



Container gardening remedies challenges in the landscape

The landscaping of a home is just as important as the interior of the home for many people. The landscaping adds beauty and value to the home. However, gardening can pose some challenges.

Bad soil and poor drainage are a couple of obstacles gardeners may face. In addition, some gardening enthusiasts are physically challenged and unable to garden at ground level. Combining these challenges may discourage folks from growing plants. Fortunately, container gardening can remedy many of these challenges.

One of the great things about container gardening is you can be successful no matter how small or large your landscape is. The size of the space will influence the size and number of containers. Also, when planning a container garden, think about where it'll be located. Consider the amount of sun the area receives. Does the area receive full sun, partial sun or is it heavily shaded? Is the area windy? The answer to those questions will be a guiding force in choosing what plants to grow.

Something else to consider is the container itself. Often, the physical container holding the plants gets overlooked, but is an important element of a container garden. Most important is the size of the container. Small spaces need small containers, while larger spaces typically call for a large container that makes a visual statement.

The container should be able to fit the root system of the fully-grown plant, so keep that in mind. Larger plants will need more rooting space, requiring a larger container. If the plant you select is too large for the container, the rooting media will dry out more quickly.

Also, consider the material from which the container is made. Porous containers such as concrete, terracotta and unglazed ceramic allows for further moisture loss. Nonporous materials, including plastic, polystyrene foam, metal and glazed ceramic will help reduce moisture loss. Keep the weight of the container in mind, especially if you may want to rearrange the containers at some point.

Get creative when selecting your containers. Go beyond the typical pot. An old wheelbarrow makes a great visual impact in the garden, as does a child's wagon. Really, anything that'll hold soil can be used in a container garden. Keep in mind, however, if the container is shallow, it'll dry out faster. If you do choose shallow containers, consider planting succulents or other plants that do well with low levels of moisture.

It's important to use artificial or soilless media when creating a container garden. Ordinary soil compacts too easily in containers and can inhibit the flow of water and air to the roots of the plants. Artificial or soilless media can be found at most garden centers. An added bonus is it's much lighter than regular soil, making container movement easier.

Container gardens will need more water than traditional gardens planted in the ground. In the heat of the summer, some containers may need to be watered twice a day, depending on the temperature, plant selections, media and size. Make sure your containers have drainage holes to help prevent overwatering and root rot.

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