



Container Gardening Basics



Choosing a Container

- ✿ The options for containers are endless. They can be big or small, expensive or cheap, new or recycled. Just remember whatever pot you choose should be the right size for the plant you want to grow (see table next page).
- ✿ The pot you choose needs to have a few 1/4 inch holes in the bottom to allow drainage. You may have to add the holes.
- ✿ If you choose large containers, be sure to put them where you want them before you fill with soil; they can get very heavy.
- ✿ Containers can be purchased with water reservoirs built in, which means watering less often. But these containers can be expensive.
- ✿ Bagged potting soil is needed to grow plants in containers. Keep this in mind when choosing your container.





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The right container for the right plant:

How Many Plants per Container? Inches refer to the diameter of the container.			
Plant Type	Number per 12" container	Number per 24" container	Number per 36" container
Basil	2	4	6
Broccoli	1	2	3
Cauliflower	1	2	3
Carrots	12	24	36
Cucumbers	1	2	4
Garlic	4	8	14
Green Beans (bush varieties)	3	6	12
Kale	1	2	4
Lettuces	4	8	14
Potatoes	1	3	7
Peas	5	10	15
Peppers	1	2	4
Radishes	13	26	40
Scallions	12	24	36
Spinach	4	8	15
Swiss Chard	2	4	6
Tomatoes (patio varieties)	1	2	3





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Ingredients for Success

- ❖ **Planning:** Plan your garden out on paper before you buy anything. Decide how much space you have, what size containers you will use, and what kind and how many plants will fit. Make a list of what you need before you shop. Be sure the plants you choose are suitable to grow in containers.
- ❖ **Sun:** Most fruit and vegetable plants need 6 or more hours of sun each day to grow. If you have space where you want a container garden, make sure it gets enough sun.
- ❖ **Soil:** Only good soil will make good plants. When container gardening, choose a good bagged potting soil. Do not use soil you dig up from your back yard; it does not work well for growing fruits and vegetables. Avoid bagged soils labeled “planting mix”, “soil conditioner”, “compost” or “manure”. These will not be well balanced for your container plants.
- ❖ **Water:** All plants need water. Containers can dry out quickly, especially in the summer months. To see if your plant needs water, put a finger in the soil. If the top inch of soil feels dry, the plant needs water. Check your plants every day. Make sure your containers have drainage holes in the bottom, so plants do not get too much water. Certain drip systems and water conserving containers can be purchased to better ensure consistent watering. However, these items can be costly.
- ❖ **Fertilizer:** Plants in containers can use up the nutrients in the soil quickly. Use an organic fertilizer once a month to ensure plants have what they need. Follow the package directions closely when applying fertilizers. A fertilizer labeled for vegetables gardens will work well.











Plant for the Season








Fruits and vegetables have specific seasons when they grow best. Lettuce and peas prefer cool weather, but tomatoes and cucumbers like it hot. Use the next few pages to learn how and when to grow a variety of plants. Always read the seed packet or plant label to know exactly what season that plant prefers. The label will also tell you how long it will take grow and harvest. Radishes and lettuces grow quickly, while tomatoes and peppers take longer.

Late Winter/Early Spring Planting: Most plants do not like frost or freezing weather. Late March to mid April is when the frost ends in Placer County. However, weather can be unpredictable so use these dates as a guide, but check your local weather before planting.

-  Kale (March)
-  Lettuce (March)
-  Potatoes (March)
-  Peas (April)
-  Radishes (April)
-  Carrots (April)



Late Spring/Summer Planting: Warm weather plants do best when planted later in the spring. These are the plants you will harvest in the middle of the summer. Frost should be long gone when you plant these varieties.

-  Green Beans (May)
-  Tomato (May)
-  Peppers (May)
-  Cucumber (May)
-  Basil (June)



Fall Planting: It is usually still really hot when thinking about planting for fall. Be sure whatever you plant now gets plenty of water until the weather cools down. Some of these plants need to be grown and harvested before the winter frost. But others will not be ready to harvest until spring.

-  Chard (August)
-  Broccoli (September)
-  Cauliflower (September)
-  Garlic (September)



