



“Small Plot and Container Gardening”

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IMPORTANT POINTS TO CONSIDER:

- Spatial awareness – air, light, water, space and control of nutrients, root depth
- Plants that cannot be easily contained – squashes, very tall plants, vines
- Plants that would prefer to be contained – tomatoes, ever-bearing strawberries, tender perennials, tomatoes, peppers
- Plants that we like to contain – mint, horse radish, other herbs
- Plants that don't like each other – *allelopathic*
- Plants that do well together – companion planting
- Sun – 6-8 hours of sun – if you need to move pots get ones that you can move around
- Wind – deeper and heavier pots to keep roots stable
- Soil-suitable potting “medium” or soils – available at most nurseries.
- Fertilizers – special ones for container plants – try to use organic ones – fish or kelp based expensive but worth it

SUITABLE VEGETABLES TO GROW IN CONTAINERS OR SMALL SPACES

Beans	Cucumber	Radishes
Beets	Lettuce	Spinach
Broccoli	Peas	Tomatoes
Carrots	Peppers	Onions

CONTAINER SIZES

Small plants

To grow lettuce, spinach, salad greens, radishes, and green onions, you need a container / area approximately **8 to 10 inches wide** and at least **6 inches deep**. In this size container you could grow two or three of your leafy greens and up to a dozen radishes or green onions.

Medium plants

For growing carrots, beets, peas, and beans—just remember your peas and pole beans will produce a better harvest if they are grown on a trellis or supported in some way—the best size container is approximately **12 to 16 inches wide** and at least **10 inches deep**. If you choose a rectangular container, you could make great use of the space by growing your peas and beans in the back and planting your root crops in front of them.

Large plants

Larger vegetables, such as tomatoes, cucumbers, cabbages, broccoli, peppers, potatoes, or dwarf corn, need a container at least **16 inches wide** and with at least **18 inches** of soil to grow well. For best results, use transplants when growing these vegetables (except for potatoes and corn). Grow only one of these plants in each container. To fill up the pot and make it look more attractive, plant lettuce or herbs around the base of the larger plant.

Invasive plants

There are some plants such as mint, comfrey, and borage that you may like to have in your garden. However, these plants can quickly become invasive, so plant them into a pot and sink the pot into the ground. Keep the rim of the pot a few inches above ground level.

TOP VEGETABLES IN TERMS OF FOOD VALUE, COST AND EASE OF GROWTH

Vegetable	Rating
Tomatoes grown up supports (indeterminate varieties)	9.0
Green bunching onions	8.2
Leaf lettuce – eg. Romaine, mesclun	7.4
Summer squash, zucchini	7.2
Edible podded peas (sugar snap/ snow), onions (for dry storage)	6.9
Beans (pole or runner); Beets (grown for leaves AND roots)	6.8
Beans – bush – green or wax; Carrots; Cucumbers (grown on trellises)	6.5
Bell peppers	6.4
Broccoli; Swiss chard	6.3
Cabbage	6.0
Sweet corn (very space intensive for only 1 or 2 cob return)	4.1

TIPS FOR CREATING A SUCCESSFUL CONTAINER GARDEN

Dwarf Varieties

When choosing to grow in containers, look for dwarf varieties. These are vegetable plants that are smaller in size and therefore need less space to grow. Usually the root system needs less space as well, making these vegetables a great option for containers. There are many more dwarf varieties becoming available as the importance of growing some of your own food is becoming fashionable, and, for some, a necessity, especially those living in cities where space is limited. Check seed catalogs—often available for free at garden centres in your area.

Grow Vertical

If you want to grow a lot of vegetables on your balcony or patio, emphasize your vertical space by using trellises or fences. Grow vegetables that can be trained to grow upright such as snow peas, shelling peas, pole beans, cucumbers, and tomatoes. Choose attractive materials like bamboo, metal, or wood to make trellises or stakes for your plants.

Grow Early and Late Veggies in the Same Pot

Some vegetable plants grow better in the cool of spring or fall, whereas others are best planted when the weather is warmer. Vegetables will mature and be harvested at different times of the year, depending on how long they take to grow to maturity and how long they take to form ripe fruit or pods for you to eat. To make the most of your container: plant a crop of early maturing veggies such as radishes or baby salad greens in the early spring; then after they have been harvested, take out the old plants, add a little more soil mix, and plant your tomatoes or peppers with a few herbs like basil and parsley around them.

<http://www.netplaces.com/small-space-gardening/container-gardens/what-to-put-in-the-container.htm>

Here are eight easy steps for planting your containers:

- 1) Select an appropriate-sized container that has drainage holes for the plants you are growing.
- 2) Fill the container with potting soil to within an inch of the top of the container.
- 3) Moisten the soil and let it absorb the water before planting (lukewarm water will be absorbed faster than cold water).
- 4) You can plant several plants in the same pot (except very large ones like tomatoes or squash).
- 5) Set taller plants in the center of the pot and insert stakes prior to planting any other plants around the larger one. If you will be trellising plants, the larger ones can be placed at the back of the container so they will climb on the trellis, and others can be planted in front.
- 6) Water once the plants are in the soil; this will help to settle the soil, and the roots will get established more quickly.
- 7) Add more soil, if needed, after watering.
- 8) Keep the container moist and well fertilized

Details on container veg: <http://gardening.about.com/od/vegetablesincontainers/tp/Vegetable-Container-Gardening-Tips.htm>

How much to plant for a family of 4: http://gardening.about.com/od/vegetable1/a/How-Much-Plant_2.htm

Vegetables requiring 4 - 6 hours of sunlight: Carrots, Lettuce, Kale, Peas, Swiss chard

Vegetables requiring 6 – 8 hours of sunlight: Vegetables that traditionally need more sunlight and warmth are the ones that produce fruit. These need at least eight hours of full sun to grow best: Cucumbers, Eggplant, Peppers, Squash, Tomatoes

No matter how large or small your garden site is, choosing an area that will get the most possible sunlight, has good drainage, and reasonably good soil will ensure you will have veggies to harvest.

Fruits

Most fruits are put into two categories: small fruits and tree fruits. Among the small fruits are strawberries, raspberries, blueberries, currants, blackberries, and gooseberries. Some fruit trees that are usually grown in home gardens are apples, cherries, peaches, pears and plums. Grapes are grown on a vine so they are a little different.

Small fruits are usually grown on either bushes or canes, except strawberries, which are a low-growing, bedding plant. Bushes have permanent spreading branches that grow to about 4 feet high and about as wide. Blueberries and currants grow on bushes. Fruit trees such as apples, plums, pears if you have a small space, these can be trained to grow as *espaliers* or *cordons* by pruning and tying branches so that they grow into a flat plane against a structure such as a wall, fence, or trellis.

Details : <http://www.netplaces.com/small-space-gardening/fruits-and-berries-for-small-spaces/berry-patch.htm>

OTHER REFERENCES

BASICS

<http://www.thegardenhelper.com/vegetables.html>

STARTING SEEDS

<http://pubs.ext.vt.edu/426/426-001/426-001.html> - good on starting seeds indoors

SQUARE FOOT GARDENING

<http://www.journeytoforever.org/garden.html> - a good overview of small space vegetable

<http://www.squarefootgardening.com/> - not that useful except the kids section as they want to sell their products and books

http://www.ehow.com/how_7424543_biointensive-tomato-gardening.html - tomatoes

http://www.ehow.com/ehow_home-growing-vegetables/

COMPANION PLANTING

<http://www.companionplanting.net/ListofCompanionPlants.html>

<http://www.mi.ca/compendium/> - very clear

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