



J&L Garden Center

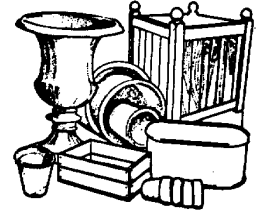
*The All Season Gift
and Garden Center*

620 North 500 West Bountiful, Utah 292-0421

www.JLGardenCenter.com

Container Gardening

Since early times gardeners have grown plants in containers. It is as old as gardening itself; flowering plants were grown in ornate vases in China long before the Christian era began. Shrub-filled clay pots were a feature of the gardens in Ancient Greece, Egypt, and Rome. The Grand Gardens of Britain and France have long had their impressive stone urns filled to overflowing with flowers.



The concept of container gardening may have been around for hundreds of years, but it is now the fastest-growing sector of the garden scene. Container gardening has become even more popular partly due to the increase of apartment and condo dwellers but also because many homeowners want to add color to their porches and patios. Container gardening is amazingly flexible; a broad spectrum of plants can be used including some very pretty herbs and vegetable plants.

SOIL

Soil is the single most important part of container gardening. It is the difference between success and failure. A good potting soil mix drains well, retains moisture, and provides support for container plants. For container gardening it is best to use a commercially bagged multi purpose soil such as **Black Gold All Purpose Potting Soil**, which consists of a mixture of vermiculite, pumice and peatmoss.



Soil taken directly from the garden, to be used in pots, tends to compact and become hard. Regular garden soil in pots makes it difficult for plants to grow and for roots to develop. Regular garden soil often provides inadequate drainage and may contain unwanted insects and diseases. Even though commercial potting soil is not sterilized it has usually been pastuerized; which means it should not contain any harmful insects or diseases.

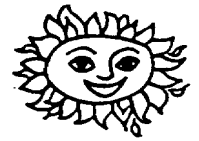
If your container is deep you can put a layer of gravel, pot shards, or 'packing peanuts' in the bottom of the pot to reduce the amount of soil needed.

To prevent soil from washing out of the holes, cover them with a piece of weed cloth, pot shard, a coffee filter, or a large rock.



SUNLIGHT

You can make any container plant happy with the right amount of light. One advantage of container gardens is that they can be moved to different locations if needed. Full sun is considered to be at least 6 hours of direct sunlight, while less than 2 hours of sun is considered shade.



While some plants will only grow in the sun and some plants will only grow in the shade, many plants will grow in either sun or shade. As a rule of thumb, cluster sun loving flowers together for a hot sunny spot. Let shade tolerant combinations fill pots to be used in spots under trees and in dark corners. Plant a combination of both sun and shade flowers for all the conditions in between.

Remember that plants grow toward the light, so rotate the pots occasionally, especially those plants growing near fences or within other barriers of light.

WATER

The task of watering is more time-consuming than any other part of container gardening and is probably the most difficult to master. It is something that cannot be done on a regular routine. Factors such as sunlight, wind, size and type of container, temperature, location, and soil type all have



an influence on watering. Shaded containers do not dry as quickly as pots in the sun. Clay pots breathe and dry out quickly. Plastic pots retain water and do not dry out as fast. Because of these varying factors there is not one 'clear-cut' watering routine.

An easy way to test to see if a container needs water is to use a moisture meter. Moisture meters are reliable and are very accurate. Another method to test water needs is 'the knuckle test'. Stick your finger into the soil down to the first knuckle. If your fingertip is dry, it is time to water.

How much water is enough? Irrigate every pot until water flows out the bottom. If your pot drains into a saucer, let it set in water for about an hour. After an hour remove the excess water. A saucer that stays full of water can mean root rot and death for plants. A turkey baster or a sponge is an easy way to remove excess water from saucers of large containers.

If, on the other hand, a container completely dries out, the water will go along the edge of the pot and out the bottom instead of soaking into the soil. A dry pot will need to be completely soaked in the bathtub, or other container of water, for about 30-60 minutes. It takes that long for the soil to soak in all the water it needs. If the pot is too large to move, water the pot every 10 or 15 minutes for at least an hour.

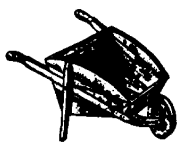


CHOOSING A CONTAINER

The sky is the limit when it comes to choosing containers for your plants to grow in. You can use plastic pots, clay pots, an old bucket, a bushel basket, a wooden fruit crate, a whiskey barrel, a wire basket, a window box, an old hollowed out log, or anything else that will hold soil. The container should be stable, durable, and most importantly have drainage holes.



