

Container Gardening

Or How to Garden Almost Anywhere!



How do we garden? How many ways...

Funky blue jeans garden



**Thriller/filler/spiller
container garden**



Garden in a WHAT?!

- Pressed paper – biogradable, vegetables
- Coir – husks, inexpensive
- Ceramic – heavy, colorful, \$\$ range
- Terracotta – clay, fragile, permeable
- Fiberglass and Resin – lightweight, durable
- Plastic – generally cheapest, many sizes
- Wood – attractive, eventually rots
- Metal – durable, handle heavy plants
- Concrete – better with age, large plants

Pros & cons of container materials



Straw bale garden: “C” or “RB”?

- Allows us to garden in almost any location.
- City, suburbs, country.
- Poor growing conditions: soil, sunlight, space.
- • Good for people with disabilities or mobility problems.
- • Low cost/low input.
- • Easy to be successful.
- • Start sooner in spring.

Reasons for container gardening

- Plan
- Place
- Pots/containers
- Potting Media
- Plants or Seed
- Provide Water & Nutrients



What do you Need?



Have fun! Grow something!

- Limited mobility?
Garden while seated!
- Match height of
container /height of
chair
- Locate container
where safely
accessible
- Make sure water
source nearby or use
drip irrigation



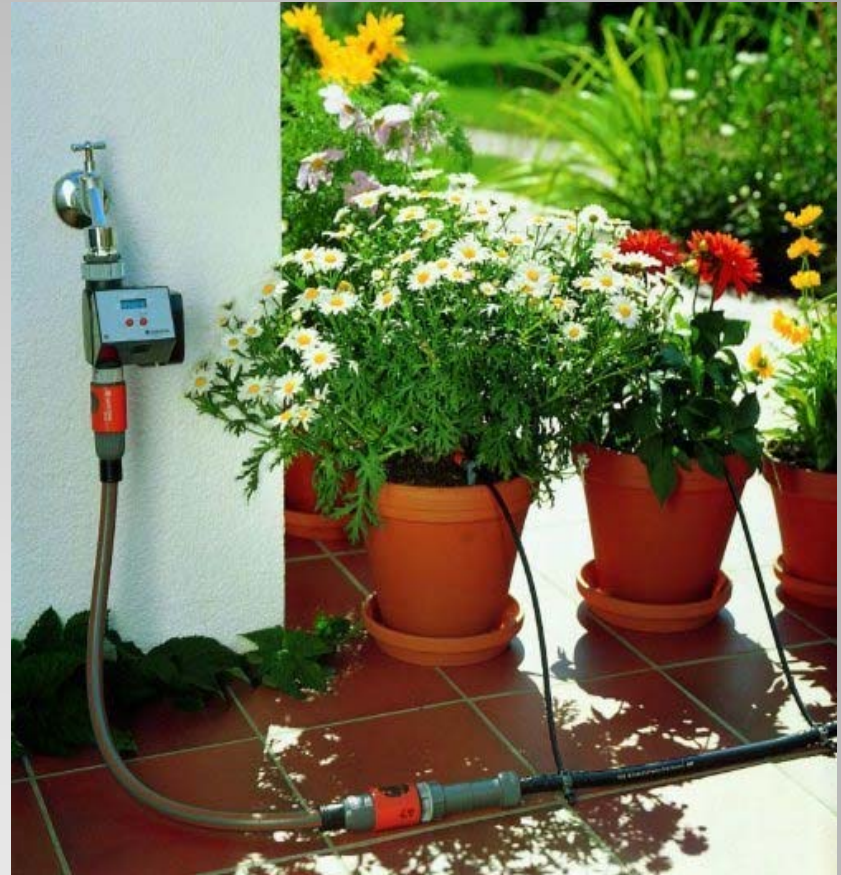
Container gardening sitting

- Locate container in permanent location
- (it will be heavy)
- Consider material
- Consider aesthetics
- Ensure excellent drainage
- Consider water source



Container on legs

- Best drip systems apply water slowly & directly to roots
- Reduces fluctuations in soil moisture
- Need backflow device
- Battery operated timer



