

FAQs about Plasticulture Program

(Frequently Asked Questions)

Plasticulture Program

Q: How long can one participate in the program?

A: Each participant has three (3) years on the program, in which the department provides plastic, drip irrigation, and an injector for fertilizer for all three years.

Q: Are there any reimbursements for the money the farmer puts into the crop?

A: Each year, the participant receives up to \$500.00 in reimbursements for money spent on items such as fencing (up to \$500), animal depredation (up to \$50), fertilizer (up to \$200), Scales (up to \$125), and plants (up to \$300). There will be **no** reimbursements for labor for fencing. **Participants must return legible receipts of itemized receipts to ODAFF for reimbursement.**

Q: How does the drip tape irrigation system work?

A: The plastic is laid in the form of a raised bed. The machine used raises the beds, lays the plastic, and puts down the drip line all at once.

Q: How much land will the program provide for?

A: Plot sizes can be no less than ¼ acre, and no more than 1 acre.

Q: Does the farmer have to return any of the profits made to the Dept. of Ag?

A: No, all the department asks is that you keep a record of how much produce was raised and sold and for what price. (A maximum of 50% may be used for personal consumption)

Q: What are some of the requirements of the applicant?

A. The land must be ready and prepared for application.
Must have adequate water supply for irrigation.
Applicant will supply any fertilizer or other chemicals needed.
Applicant will do the planting and harvesting.
Remove and dispose of all plastic, irrigation tubing and any other materials associated with the project.
Soil and water (for pond and well water) tests must be completed by the applicant through a local OSU Extension Office or the Noble Foundation.

Plasticulture Benefits

Q: What are some of the benefits of the Plasticulture program?

A: The Plasticulture Program is designed to help small farmers extend their growing season and production, while minimizing the labor put into weeding and watering crops.

Q: Which vegetables grow best on plastic?

A: Plasticulture allows the grower a little more control over their vegetable production by warming the soil early and keeping the soil warmer longer. The drip irrigation system used with plastic mulch in commercial production, provides a consistent water supply and chemigation/fertigation system and the raised bed which is a component of laying plastic mulch has aided in increased vegetable productivity. These factors make growing in plastic ideal for most vegetables. Plastic works best for above ground plants, but not discriminatory to underground plants such as potatoes, onions, carrots, etc.

Q: There are different colors of plastic mulch. How do the different colors of mulch affect the vegetable grown in them?

A: Plastic mulch comes in several colors, including black, red, white, blue, silver, green yellow and clear. The different colors reflect, absorb, transmit and radiate UV light differently. These properties affect soil and ambient temperature as well as the micro-nutrients and environment of the raised bed under the colored mulch (1). For example, tomatoes and peppers like red mulch. For tomatoes, the red mulch reduces early light but inhibits the spread of certain insects.

Websites to visit for more information on Plasticulture

<http://www.oda.state.ok.us/mktdev-plast.htm>

<http://plasticulture.psu.edu>