

Container Gardens

Container gardens are a great way to exercise your green thumb without planting a full blown garden. Here are a few tips for your container garden.

Containers

1. Use a bigger container. It holds more soil and, therefore, holds moisture longer and some vegetables need deeper and larger containers to grow.
2. Plastic or wooden containers don't leach moisture from the soil like clay containers and require less frequent watering.
3. Small containers often cannot store enough water to get the plants through a hot day.
4. Dark colours absorb heat and will require more watering.
5. Avoid treated wood, as the chemicals may leach into your vegetables.
6. Make sure the container has drainage holes, and line the container with landscaping cloth so the soil doesn't wash out of the holes.
7. Put about an inch of stone or gravel in the bottom to improve drainage.



Soil

1. Garden soil is not ideal for container gardens. It is too heavy and doesn't offer enough air, water or nutrients to plants in a container. A good potting mix is best.
2. Fertilize about twice a month to help replenish nutrients. Fish or seaweed-based fertilizers are a better option than a chemical-based fertilizer.

Planting

1. Don't crowd your plants.
2. Water soil completely and let it sit to absorb excess before you plant.
3. Follow the sowing directions on the seed package. You may want to plant a few more as not all seeds will germinate and you can weed out the extras as they grow.
4. Plant what you will eat. There is no sense in growing tomatoes if you don't like them!
5. Wire cages or trellises are a good addition to assist plants growing in containers.
6. Put containers in an area where the plants will receive about 5 hours of direct sunlight per day and good ventilation.

After Harvest

1. Empty soil into compost.
2. Clean your container with 10 parts water and 1 part bleach, so they are ready for next year (ask a parent for help).
3. Store in a dry place until next year.

Please remember that plants in containers need more water than those in a ground garden.