Terra cotta pots are available in a wide range of sizes and styles. Clay is one of the oldest materials to make containers. Keep in mind, however, clay pots are brittle and will break if dropped. Also, their porous nature means they need more frequent watering than plastic pots.



Wood containers made of redwood or cedar are more rot resistant than those made of other types of wood. If wood containers are homemade they should be

treated so they won't rot easily. Cleats (feet) under wood pots will increase air circulation reducing decay and insect problems, and may help with drainage.



Plastic containers are popular because they are lightweight, durable, usually inexpensive and available in a wide range of finishes, colors, sizes, and shapes. With age plastic pots can become brittle and break. Plastic pots are very susceptible to breakage during the cold winter weather.

Resin containers and fiberglass pots are very durable. They are much stronger than plastic pots and do not break as easy as many other types of pots.

Cement pots are very popular but they are heavy and hard to move. Cement pots should be sealed every few years to prevent water from penetrating the concrete which can cause the cement to crumble during the freezing winter weather.



TIPS FOR SUCCESS

The biggest difficulty with container gardens is maintaining the correct moisture level, which can require inconsistent or frequent watering schedules. Products are available to help with this problem; coconut fiber, water holding polymer granules, and PVC pipes.

Coconut Fiber is made from the shredded husks of coconuts. It has the unique ability to absorb large amounts of moisture rapidly, then release it over a long period of time. Coconut fiber will not compact and will maintain a loose texture. It can be used with regular potting soil at a ratio of 1/2 to 1 part coconut fiber to 1 part potting soil.



Water Holding Polymer Granules, such as **Waterhold** or **Soil Moist** absorb and store water. These granules slowly release the stored water as the plant needs it. This storage and release process reduces watering requirements by 50% to 75%, particularly in dry, hot climates.



It is easy to use the polymer in its swelled state, so you know how much is being used. It can be also be used dry, but remember the crystals expand greatly when moistened. One teaspoon of **water hold** is all that is needed for a 6" pot.

PVC pipes which are capped on one end and with holes drilled along its length help water large contain-

ers. Put the pipe in the center of the container (leave it in the pot the entire summer). Pouring water through the pipe helps distribute water deeply in large containers and in strawberry jars. This method helps maintain moisture around the root system and helps the soil stay evenly moist; top to bottom.



FERTILIZER

Container gardens do not require a large amount of fertilizer at one time, but they do need to be fed continually all summer. A time-release fertilizer like **Osmocote**, added to the potting soil at the time of planting, will feed most containers for 3 months. Each time you water your plants are being fertilized.



You can use a water soluble fertilizer, such as **Fertilome Blooming and Rooting Fertilizer** every 2 weeks during the summer while watering. Liquid fertilizers are safe, quick fertilizers; results are evident in a few days. They do not burn the plant unless you fertilize a dry, wilting plant or unless you mix the fertilizer too strong. The only disadvantage of using water soluble fertilizers is that you have to remember to fertilize your plants regularly.



Maintenance

To keep your container plants looking good be sure to dead-head your plants occasionally: remove old or dead blossoms. Trim the plants once in a while to help the plants keep their shape and to stimulate more flowers.



Planting Containers

1. Prepare the container by placing broken pot shards, weed cloth, or rock over the drainage holes.

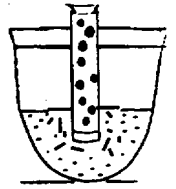
Tip: Small containers are easy to move around while large pots can be quite difficult to move. Once a container is filled with soil it can be quite heavy and difficult to maneuver, so, whenever possible set the larger containers in place before adding the soil.

2. If you have a large container, position a PVC pipe watering device (optional) in the center (or just a little off center) of the container. Fill the container half



full with potting soil.

Mix water holding polymer granules with the potting soil needed to fill the rest of the pot.



3. Start planting your container in the center and work towards the edges. Traditionally the largest plants go in the center of the container but you can spread them throughout the pot if desired.

Remove the plants carefully from their pots. Loosen the soil in the rootball slightly. Place the rootball in the hole to the same depth as it was in its original container. Firmly set the plant in place and compact the soil around the rootball.

4. Continue planting the container with the other flowers until they all are planted, or until the pot is full; whichever comes first.

5. Sprinkle **Osmocote** fertilizer over the entire soil surface. Be sure to use the recommended amount of **Osmocote** which is approximately one tablespoon of **Osmocote** for every six square inches of soil surface.

