

KINGMAN IS GROWING! COLUMN

BAG IT!!!

By **Linda Reddick**, Kingman Area Master Gardener

Want to plant a tomato, or squash but you have awful soil or no space? Well then, just “BAG IT”. Several years ago a Kingman gentlemen by the name of Duane Clupper developed a planting method called “Garbage Bag Planting”

This is a check list of what you will need;

- ✓ A heavy 4 mil plastic bag. Empty steer manure or potting soil bags work well or you can purchase the plastic bags that are used in trash compactors. I do not recommend the use of black bags because they conduct heat. White bags work well, and the printing has no effect. If you do not like the printing simply turn it inside out.
- ✓ Some small or medium size rocks
- ✓ Charcoal. The type used in terrariums, Not a BBQ.
- ✓ Good potting soil or planting compost.
- ✓ Perlite
- ✓ A square plastic crate
- ✓ A plant or seeds

The preparation procedure is;

1. Fold the top of the plastic bag down double, about two inches to form a collar. This is for ease of filling the bag.
2. Place the plastic bag in the plastic crate. This is for ease of handling. Once the bag is filled it is very difficult to move. By placing it in the plastic crate it can be easily moved to different location, if needed.
3. Place about two inches of small to medium size rocks in the bottom of the plastic bag.
4. Using a sharp instrument, cut slits in the plastic bag just above the rocks. Three or four on each side will be sufficient. This is to allow any excess water to drain, while allowing some moisture to remain in the rocks.
5. Cover the rocks with about ½” of charcoal. Charcoal is a natural cleansing agent, which will discourage any algae from growing. It helps prevent root damage from over watering. If you do not have charcoal this step is not absolutely necessary.
6. Combine the perlite, about 1 gallon to every 7 gallons of potting soil or planting compost and moisten. Fill ¾ of the remaining bag with this mixture. I would recommend you moisten the mixture before placing it in the bag. It is easier to get completely moist.
7. Place your plant or seeds in the soil. If you are using a plant simply make a hole in the middle of the potting mixture, and insert your plant. If you are starting seed, just follow the package instructions.



8. After seeds have sprouted, spread chopped straw about $\frac{1}{2}$ ' thick around them, do the same around your plants.

Steer manure or potting soil bags generally hold about 2 cubic feet. Each bag is sufficient for planting;

- One tomato plant.
- Two squash plants
- Two cantaloupe plants
- $\frac{1}{4}$ of a package of radishes or carrots.
- Three cucumber plants
- Almost any vegetable can be grown in a bag. Just keep in mind the size or number of plants you are putting in each bag. Do not over crowd.

You could use a larger bag, but you would need a larger plastic crate. The nice part of the plastic crate is ease of moving it. After the initial planting I do not recommend moving the crate frequently. But if you find the plant is getting too much or not enough sun, or simply was placed in a bad location it can be moved. Be extremely careful moving veining plants.

If you plan to use a trellis or cage on the plants, it is best to carefully insert them when the bag is first planted. Be sure not to tear the plastic bag.

Since a plastic bag is a type of container you will need to supplement your plants with an organic or liquid fertilizer approximately every three weeks. Since the plants are in a container their roots can not reach out beyond the container for nutrients. Water as needed; remember some vegetables like cucumbers are water mongers, while others like tomatoes do not require daily watering.



It's a simple and effective way for you to walk out your door and pick fruit or vegetables. Actually Mr. Clupper grew his entire garden in plastic bags. Try it, and enjoy.



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