

CONTAINER GARDENING BASICS

WHAT IS CONTAINER GARDENING?

Container gardening, or pot gardening, is the practice of growing plants, including edible plants, exclusively in containers instead of planting them in the ground. Containers can range from simple plastic pots or teacups to complex automatic watering irrigation systems. The flexibility of design is another reason it is gaining popularity with growers. Container gardens can be found on front porches, back patios and steps, and on rooftops and balconies.

THE PROS AND CONS OF CONTAINER GARDENING

Benefits

- **Containers Require Very Little Space** – You can start growing vegetables with as little as 1 square foot of space. It's an ideal choice for people living in small spaces such as apartments, townhomes, or condos.
- **Containers Are Movable** – Growing vegetables in containers allows you to move your garden as needed. If your plants require more sun, you can adjust their placement as the sun moves throughout the day. You can also easily protect your plants if adverse weather moves through the area.
- **Fewer Weeds To Pull** – Containers require far less maintenance than a full vegetable garden. When your plants are isolated, they do not have the level of weed growth you have with a traditional garden.
- **Less Physical Effort Needed** – If you have any kind of back problems or other physical disability, growing in containers will limit the amount of tilling, weed pulling, and shoveling needed.
- **Creative Options** – With containers, you can easily change the arrangements and design of your garden. You can experiment with different plants, arrangements, and even grow flowers among your vegetables. Changing this in a traditional garden requires significantly more effort.
- **Gardening Becomes More Accessible** – Container gardening makes gardening more accessible for people with limited mobility, including children and the elderly.
- **Keeps Costs At A Minimum** – You won't have to purchase much in the way of garden tools and equipment and smaller containers will keep the cost of seeds low.
- **Fewer Issues With Insects** – Insects are less likely to find plants on your balcony than in your garden, but if they do, it is easier to detect and destroy any infected areas.
- **Containers CAN BE RECYCLED** – Gardeners can recycle or up-cycle containers such as coffee cans, kiddie pools, plastic milk jugs, and wooden wine crates.



Disadvantages

- **Constant Water Required** – Containers do not retain water for long periods of time. Unlike a backyard garden, vegetable roots in containers cannot tap into water present in the soil. You can expect to water every day, and sometimes twice per day in the spring and summer.
- **Containers Can Be Expensive** – If you have some specific ideas about what you want your containers to look like, you may need to pay a little more for those. The cost will often depend on the size of the container and can run from \$50 to \$200, depending on the size and material.
- **Growing Space Is Limited** – Even the largest containers can limit and inhibit the growth of certain seeds. When roots can't grow freely, plants may end up being smaller and less vigorous.
- **Soil Needs To Be Replenished** – The soil in containers needs to be replenished every year. Fertilizing the existing soil is not sufficient to maintain optimum growing conditions in containers. For large containers, this process can be time-consuming and tedious.
- **Roots Are Vulnerable** – Some containers, especially metal, clay, and dark plastic ones, conduct heat, exposing various roots to wide temperature variations.

SOME HELPFUL ONLINE SOURCES FOR CONTAINER GARDENING

<http://yougrowgirl.com/resources/container-gardening-guide/>

<http://www.bhg.com/gardening/vegetable/vegetables/growing-vegetables-in-containers/>

<http://www.tastefulgarden.com/Growing-Tomatoes-in-Containers-d9.htm>

