



Useful Reusing

- How to make a bottle bed.



One thing we always like to recycle is the sun's energy. Bottle beds are a great way to do this. Any bottle filled with water will warm in the sun, but especially a darker coloured one. This makes bottle beds a great way to reuse wine bottles, or strong, 2 litre coloured plastic bottles.

To make a bottle bed, you will need:

A flat area big enough to fit your bed (as our area is slanted, we used a levelled 60cm x 60cm slab)

Enough bottles to make a planter the size you want (we used 13 or 14 wine bottles)

Water

A funnel

Strong non-stretch twine or plastic straps

Potting compost or garden soil and garden compost

How To:

1. First create a level area. If doing this straight onto soil, weed thoroughly, then treat down, but try to fluff-up the top few centimetres a little. If using a slab, add some strong stones or remodel the ground beneath to make it flat.
2. Now place the bottles where you want them to go and in the shape you intend them to stand in.
3. If they fit, tie a string around the bottles around their widest part and tie it tightly, and if they seem unstable, then tie another around the narrowest part of their necks.



4. Now fill the space inside the bottles with compost. You can tweak the positioning or change the string location if any of them move a little.
5. Now use the funnel to fill each bottle in turn with water. This can be from a waterbutt as it doesn't matter if it isn't clean, since it won't be used for watering or drinking.
6. Add extra girdles of string if necessary to sure none of the bottles will slip out. We find that once the bed is set up it is pretty stable.
7. Water the compost until it is damp and then plant your chosen specimens.

NB. If using glass bottles, be careful to put them down carefully so they don't break, and take bottles in and empty them as soon as there is a chance of frost in Autumn, as frost may shatter them. If you store the bottle upside down and empty, they should be fine.



We have used these bottles to grow tomatoes, with good results and reliable ripening. It helps to create a support, which can be made by canes tied against the bottles. It's not a good idea to put canes in the bottles themselves as pressure from the bamboo bending in the wind can crack the bottles at the neck.