

# Regular Keyhole Garden Kit



**WATCH FOR  
SHARP EDGES**  
on METAL tube ends  
and ESPECIALLY ON  
INNER BASKET  
MESH.

*PLEASE  
NOTE:  
A VIDEO  
HAS BEEN  
LAUNCHED  
ON OUR  
WEBSITE  
KEYHOLEFARM.COM  
THAT OFFERS  
THE EASY WAY  
TO CONSTRUCT  
THE KEYHOLE  
GARDEN FRAME.*

*IT IS UNDER  
THE MENU  
ITEM "EXTRAS"  
IN THE UPPER  
RIGHT-HAND  
CORNER AREA.*

*GO TO THE  
PAGE AND  
WATCH FOR  
POINTERS.*

Exercise caution when loosening the roll of mesh, as it could spring open suddenly.

You might want to handle the wire mesh wearing leather or cloth gloves.

# KeyholeFarm.com Keyhole Garden Instructions

Construction of the regular size original keyhole garden kit normally takes the Keyhole Farm staff about an hour to an hour-and-a-half.

Construction is done in three phases: the frame, the panels, and the interior basket.



## BE CAREFUL

Safety precautions should be taken when using tools, especially power tools. There are sharp edges on the interior basket, so please exercise caution when handling it.

**T** POWER DRIVER (required)  
**O** PADDED MALLET (required)  
**O** Level (optional)  
**L** Leather or Cloth Gloves (optional)  
**S** Shears or Scissors (optional)  
**S** Small Drill Bit (optional), included



## THIS KIT CONTAINS:



12 Panels For Sides

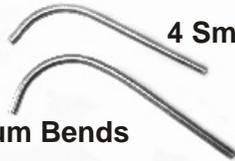


10 Vertical Supports  
(A.K.A. Tee Posts)  
With 20 Tee's Attached

12 Big Bends (Curved Tubing)



4 Small Bends



4 Medium Bends



125 Polyester Ties  
40 Screws  
(a few extra included)



Inner Basket Wire Mesh  
and  
Three Wire Rings

These instructions are based upon the techniques Keyholefarm.com utilizes to put the kit together. There are probably variations of these instructions that will work fine, too.

The dimensions of the finished product should fall in the ballpark of being: a 6-ft. diameter across the top (circle, pretending the wedge not cut out), the internal basket should have a diameter of approximately 12 inches, and the fill content of the garden should comprise approximately 1.8 cu. yds., which excludes the wedge and internal basket.

We recommend building the frame first, then attaching the panels to it, and finally constructing the internal basket.

# THE FRAME

**1. PUT THE FRAME TOGETHER FIRST.** Ingredients consist of tubing: 12 big bends, 4 small bends, 4 medium bends; 10 "tee posts," and a packet of self-tapping screws that includes a small drill bit in the event it is needed to make a starter hole in the tubing. You might also need a rubber mallet or stick to tap tees into place. A power driver is required to drill the screws into the metal.



**2.** Start with the wedge portion of the frame, inserting the curved edges of the small bends into both ends of a tee post. Raise the remaining ends of the small bends and attach a tee post to the left and right sides, to separate the upper and lower rail, forming a "U" shape. The pre-drilled holes in the tees should be visible from the inside of the "U."



**3.** Now, using the power driver, drill screws into the bottom tee post and then rotate the two sides onto a flat surface to drill one screw on each side tee post where it connects with the small bend. Always be sure the rails (curved metal) are inserted all the way.



**4.** Next, insert the four medium bends (long end toward the "U"). On one side, point the two curved parts of the medium bends downward and add a tee-post to keep alignment correct. Insert a screw on each of the tee posts where the long end is connected. Do the same thing on the other side. Now put a screw into the tee posts adjoining the curved part of the medium bends. See illustration.



**5.** You are now working with four connect points, the upper and lower rail on both the right- and left-handed sides. On one side, take two big bends and insert them into the edge tee post, the big bends facing up. Put another tee post on the open ends to keep alignment, then flip the unit into the



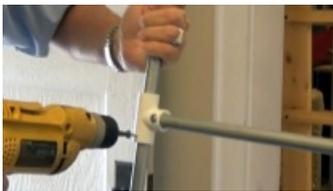
opposite direction and insert screws adjacent to the curved parts of the medium bends. The first screws on the newly added tee post can then be inserted. Do the same thing to the other side. Be sure that all screws will be on the outside of the frame unit.



The Frame...Continued On Next Page

# THE FRAME CONTINUED

6. Now turn the unit over (below images), with the wedge pointing up and the big bends pointing up and begin installing big bends on one side: two bends, upper and lower rail, followed by a tee post to assure alignment. Put in screws along the way.