6. To add a finishing touch to your container cover the surface with bark, or moistened sphagnum moss.



7. Water your container thoroughly as soon as you are finished planting it. Water your container again this time using **Fertilome Blooming and Rooting Fertilizer**.

8. Check your containers regularly. Containers will not need a lot of water at first but as the plants begin to grow they will need a consistent watering schedule to keep the looking their best.

Strawberry Jars

Strawberry Jars are attractive as well as practical. Plants other than strawberries will also grow well in the jars, such as herbs and flowers. If planting strawberries choose those varieties that are everbearing such as Quinalt, Ft Laramie, or Hecker.



Flowers planted in the pockets should be a mounding or a cascading variety. Plants in the top should be a combination of mounding or cascading types along with one or two upright plants for vertical accents.

1. Prepare the soil by adding the osmocote and polymer granules and mix together well.

2. Begin by placing the capped PVC pipe in the center of the pot with the cap covering the drainage

hole. Hold the pipe upright while filling the jar with potting soil up to the bottom tier of pockets. Pack the soil firmly.

3. Gently poke the plants through the pockets from the inside of the pot to the outside.

4. Fill the jar with soil to the next tier of pockets, packing them gently with soil. Continue planting until all the pockets are filled.

5. Plant the top with remaining plants. Sprinkle top with Osmocote. Then tuck moist sphagnum moss around the base of the plants in the pockets and around the plants on top. This helps maintain the moisture.

6. Water thoroughly through the PVC pipe. Water the jar again in an hour using **Fertilome Blooming and Rooting Fertilizer**. This fertilizer will act as a root start to help your new plants root quickly.



Moss Baskets

1. Make sure the basket is stable before you plant it. Rest it in a bucket or similar container.

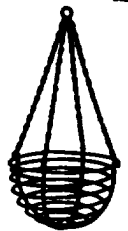
2. Use moistened sphagnum moss to line the bottom and the bottom third of the basket. Fill the basket to this point with potting soil already prepared with water holding polymer crystals and Osmocote fertilizer. Carefully tuck the plants into the basket between the wires.

3. Line the next third of the basket with moss, fill with soil, and tuck in the plants. Continue in this manner to the top.

4. Fill the top of the basket with the tallest plants in the middle. Use the mounding plants around the edge.

5. Carefully tuck sphagnum moss around the plants.

6. Hang your basket in its new home and water it well. Water your basket again in an hour using **Fertilome Blooming And Rooting Fertilizer**. Be faithful in checking for moisture daily.



Vegetables for Containers

Vegetables containers should be a minimum of 12" to 24" deep. The bigger the pot the better.



Try beans, beets, broccoli, cabbage, carrots, corn, cantaloupe, peas, eggplant, cauliflower, kohlrabi, kale, leeks, lettuce, onions, parsley, peppers, cucumbers, radishes, spinach, tomatos, swiss chard.

Herbs also grow well in containers and make excellent indoor planters during the winter months. Try chives, basil, cilantro, oregano, thyme, sage or mint to mention a few.

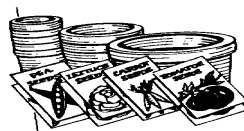
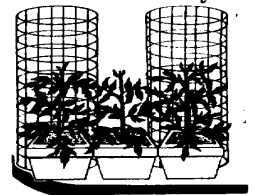
Annuals for Shade

The amount of shade can be variable.

Some of the popular annuals for shade are fuchsia, viola, lobelia, begonia, coleus, impatiens, ivy, monkey flower,

dahlia, schizanthus, torenia, nierembergia, dracena spike, or asparagus fern. Don't be afraid of using a few perennials in your containers such as coral bells,

hostas, hardy ferns or ranunculus.



Annuals for Sun

Many annuals like the sun and partial shade. These flowers will grow in full sun, alyssum, snapdragon, crystal palace lobelia, sunflower, petunias, surfinia, verbena, vinca, geranium, nicotiana, calendula, nasturtium, marigold, african daisy, marguerite daisy, strawflower, dusty miller, canna, gazania, osteospermum, lotus vine, dracena spike, scaevola, ipomea, celosia, portulaca, red fountain grass, bacopa. A few perennials to use are creeping jenny, ivy, and many varieties of daisies.

These are just a few of the many flowers suitable to grow in your flower pots. Don't be afraid of trying several of these plants in many combinations. **The only limit in planting containers is your imagination.**

