

Tire planters are universally available and inexpensive, making them a great addition to any low-cost outdoor learning environment (OLE) naturalization. Used tires can be found at almost any local car repair shop or tire store—explore options in your community and see if a local business will donate tires for free!

SINGLE TIRE PLANTERS

Wash the tires thoroughly with soap and water to ensure that paint will adhere to the rubber. A non-toxic degreaser may also be required to remove tougher grime.

Prime the tires with a spray primer once dry. This will also help paint adhere to the tires. Allow the primer to fully dry before applying a layer of paint.

Apply a layer of paint once the primer has dried. Commercial grade paint is best but any durable, non-toxic outdoor paint will do. When choosing paint, remember that black tires absorb sunlight and can get hot, which is not good for the plants or children. Painting tires with light colors reflects light and helps keep the plants and children cool. Be creative with decorations, and let the children help—they'll enjoy the OLE "masterpieces."

Fill the tires with soil after choosing the location. Once filled with soil, they will be difficult to move. Add compost to the top layer of soil and mix.

Plant heat-tolerant, non-edible annuals and perennials to bring color and texture to the OLE. Don't plant edibles in recycled tires. They degrade over time so plants may absorb chemicals from the rubber. Once planted, water frequently as plants are likely to dry out quickly.

STACKED TIRE PLANTERS

Stacked tire planters can be used to edge a pathway, create screening, or otherwise define an outdoor space. Repeat steps above. Before filling with soil secure the tires together. Drill holes through the side walls and use three equidistant bolts, each paired with two washers and a nut to join them together. As stacked tires will require additional filler, use poorer grade soil, broken brick, stones, or gravel in a bottom layer if needed.

MATERIALS & TOOLS:

- Old tires
- Primer and non-toxic outdoor paint
- Liquid soap and non-toxic degreaser
- Garden soil and compost
- Drill*
- 2 washers*
- Bolts and nuts*
- Landscape/filter fabric**

*For stacked tires**

*For tires placed on hardscape surface***



A "dragon" made from recycled tires.



Colorful stacked tire planters act as a boundary between play settings.



Children planting in painted tires.

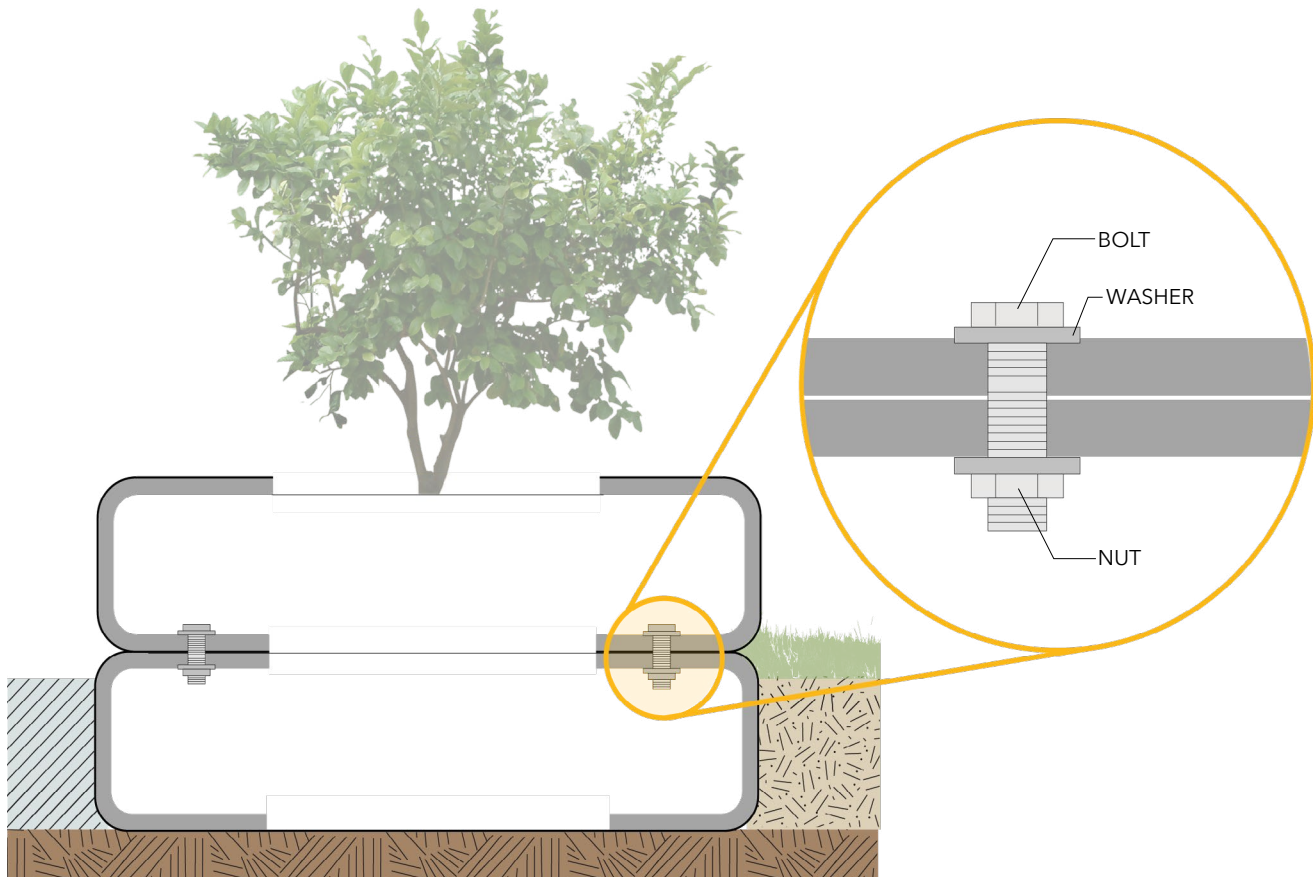
TIRE PLANTERS ON HARDSCAPE

For tire planters on top of hardscape such as asphalt or concrete, line the inside bottom of the tire with landscape fabric before filling with soil to prevent it from "migrating" out of the bottom. Fabric can be held in place by heavy stones. Landscape fabric can be found at most local hardware stores.

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Stacked tire planters painted in light colors.



Bolt stacked tires together before filling with soil.



Cross section of single and double tire planters used to edge a wheeled toy, primary pathway.