

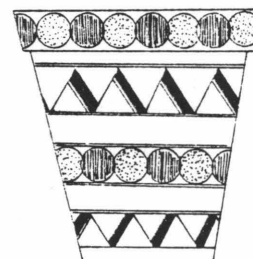
container garden

If you don't have space for a regular garden, but do have a balcony, porch, patio or other sunny, protected spot at your home, you might like to try a container garden. You can even use hanging baskets! Do this project along with the Vegetable Seeds, Herb Garden, or Small Fruit project(s) if you like.

Read the "Recycling" HELP sheet to find ideas for your containers. Your leader may have more suggestions. Remember that most vegetables will require fairly large containers - baskets, barrels cut in half, large clay pots, tubs, plastic pails, even old toilets have been used! Ask around in your neighborhood.

Just for Fun - Container Creations

- You'll need:
- containers
 - dishwashing liquid
 - old rags or sponges
 - nails & hammer for punching holes
if needed
 - decorations for containers (optional)



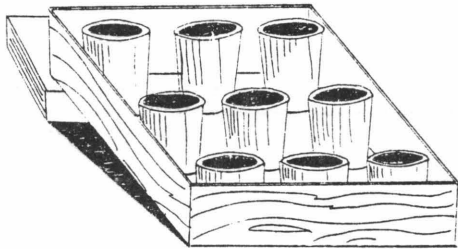
Wash your containers out thoroughly and allow to dry. If there are no drainage holes, punch some in the bottom if you can. Don't even try, though, if the container is glass or ceramic - you will just need to use extra drainage material in the bottom. For metal containers, just hammer a nail through the bottom and pull it out. If you have plastic containers, you might find it easier to heat the nail first (don't burn your fingers!).

Decorate your container(s) if you like. You can paint it or glue things onto it to make it look nice. Use water-resistant materials.



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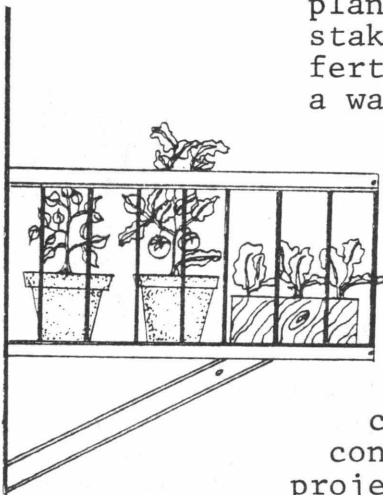
Game - Bean Toss



The game board is made by glueing styrofoam or paper cups into a shallow box. Each cup has a number from 1 to 5 inside. Players stand behind a line a few feet away and take turns tossing 10 beans into the cups. The score is found by adding up the numbers of all the cups with beans in them. If there is more than one bean in a cup, multiply the score in the cup by the number of beans that landed in that cup. Beans that land outside the cups are counted as 0 points. Highest total wins.

Project - Container Garden

- You'll need:
- containers
 - potting soil
 - drainage material (gravel, pot chips, etc.)
 - plants and/or seeds
 - stakes or cages for some plants
 - fertilizer
 - a watchful eye



1. Choose at least 3 different vegetables (and/or small fruits) that you like. Note: Corn doesn't seem to care for container growing, unfortunately. If you started sunflowers in the Vegetable Seeds project, you can use them for one container plant. Or, if you are growing strawberries for the Small Fruit project, you can count them as one plant, too. Herbs in containers may also be grown for the Herb Garden project. Find out how large your chosen vegetable or fruit plants grow so you will have an idea what size containers to get. Some small or shallow-rooted vegetables like spinach, carrots, lettuce, radishes and others may be grown several to the pot. Seed catalogs often list special container varieties, so look for them.
2. Some seeds are best started directly in the container, while others should be started in small pots, jiffy-7's or flats and then transplanted to larger containers. See the "Seeds, Soils, Supplies" and "Transplanting" HELP sheets for directions on how to start seeds and transplant.

You may also wish to purchase some of those plants which should not be sown directly into a container. Most are usually available at garden shops and grocery or discount stores in the spring.

