

Planning Your Container Garden

Container gardening is a great way to maximize the little space you have while still growing what you want! Always match the container size to the proper use a light soil, ensure adequate sunlight and don't let the plants get too top heavy.

Benefits of growing in containers

It is convenient and accessible.

Less space = less maintenance = less time! This is a great option for busy individuals or families.

While the initial up-front cost might be a little more, once plants are established costs are minimal.



Even old Coca-Cola bottles can be used as upcycled containers for a garden! Above on the left is picture of onions placed into cut outs in coke bottle filled with media. On the right, those same onions have germinated and are ready for harvesting!

Choosing your containers

Anything that can hold soil AND has drainage holes is suitable for container gardening. Without good drainage, plants could sit in stagnant water. Some examples of ordinary items that can be used are milk cartons that are cut in half, 5 gallon buckets, colanders, and recyclable shopping bags. The container's size will be determined by the plant selected.

Generally shallow rooted crops like lettuce, radishes, and herbs can be planted in smaller containers (milk jugs, coffee cans) while tomatoes, squash, peppers, pole beans, and cucumbers need larger containers (like a 5-gallon bucket) for their deep roots.

Use the right soil

A lightweight soil mix or "media" is needed for container gardening. Soil from the garden is not recommended as it is too heavy and compacted. You can find pre-packaged media at any local garden center.

Consider environmental factors

Know the preferred amount of sunlight and water for the plants you are growing. One advantage of container gardening is that plants are movable which means you can adjust their location based on changes throughout the season.

Wind can be a problem for container gardens. Be sure that your plants are not too top heavy so they don't fall over.