After the final two big bends are inserted and before screws are added, bring the opposite side of the unit up and around to connect with the last two big bends. You might have to push down on the top of the unit to allow the big bends to easily fit into the tee post openings on the other side of the unit. Put them in place, then insert the remaining four screws to complete the unit.

7. We generally try to build this unit on a table, as we deem that easier, and usually do so inside, then roll it outside to be used to determine level at its intended site (put a board across it and a level on top of the board). It is easier to dig around and position the frame than a unit with panels. After level is established, we bring the frame back inside to install panels.

8. It normally takes one person about 25 minutes to build the frame (15-20 minutes with a helper). In drilling the screws into place, put light pressure on the power drill at first, then increase it when you are sure the drill is at a stable position. At times, the drill might slip off the screw, so be sure that hands are kept out of harm's way. If for

some reason a screw simply won't go in, replace the screw. Sometimes (but rarely) it is misshapen. The included small drill bit can also be used to make a starter hole for easier insertion of a screw. Also, sometimes a particular power driver will work best in putting screws into metal at a slower speed, so it might be worthwhile to experiment early on to determine the optimum speed for your driver.

**9. A video describing what we determine to be the easy way to construct a frame has a link on our website, [www.keyholefarm.com](http://www.keyholefarm.com). On the right portion of the upper menu bar under the "Extras" tab click on Easy Frame Construction, which will take you to a page that contains the link to the 15-minute YouTube video.**

# THE PANELS

This phase involves putting the panels onto the frame. If you want to do it indoors, first measure the panels to assure that they will fit through the doorway when rolled outside.

We usually place the frame on its side (as to roll it) and then work from both sides, rotating it as we go. If you do it outside in a finished position, you will need to put some bricks along the base of the frame since it sits up higher than the panels that will touch the ground. The remainder of this instruction sheet deals with vertical installation, but both are similar.

1. Holes through which the polyester ties will go (right) have been pre-drilled in the panels. An arrow appears on one side of each panel. The side of the panels with the arrow should all be placed on the interior, either in the up or down position (all side by side) to assure that the holes will line up correctly in the finished product.



2. Most of the ties in the panels will encircle the curved tubes of the frame (left), but some are merely situated to help hold the panels together. A few holes will not be used at all. You will feed the ties from the inside, to the outside, then

The Panels...Continued On Next Page



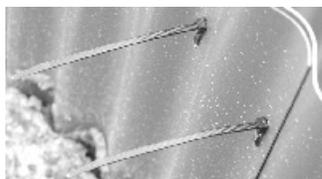
# THE PANELS Continued

back again to the inside through the adjacent hole about an inch away (around frame tubes where applicable) so that the rough edge (tie end) of the ties is hidden from exterior view. Please note that on the “buckle” of the ties, where the loose end feeds, one side is wider than the other. Put the loose end through the wider side of the tie connector.

9. The sequence of placing the panels onto the frame can vary according to preference. Just be sure that the panels are placed **INSIDE** the frame, not outside. Each panel will overlap by two ridges, except one, which will overlap one ridge. We generally start at the peak of the wedge, with a two-ridge overlap on the panels, the final overlap of panels to be one ridge. Tighten slightly as you go. A firm tightening will occur once all the pieces are in place.

10. We usually stand the frame upright (vertical) with the wedge down and begin at the peak of the wedge with the first panel, then work our way up each side, ending at the top where the one-ridge overlap will take place (images at right). On the way up the sides, we utilize the second set of holes from the edge to secure the panel lightly to the frame to make working easier. The set next to the frame will be used in the overlap of the next panel. Be sure to use the same overlap procedure on all the panels for sake of uniformity, choosing the same overlap of new panels being installed.

11. Once complete, go back and tighten each tie. Now the keyhole garden can be carefully rotated to a horizontal position and placed in the garden area.



12. Construct the inner basket (see instructions on next page).

The inner basket used for feeding the garden and is placed near the point of the wedge entrance and can be staked into place or wedged into place with rocks or wood or other materials. It should sit several inches higher than the walls of the keyhole garden.

Once it is in place, fill the garden with layers of different material. Usually on the bottom we put some old twigs or pieces of wood, followed by cardboard and old phone books or similar materials soaked in water and tromped down some. Then we might put in layers of leaves, grass clippings, compost, coffee grounds, various items, trying to utilize both “green” and “brown” material (mainly brown) and finish the top portion with compost, topsoil, and some potting soil. With this you can be somewhat creative. We form the very top so that the topsoil rises near the feeder basket. Then we usually wet down the contents and when it settles some (the level will drop), go back and add more compost and topsoil (mixed) to bring the level back up to the top or very near it. Now we are ready to plant.

