



5 Easy Steps to Container Gardening

Any patio or porch can play host to a vegetable crop or gorgeous flower garden when you garden in containers. Container gardening gives you lots of flexibility with size, function, portability, and style. In addition, planting in a container is incredibly simple!

Follow these five simple steps to creating your very own container garden to get you started. Also take a look at the common mistakes to avoid when container gardening. If you need any more help, stop by and see us. We'd be glad to help!

1. Choose your container: Just about any container can be used for your mini garden. Consider these guidelines:

- Avoid narrow openings – it'll be too hard to plant in!
- There are pros and cons to each container material: Ceramic pots will last a long time, but require drainage holes. Plastic pots will deteriorate more quickly, but tend to hold moisture. Terra cotta will dry out quickly, so you'll need to water often. Wooden containers may be susceptible to rot unless treated; and the chemicals used to treat them could harm your plants. Redwood and cedar are great wood choices. They can be used without treating, staining or painting; and are rot resistant.
- Let the size and number of plants determine your container size - but don't go too small because the plants will dry out too quickly!
- Ensure your container has adequate drainage. If necessary, drill drainage holes in the bottom of the container about ½". If holes are larger, add a layer of gravel on the bottom of the pot to help retain the soil. Consider also placing the container up on blocks or bricks so that the water will drain out and away.
- Light colored containers will do better in hot areas as they won't absorb as much heat.
- Don't forget to coordinate the color of the container with the colors of flowers or plants you'll be using.
- Keep in mind that you'll need to bring your containers indoors during the winter months – most materials won't survive long if left out in the elements.

2. Planting Mix: When planting in a container, your planting mix should be very nutrient rich. **Warner's Potting Soil** and **Black Gold Potting Soil** are both good choices. If you're planting a specialty indoor plant (such as cactus), consider using a specialty soil formulated specifically for that type of plant. Your compost will also make

an excellent potting soil, but will need to be combined with another mulch or sand; depending on what type of plants you're planting.

Fill your container with your planting mix, leaving the top two inches clear to plant in.

3. Choose your Plants: Choose flowers that will complement each other. It's good to have plants of varying heights; including some tall, medium, and trailing plants to drape over the sides. Colors that contrast drastically will make your container "pop"!

Also take into consideration the water, soil, sun, feeding and other requirements of your plants and make sure that the plants you choose for each container have similar needs.

Some great annuals for your container include:

Proven Winners

Lobelia

Diascia

Bacopa

Nemesia

4. Fertilizing: Annuals tend to use nutrients quickly, especially in a container where there is nowhere else for them to grab them from. Therefore, you will want to fertilize regularly. We recommend using a liquid fertilizer with every other watering. Liquid fish emulsion or seaweed are excellent organic options, but keep in mind that your plants need a variety of nutrients.