

CONTAINER VEGETABLE GARDENING

PPT by Joan Baldwin

Adapted by Gia Parsons



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Container Gardening Practical & Flexible



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No Room For Vegetables? Pot up Your Plants

- Suitable for every level of gardening expertise
- Excellent for apartments, condominiums, and small homes
- Can be beneficial for those with limited mobility
- Containers can be moveable to take advantage of sun, microclimates, etc.
- Initial investment in containers, a few tools & supplies, but annual costs are only seeds, plants, fertilizer, growing media





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Containers





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Choosing Containers

- Adequate drainage
- Large plants = wider & deeper growing space
- Smaller containers are easier to move
- Shallow containers are OK for some vegetables, but may dry out faster than deeper containers
- Some crops require deeper containers, tomatoes





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Choosing Containers

- Terracotta: Inexpensive, lasts a long time
- Ceramic containers: Can be easily damaged
- Plastic pots: Lightweight & inexpensive
- Wood containers: Will ultimately rot
- Tin containers: Rust over time
- Whiskey barrel: Good size, but difficult to move
- Make your own



Vegetables to Grow in Containers

- Many types of vegetables can be grown in containers
- Most popular: lettuce, cucumbers, herbs, peppers, tomatoes, potatoes
- Plants require sufficient root space
- Many dwarf cultivars are now available





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Keys to Success

- Drainage! - Holes on side near bottom or on bottom
 - Set pot on bricks or “pot feet”
- Clean containers!
- Good soil – not topsoil!
- Adequate soil moisture
- Steady nutrient supply
- Good basic gardening principles



PLANT SELECTION



PLANT SELECTION

- Basic rule for plant selection:
 - What do you like to eat/grow?
 - What growing conditions do you have?



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SEEDS OR TRANSPLANTS?



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Soil

- Growing media must provide water, nutrients, and physical support
- Commercial potting mixes have advantages
 - Light, drain well, hold moisture, free of disease and widely available
- Potting soils will compact when watered
- Gently push soil down as you fill containers



Soil

- Soil should be light, airy, capable of holding moisture & nutrients, but quick to drain.
- Common mix:
 - 1 part potting soil
 - 1 part compost
 - 1 part sharp sand
 - A little bone meal
- Substituting vermiculite or perlite for sand will hold more moisture



Fertilizer

- Available fertilizers will be either time-release or water soluble
- Easiest way to add fertilizer to plants growing in containers is to prepare a solution
- Organic vs. synthetic
- Slow-release fertilizers are less likely to burn plants from over-application
- When to fertilize



Watering

- Proper watering is essential
- Overwatering & underwatering are common problems
- Best guide – stick a finger 2-3 inches into the soil – if dry, then, water!
- Watering once a day is usually adequate
- Poor drainage may slowly kill plants



Light

- Nearly all vegetable plants grow better in full sunlight than in shade
- Leafy crops tolerate more shade than root crops
 - Lettuce, cabbage, spinach, parsley
- Fruit bearing plants need most sun of all
 - Cucumbers, tomatoes, peppers, eggplant
- A major advantage of container gardening is that you can place the vegetables in areas where they can receive the best possible growing conditions



Container Gardening Success

- Plant growth & vigor will vary depending on the location and attention you give your plants.
- Inspect plants daily and, if necessary, water, trim, train or prune.
- Check you plants daily & remove pests & weeds & treat diseases.
- Continue your education by soliciting advice from experienced gardeners.
- Make time to enjoy the fruits of your labor.





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