

Growing Container Gardens

Growing Tips



Lack of gardening space does not have to limit your ability to grow flowers or vegetables. Growing in containers allows opportunities almost anywhere on patios, decks, porches, balconies or indoors under lights. Plants can be arranged in different ways to take advantage of colors, textures, and blooming times. Located close to the kitchen, container gardens are excellent for growing herbs. Weather can make container gardening challenging. Extreme heat, coupled with high winds, can quickly dry the relatively small root area of the container plants. This can be minimized by careful selection of plants, media, site selection, and watering methods.

Containers

Containers are available in a variety of sizes and styles. The size of the container will depend on the eventual size of the plants it will contain. The container will also affect the size of the plant and how often it will require water. Make sure the container has holes in the bottom for the excess water to drain.

Soil Mix

A well aerated, well drained, lightweight medium is best for growing plants in containers. The growing medium must support the plants and provide water and nutrients. It is not a good idea to use plain garden soil for container plants. It will not drain readily and may contain disease or insect pests. Most soilless mixes contain three or more of these ingredients: sphagnum peat, compost, pine bark, perlite, vermiculite, and a wetting agent.

Plant Selection

Choose plants that are adapted to the site and that are pleasing in form and color. Vegetables that produce fruit, such as tomatoes, beans, peppers, etc; require at least six hours of full sun to be productive. Leaf and root vegetables can get by with fewer hours of direct sun. Flowers should also be selected according to the amount of sunlight they will receive.

Maintenance

Check containers for moisture in the morning when plants are freshest. It is normal to see a little stress during the heat of the day. Soil moist is a polymer granule which can help conserve moisture in container plantings. Mix into the planting medium at planting. Containers use up nutrients in their limited soil supply and need regular feeding. A well-balanced fertilizer is adequate for most containers. Fertilizers come in several forms; granular, water soluble and slow release varieties. You can use a mild water soluble fertilizer with Superthrive added at planting. Myke for Annuals and Perennials can be placed under the plants roots if you prefer to use a granulated product. After planting containers, feed them about every two weeks. Alternate between a Rooting and Blooming formula and a balanced fertilizer such as Miracle-Gro. Always follow label instruction as too much fertilizer will cause salts to build up injuring plant's roots. Lastly, timely pinching and dead-heading can promote quicker bloom times and reduce legginess. The plant's energy is then allowed to concentrate in forming new blooms and shoots. Always prune any dead or damaged foliage.



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