



THE LANDSCAPE CONSULTANTS

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Vegetable Gardening in Containers

Some herbs and vegetables do really well in containers. There is no reason that a city dweller can't have a veggie garden on the balcony. Here are some gardening tips that will surprise you.

With proper variety selection and plant care, your vegetables in containers can grow and provide maximum vegetable yields in minimal space. Selecting dwarf varieties can be helpful, as they are best suited to container growing.

It does not matter the type of containers that you choose to use; it can be milk jugs, half oak barrels, strawberry pots, old garbage cans, wheelbarrows, buckets or clay pots. Since containers are mobile, you can move the plants to the perfect growing location. Heat-loving to a hot sunny spot, and leafy vegetables that favor a cool, moist condition in the shade.

However the container should have a capacity of at least one-gallon. Soil depth is an important factor, as the plants need to develop strong, healthy roots. Here is a basic rule to follow, a minimal depth of 12 inches for deep rooted plants like tomatoes, peppers, broccoli and cauliflower; 10 inches for beans, peas, and cucumbers and between 6-7 inches for short-rooted veggies like radishes, turnips, onions, lettuce, cabbage, kale, spinach, and dwarf carrots.

It is important to clean the containers thoroughly that were used for food containers or had other plantings in them. To do this, simply wash the containers in warm soapy water, with an added tablespoon of bleach for each gallon of water.

Contained plants do best and are less susceptible to disease when grown in a loose and loamy soil with proper aeration and drainage. To achieve the proper soil, it is best to mix your own. Mix 1/3 Exel planted box mix, 1/3 Natures Gold Fertilizer Mulch, and 1/3 vermiculite or perlite. Make sure to provide good drainage by placing 2-3 inches of rock in the bottom of the container.

Mix for colour in your pots, as this will make them not only functional but beautiful as well. Maybe add some edible flowers like Nasturtiums, Violas or mix in some herb for not only their flower but leaf texture and variegation of the leaf colour. Flowering kale and chard are attractive vegetables and add colour to the containers.

Watering and fertilizing your mini gardens is a very important factor as to the amount of produce you will harvest. Practice deep watering by fully saturating the soil, as shallow watering will cause the roots to remain near the surface and then the plant will become weak. Deep rooted plants like tomatoes and peppers will easily drink up to 1 1/2 - 2 quarts of water a day for every two to three gallons of soil. After the plants have been in their containers for about 3 weeks, fertilize every 10 to 14 days. You can use Miracle Grow 10-30-15 or work in to the soil Exel 10-20-15 every four weeks.