

URBAN FARMER

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How to: Grow a Patio Garden for the City Gardener

Many people who own a home near a city can still exercise their green thumb, despite the lack of green space. Patio gardening can even apply to those who own patio homes or duplexes that don't have a very large yard but have plenty of spacious opportunities to garden on a patio. Apartment dwellers also can utilize patios as gardening spaces.

Ways to garden on a patio:

It depends on the set-up of the patio to choose the best option for growing vegetables, flowers and other plants on your patio. If potted plants placed at ground level still receive more than six hours of sunlight a day and don't cast a shadow on other plants that need that sun, pots will be the best option for growth. However, some patios are fenced in, or have bushes or trees planted nearby that make growth at ground level not possible. Instead of trying to urge your potted plants along, opt for window boxes, hanging gardens or other above-ground level options.

If you don't want to go to the trouble of shopping for window boxes, gutters are actually an easy similar option for plants with a shallow root system. You can easily mount them to a wall or a balcony/patio railing for a unique option.

Best plants to grow on a patio:

The number one easiest plant to grow on a patio, whether it's in pots or in window boxes, is herbs. Herbs grow quickly, rarely require fertilizer and they keep producing



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the more you harvest them. They also will add different types of foliage and wonderful smells to the patio.

For flowers, opt for geraniums. These flowers have a bright flash of color that can add to the atmosphere of any outdoor space, and they are relatively easy to care for.

A good tip to use when choosing flowers for a patio garden is to choose heat tolerant flowers. Whether the flowers are planted in a window box or in a pot on the patio, they will have little protection from the heat. Heat tolerant like angel's trumpet flowers are a great choice.

When it comes to planting vegetables, place taller veggies like tomatoes or peppers in bigger pots so they have plenty of space to grow their roots. Then, these pots should be positioned on the patio to where they don't cast a shadow over other pots or plants that



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need the sun. However, if you are also planting some shade tolerant plants, you can position the taller vegetables or flowers in a way that a shadow is cast over the shade-tolerant plants.

One main problem gardeners may come across when growing outdoors in pots or window boxes is how quickly the soil dries out. Be sure you water your pots frequently because all those most vegetables love the sun, the soil in the pots won't retain moisture as well as the ground.

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