

**To:** All Home Gardeners and Potential Commercial Growers.

**Subject:** Crops and Varieties for Vertical Growing

We have recently had questions arise on what can be grown in the **Verti-Gro** system, where to get the seed, what type of seeds, etc... Hopefully the following information will help you decide what to grow in the most versatile and easiest growing system ever developed.

The **Verti-Gro** pot is an insulated plastic pot that has 1/2' thick walls. The pot is about 9" x 9" x 8" with a volume of five quarts. The pot is not very large but when plants have small root systems and are fed automatically every day there is no need for a large container. Larger containers only mean more soil or soilless mix, more water, more fertilizer, etc... There is no soil in the mix we supply or recommend. The perlite and coconut fiber is very porous allowing for a lot of roots in a small area.

(Coarse vermiculite can also be used to replace the coconut fiber)

Here are some of the plants that do well in the **Verti-Gro** system:

1. Lettuce—leafy types such as Sierra, Black Seeded Simpson, Red Leaf and Grand Rapids. Romaine such as Little Caesar and basically any type of lettuce seed except head lettuce. Head lettuce takes too long. Try different varieties including some colored types. Sierra is a good summer type. There are many, many types of lettuce. You may find ten different varieties that have different names, but are, in fact, the same variety sold under brand names such as Summer Bibb and Boston Bibb, etc... You could grow twenty different types of lettuce in a single tower. Endive, Parsley, Tak Soi, Kale, Kohlrabi, Swiss Chard and small varieties of celery and egg plant also do well.
2. Greens—mustard (Florida Broad Leaf), turnip (Tender Greens), Chinese Cabbage and spinach (Space, Tyee, Denali, Hector, Bloomsdale and other varieties of spinach do well during cooler weather). Spinach is delicious in this system, but the seed is difficult or slow to germinate. (Soak the seeds in warm water over night before planting)
3. Herbs—basil, thyme, mint, arugula, rosemary, chives, parsley, cilantro, etc... do well. Keep the plants trimmed. The fresh small leaves are the most nutritional and taste the best. You can pick continuously on all of the above plants for 2-3 months. It is advisable to pull out old plants and start new ones every three months.

4. Peppers—smaller varieties such as chili peppers and banana peppers are the best to grow. The plant for bell peppers becomes quite large. If you try growing these pinching the plant after two sets of blooms will keep the size reasonable. The quality of peppers in the system is excellent.
5. Tomatoes—smaller varieties such as Better Bush, Patio Hybrid and bush type cherry tomatoes do very well and are tasty and nutritional. If the plant gets too big simply cut the growing tip off and force it to bush. Keep in mind that the root is being fed perfectly in a small **Verti-Gro** pot. Tomatoes overall are one of the most difficult plants to grow. There are hybrid and standard (open pollinated) varieties of tomatoes. (Seed can only be saved from open pollinated or standard varieties)
6. Strawberries—many varieties are available and are either day neutral (“everbearers”) or “June bearers”. Strawberries have a small root system, but are not the easiest to grow. They are perennials, prefer cooler weather and a lot of sun. (see special instructions for growing strawberries in vertical towers for family use)
7. Root crops—onions, carrots, radishes, potatoes are not recommended. Scallions grow well in this system. If you want to try some do it in the top pot, but don’t grow large plants that will shade the plants in the pots below.
8. Flowers—begonias, pansies, impatiens, dianthus, miniature mums, miniature carnations, snapdragons and other flowers that have a height of about 12" are suggested. Edible flowers such as nasturtiums, violas, and pansies can be enjoyed in salads and/or as vitamin supplements. Consider planting one pot with flowers for the color, fragrance, beauty and food value they offer.
9. Cuttings may be taken from regular houseplants such as ivy, pothos, etc... and grown to transplant size in the system.
10. Seeds can be planted directly in the pot on the vertical stack or in smaller containers and allowed to grow to transplant size before putting on the stack.

**Note:** Tomatoes, peppers, and strawberries need to be pollinated by bees, wind or by hand.

**Note:** Extra pots can be purchased and plants grown in single pots and fed by hand with the same fertilizer solution that is used in the vertical system. Extra pots are only \$2.00 each plus shipping for customers with vertical gardening units.

**Note:** Regular size tomatoes, peppers and cucumbers can be supported outside the stack on a pole or stake. These and other vine type plants such as melons and beans can be grown in the lowest pot and either supported or allowed to grow along the ground if you have space available. Check your seed catalogs for dwarf or bushy plants.

**Note:** Small plants can usually be purchased from your local nurseries for vegetables and flowers that can be transplanted in the vertical system. Inquire about the size of the plant at maturity before you make the purchase if you not familiar with a particular plant.

When you try your **Verti-Gro** system it will be more apparent what you can and can't grow. Size is a limitation as well as how long it takes to grow. For example, corn and squash are not practical. You will find that there will be many different types of plants that you will want to try in the system. Just remember to be practical and use your common sense about what you want to grow. You will be amazed at what you can grow in this vertical system and how great it looks and tastes.

Please share your stories (good and bad) with us. We would like to incorporate them in our newsletter and get the information to our growers. You receive a newsletter the first year after your initial purchase. Recurring customers will receive newsletters on a quarterly basis.

**Good luck with your growing!**

Tim D. Carpenter  
President/Owner

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Vertical Gardening