



# What is a Pit Latrine ?



*Vishnu Maya Siris's temporary pit latrine, Surkhet*



When eating, people will take in and digest any food nutrients they need, and what is left is pushed out of the body - this is called **excrement**, or **faeces**. The proper place to dispose of this is in a **toilet** or **latrine**. Without toilets, excreting in just any place can lead to many problems of health and pollution.

This chapter gives information on how to solve these problems, and at the same time getting more benefits from the toilet.

# Why make a Pit Latrine ?

## What if we don't make a latrine ?

- the environment is dirty
- many types of disease can spread
- there's no use for this local resource
- so the resource is wasted
- self esteem and dignity is lost

Where's the toilet?



To avoid these problems, and to turn our waste into benefits for minimum expense, we can build temporary pit latrines.

## Temporary Pit Latrine - how to get more benefits from the toilet

A pit latrine made from your own local resources is called a **temporary pit latrine**. When the pit of one latrine is full another pit latrine is dug in another place. By doing this you can plant a useful and valuable fruit tree in the fertile pit. Mixing soil and leaf litter with the excrement and urine as it is made means that it quickly rots down to make good compost. These are free nutrients for the fruit tree.

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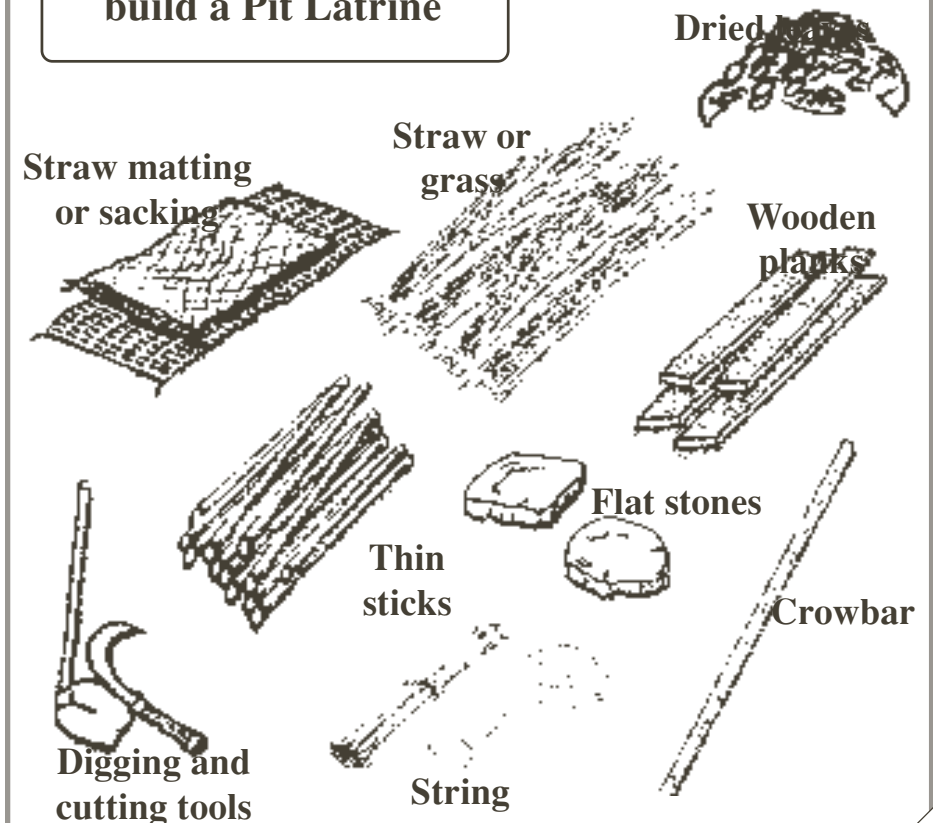


# How to make a Pit Latrine ?

## Where to make the temporary pit latrine ?

The pit latrine should be made on the edge of a field or terrace. Also, you can select a spot according to wherever you want to plant a fruit tree.

