

Here's another way to escape daily watering. This system provides feeding through the bottom of the planter, using wicks dipped in a container of the nutrient solution. The wicks or cords should be made of synthetic fiber, either nylon, rayon, or polyester. First, test the wick to see whether it draws moisture up its entire length by placing the end of a six-inch cord into water.

The end of the wick inserted into the artificial soil should be spread out on the bottom of the plant container so nutrients will be distributed evenly throughout. The wick then is passed through the drainage hole into the second receptacle filled with the solution. For best results, place the container of nutrient solution directly underneath the planter. Several wicks can be used to supply the solution to the plants; simply drill holes in the bottom of the planter. The wicks will carry the solution up to keep the medium moist.

Soluble salts from the water in the nutrient solution will build up gradually in the growing medium because of evaporation. This will eventually inhibit plant growth. To avoid the problem, clean the growing medium thoroughly every few months by running tap water through the medium several times.