring of holes. Consolidate the mixture, particularly near the sides, using a piece of wood to push down the mixture. The level of the mixture should fall just below the tops of the holes. If it does not, add or take away the necessary amount of compost.

The leaves of each strawberry plant should be inserted from the inside through the hole so that the base of each crown is in line with the side of the barrel at the hole and

the roots spread out on the compost (Fig G). Further layers of sand/peat compost should be added and compressed so that all the holes can be planted and the tub finally filled and consolidated with the mixture to within 2.5cm (1") of the rim. Keep the watering tube nicely centred as you fill. The remaining 6 plants can be planted in the top surface of the compost, remembering to keep the crown of the plant just above soil level. A test of firmness of planting is that an attempt is made to pull a plant out by one of its leaves, the leaf breaks before the plant moves.

GENERAL CULTIVATION

Over watering is the most common cause of failure of strawberry plants grown in containers. Over winter (late November to late February), it would be advisable to cover the planter and plants with thick gauge white polythene to prevent waterlogging. This should also prevent frost damage.

