

Vertical Gardens

Story By: Andrew Frinkle

Henrietta did not have a big yard. She only had a small deck overlooking a tiny piece of grass. It was barely enough yard for her dog to play on. She wanted a garden really bad, but did not have space. What could she do?

For awhile, she just kept a few plants in pots and planters on the deck. They took up space and there was barely any space for her table and chairs. So, she made some flower boxes to put plants in. She hung one on her window and planted fragrant herbs for cooking. She made two more to put on the railings, which were great for flowers. This helped for a time, but she was still itching to plant more.



She finally got an idea: if she couldn't build out, why not build up? She had heard of vertical gardening on TV and from a friend. She had wooden fences all around her little piece of grass, so if she could attach some pots to the fence, she could garden up into that space, and her dog could still play.

She went to the building store and got some supplies. She needed screws, treated lumber, some fasteners, and some pots. It was hard to find pots that would fit what she had in mind, but she had an idea with rain gutters. She looked around to find something else she might be able to use in her vertical garden. There were a lot of options, but one seemed best. Rain gutters were already long troughs that would hold water, so why not plants? She decided to try them.

Back at home, she screwed the boards to her fence rails for bracing. Then she attached the rain gutters on a slight incline, so they would drain. She put caps on the end and extra supports in the middle. Then she filled them with potting soil and planted seeds; she planted three long rows of veggies.

A few days later, there were sprouts, which grew into plants. Weeks later, she was harvesting lettuces and herbs to eat. She went all out then, lining all three walls of her fence with more long rain gutter planters. She had made her vertical garden! Best of all, her dog, Skippy, still had room to run and play.

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Use the information in the story to answer the questions below.

1. What was Henrietta's problem?
 - A. She didn't have space for a party.
 - B. She needed room for a garden.
 - C. She wanted to move to a bigger house.
 - D. She didn't have a green thumb.

2. Which of these ways did Henrietta NOT try to solve her problem?
 - A. flower boxes
 - B. planters
 - C. pots
 - D. renting a garden space

3. Why couldn't Henrietta just garden in her back yard?
 - A. It was against the home owner's code.
 - B. The soil was no good.
 - C. She needed space for her dog.
 - D. There wasn't any rain there.

4. How does Henrietta decide to confront her issue?
 - A. She will build up, not out.
 - B. She will just go to a farm.
 - C. She will buy more fresh food.
 - D. She will just use the grassy area anyway.

5. How would you describe Henrietta's personality?
 - A. smart and nerdy
 - B. lazy and dull
 - C. creative and thoughtful
 - D. rude and mean

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