

Put A Little Green In Your Life

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Container Gardening



Even if you don't have a large garden spot at your disposal, you can still grow fresh produce in containers. Small container gardening is a quick and easy way to increase indoor and outdoor gardening space. Plants in containers can fill nooks, add a garden touch to decks or patios, and bring the outdoors inside to extend the growing season.

Almost any vegetable that will grow in a typical backyard garden will also do well as a container-grown plant. Vegetables that are ideally suited for growing in containers include tomatoes, peppers, eggplant, green onions, beans, lettuce, squash, radishes and parsley. Pole beans and cucumbers also do well in this type of garden, but they do require considerably more space because of their vining growth habit.

Any growing media must provide water, nutrients, and a physical support in order to grow healthy plants. A good growing media must also drain well. Drainage is especially important in container gardening. Synthetic or soilless mixes are well suited for vegetable container gardening and may be composed of sawdust, wood chips, peat moss, perlite, or vermiculite.

Almost any type of container can be used for growing vegetable plants. For example, try using bushel baskets, drums, gallon cans, tubs or wooden boxes. The size of the container will vary according to the crop selection and space available (see right).

Container gardening, however you choose to do it, is very rewarding!

What to Grow

The size of your container will help you to determine which plant is best suited to grow in it.

5 Gallon Containers

- tomatoes
- peppers
- eggplant

1 to 2 gallon containers

- chard
- dwarf tomatoes

6 to 10 inch pots

- green onion
- parsley
- herbs
-

Smaller container sizes

- some herbs
- lettuce
- radish crops



The Dirt on Compost



Very simply put - **compost** is plant matter that has been decomposed and recycled as a fertilizer and soil amendment. Dig a little deeper though, and you'll find that composting is a millennia old science that has helped mankind improve the quality of their soil for growing plants.

Not only does setting up a compost bin at home cut down on around 30% of the waste/trash of an average home, it can also give any garden a big boost! Several factors affect the quality of your compost - Surface area, aeration, moisture, internal temperature, outside temperature, and carbon to nitrogen ratio.

A healthy compost pile with all of these factors in balance and working in harmony will produce rich, dark compost, with a nice earthy aroma. Microorganisms do the major work in a healthy compost bin, but they do enjoy a little help from you in the form of compost aeration (turning the compost to add oxygen).

- Cardboard or clean paper
- Dried Out Egg Shells
- Leaves, Yard Trimmings
- Fruits, Vegetables, Coffee and Tea
- Manure from herbivores (cows, horses, pigs, rabbits, etc)

Meat, dairy, and other animal products are not recommended for composting as they can encourage the growth of undesirable anaerobic bacteria. To learn more about the science of composting, please visit howtocompost.org



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