



# Container Gardening Basics

Pinched for space? Unsure about digging up your yard to start a garden? Give container gardening a try!

## YOU MIGHT BE A CONTAINER GARDENER IF:

- You are new to gardening and want to start small.
- You only have a patio or porch to grow on.
- You would rather not spend a lot of time bending and crouching.

## BE CREATIVE

Reuse old plastic totes, clay or ceramic pots, wooden boxes or barrels, laundry baskets, you name it. Or make your own out of bricks, wood, or rocks.



### SUN

Most vegetables need 6 to 8 hours of direct sunlight per day to be productive. Move your containers around to catch the best sun.

### FRUITING VEGGIES

like tomatoes, peppers, and eggplant need the most sun.



### ROOT VEGGIES

Radishes, carrots, beets, and other root veggies need about 6 hours of sun.



### LEAFY VEGGIES

Spinach, lettuce, collards, kale and other leafy vegetables can get by with 4 hours of sun.



## CONTAINERS

Choose a container with at least 1 hole in the bottom. Different sizes work best for different plants.

### 5 gal. buckets or tubs work best for:

- Tomatoes
- Peppers
- Eggplant
- Cabbage
- Broccoli
- Cauliflower

### 3 gal. pots or rectangular tubs work best for:

- Lettuce
- Spinach
- Radishes
- Carrots
- Beets
- Herbs like basil, cilantro, or dill

### SPACE

Think big or small. It's up to you. Start with 1 or 2 containers and add more as you get the hang of it.

### SOIL

#### A good potting mix will contain:

- Peat
- Vermiculite
- Perlite

You can get potting mix from garden centers or hardware stores.

Use a good "soiless" potting mix. Avoid regular soil from your yard or garden - it won't allow water to drain from your container.



Brought to you by Grow Well Missouri. Contact Bill McKelvey, University of Missouri, 573.882.4973.

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# Steps to Container Gardening

Whether you have a little space or want to ease into gardening, make your vegetable garden fit your needs by growing it in a container.

## WHAT YOU NEED:



sun



potting soil



water



container  
(with 1 or more holes  
in the bottom)



seeds  
or transplants

### STEP 1. FILL



Add soil and get settled in by lifting and gently dropping the container a few times.

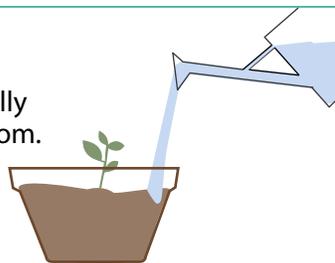
You can also gently press the soil down with your hand.

**Grow Well Tip:** Leave 2 inches between the top of the container and the top of the soil to leave space for watering.

### STEP 3. WATER

Water potting soil until it is fully soaked and runs out the bottom.

Add more soil if the water settles too far below 2 inches from the top.



**Grow Well Tip:** Test soil moisture with your finger. If it is dry 2 inches below the surface, add water.

### STEP 5. REPLENISH

- 1 At the end of the year or when you want to replant, dump your potting mix onto a tarp.
- 2 Remove any old roots or plant parts.
- 3 Add a scoop of aged compost (1 part compost to 3 parts potting soil).
- 4 Store in garbage can or plant container in a sheltered location until next planting.
- 5 Add some fertilizer to mix at planting time.
- 6 Plant!

### STEP 2. PLANT

#### TRANSPLANTS

Use these young, small plants for a quick start on: **or**

Tomatoes  
Peppers  
Broccoli  
Cabbage

#### SEEDS

Are cheaper and work better for:

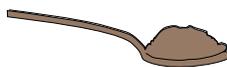
Lettuce  
Radishes  
Carrots  
Spinach



**Grow Well Tip:** Avoid overcrowding. Imagine your plants fully grown - this is how much space they need when planted.

### STEP 4. FERTILIZE

Try these fertilizer options to ensure your plants get what they need:



#### Granular Organic

Sprinkle a couple of spoonfuls on the surface and mix into the top 2 inches of potting soil. Use every 2-3 weeks on moist soil for best results.



#### Slow Release

Found at your garden or hardware store, these will slowly release nutrients over a few months.



#### Water Soluble

Mix ½ strength based on label directions. Use every other time you water.

# Watch it grow, pick & enjoy!

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