

# Laying Plastic in a high tunnel: A Step-by-Step Guide

Cooperative Extension • Delaware State University

*A publication of the Agriculture and Natural Resources Program*

**Why lay plastic?** Plastic aids in weed suppression, as weeds cannot grow without sunlight. Laying plastic retains moisture in the soil, enabling your plants to thrive without having to be watered as frequently. Plastic also helps adjust soil temperature.



## STEP 1:

Prepare the soil and make any necessary soil amendments. Till the soil and make the growing area relatively level. Remove any rocks or debris. The less compacted the soil, the easier the plastic layer will travel over the area.



## STEP 5:

Be sure to drive straight so that the rows are too! Check your progress as you continue to the end of the row.



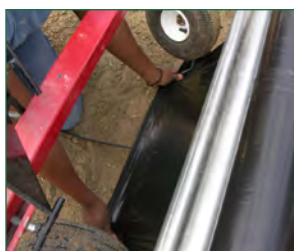
## STEP 2:

Prepare the equipment (plastic layer and a tractor with a PTO shaft). When using a plastic layer, there is the option of laying drip tape for irrigation. The two rear discs will need to be adjusted to the row width and depth. There are various plastic colors available with different benefits and purposes.



## STEP 6:

You may need to cover the sides of the plastic with remaining soil using a shovel. This helps ensure that air will not get underneath your plastic covered row and rip it. This also helps prevent weed growth.



## STEP 3:

It is important to hold both the drip irrigation tape and the plastic at the end of the row. Ensure that the plastic is placed under the two wheels, with the drip tape under the plastic and in the center of the row.



## STEP 7:

The finished product should allow for optimal yield with reduced weeding. Happy planting!



## STEP 4:

Continue holding the plastic and drip tape until you have finished covering the entire row. If you fail to hold down the plastic and tape, the plastic layer will not successfully cover the row, and the drip tape will not run the entire row from end to end.

By Kathryn Carroll and Megan Pleasanton.

**For more information, contact:**

John Clendaniel, AgNR Program Leader  
DSU Cooperative Extension  
jclendaniel@desu.edu, (302) 857-6425

