

How to make a Veggie Bag
By Judy Moores, Green Sanctuary Committee

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Have you ever been troubled by the number of plastic bags you use as you do your shopping inside the grocery store, particularly in the produce section? Make yourself a generous supply of washable, reusable veggie bags and you can eliminate the plastic bags altogether. A set of bags makes an excellent gift as well, and you can use up old fabric! Please pass along these instructions and spread the idea as we all take steps to reduce our dependence on petroleum products.

You will be making a simple sack with the top folded over to form a sleeve for a string or length of yarn. You can either use cotton, tulle or sheer fabric, but cotton or sheer fabric is easier to work with. The advantage of tulle or sheer fabric is that the bags can be seen through and are lightweight. But cotton is sturdier, and I find that it easy for the check-out clerk to peak in the bag. If you use tulle, check that it does not rip easily.

From a yard of 44-45" cotton fabric, you can make 4 bags. If you use tulle, which usually comes in wider widths, it is possible to get about 6 or more bags from a yard. Tulle is a pain to work with, but it is cheap – about \$2/yard. Cotton can cost from about \$3-10/yard. Here are the instructions for a cotton Veggie bag:

First, using a yard of cotton fabric 44-45" in width, cut the fabric in half between the cut edges to get 2 pieces about 17-18" in length. Then cut each of these pieces along the fold line so that you end up with 4 rectangles about 22" or so inches wide and 17-18" long. If the fabric is patterned, for each rectangle, fold one of the long sides over about 1/4" with the pattern side out and stitch in place. Then fold the same side over again, but this time make the fold about 1" deep and stitch in place along the seamed edge. This makes the sleeve for the top of the bag.

Now fold the piece of fabric (patterned side in) in half at right angles to the stitched side to form the bag – bringing the ends of the sleeve together. Sew a 1/2" seam down the side of the bag starting just at the edge of the sleeve (leaving the sleeve open) and then across the bottom of the bag. It is best to repeat this seam with a zigzag stitch to keep it from unraveling. Turn your bag inside out and using a safety pin, pull a piece of yarn or string through the top sleeve and knot the ends. You will want the tied off yarn to be wider than the bag by about 4". You may wish to weigh your bag and write the tare weight on the bag. I find that the bags – especially of tulle - are so light that they are close to the weight of a plastic bag, that is negligible. For step-by-step instructions for a similar bag, go to wisdomofthemoon.blogspot.com/2008/01/cheap-easy-fabric-produce-bags.html