

Creating a Tower or Key Hole Garden

Bible Reference Isaiah 58:11 **“The Lord will...satisfy your needs in a sun-scorched land...”**

Memory Verse Galatians 6:7 **“A man reaps what he sows”.**

Food towers are raised structures that are used mainly for growing salads and vegetables. There are various types of structures as shown below:



You will need:

Wire or plastic mesh
Wire mesh cutter
Wooden poles (eg. Eucalyptus poles or bamboo)
Panga/Hacksaw
A shovel
A watering can
Stones (Small to medium)
Nails and hammer
Manure/organic compost mixed with top soil
Ash
Polythene
Seedlings ready for planting
Hay or long grass
Additional extras if available: bottles, pots, containers

Method

- Identify a level area to build the food tower
- Mark a small circle of approx. 10cm radius on the ground using ash
- Mark another outer circle approx. 100cm radius, from the centre of the small circle
- Chop or cut the wooden poles using the hacksaw into 1.5m length pieces (about 8-10 poles; the more poles, the stronger the structure will be). Create 5 poles of 1m length. Sharpen one side of each wooden pole.
- Drill/make 5 evenly spaced holes (about 10-15cm deep) around the circumference of the inner circle and 8-10 evenly spaced holes around the circumference of the outer circle.

- Tie a piece of polythene to cover the 10-15 cm on the sharpened end of each pole. Place the 1m high poles in the holes of the inner circle. Hit them at the top until they are firm in the ground. Repeat for the 1.5 m high poles in the outer circle but at a slight angle slanting towards the inner poles but an even distance away from them.
- Roll a double layer of the mesh around the entire circumference of the inner circle outside the poles and cut it using a tine cutter where it stops. Fasten the mesh with nails along the length of the poles using a hammer. Repeat along the circumference of the outer poles.
- Pour stones in the middle of the inner circle within the mesh up to the brim. The stones are meant to improve drainage and water distribution in the food tower.
- Shovel a mixture of top soil and manure into the area between the outer and inner mesh up to the brim.
- Plant crops on the food tower, both on top and on the sides of the mesh in between the poles whilst leaving appropriate spacing.
- Water the crops immediately after planting them using the watering can to embed them into the soil.
- Cover the top of the tower with dry grass to preserve the moisture, avoid soil erosion and compaction.

What do you need to do to take care of your tower garden?

Regular daily watering before 9 in the morning and after 5 in the evening. Avoid getting the leaves wet if possible as this will cause scorching during the day. Try to water from under each plant. Covering with hay will help to keep the moisture in and stones at the foundation help with drainage during flooding.

It is advisable to plant vegetables that once mature, can continue to be harvested over a longer period of time eg. Sukuma wiki, egg plants, and spring onions. For more productivity, ensure that the soil is thoroughly mixed with manure before being placed in the food tower. Keeping the centre topped up with manure will help to maintain soil fertility.