How to Reuse Grow Bags

Grow bags are an excellent container option for the frugal gardener. They're extremely versatile and work for a variety of plants. Did you know that you can reuse them from year to

year, too? Here’s how to reuse grow bags and save money down the line.

What is a grow bag?

A grow bag is a flexible container for growing plants. It’s usually made out of a breathable fabric. The breathable material lets air and water through but keeps all your earth neatly contained.

Benefits of using grow bags

Grow bags have a ton of wonderful advantages and are especially useful for frugal gardeners. They are great for:

People on a budget. If you don’t have a lot of money to spend on fancy containers, grow bags are an excellent choice. They’re fairly durable, so you can reuse them for several years.

People without a lot of room. If you have a small space or are gardening on a patio or balcony, grow bags are an excellent option. They’re available in multiple sizes, and when they’re empty, they fold down flat. You can also drag them around in spaces where the light moves around quite a bit, which can help you keep your plants happy.

Temporary gardening spaces. Not sure if you’ll be gardening in the same location next year? Use grow bags! When you’re done, they can come with you. They’re easy to store and transport when empty.

Certain plants. Grow bags are great for growing certain kinds of plants. I’m particularly fond of growing potatoes inside large grow bags. It keeps the potato plants contained, and at the end of the season, I just dump out the earth making it easier to spot ready-to-eat tubers.

Beginner gardeners. If you're new to gardening, building raised beds or creating an in-ground plot can seem like daunting tasks. Grow bags are easy and convenient growing vessels that require not an ounce of physical labor.

How to reuse grow bags

You'll get more life out of your grow bags if you empty them and store them in a dry place over the winter. Dump out the earth in your compost bin (or in a raised garden bed, if available) and then rinse, dry, and store your bags for the season.

You can also leave them full of dirt and reuse them next year. You'll need to mix in fresh compost next season.

However, if any of your plants were diseased or experienced severe pest infestations, you're better off safe than sorry. Toss out all the dirt and start fresh.

Some grow bags are also safe to toss in the washing machine, which is great if you need to sterilize them once the growing season is done. Never put grow bags in the dryer, though. The heat can cause shrinkage or weaken the fabric.

By reusing your grow bags, you can save money and avoid waste.

If your grow bags rip, don't throw them away! You can use the pieces as a weed barrier in pots or raised beds.

Can You Grow Potatoes in

Containers?

Growing potatoes is so incredibly fun. With a little bit of patience, you'll be digging up spuds towards the end of the season. The taste of freshly dug potatoes is unparalleled.

People say the same about tomatoes, but I genuinely think potatoes win the contest for best-tasting garden edible. Compared to a storebought potato, one from the earth has a creamy, potato-y quality that's impossible to match. There's also so much more variety available when choosing seed potatoes compared to shopping the root vegetable aisle at your local grocer: fingerling potatoes, red-skinned varieties, and even blue spuds. But how do you grow potatoes if you don't have tons of in-ground space?

Can You Grow Potatoes in Containers?

Yes! Absolutely! I wholly recommend growing them in containers instead of using in-ground real estate or large raised beds. A single 5-gallon container yields about 1.5 pounds of potatoes.

Benefits of Growing Potatoes in Containers

What's the advantage of growing potatoes in containers? Here are the benefits of growing in containers:

- **Inexpensive**. There's no need to build a garden bed, there are plenty of cheap container options available from fabric pots to upcycled vessels like empty recycling bins.
- **Easy to relocate**. Did you plop the containers somewhere where you've realized there's not enough sun? Simply drag the containers to a sunnier spot.
- **Easy harvest**. No need to dig around for hours to find spuds. Dump out the container and sift through the dirt. Since you're less likely to leave behind diseased potatoes, there's also a decreased chance of pest and disease in the following year.
- **Great for small spaces.** Don't have a large garden? You might think it's time to give up on planting potatoes. Not so fast! Containers are great for gardeners with

limited room. Grow taters or your porch or balcony.

How to Grow Potatoes in Containers

Plant 1-2 seed potatoes in a single 5-gallon bucket and double that amount for large containers. Fill your container up with enough soil (mixed with plenty of compost) to cover those newly planted seed potatoes.

As days go by, you'll notice foliage start to appear. Continue to add enough soil mix to cover the stems and tubers, but don't bury the leaves.

Potatoes need plenty of sun and regular watering. However, it's best to avoid high-nitrogen fertilizers as they will increase foliage production but reduce tuber formation.

When Do I Harvest Potatoes?

Potatoes are ready to harvest when the tops have completely died back. Attempting to dig them up too soon may hinder tuber development and leave you with a smaller crop. Still not sure when the time is right? Read more about harvesting potatoes.