



Arrange them as you wish. I find that butting them together works better to preserve moisture.

TO MAKE A STRAW BALE GARDEN:

Step 1: In spring. place bales where they will get at least 6 hours of sun a day, with the cut side on top, strings on side.



This is the "cut side"



Photo: Brick House Acres Rabbits, Frankfort, NY

Rabbit poop makes excellent fertilizer! (and it can be purchased if you don't have a ready source)

Step 2: Condition your straw bale

Sprinkle high N fertilizer every other day for 10 days, dousing with a gallon of water each time.



Photo: The Wisconsin Vegetable Gardener

STEP 3: Plant Seedlings

Dig into the bales, extracting straw as needed, and insert plants.



Photo: Nicole Cotroneo Jolly, Modernfarmer.com

Or, top with a soilless mix and sow seeds.



Photo: Craig LeHoullier, craiglehoullier.com



STEP 4: Irrigation is essential! I set a hose-end timer to water automatically for 6 minutes every 6 hours, 24 hours a day.





Use a flexible soaker hose to irrigate.











STEP 5: Fertilize weekly, using a liquid, balanced fertilizer. A hose end sprayer (left) will make this easy.



Or use rabbit poop every couple of weeks!



STEP 6:

Make a strong structure to support tomatoes and other vining plants.

We made this structure at Nurture Nature Center last year using bamboo and zip ties. Note that it is supported by the bales themselves.

WHAT TO PLANT? Try anything!

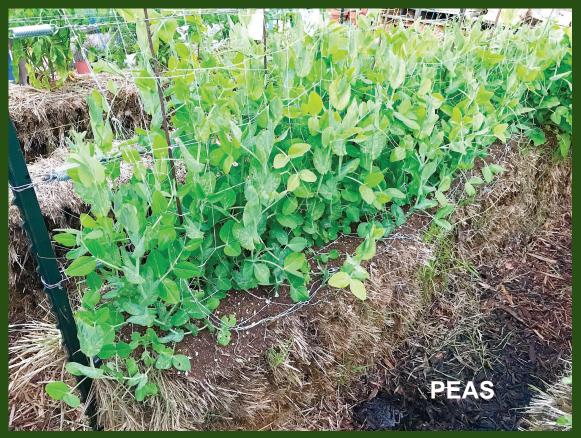


Photo by Susan Laird, originally posted in villagelife.com









Tomatoes, Peppers, Kale, Eggplants, Zucchini

Mushrooms can grow in the bales. They will not cause any problems.

Photos by Craig LeHoullier



A productive Community Garden in Pittsburgh



Our Nurture Nature
Center straw bale
garden with tomatoes
and zucchini



Your straw bales will warm up more quickly than garden soil. For added frost protection, you can cover plants with plastic or row cover.

Right: Oakleaf lettuce grew well in our straw bale garden!





Even sweet potatoes can grow in bales!

Photo: UCCE Master Gardeners of Sacramento County; http://sacmg.ucanr.edu/StrawBale2018/



