



CONTAINER VEGETABLES

You can grow almost any vegetable in a container. With some planning, choosing the right varieties of plant, a container garden can grow plentiful vegetables.

Types of Containers

You can grow vegetables in just about any container including smart pot/grow pots, self-watering pots, clay pots, plastic pots, half wine barrels, planter boxes, and many others too numerous to list. Important considerations in container vegetable gardening are drainage, accommodation of root size, rooting depths, and plant density. Plant density is the number of individual plants per pot. It is the space requirement each plant needs in the pot and the rooting depth of the plant.

Planting Medium

You should choose a good quality potting soil. Do not use soil from your yard or garden. A soil mix is often made up of part sphagnum peat moss, coir or compost; part pasteurized soil; part vermiculite or perlite; and some composted manure. Be sure to check for the organic material like peat moss or vermiculite. Organic materials allow potting soils to retain moisture, maintain air space and allow roots to grow more quickly.

Fertilization

Growing vegetables in containers requires more frequent fertilization than vegetables grown in the ground. There is limited space, limited nutrients, a lack of natural processes, therefore, fertilization must be relied upon.

Additional fertilizer is needed because frequent watering leaches out nutrients. Plants grown in containers and not fertilized are stressed. Stressed vegetables are just not going to be good producers! When the plants begin to produce vegetables, additional fertilizer is needed. Fertilizer should be made per direction, look for a water-soluble solution. Fertilizer should be applied once a week when watering.

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e-mail your garden questions to: mastergardener@spokanecounty.org

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Planting

(See chart on following pages)

You will still be able to plant all your favorite vegetables in a container; however, you may have to change varieties. Select from the chart or select similar varieties at your favorite garden store.

Determine the number of plants per container. Plant seeds or transplants into the prepared containers as you would plant the seeds or transplants into the ground. Do not over plant! If you are seeding, yes over-seed, but thin to the correct number per the container.

Succession Planting of Leafy Vegetables in Containers

Space out plantings of the same vegetable every two to four weeks. This can be achieved by planting leafy greens that take a shorter time to mature.

- Select leafy vegetables that you would like to grow (such as spinach, lettuce, collards, etc.)
- Select a container that will accommodate vegetables planted in succession
- Plant seeds or transplant seedlings of the selected vegetable in a container and leaving a space for future plantings.
- After one or two weeks, make a second planting of the vegetable in the vacant space.
- After another week, make a third planting in the vacant space.
- After harvesting the first planted greens, there will be space for a planting of another type of vegetable which will mature later in the growing season.

Watering

Plants grown in containers are more exposed to the elements and therefore need frequent watering. During the summer months, watering daily is a must; in the heat of the summer sometimes water is a twice daily endeavor. You will be the judge of the this. The best way is to stick your finger in the soil. If the soil is wet, hold the water; if dry, water.

When you water, don't pour the water over the top, water slowly, let the water soak into the soil, until it pours from the drainage holes, at the bottom to the container. Don't water the foliage or the fruit as this promote disease.

Staking and Caging

To stake or cage? That is the question and when to do it? The answer is yes, fit the container and do it early. The argument for staking/caging is for the health of the plant and to contain the plant.

To stake a plant, place the stake in the pot, when the plant is about 12 inches tall begin tying the plant to the stake loosely with a stretchy tie, continue as the plant grows.

Caging is the same. Know your plant, if your tomato will grow to 6 feet, plan to have a 6-foot cage, cage early and allow the plant to grow into the cage. Tomato cages can be used to support tomatoes and peppers.



Suggested minimum container sizes and varieties of vegetables suitable for container gardening are as follows:

CONTAINER	NAME	SPACING/PLANTING	RECOMMENDED VARIETIES
One gallon	Beans (pole)	pole: 3" apart on trellis	Blue Lake, Emerite, Fortex,
	Beans (Bush)	2-3 plants	Eureka, Porch Pick, Provider, Topcrop, Tendercrop, Nickel Filet , Derby, Eureka Wax, Gold Rush Wax
	Beets	2"-3" apart	Burpee's Golden, Bull's Blood, Chioggia, Cylindra, Early Wonder, Detroit Dark Red
	Bell Peppers	1 plant	Chinese Garden, Sweet Big Dipper, Sweet Golden Baby Belle, Sweet Red Popper, Sweet Tangerine Dream
	Broccoli	1 plant	Green Goliath, Gypsy, Packman, Bonanza
At least 10" of soil	Cabbage	1 plant	Any cultivar
	Carrots	1½"-3" apart	Scarlet Nantes, Gold Nugget, Little Finger, Baby Spike, Thumbelina
	Cherry & Patio Tomatoes	1 plant	Pixie (cherry); Patio (patio)
	Cucumbers	1 plant	Burpless, Liberty, Early Pik, Crispy, Salty, Bush Champion, and Spacemaster
	Eggplant	1 plant	Florida Market, Black Beauty, Long Tom, Early Black Egg, and Ichiban Hybrid
	Kale	6" apart	Winter Red, Siberian
	At least 6" of soil	Lettuce	2 plants (Head) seedlings 4-6" apart (leaf)
Leeks		2"-3" apart	King Richard, Musselburg
Onions		2" apart; harvest: 8-10" for green onions	Yellow Multiplier, Sweet Spanish, Walla Walla Sweets, Copra, Bunching
Radishes		Plant in rows Thin to 1" apart	Champion, French Breakfast, White Icicle, Easter Egg, Cherry Belle, Scarlet
Spinach		direct seed thin to 1-2 inches apart; 5" in rows	Any cultivar
Swiss Chard		1 plant	Fordhook Giant, Lucullus

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CONTAINER NAME		SPACING/PLANTING	RECOMMENDED VARIETIES
Two gallons	Beets	thin to 2-3 inches apart	Ruby Queen
	Carrots	thin to 2-3 inches apart	Little Finger, Denver's Half Long, Nantes Half Long
	Cucumbers	12"-16" apart	Marketmore, Lemon (for slicing); Diva, Bush Champion, Burpee's Pickler (for pickling)
	Eggplant	1 plant	Dusky
	Peppers	2 plants	Lady Bell, Gypsy, Crispy, New Ace, Red Chili
	Radishes	thin to 1-2 inches apart	Champion, Comet, Sparkler, White Icicle, Early Scarlet Globe
	Turnips	Thin for greens leaving others to mature	Any cultivar
Three gallons	Standard tomatoes	1 plant	Jetstar, Celebrity, Super Bush
Four gallons	Peppers	14"-18" apart 1 plant per gallon	Gypsy, Sweet Banana, Early Jalapeno, Ace Hybrid, Anaheim Chili
	Tomatoes - Large Fruit Variety	Depends on variety and how trained	Early Girl, Oregon Spring, Patio Hybrid, Sweet 100, Sungold, Celebrity, Glacier, Sweet Baby Girl, Taxi
	Zucchini	1 plant	Eightball, Black Beauty, Gold Rush Hybrid