### Materials needed to build a Pit Latrine



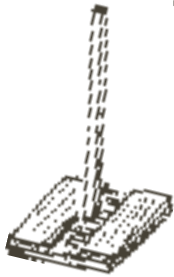
## 1. Digging the Pit

Dig a pit 1-1.5 metres deep and a metre wide. Fill the pit half-full with straw or leaf litter. Don't think the work of digging the pit goes to waste, as you can plant a fruit tree in the pit after it is full.



## 2. The frame and lid

There needs to be strong timber over the pit to support the frame and the weight of a person using the latrine. At right angles to this put smaller sticks, leaving a space for the toilet hole. Fill in all the gaps using sticks and soil. Using planks is best as they join tightly and be kept clean easily. If you can't get planks, then sticks and soil will do. Make a raised footstep either side of the hole. This keeps the feet from getting wet. Finally, make a lid which fits and covers the hole well, keeps flies out, and can be moved easily.



## 3. Covering around the latrine

To surround the latrine so no one can see inside, use straw matting, sacking, cut sticks such as wormwood or morning glory, or even maize stalks. This should include a doorway to make getting in and out easy.



Now your pit latrine is ready to use

## Let's See

## how to make a pit latrine



First dig a pit 1-1.5m deep and 1 metre wide

Fill the pit half full with straw or leaf litter



Now put large timber over the top



Leaving a hole in the centre, fill in the gaps with other sticks or planks

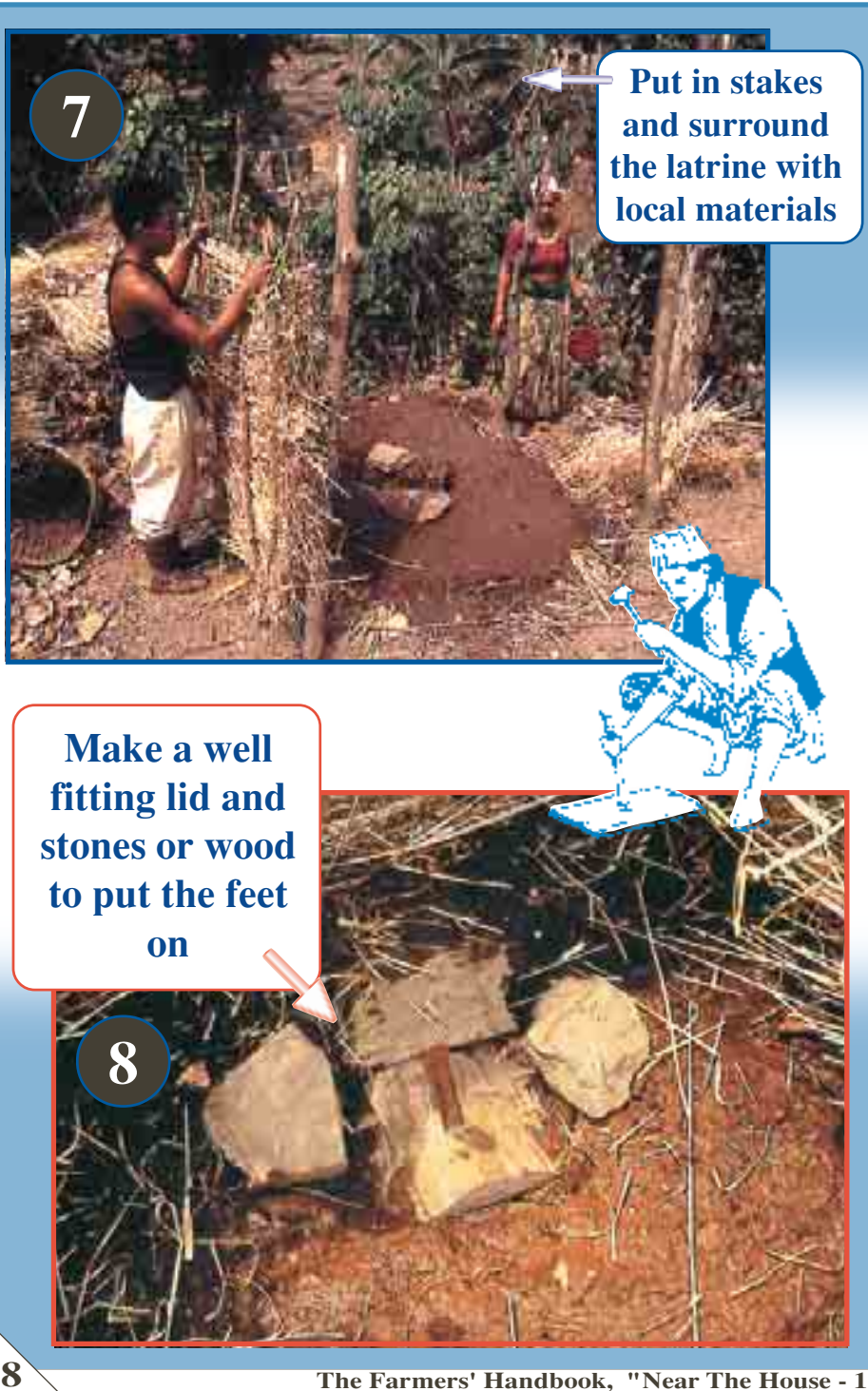


Fill in the smallest spaces with straw and mud



Cover the top with a thick layer of soil





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Put in stakes and surround the latrine with local materials

Make a well fitting lid and stones or wood to put the feet on

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# Maintenance

## How to Maintain the Pit Latrine

### Things to consider when using the pit latrine

Each time you have used the latrine, cover your deposit with soil and/or leaf litter. From time to time add ash which improves the rotting of the excrement. Always keep the lid on the hole.

Putting soil, leaf litter and ash on the excrement prevents flies settling. This also helps micro-organisms to rot down the excrement quicker. This makes nutrients ready for trees planted in the pit. When the pit is full the contents will settle so add an extra foot or 2 of soil on top. If soil, leaf litter, ash, etc. is well mixed as the pit is filled then a seedling can be planted straight away. If these materials aren't mixed in, it takes the excrement a long time to rot down.



