

## GARDENING IN CONTAINERS

It's not necessary to have a large, sprawling piece of land to enjoy gardening. Container gardening is appropriate in nearly all cases including apartment gardening, balcony gardening, poor soil conditions on current properties, easy mobility during weather changes, or when attempting to achieve an artistic statement.

Whatever the reason, container gardening can be done anywhere. Indoor gardens are increasingly popular and can be done year-round. Everything from windowsill herb gardens to foyer container groupings can be successfully established if you do not neglect the plants' needs and stay aware of environmental changes.

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**Feng Shui** (pronounced fung shwei) is also incorporated in container gardens on many levels. The art and practice of Feng Shui utilizes plant groupings within specific areas, or "troubled zones," of the living or working habitat. This method of bringing live plants into the living area is used by interior designers and decorator and by those looking for peace, harmony, and balanced relationships of their own.



Add a small indoor fountain and you will have a happy tranquil space in your home or

office. A tabletop fountain can be purchased ready-made, or you can make one from small pots and a water pump. All you'll need is an electrical outlet.

Further information on container gardening can be found at [www.gardenguides.com](http://www.gardenguides.com)

Or call your local county UC Extension Master Gardener Office. [www.mastergardeners.org](http://www.mastergardeners.org)



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# A Garden in a Pot



## A Guide to Container Gardening for Apartments, Patios, & Balconies

## APARTMENT GARDENING IN CONTAINERS

No matter what type of environment you live in, finding space for an outdoor garden is easy when gardening in containers. Container gardening gives you the opportunity to work with small environments, such as apartment balconies and patios. For the city dweller, using containers brings the beauty and design of a landscape without the weekly mowing or weeding.

The smallest of areas can boast a crop of vegetables or flower gardens in containers,



such as planter boxes, hanging baskets, or flowerpots. You can even grow dwarf fruit trees if enough sun is given to

the plant. The possibilities are unlimited, but some guidelines can help with the success of your potted garden.

- Avoid smaller pots. Small pots restrict the growth of the root and can dry out much quicker.
- Make sure your pots have drainage holes at least 1/2 inch across and containers are located in an area which allows free drainage.
- Glazed ceramic pots are ideal for container gardens. They will not dry out like terracotta and they tend to withstand weather conditions better.
- It is a good idea to line the bottoms of hanging basket with moss for better water retention.



Now that you have gathered your containers and soil and are ready to create your own outdoor retreat, it's time to select plants. But how do you know which varieties to select? Perennials

can be chosen, limiting replacements each year. Annuals can add color and can be changed out as the seasons change. They include impatiens, marigolds, coleus, periwinkles, ferns, and more. Perennials that are good in pots are marguerites, dwarf camellias, artemesia, geraniums, and other slow-growing shrubs. Dwarf trees such as Japanese maple add color in the fall and beautiful leaves in the spring and summer.

### VEGETABLES

Choose vegetables by season: Tomatoes, peppers and summer squash for the summer

months; broccoli, cauliflower, lettuce and onions for winter and early spring. Try a container full of herbs. There's nothing better than fresh picked herbs in your cooking.

### DWARF FRUIT TREES

Miniature or dwarf citrus, plum, or fig can be grown on a balcony with a sunny location. Choose a variety of containers and species to create an outdoor room with trees. They also add a privacy screen when you need it. A pineapple guava can also be used as a wind break.



Check with your local nursery to find out what would grow best in your location and enjoy the beauty and fun of having an apartment garden.



### Transferring Plants To New Containers

1. Use a lightweight soil mix. Be sure to choose one formulated for potted plants. Wet the soil well and let it sit overnight before using.
2. Make sure the new pot is at least 2 inches larger in diameter than the old and has at least a 1/2 inch drain hole in the bottom. Place a generous amount of soil at the bottom of your new container. The root ball should sit at the same level at which it was growing before. Work and loosen the moistened soil. Add a slow-release fertilizer if you wish.
3. Remove plant gently from its growing pot. Tap the bottom while holding the top. When out of the old pot, loosen the roots if they are tightly wound on the bottom.
4. Place plant in new container and fill almost to the top. Tamp down soil. Water well.