



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.

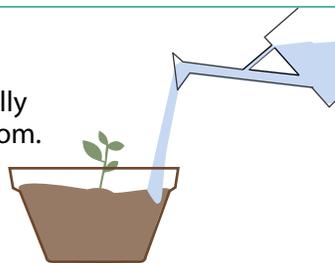
You can also gently press the soil down with your hand.

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:

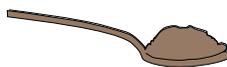
Lettuce
Radishes
Carrots
Spinach



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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