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Short on time or space? Try container gardening

Gardening is a favourite pastime for many Americans. But what do you do if you don't have the time to garden? Or the space? The answer is easy - container gardening.

For those who love to garden but don't have time to tend to a yard full of flowers, container gardening gives those green thumbs an adequate workout. Container gardening is great for apartment dwellers, gardeners with small yards and gardeners who are renting homes. If you move, you can take your garden with you. It's easy to plant a container garden. Start with your container. Be creative - look beyond the basic flowerpot. Wooden barrels, interesting antiques and even an old boot can hold potting soil and a plant. Be sure the containers have adequate drainage. If they don't, drill a few holes in the bottom.

Next, line your container with a layer of landscape fabric to keep the potting soil from washing away when you water. Fill the lined container with a quality sterile potting soil. Leave about an inch of space between the soil and top edge of the container.

Now it's time to pick your plants. One of the greatest things about container gardening is its affordability. You can experiment with different flowers and plants without breaking the bank. Are there some bulbs or perennials you'd like to plant but aren't sure if they'd do well where you live? With container gardening, you can purchase a couple and give them a try.

It's important to place your newly planted containers in a location that provides proper light for your plants. Potted plants look best in groups, so try several arrangements. The versatility of container gardening allows you to move your "garden" wherever and whenever you wish.

When you've settled on a location, don't forget to water. This is where most mistakes are made in plant care. Too much or too little moisture can bring disaster. Water plants when the soil is dry an inch below the surface.

Like people, plants need proper nutrients. Make this easy on yourself and use fertilizer spikes. Gardeners have used them for years because they consistently produce vigorous, healthy plants and they're easy to use. All you do is push the spikes directly into the soil, then water. The spikes come in a variety of formulas, several of which are perfect for container gardens. Try the formulas for flowering plants, houseplants, potted plants and hanging baskets and bulbs and perennials.

If you love plants and flowers but find your time and space limited, give container gardening a try. The possibilities are as endless as your imagination.

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