

URBAN FARMER

LOVE THE EARTH

How to: Choose What Vegetables Grow Best in Containers and What Size of Containers to Use

Container gardening is an excellent method for gardeners who may have limited yard space or who live in an apartment or townhome with no yard. Container crops are more resistant to diseases, and growing crops in containers allows for gardeners to get their gardening fix without taking up much space. Just like growing vegetables in a garden, growing vegetables in a container requires certain actions to ensure the best growth.

What vegetables grow best in containers?

Most vegetables grow well in containers as long as they have adequate living conditions and enough space, and vegetables that grow on vines or grow on taller plants like peppers or tomatoes require support. Common container vegetables include lettuce, spinach, Cole crops like broccoli or cauliflower, dwarf variations of tomatoes, eggplant and even squash.

If planting a tall plant or one that vines, add a trellis or a wire cage to the pot like you would if planting such vegetables in the garden. If using a trellis or wire cage, be sure to use a heavier pot to prevent tipping.

What size of containers to choose?

A general rule of thumb is to plant your container plants in a container that is at least 10 inches wide and 12 inches deep. The type of container doesn't really matter and can include 5-gallon buckets, large flower pots, window boxes, barrels and planters. Stay away from dark colors when choosing



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a container, as dark colors absorb heat and can cause the soil to become too hot for the vegetables. Containers also should have drainage holes on the bottom. Don't use containers that are made of treated wood, as chemicals can seep into the soil and cause damage to the plant.

The larger the container the better, as it allows more room for the plant to grow. A larger container also holds moisture for longer, so gardeners don't have to water as frequently.

Where to place the container?

Just like growing them in the garden, place container plants in full sun. Also, don't cluster the containers too close together and make sure they are placed in an area with good air circulation. If placing containers outside a little early while it is still cool, place them against a south-facing wall.



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How to plant in a container?

If you are planting vegetables in a container, it is important to do so properly to ensure germination. To begin, use an organic potting mix specialized for containers. Plant vegetables in containers the same time you would plant them in the garden, but water the soil in the container thoroughly prior to planting regardless of what you are planting. Plant seeds according to instructions on the seed packet and water gently after planting to settle the seeds. Mulch can even be applied to container plants to prevent the soil from drying out as quickly.



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Once a container vegetable has been harvested, add the container soil to the compost pile.

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