

Container Gardening For Small Spaces

By Bettylou Sandy

Growing vegetable in containers can be for small spaces, temporary residence, moveable gardens, exterior design, accent gardens, **able gardening** for limited mobility of the gardener, or just for fun and nutrition!

These days it is important to know where our food comes from and have an available food source close by. What better way to have your own healthy food than to grow it yourself!

Even in small or temporary space, you can grow your own food in containers of all sizes and shapes! As long as you consider the needs of each plant for root growth, sunlight, food, water and soil needs, you will be eating from your containers in just a few weeks!

1. Find a space that receives at least 8 hours of full sunlight each day.
2. Find suitable containers from around your home, garage, shed, or even the side of the road...
 - a. Buckets with holes in the bottoms
 - b. Rubbermaid type totes with drainage holes in the bottom
 - c. Plastic, pottery or ceramic pots and containers
3. Decide on the food you want to grow
4. Learn the needs of each food
5. Plan the soil for the containers for the plants that will grow there:
 - a. Potting soil and compost

- b. Potting soil, compost and sand
 - c. Mostly sand, and compost
 - d. Extra lime for some vegetables
 - e. Extra composted manures for others
6. Match up the containers with the needs of the plants
- a. Root depth,
 - b. Space to spread out
 - c. Deep enough for a trellis, or way to connect a trellis to is
7. Arrange the containers in their positions for growing
8. Add moistened soil to the proper containers
- a. If the soil is not moistened before the plants go in, the soil will take the water before the plants have a chance
9. Water the plants before planting
- a. Soak larger seeds for a few hours before planting to help them germinate sooner
10. Plant the plants, or seeds, with enough space between them for them to grow to maturity
- 11. Collect rain water to water your plants, or leave your water containers out, at least overnight, to let the chlorine dissipate from it.**
- a. Tap water has chlorine in it to kill harmful bacteria in the water pipes.
 - b. Chlorine will also kill beneficial bacteria in the soil
12. Water the plants well to give them a good start

13. Water the plants or seeds daily for two weeks so they will establish their roots in the soil.
14. After two weeks, water as needed
 - a. For instance, cucumbers need daily, even watering; tomatoes need deep watering twice a week.
 - b. Learn about each vegetable needs
 - c. Plants in containers need more watering and care than those in framed raised beds or in the ground because of heating of the container sides.
15. Each plant will be ready for harvesting in its own time and continue with good care.
16. Enjoy your harvest and plan to plant again
 - a. Cold crops April through June and August through October
 - b. Winter growing, April through April and October to April
 - c. Warm weather crops May through September