Start in smaller pots (or in a mini-greenhouse if you are doing the Vegetable Seeds project) and transplant to containers:

tomatoes	herbs	head lettuce
peppers	eggplant	*cucumbers
*sunflowers	*melons	*Brussels sprouts
*cabbage	celery	*broccoli
*squash	*kale	

*may also be sown directly in containers

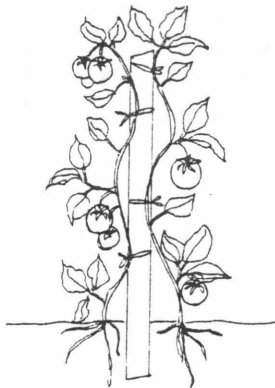
If you'd like to plant sweet potatoes in a container (bushel basket size, at least), you'll find directions for starting and transplanting the slips (sprouts) in the Kitchen Garden project. Small fruit plants should be purchased.

Start these seeds directly in the container (these do not transplant well):

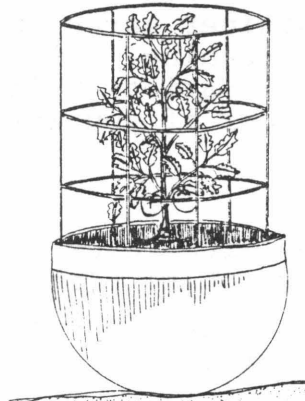
leaf lettuce	beans	beets
carrots	peas	radishes
Swiss chard	onions (sets)	potatoes (seed potatoes)

3. When you transplant your vegetable plants, find out (from the seed packet or the Guide for the Beginning Gardener) if they will need support. Some that should be supported are: tomatoes, cucumbers, pole beans, peas, melons and squashes. Sunflowers may also have to be staked.

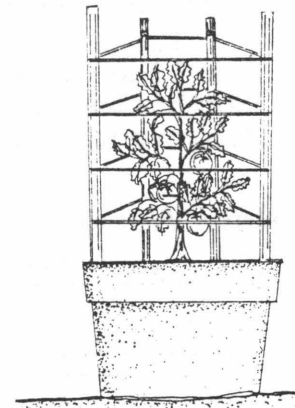
You can have your plants climb an existing railing, trellis, or fence, or you can use many other methods for helping them stand up. Here are some ideas used for tomatoes and other climbing plants:



Normal staking method; plant is tied to a wooden or metal stake and pruned.



Wire cages. Fencing with at least 6" mesh is rolled into a cage.



Cage made with stakes and string or wire.

4. Container vegetables, especially fruiting ones, and small fruits, should be kept in full sunlight if possible. You can get by with some shade for leafy plants like lettuce and spinach (see MH 336, Container Gardening, available from your Extension Agent). If you need to increase the amount of light, aluminum foil or white paper underneath or around your plants may help.
5. Watering, fertilizing, and harvesting instructions may be found in the HELP sheets and in Guide for the Beginning Gardener. The Guide will also have suggestions for insect and disease problems. Also see the Garden Pests and Problems project.

Record - keeping

Keep a notebook about your container garden and turn it in to your leader. Include the following information:

- type of containers used and how they worked (too large? too small? did they blow over easily? etc.)
- seeds or plants used (what variety, cost, etc.)
- number of plants in each container (could you have planted more? were there too many?)
- location of containers (amount of sunlight, trellises and other support used, problems with location)
- type of fertilizers used and schedule of use
- how often did you have to water?
- pests, diseases and other problems; describe what they were and what you did about them (or do Project #9)
- harvest (amount harvested, taste, would you plant again?)
- photographs or drawings of plants as they grow

Extra projects

There are other container gardening projects you can do if you like this type of gardening: (1) Hydroponic Culture, (2) Exhibiting at a Fair, (3) Variety Trials, and (4) Compost in a Flowerpot. See your leader if you would like to do any of these.

New Words

seed potatoes: potatoes with "eyes" or buds that will sprout to form new potato plants

sets: small reproductive part of a plant, such as a bulb, suitable for planting

slips: shoots from a plant used to start new plants

staking: vertical support of a plant against a pole driven into the ground nearby