

Advantages to gardening in a pot

- ♣ *Takes up less space and can be done no matter where you live!*
- ♣ *They are portable! You can take your plants inside on potential frost nights or move them if you realize they are getting too much or too little sun.*
- ♣ *Soil-borne diseases, plant pests such as nematodes, and poor soil conditions can be avoided by using containers.*
- ♣ *Perfect opportunity to reuse something instead of throwing it away...use an old boot, teapot, wagon, kiddie pool, or anything else that would hold a plant! Don't forget to drill drainage holes in whatever you are using.*

Other tips for successful container gardening...

- ♣ Increase light exposure by placing reflective materials, such as foil, suncatchers, or white surfaces, around the plant.
- ♣ Be sure to clean and sterilize used pots! To avoid spreading disease previous plants may have had in those pots, soak your used pots in a solution of one part bleach or hydrogen peroxide and 10 parts warm water. Scrub the pots to remove mineral build-up and rinse. Once dry, you can begin planting!
- ♣ If you are unable or prefer not to drill drain holes in your pot, put a layer of gravel or broken pot shards in the bottom of the container before putting in your soil.
- ♣ Container gardens in general require more watering than gardens in the ground. Check your plants frequently to ensure they have enough water.
- ♣ Do not use yard soil for your container plants. Use potting soil or 'soilless mix' or 'substrate.'

Sources: Arizona Master Gardener Manual: Container Gardening:
<http://ag.arizona.edu/pubs/garden/mg/vegetable/container.html>

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Container Gardening....

Gardening isn't just for your yard anymore. If you live in an apartment or lack the space or time to have a big garden, you can still grow just about anything in a container if you use the right one.



Containers

In choosing a container, keep these things in mind:

- 1) they are large enough to hold the plant when it is full grown.
- 2) they have holes for drainage.
- 3) they have never held products that could be toxic to plants or humans.

Your options are wide open! You can use plastic, wood, clay, metal or any other container from the size of a tin can to a large barrel. There are some pros and cons to different kinds of containers.

Plastic: It is lightweight, easy to clean, holds up in all temperatures, and retains moisture well. They can hold too much water, possibly damaging plants that prefer drought conditions and are not as decorative and pretty as other options.

Wood: Blends in well with the natural environment and can be quite beautiful. Wood breathes, which is beneficial to plants. They can be expensive and have a tendency to rot.

Cedar makes a good plant container as it is resistant to rot. Avoid using treated wood.

Metal: Galvanized metal is beautiful, inexpensive and will not rust. If placed in direct sunlight, they can absorb a lot of heat and dry the soil out faster.

Clay: Often very artistic with various shapes and designs and their porous nature is ideal for drought-loving plants. These cannot be left out in freezing temperatures as they will crack and the soil tends to dry out quickly. Large containers can be very heavy.

Choosing what to grow

Though almost anything can be grown in a container, flowers, herbs and vegetables that require less space are best. Examples of vegetables include: lettuce, carrots, and radishes. Other vegetables ideal for container gardening are those that produce fruit over time, such as peppers or tomatoes.

To mulch or not to mulch...

As with yard gardens, you may choose to use mulch to help prevent weed growth, hold moisture in the soil and protect soil from erosion, heat and cold. Mulch can also be used with container gardening. In fact, because of the smaller space, you can afford to be more creative in choosing a mulch. Use beach glass, river stones, marbles, slate or other materials.

Be sure not to put mulch directly where the stem comes out of the dirt as it may cause stem rot.