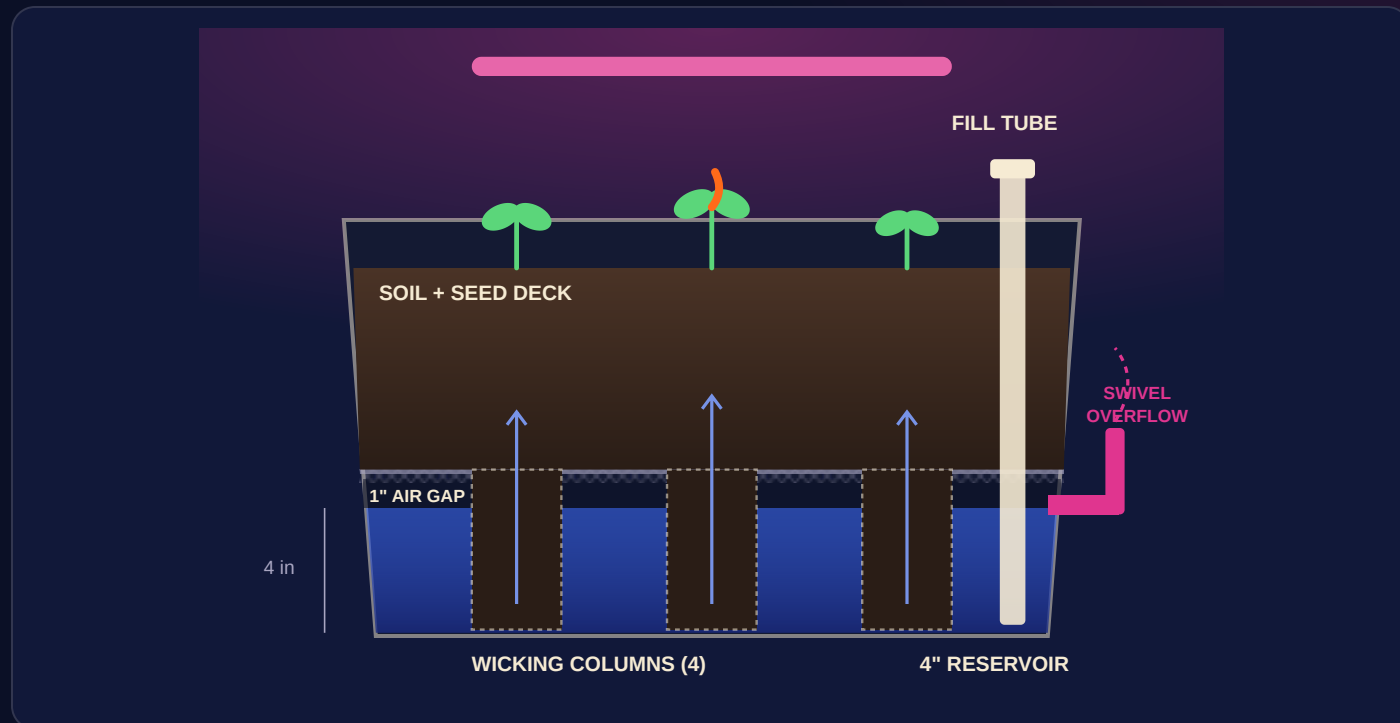


# The Launch Pad Wicking Bed



A self-watering tote bed you can build in an afternoon. Fill the reservoir, walk away, and let the bed water your seedlings from below.



## SHOPPING LIST

- ☐ 1 medium heavy-duty storage tote
- ☐ ½" PVC pipe (about 2 ft)
- ☐ 2 × ½" PVC couplers, 1 × ½" elbow
- ☐ Corrugated drain pipe (about 2 ft)
- ☐ Thin landscape fabric
- ☐ Hardware cloth (near the chicken wire)
- ☐ Rigid pipe for a fill tube
- ☐ Potting mix
- ☐ PVC cement (optional)

## CUT LIST

| PIECE                        | QTY | SIZE      |
|------------------------------|-----|-----------|
| Outlet hole height           | 1   | 4"        |
| ½" PVC through-wall stub     | 1   | ~1½"      |
| ½" PVC swivel riser          | 1   | ~6"       |
| Drain pipe wicking columns   | 4   | 5"        |
| Fabric squares for columns   | 4   | Oversize  |
| Fabric + hardware cloth deck | 1   | Tote + 2" |

**The rule that makes it work:** columns are 1" taller than the reservoir. That 1" air gap keeps the soil out of the water, so it wicks instead of turning to swamp.

# 10 steps to launch

1. **Drill the outlet** 4" up from the tote floor. Pilot hole first, then step the bit up until ½" PVC fits snug.
2. **Install the stub** through the wall with a coupler inside and outside. Glue when you're happy with it.
3. **Add the elbow and riser** on the outside. Glue the elbow if you like. **Do not glue the riser.** It has to swivel.
4. **Cut four 5" wicking columns** from corrugated drain pipe.
5. **Drill ¼" holes** around the bottom of each column if it isn't perforated.
6. **Sock each column** by pushing landscape fabric down inside with plenty of slack.
7. **Strap the fabric** with a strip of hardware cloth around the outside. Twist tight and trim.
8. **Set the deck:** space the columns on the floor, lay fabric over the top, then a sheet of hardware cloth cut a little big so it friction-fits.
9. **Open the ports:** cut an X over each column with needle-nose pliers and fold the flaps down to lock it in.
10. **Fill and plant:** pack columns and deck with potting mix. Fill through the tube until water runs out the overflow. Plant.

## SWIVEL OVERFLOW

**Down:** sets the normal water level at 4".

**Up:** floods the whole bed. Then drop it to drain. That flush pulls fresh oxygen down and rinses out hard-water buildup.

## TOOLS

Drill, step drill bit, PVC cutters or saw, needle-nose pliers, tin snips, marker, tape measure.

## STARTING SUPERHOTS

Superhot peppers need the longest runway of anything in the garden. In a short-season climate, start them indoors roughly 10 to 12 weeks before your last frost. The steady moisture from below is what keeps tender seedlings alive while you're at work.

**Want the full playbook?** The WickPod Master Build Plans cover three bed sizes with exact cut lists, and the Superhot Launch Protocol walks you week by week from January seed to May transplant. Find them in the Supply Bay at [StarshipHomestead.com](https://starshiphomestead.com).

Build at your own risk and use common sense with tools. Results vary with climate, mix, and plants. Some experiments work, some don't. That's how we learn.