

Container Gardening

Benefits of Containers

- Easily contain plants that spread fast
- Grow plants that need to be moved inside in the winter
- Easier to weed, organize, and keep (some) mammals out
- Can control more variables like soil, water, and fertilizer
- Experiment with varieties, sizes, containers, and placements!

Plant Care

Light

- Almost all edible plants need full sun (8+ hours of direct sun)
- Be aware of other things shading the pot, or the container plant shading something else
- If moving plants from inside: acclimate for a couple weeks before moving into full sun



Soil

- For most edible plants, a standard potting mix is fine
- In general, a 2:2:1 ratio of topsoil : compost/organic : inorganic (perlite, vermiculite, etc)
- Aeration is important! Aim for a mix of particle sizes, 1mm-15mm
- Tip for tall pots: fill bottom with hay, upside down pots, etc to save on soil
- Can reuse soil year to year if no diseases or pests, but add compost (see fertilizer)

Containers

- All pots MUST have drainage
- Use the appropriate pot size; too small can make plants root bound and too big can cause root rot (see table below)
- Sterilize pots if diseases/pests occur
- Get creative!! Can use anything that holds soil: pots, bags, bottles, jugs, washer barrel
 - Keep in mind its past uses: Are there any toxins that can leach into the soil?
- Growing in a container may limit the size of some plants

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Watering

- Good general rule is water when dry: Don't let go bone dry, don't let sit in water/remains soggy. You can visually determine or touch the soil to feel if it's still wet.
 - Notable exceptions are lavender and prickly pear that like to go dry.
- Fully saturate the soil, water should be coming out the drainage holes.
- Aim for a consistent watering schedule.
- Before planting, fill the container to the very top with soil.
 - For sowing seeds: water first, then sow
 - For seedlings: transplant, then full water

Fertilizing

- Containers need more fertilizer since they aren't as connected to our soil ecosystem.
- Typically adding compost at the beginning of the growing season is enough for most plants, but some heavy-nutrient users like corn or tomatoes might need more.
- For St. Louis City Residents: [Click here for list of free compost pick up sites!](#)

Approximate Pot Sizes

- Tip: Look at the seed spacing on seed packets for a reference on pot diameter!
- Below are approximate pot sizes for a single plant per pot, although most non-trees can have multiple plants together in a larger pot

Tomatoes, peppers	10 gal
Herbs (basil, thyme, oregano, rosemary, lavender, sage, parsley, mint)	5-10gal
Potatoes, radishes, beets, onions, peanuts	5 gal
Citrus trees	20-30 gal
Beans, peas (with trellis)	5 gal
Leafy greens	3-5 gal
Squash	15-20 gal

