**HOW TO BUILD A FLYING GARDEN**

**SACK FARM PREPARATION**

Take a 50 kg mesh sack or gunia (gunny bag) and fill it with soil and manure in equal measure.

When the sack is about 30-45 cm filled, take a container (you can use 2 kg tin or gorogoro) and cut off the bottom so that it is open on both sides, and place it in the middle of the sack.

Fill it with small pebbles--you can use the ‘kokoto’ used in construction--and continue adding soil around it up to the top; once it is full, gently remove the tin, leaving the stones in the middle. Congratulations!  You now have your farm. Repeat this for as many sacks as you want.

**Nursery**

Since sukuma wiki and spinach are in the same family, they require the same environmental conditions to grow. They take a similar amount of time to mature, in addition to being attacked by the same pests. Sukuma and spinach seeds have to be grown in a nursery for four weeks before being transplanted to the garden.

For a nursery you can use a container such as a 20-litre jerrican cut into two. Alternatively, the top of your sack, which now has a circular patch of stones surrounded by soil, will act as your nursery. With a stick, make shallow trenches 15 cm apart. It will look like you are drawing circles around the stone patch. Thinly spread your seeds, fill the trenches with soil, cover with some grass and water--use a watering can that spreads water in a shower.

If you have a bit more space, create a raised bed of soil one meter wide and a length dependent on the number of seedlings you want. Mix dry manure into the soil and run a stick or your finger across the soil, creating ridges half an inch deep and 15 centimeters apart from each other. Spread the seeds thinly and cover lightly with soil.  Cover the bed/container with grass and water.  As the seedlings sprout, remove the grass.

**Transplanting to the sack**

After three days, your Sukuma/spinach will have germinated.  Water daily and after four weeks they will be ready to be taken to the sack or your backyard. Choose a cloudy day to do this or do so in the early morning (6-10 am) or evenings (4-7pm), this is to reduce plant stress from direct sunlight. Before uprooting the seedlings from the nursery, water them.  Do this at least an hour before transplanting. In the meantime, prepare your sacks to receive the young seedlings.

A 50 kg sack should handle a maximum of 35 plants.  Use fewer plants depending on the species.

Using a knife, make a few holes around the sack 30 cm (or 60 cm for bigger-leafed species) from each other. When you are done with one row it should look a circle of holes around the sack. Go thirty 30 to 60 cm below this row and do the same thing. Stagger the rows so each seedling won't block the other from sunlight. Water your sack from the top. Uproot your seedlings from the nursery--remember to hold the bottom part of the stem when uprooting--and use your fingers to plant the seedlings into the holes.  You should only bury the plant to a half an inch from the roots.

**Watering and Fertilization**

Water the transplanted seedlings twice a day, in the mornings and evenings, and don't miss a day.  You will get healthy sukuma wiki when you maintain this level of care from a young age.  After two weeks, spray your sukuma wiki with a foliar fertilizer such as Easy Gro or Gatit foliar feed fertilizer.

**Harvesting**

Your sukuma wiki/spinach should be ready for harvesting 3-4 weeks after transplanting.  Harvest in the mornings or evenings.  When harvesting sukuma wiki, break off the leaf branch but leave the section of the branch still attached to the main stem, to avoid rotting.  When harvesting spinach, break off the whole leaf branch from the main stem to avoid rotting.

**Maintaining your sacks**

Keep the sacks out of direct sunlight or they will break down more rapidly.  Keep them under a tree or by the side of a building.

*credit to Gabriel Onyango,*[*http://www.writegarage.com*](http://www.writegarage.com/)