

Growing plants in containers

Anyone can grow plants in containers. The different types of ornamentals (flowers), fruit and vegetables that you can grow is surprisingly large. It is also amazing how many things can be recycled to make containers.

Suitable Containers

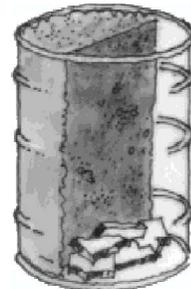
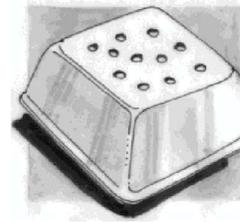
You can use many different types of container to plant in. Some suggestions for containers include:

- old tyres
- tied bundles of newspaper
- buckets
- plastic storage boxes
- half barrels
- old bins
- containers made from pallets
- old chimney pots
- old sinks

Remember, unless you are growing bog plants, the containers will need to have drainage holes.

Planting up your container

1. Choose your container. Check that it has drainage holes at the bottom. If it hasn't, make a few in the bottom.



2. Use broken bits of clay pots or flat stones to cover the holes. Fill the pot until a quarter full. This stops the holes getting blocked by soil.

3. Fill with potting compost or good garden soil. If you cannot find an organic potting compost then buy a peat-free compost.



4. You can now start to plant up your container. Suggestions of suitable plants are given on the back of this leaflet.
5. Once your container is planted you must remember to water it regularly. Plants in pots need watering more often because the soil dries out faster.

Why peat free?

Peat is a soil-like material made up of partly rotted organic matter (things that have once lived). It is still used in many composts.

The peat is taken from peat bogs where rare plants live. Bogs take thousands of years to develop and are getting smaller as the peat is used by gardeners. To do your bit and help preserve (keep) this habitat use peat-free composts.

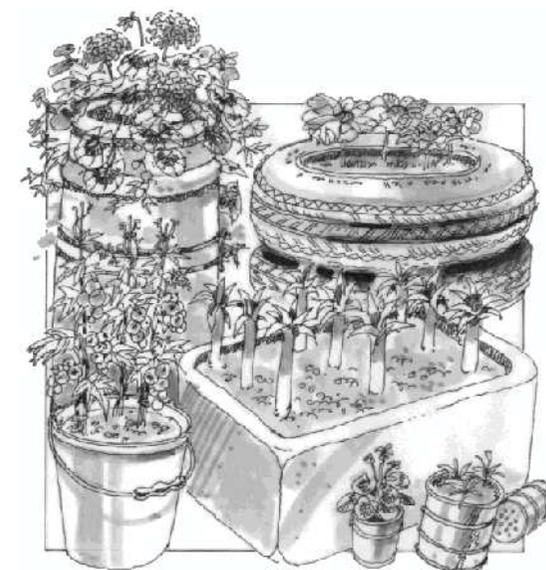
Vegetable varieties to grow in containers

Vegetable	Suitable variety	When to sow	Spacing/pot size
Broad Bean	The Sutton	March to April	4 per 10 litre pot
French Bean	Purple Teepee	Late April to mid-May	4 per 10 litre pot
Carrot	Any early varieties	March to April	Plant 4cm apart
Chard	Ruby or Lucullus	April	1 per 4 litre pot
Courgette	Ambassador, Early Gem	Late April to mid-May	1 per 30 litre pot
Cucumber	Bush crop, Burpless Tasty Green	Late April to mid-May	1 per 30 litre pot
Leek	King Richard	March to July (in succession)	Plant 4cm apart
Onion	Any variety from sets	March to April	7.5cm—10cm apart
Pea	Kelvedon Wonder	March to June (successional)	8 per 10 litre pot
Pepper	Redskin	Late March to early April	1 per 10 litre pot
Potato	Early varieties only	February to March June to July	2 per 60 litre pot
Radish	Any variety	March to June	Sow 2.5cm apart
Tomato	Pixie, Totem, Tumbler	Late March to Early April	1 per 15 litre pot

Flowers to grow in containers

Plant	Latin Name	When to sow	Height x spread
Bergamot	<i>Monarda didyma</i>	April	1m x45cm
Candytuft	<i>Iberis umbellata</i>	April-May	15cm-30cm x 20cm
Chives	<i>Allium schoenoprasum</i>	Autumn	12cm-25cm x 5-10cm
Honesty	<i>Lunaria annua</i>	May or June for next year	60cm-90cm x 30cm
Love-in-a-mist	<i>Nigella</i>	Autumn or Early spring	45cm x 22cm
Pot Marigold	<i>Calendula officinalis</i>	Autumn or Spring	30cm x 30cm
Nasturtium	<i>Tropaeolum</i>	February to April	15cm x upto 180cm
Perennial cornflower	<i>Centaurea dealbata</i>	September or April	30cm-45cm x 30cm
Phlox	<i>Phlox paniculata</i>	March to April	15cm—30cm x 22cm
Poached egg plant	<i>Limnanthes douglasii</i>	March	15cm x 10cm
Small Scabious	<i>Scabiosa columbaria</i>	September or March	30cm x 15cm
Spring Crocus	<i>Crocus spp.</i>	September to October	20cm
Sunflower	<i>Helianthus 'Sungold'</i>	April	60cm x 30cm
Wallflower	<i>Cheiranthus cheiri</i>	May to July	23cm-60cm x 20-30cm

Growing in containers



A student's guide to growing plants in containers.



DUCHY ORIGINALS HDRA
Organic Gardens for Schools

Growing plants in containers

Container planting is ideal for schools. It is particularly suitable where there are no available areas of soil, or where large expanses of tarmac need improvement. The range of ornamentals, fruit and vegetables that can be grown is surprisingly large, and it is an easy activity for all pupils.

Containers can be used for growing shrubs and insect-attracting flowers as well as some vegetables. They can also be used for creating a worm bin, compost heap, a pond or liquid plant food.

Suitable Containers

Students can create a range of different planting sites using different types of container. It is amazing how many things can be recycled to make containers.

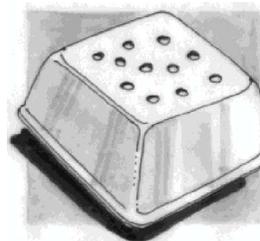
Some suggestions for containers* include:

- old tyres
- tied bundles of newspaper
- buckets
- plastic storage boxes
- half barrels
- old bins
- containers made from pallets
- old chimney pots

* Remember unless you are growing bog plants the containers will need to have drainage holes.

Planting up your container

1. Choose, adapt or make the container. Check that it has drainage holes. If it hasn't, make a few in the bottom.



2. Using broken bits of clay pots or flat stones to cover the holes. Fill the pot to a quarter full with the broken pots/stones. This stops the holes getting blocked by soil.

3. Fill with compost. If you can not find an organic potting compost then buy a peat-free compost.



Why peat free?

Peat is still used in many potting composts. The peat is taken from peat bogs which destroys habitats. Bogs are getting smaller as peat is used by gardeners. To do your bit and help preserve these precious sites - use

4. Start to plant up your container. Suggestions of plants that you can use are given on the back of this leaflet.
5. Once the container is planted it is important to water it regularly. Plants in pots need watering more often, because the containers dry out quickly.

Further Reading

Grow your own organic vegetables—
Getting started—HDRA Step-by-Step
booklet

Grow your own organic fruit—
Getting started—HDRA Step-by-Step
booklet

Growing Naturally— A Teachers Guide to
Organic Gardening—Maggi Brown,
Southgate 1996

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