Drip Irrigation for container gardens

- Uses basic materials
- 2 litre plastic soda bottle with lid
- Add commercial watering spikes
- Drill holes in cap
- Remove bottom of bottle w/ sharp knife
- Dig hole, bury 1/3 of bottle cap side down
- Add fertilizer to bottle every few weeks



DIY container watering system

- Drainage holes
- Bottom vs sides
- No holes?
- ½ inch layer of gravel
- Or
- Pot-in-Pot



Drainage – a priority

- ROT = Rule of Thumb
- Group plants with similar needs
- Just like landscape beds
- How much sun
- How much water
- How much fertilizer
- Group fragrances



Group plants with similar needs

- Container soil is a challenge due to small volume of media used to support plant growth
- Desirable traits:
 - Water and nutrient retention
 - High porosity to ensure good aeration and root growth
 - Low bulk density (fluffy and light)
 - Free from weeds, diseases, human pathogens
 - Not soil from your garden by itself

The right soil for containers



Check significant differences

- Commercial mixes: “Container Mix” or “Self-watering container mix”
- Organic blend: 5 gallons finished compost, 1 gal. sand, 1 gal. vermiculite or perlite, 1 cup granular all purpose fertilizer (organic)
- Standard blend: 1 bushel vermiculite, 1 bushel ground spagnum moss, 8 Tbsp superphosphate (0-20-0), 8 Tbsp ground limestone, 2 cups bone meal
- Garden soil: 25% sand, 25% garden soil, 50% finished compost

The right soil...

- Some potting mixes include fertilizer
- Some don't
- Check label
- Container plant roots can't spread into surrounding soil
- Need to replenish soil nutrients regularly



Fertilizers and Feeding – what's best?



Grow lettuce and corn in containers!

- Bush beans
- Beets
- Carrots
- Cabbage
- Swiss chard
- Cucumbers
- Leaf lettuce

- Bell peppers
- Summer squash
- Tomatoes
- Turnips
- Eggplant
- Kale
- Green onions

Vegetables for containers



Patio tomatoes BR AL



Container carrots and cabbage

- Container size
- Not enough sun
- Too much water
- Too little water
- Overcrowding
- Chilly roots
- Starving plants

**Common mistakes for
containers gardens**



in

- Anise Basil
- Caraway Dill
- Chives Parsley
- Fennel Coriander
- Chervil Savory
- Lovage Mint
- Majoram Thyme
- Tarragon Lemon
balm



Other plants suitable for containers

- Zinnia
- Ivy geranium
- Sedum
- Gomphrena
- Texas sage (salvia greggii)
- Scented geraniums
- Petunia
- Verbena
- Heliotrope
- Dwarf dahlias



Movable, colorful, easy to change and arrange

- Terra cotta (clay) pots
- ½ of whiskey barrel
- Plastic tubs or buckets
- Hay bales
- Earth box (pictured)
- Upside down containers
- Containers on wheels
- Bushel basket



Types of containers



Thriller - Filler - Spiller

Perlite – crumbled takeout container



Other ingredients



More of What plants like

- Scrub old pots with 10% bleach solution before re-using
- Season new clay pots by submerging them in water for 15 mins prior to filling with soil
- Add sand to bottom of container to keep tall plants from tipping over
- Non-biodegradable styrofoam packing peanuts used instead of stones for drainage in bottom of pots to reduce weight

Container Gardening Tips, the sequel

- Slightly pre-moisten soil before putting in pots.
- Sphagnum peat works best with warm water
- Drainage holes work best if on sides of containers rather than bottom; excess water drains out better (contested suggestion)
- Choose right size container for plants
- 1-2 gal: pepper, chard
- 4-5 gal: tomato, cucumber
- 6-10" diameter pots: greens, beets, radishes, onions, lettuce

Container Tips and more Tips

- Type of container
- Soil mix
- Drainage
- Selecting plants
- How big will they get
- Watering
- Fertilizing
- Maintenance
- Pests/diseases



**So many ways to grow in containers:
consider these**

Not only soil goes into planters.

Tip: use one third soil, two thirds Styrofoam packing peanuts

Some add pantyhose or fabric between peanuts & soil (optional)

Add soil on top of peanuts



What about those big mall planters?

- Drainage
- Water
- Fertilizer



Big Three Considerations



The End and a Beginning