

Container Gardening



Almost anything can be a container garden



Containers allow you to grow a larger selection of plants



- Containers allow you to push the hardiness zone
- It is an easy and inexpensive way to turn a drab porch/patio into a “dressed up” location
- You get to choose the plant, the container, and the location

Advantages of Gardening in containers

- The soil mix in containers warms up faster, so you can plant earlier.
- Crops can also be grown later into the season and containers are easy to cover to protect from cold/frost.
- You can move containers as the seasons change.
- Containers are easier to weed and they don't have to be tilled or raked.
- Most anything can be grown in a container.
- The Variety of containers is endless. Be creative!

Disadvantages of container gardening

- Soil heats up faster and cools down quickly
- Soil dries out faster
- The planted container is dependent on you for all water and nutrients
- Containers must be cleaned between plantings
- Container grown plants may outgrow the pot and need replanting
- Container grown plants take more time and commitment

Select the plants and Container



What to look for

- Drainage, if the pot does not have drainage holes, make some.
- Color of pot/container...look at the texture and color.
- Size, if you are planting something that will be spending more than one season in the container, think large, not small.



Consider Soil and Water Needs

- Purchased potting soils are compounded to be used in containers.
- Making your own? Use 1/3 compost and 2/3 potting soil.
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- Soil ph should be 5.5-7.0
- How much water?? Stick your finger in the soil, if wet up to the second knuckle the pot is ok.
- If adding water, water until the water runs out the bottom of the drainage hole.
- Saucers? turn them upside down, do not let containers sit in water, unless the plant likes wet feet.

Location and Nutrients

- Where to place the container?
- Plants need 6 – 8 hours of sunlight per day
- Light to read by is usually a suitable location.
- Nutrients? Plants in a container depend on you for all nutrients.
- Feed the plants every week to two weeks if you want continuous blooms. Less frequently for shrubs, trees.
- Follow the directions on the plant food container.

Plants can define garden spaces, add architectural interest & control traffic



Climate –containers are portable

- Heat tolerance is important. Choose plants that are more heat tolerant than the climate. Or plan to move them into an area that is shady part of the day. (above 86 degrees F. is considered to be a heat day according to the American Horticultural Society.) Don't forget reflected heat. (driveways, walls, pools)
- Winter weather is usually what determines container location.
- Extreme temperatures, hot or cold must be considered. A plant's roots may not be as hardy as the upper part of the plant.
- If the soil has frozen, then thaws and refreezes the plant will be pushed up out of the soil. This is called heaving. If the plant survives, it may not be very healthy.
- If trying to determine cold hardiness subtract one or two hardiness zones for containers.
- If the temperature dictates: move the containers into a protected area, or cover with frost blankets.

Containers gardens may hang or hug the ground, creativity is the key.



Highlight a path or add a touch of color



Container gardens can be outside or inside



Locations

- Container gardens are found in private homes, schools, hospitals, shopping malls, libraries, restaurants, theaters, office buildings, and numerous civic facilities and offices.
- Why? plants clean the air and

Plants make people happy

