

Tinkering Through the Tulips: Container Gardening Can Beautify Any Space

When you think about gardens, what comes to mind? Lush, green lawns? Vibrant flowerbeds bursting with a kaleidoscope of color? Or maybe exotic plants for as far as the eye can see? Once upon a time, those things were some of the only characteristics of a garden. To have a garden, you had to have land to spare. But not anymore. These days, even if you live in an apartment you can have a garden. Container gardening lets you enjoy all the benefits without needing the space. Whether you choose to grow flowers, herbs or vegetables, you can be successful at container gardening. If you follow these tips, you'll be enjoying all the benefits of a garden in no time, no matter where you live.

Tip 1: Not just any container will do Experienced green thumbs will tell you that a garden can be grown in any container. Although that may be technically true, some containers will offer more chances for success, particularly if your thumb is of another shade. Inexpensive plastic may be a natural go-to for those who don't want to break the budget on their gardens, but those containers can deteriorate easily in the sun, and they are not built to last. However, if you are looking for something temporary and lightweight, this can be good option. Terracotta pots are more durable but will require you to water the plants in them more frequently, as terracotta dries out much more easily than other materials. You may want to get creative and use something unconventional, like a teapot, to plant a small container garden. This is a great idea, as long as you remember to ensure it has a drainage hole in the bottom. If your chosen container doesn't already have a hole in it, you can always drill one.

Tip 2: Cleanliness is next to godliness Before you get up to your elbows in potting soil, it's important to sterilize the container in which you will plant your garden. This is particularly important if you have purchased second-hand planting containers; the plants that grew there previously may have had a disease that can affect your plants, too. All you need is an environmentally sound, all-purpose cleaner; just rinse and pat dry before planting.

Tip 3: Plan, then plant Much like traditional gardening, the placement of container gardens will depend on what you plant. Do your research! Some plants will require full sun, others partial shade, and still more might flourish in just about any conditions. The good news is this: unlike traditional gardening, if you find that your container garden isn't flourishing in the chosen spot, you can pick it up and move it! Knowing this ahead of time can do more than help you determine where you will place each container. You also can roadmap where you will place each plant within each container. For example, you wouldn't want to plant tall-growing plants around the edge of a container with shorter ones in the middle. Similarly, plants that trail over the side of the container should be planted, obviously, on the perimeter of the container.

Tip 4: When in doubt, fertilize! Plants love to be healthy. If you want to get full and beautiful flowers out of your container garden, it's imperative that you keep up the soil's nutrient levels. To do that, you'll need to fertilize - a lot. It wouldn't hurt to fertilize every time you water. If you are growing vegetables, manure tea is an effective fertilizer, even though it doesn't sound very appealing. Manure tea is essentially water extracted from manure, with soluble nutrients. It increases the organic content of the soil, which, in turn, improves drainage and helps the soil hold on to the nutrients.

Tip 5: You can lead a plant to water Container plants need to be watered more often than a standard garden, particularly during extreme heat and dryness. Watering container plants is a daily affair. Keep adding water until you see some spill out through the drainage holes in the pot. Then stop! Go any further and you'll be in soggy soil territory. If you aren't the type to dedicate some time each day to watering, consider getting a self-watering device. These contraptions have a reservoir at the bottom that keeps your plants hydrated for a few days at a time. Container gardening can afford you the chance to have a beautiful garden without a lot of space. And your thumb can be a little less than green. With a little bit of time and planning, container gardening could be just the form of expression your thumbs having been craving - no matter what color they may be.

About the Author

James Mitchell has created several online resources dealing with Gardening and other related topics, as well as publishing articles on numerous subjects. You can find out more about this form of gardening at <http://www.containergardeningreport.com/>.

Source: <http://americanahost.com>