

Guide to Self-Watering Reservoir



General Concept

IOTA's Self-Watering Reservoir can convert a wide range of our best-selling planters into a **subterranean capillary irrigation system**. It can be used either in planters outdoors, or in planters which have been sealed for indoor use.

The reservoir comes in two sizes:

- * Small 24cm in diameter and 10cm deep, holding 3.7 litres of water.
- * Large The same diameter, but 15cm deep and holding 6 litres of water.

View our **Planting Guide** for the reservoir size to use with your chosen planter.

The reservoir works on the principal of capillary action, with water being drawn into the soil around the roots. Over time, the roots will also penetrate into the reservoir, through the holes in the lid (these holes also allow oxygen to pass into the roots from the air space at the top of the reservoir).

The reservoir is filled by pouring water into a downpipe. The top of the downpipe must be just above soil level, but it can be discreetly hidden – for example by dressing the top of the planter with IOTA's Decorative Pebbles. The open end of the downpipe is sealed with a cap, and an indicating float is incorporated to allow easy measurement of correct filling level.



Benefits of Using Reservoir

The reservoir saves time and money, and guarantees an optimal growth environment for your plants:

- * **Save water.** Water is held in a watertight, plastic reservoir directly under the rootball. This saves water by reducing water loss through evaporation, and by holding the water exactly where it is needed. In a period of heavy rainfall, the reservoir will also harvest natural rainwater, and feed it back to your plants.
- * **Reduce maintenance, and keep plants watered while you're away on holiday.** Filling the reservoir is quick and easy, and it won't need doing very often. The refilling period will vary with different plants and weather conditions, but it typically only needs doing every 3-6 weeks (the indicating float will let you know when refilling is necessary).
- * **Bigger, healthier plants.** The air space at the top of the reservoir assists in keeping the roots oxygenated, as well as keeping them healthy and free of water saturation. Studies have also shown that watering direct to the roots promotes vigour and rapid establishment of plants (compared with watering from above).
- * **Prevent water stains on hard landscaping.** As the water is held in a reservoir, the bottom of the planter can be sealed (just tell us when you order, and we can do this for you free-of-charge). This is a great way to prevent water stains on delicate or valuable areas of hard landscaping, and it also avoids undesirable water runoff on decking, roof terraces, balconies etc... Of course, this is also an ideal solution for using IOTA planters indoors.
- * **Reduce fertiliser usage.** As the reservoir is a closed system, fertilisers are confined within the container, and are used only where and when needed. As a result, you will use less fertiliser, and its effectiveness will be greatly increased.

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Reservoir Components

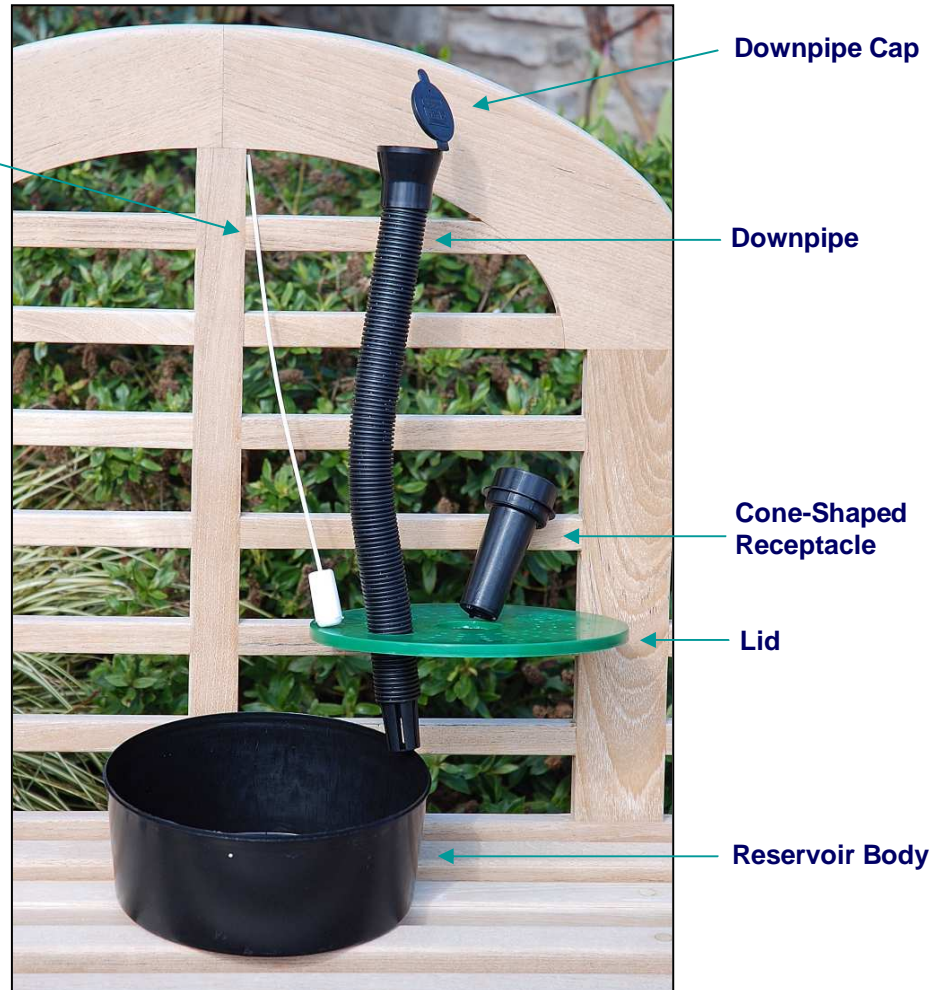
Before installing the reservoir, disassemble it and spend a couple of minutes identifying all of the components.

Float Indicator

When the reservoir is full, the white tip of the float indicator will be just at the top of the downpipe (see below). Top up to this level each time you refill.



If necessary in shallow planters, you can remove the downpipe cap, cut the downpipe to the correct length, and then replace the cap. If you do this, just remember to trim the top of the float indicator by the same amount, so it will read correctly.



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Installation Instructions

Installation is quick and easy – just follow this simple, step-by-step guide.



Step 1: Estimate the final position for the reservoir within the planter. The downpipe should end just above soil level.

Tip: In shallower planters, the reservoir can sit directly on the bottom of the planter. If necessary, the downpipe can then be trimmed down to soil level.



Step 3: Place the reservoir into the planter.

Tip: Packing some of the polystyrene chunks around the reservoir will help to hold it securely (as shown here).



Step 5: Continue filling the planter with compost, up to the level where the plant rootball will rest. Once the compost is at the correct level, add water to the reservoir via the downpipe. The aim is to get the compost well moistened – so add more water if necessary, and leave for a while for the water to permeate.



Step 2: Underneath where the reservoir will sit, pack the void with the polystyrene chunks supplied. Firm down hard, as it is important that the reservoir will be securely held, and in a level position.



Step 4: In the centre of the reservoir there is a cone-shaped receptacle, and this is where the capillary action starts. Fill this receptacle with compost, and then press down firmly to eliminate any large air pockets.

Tip: It is easier to do this if you remove the receptacle from the lid (just make sure it is replaced firmly in the original position).



Step 7: Place the plant in the planter, and fill up with compost as normal.

Tip: With larger plants, you will need to push the downpipe to one side (as shown here). This is fine, just so long as the downpipe is straight, and not kinked.

Tip: A pot dressing, like IOTA's Decorative Pebbles, is a neat way to disguise the end of the downpipe.