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container gardening

by Sarah Smith

One doesn't need a lot of space to get in on the "grow your own" craze; if you have room for a few potted flowers on the porch or patio, then you have room for vegetables.

Most any garden container can hold vegetable plants, however bigger is better, to allow room for the fast growing plants. A grouping of simple terra cotta pots looks timeless and would fit in with most any home exterior. A repurposed galvanized water trough would fit either with a farmhouse or a home with sleek modern styling. Choose containers that allow for good

drainage and raise them up on pot feet or casters to ensure the drain hole stays clear.

Vegetables by the front door? Don't be so quick to dismiss that idea. Many vegetable plants are as attractive as the annual flowers we buy each year; most vegetables are, after all, annuals with flowers that mature into fruit! Eggplant have, large green leaves,

bright purple flowers and dark shiny purple fruit; the herb Basil comes in a variety of leaf sizes in colors ranging from light green through dark purple; and tomatoes range from yellow, to red, to striped, and beyond.

When choosing which plants to grow, consider what your family eats, what is hard to find at the local grocery store, and

what tastes best immediately after harvest. Whatever you plant needs to be worth the limited room available. Some vegetables are better suited for container gardening than others; generally choose dwarf or bush type plants for best results. If there is space to situate your pot next to a trellis, you could grow climbing vegetables like beans, cucumbers, or even little watermelons.

Most vegetables and herbs require at least 6 hours of sun per day; however they will do best if the pot itself is shaded to keep the soil temperature down on the extremely hot days. The containers will need to be watered

regularly, maybe as often a twice as day in the heat of summer. A large pot of moist soil with a fruit laden plant in it can be heavy; make sure that any structure your pot sits on can accommodate the extra weight.

For more information on growing vegetables check out Sarah Smith's Edible Gardening in Containers Tip Sheet: <http://thegardensmith.com/TipSheets>. ©

Sarah Smith owns The Gardensmith Landscape Design in Milwaukie, OR. She occasionally takes a day off to help Weatherford's Grand Lodge Chef Matthew Castellani with cooking demonstrations at the Oregon City Farmers Market... she always finds at least one vegetable start that she must bring home to add to her year-round edible garden. You may contact her at 503-653-0015 or on the web: www.TheGardensmith.com



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sarah's favorite veggies for containers

Large pots in full sun: Millionaire Eggplant, Siletz Tomato, Sweet Million Cherry Tomato, or Flamingo Sweet Pepper.

Medium pots in full sun: Basil, Arp Rosemary, Seascape Strawberries, Kentucky Colonel Mint, or Lavender.

Small pots: Lemon Thyme, Garlic or Chives.

Hanging Baskets: Nasturtiums or Strawberries.

Pots in part shade: Some herbs, and leafy greens like lettuce.

Trellises & bamboo teepees: Romano Beans, Purple Pole Beans, Cucumbers, and Snap Peas.



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