

# Growing Pak Choi using wet pots

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Pak Choi (also known as Bok Choy) is a bit of an enigma. It grows best when soil temperatures are warm but has a tendency to bolt in hot dry weather. To limit the risk of Pak Choi going to seed you need to keep the soil as wet as possible and a great way to do this is to grow them in wet pots.

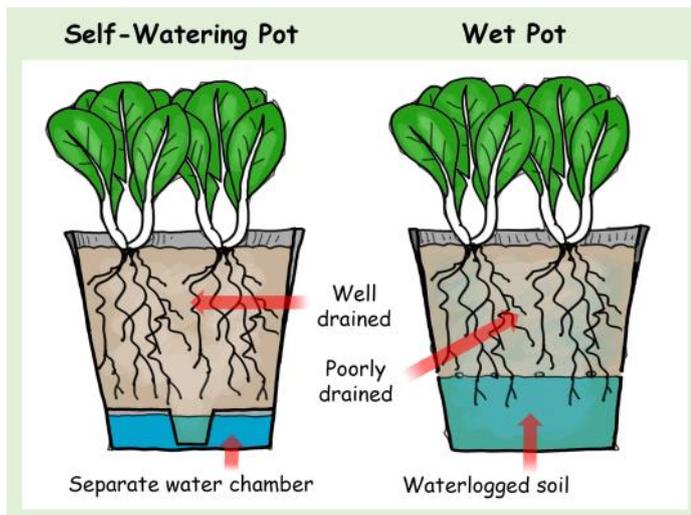
## What is a wet pot?

A wet pot is a container that has a water reservoir in its lower section. It is similar to a self-watering pot but it does not separate the soil from the water reservoir as a self-watering pot does. A wet pot has a larger water reservoir than a self-watering pot. It is also much cheaper as any watertight container can be made into a wet pot while a self-watering pot is a specialised gardening product.

The biggest difference is in the way the pots drain. The soil in a self-watering pot drains easily whereas a wet pot creates poorly drained boggy soil which is ideal for growing Pak Choi. As long as you regularly water a wet pot the soil in it will remain very moist.



Green Pak Choi in the end pots and Tatsoi in the centre pot. I prefer to use black buckets as they absorb the sun's heat more easily which keeps the soil warmer.



## Using a wet pot

Fill the bottom quarter of the bucket with sheep, horse or cow manure then top up with good compost and some extra manure. If planting seeds cover the top with a couple of centimetres of seed raising mix and plant into it. If using seedlings then plant directly into the compost. I find seedlings grown in single cell seedling trays do best as they are less likely to go to seed. A standard pot will hold three green Pak Choi seedlings.

Water the pot until water begins to seep out of the drill holes. An optional extra is to place a drip tray under the bucket to catch the excess water.

## Making a wet pot

Any watertight container can be turned into a wet pot but I have found buckets are ideal, particularly the large builders' buckets as they are big enough to hold three or four Pak Choi plants but small enough that they can be easily moved around.

To make a wet pot take a bucket and mark a line around the outside one third from its bottom. Drill several holes along this line at regular intervals. The holes have to be big enough to allow some drainage but small enough to stop soil washing through them. I usually use a three of four millimetre drill bit to drill the holes.



Green Pak Choi in larger builders buckets. Each of these buckets can hold up to four Pak Choi.

In high summer place the pots in a semi shaded position or cover them with 50% shade cloth. This is where using buckets as wet pots comes in handy as they can be easily moved to a shady spot as the weather warms up. By using a number of wet pots you can stagger the plantings so you always have some mature Pak Choi plants ready to harvest.

## **Vegetables that can be planted in a wet pot**

As well as Pak Choi, Mizuna and Tatsoi also thrive in wet pots, however any vegetables that require well drained soil do not do well. For this reason I confine my use of wet pots to these Asian greens vegetables.

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