This is how, with good use of a latrine's waste, excrement can be turned into a useful resource.

*A permanent toilet can cost \$200 to build. Can we afford this? For us farmers the temporary pit latrine is cheaper AND more useful than an expensive toilet !*

## Farmers' Experience

Mrs Chavi Gurung

From Nepal, Surkhet district, Gumi - 5, Krishnagar, Mrs Chavi Gurung has made a pit latrine for her own household. Now let's hear about her experience.

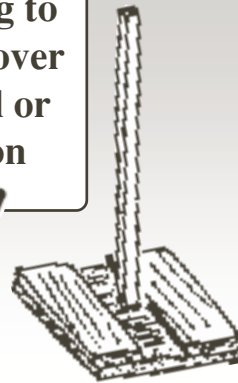


Mrs Chavi Gurung

“ There are lots of benefits from making a pit latrine. Waste is made useful, and the house and yard is kept clean. Before making the latrine, first I dug a round pit. After digging the pit I put planks over the top. I left a hole in the top, and made a lid to fit exactly over the hole. This all stopped the latrine from smelling. After going to the toilet, soil and leaf litter are put in. When this pit is nearly full, we start digging a new pit latrine. On the full pit we add more soil and can plant a mango seedling straight away. I'll be planting another mango in the new one when it's ready. It takes about a year to fill one pit. Now others have seen how easy it is, and are starting to make the same type. ”



After going to the toilet cover it with soil or vegetation



*Always keep the lid when the latrine is not in use*

*When you come out from the latrine wash your hands well with soap or ash*





# Read On !



## Subjects Related to Pit Latrine

In this book benefits can be had from the information about the pit latrine. However, this information is also linked to other methods. For extra benefits let's read, learn and practice from other related chapters.



**House Hygiene chapter**

**Pit Latrine chapter**

**Fruit Tree Planting chapter**

**Building a pit latrine is good for the health. But dangers to health can come from many different places. Information on where dangers come from, and how can we protect ourselves from them is given in this chapter.**



**After raising good seedlings in the fruit nursery, if they're not planted well, all the work can go to waste. Information on more productive planting is given in this chapter.**

