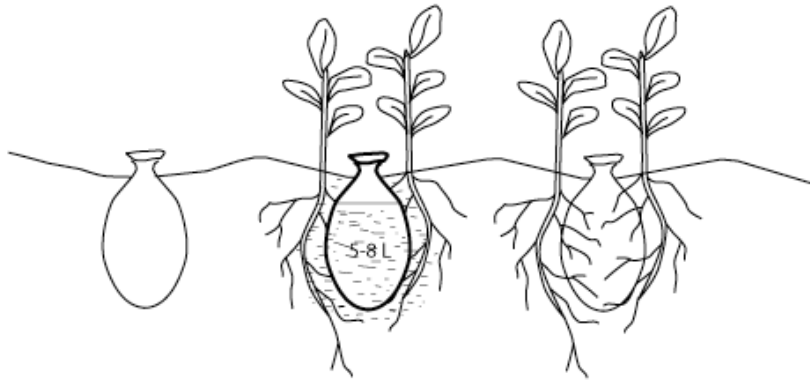


Bottle Irrigation



source: <http://en.howtopedia.org/wiki>

Buried woven basket/clay pot (olla) irrigation is an ancient technology that uses a logical idea. By burying a porous container up to its neck, and filling it with water, a gardener has a 70 percent efficient watering system. Water weeps slowly out of the container and moistens an area about one-half the diameter of the olla. Since soil is not saturated, the environment created is very healthy for the plant roots, which form a mat around the olla. (Many modern gardeners kill plants by overwatering.)

A perfect modern, clay olla has a thick wall, is fired at a high temperature, has rough surfaces, and holds one quart to two gallons of water. Basket ollas of the 19th century were tightly woven baskets covered with pitch to retard seeping. After burying the container and filling it with water, the top was covered with a rock to keep it clean and prevent evaporation. Depending upon the crop and the rainfall, filling the containers two to three times a week was adequate.

To use a modern, clay olla, place it in the middle of several plants so that the plants draw moisture from the center and grow outward onto dry land. This uses the space and the water very efficiently. Smaller ollas may be used to water smaller containers or patio pots.

If the pots lose flow after many years of use, they can be soaked in vinegar to reopen pores. Always use clean or settled water and don't add fertilizer so as not to clog the clay's pores.