One good source for how to fill a keyhole garden is located at  
<<http://www.texascooppower.com/texas-stories/nature-outdoors/keyhole-gardening>>

# CONSTRUCTING THE INNER BASKET

The inner basket, or the “keyhole,” is used to recycle table scraps and other materials that will decompose and “feed” the garden with nutrients and moisture. Traditionally, this basket should sit in the middle of the garden for maximum effect, but can be positioned elsewhere if necessary.

The basket will sit up higher than the garden itself. The garden measures approximately 27-29 inches in height and the basket is approx. 36 inches tall, allowing “mounding” toward the basket if wished.

This metal mesh contains very sharp edges, so utilize caution when disconnecting the wires holding it in its cylinder shape or cutting the tape around it (depending on how it is packaged), for it will spring loose some.

The use of leather or cloth gloves is recommended because of the sharp edges (although we seldom use them).

1. Separate the two edges of the cylinder of mesh (be careful), spreading apart. Traditional keyholes utilize a one-foot diameter opening and three rings are provided with this approximate diameter.



2. Shape the cylinder approximately 12 inches in diameter and go to one end and place the ring inside, putting a zip tie one notch down from the edge (not on the top edge).



3. Once you have about three or four zip ties on the non-overlapped areas, add one or two through the areas that overlap, pulling tightly the mesh as you go. Then do the same thing to the opposite side of the cage. Next, put a ring in the middle and zip tie it the same way.

4. When you are satisfied that all the ties are pulled tight, cut the ties just beyond the buckle.



5. Now along the length of the cylinder, find the overlap edges both inside and out and bend the sharp points around nearby mesh edges to secure the sides, trying to put them parallel with other wires.

6. Lastly, bend and mash the top and bottom edges down over the wire circles toward the middle.

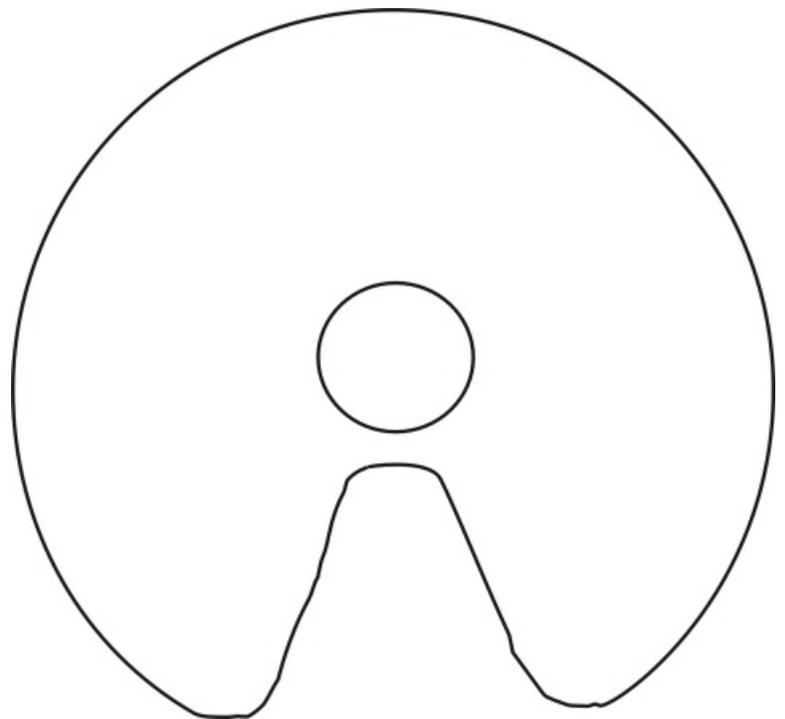


7. The basket can now be placed in the garden. When you are filling the garden, be sure that the basket remains upright and where you want it during the process of putting in wetted-down boxes, paper, leaves, twigs, etc. as you layer the garden, putting topsoil and a compost mix (our recommendation) on the upper level.

# PLANTING WORKSHEET

## INSTRUCTIONS:

On the numbered blanks below fill in the name of a crop. Then section off the circle at right and insert the number applicable to a crop in that area. Use a pencil in case you need to erase.



Crop	Planting Date
<b>01.</b>	
<b>02.</b>	
<b>03.</b>	
<b>04.</b>	
<b>05.</b>	
<b>06.</b>	
<b>07.</b>	
<b>08.</b>	
<b>09.</b>	
<b>10.</b>	
<b>11.</b>	
<b>12.</b>	

Keyhole Name or #:

Crop	Planting Date
<b>13.</b>	
<b>14.</b>	
<b>15.</b>	
<b>16.</b>	
<b>17.</b>	

Notes:

If you have any questions not answered in these instructions, please e-mail us at [smith@keyholefarm.com](mailto:smith@keyholefarm.com) and we will attempt to help. Here's wishing you the best of luck with your garden!