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Wicking pots and worm beds for solanacea int he tropics

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This year I am going to add some polystyrene boxes to plant tomatoes in. Large tomatoes don't do well here - we have bacterial wilt in the soil, and I think a myriad other diseases that are commonplace here. I like tomatoes though, and I did get some free seeds to experiment with. I am going to try a sort of wicking bed system as in the past I have had blossom end rot as well which indicated uneven watering. I found some good instructions here [1]. I am putting the boxes front and centre. They are resting on the front of the the asparagus bed, making use of every inch of the garden. I hope I wont be disappointed.
The idea is to drill a few drainage holes about a quarter of the way up the box. I had read 30cm, and measured carefully - only to discover that the inside bottom of the box is almost 30cm. Oops - that hole got plugged, and I started again....

[2]

Below this line the boxes are filled with small rocks for drainage. . Now I am not sure if there should be standing water here, or some people even use sand. There is conflicting advice about whether to put a barrier above this. I am not a huge fan of weedmat, so put a layer of chux cloth - water will wick through it, and it is what I had available. I hope mosquitoes wont breed in there - maybe it needs to be flushed out regularly. Maybe some little fish should be added - has anyone done anything like that? I put a little piece of flyscreen against the side of the box where the hole is.

[3]

I took a couple of old beer brewing bottles and cut one water inlet bottle and one worm feeding tube for each bin. I have a cap cut from the lid of the polystyrene lid on the water inlet bottle - once again so that mosquitoes cannot get in and breed. The worm feeding tube has top and bottom cut off and large holes drilled (just in case my worms get HUGE) around the lower two thirds of the bottle.

[4]

Into each bin I spread some crushed eggshells and a few comfrey leaves - all things I have read will help with this battle against bacterial wilt.
On top of that I put my soil, and in the interests of not using any of my own soil or compost, I used a mixture of : Crusher dust, potting soil, and pelletized organic fertilizer. I gathered a few earthworms from the

garden, and then laid them into the worm tubes along with some shredded newspaper and finely chopped fruit. I covered the top loosely with a damp chux cloth to keep it dark and moist.

[5]

One one side of each box I have a tube for watering - you can see the level, so that the box will always have water available for the plant. For now the tomato seeds have been planted in little pots in the shade. I put in a crop of salad greens just to get the wicking beds started. There is also a basil plant in each bed as they are supposed to be good companion plants for tomatoes. There was a lone struggling eggplant in the garden bed and that has been moved to the eggplant wicking bed. Over the weekend I noticed that this soil never seemed to dry out - the surface was always moist - now that has to be a good sign...

At last the wicking bed experiment has begun....

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