

HOME GROUNDS FACT SHEET

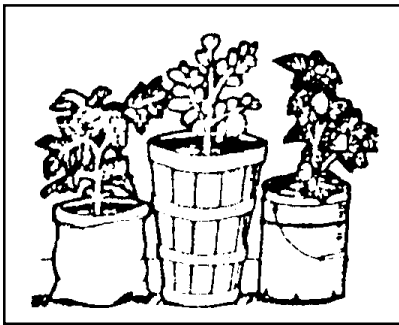
CORNELL

Cooperative Extension
Nassau County



Nassau County
Horticulture Program
Eisenhower Park
East Meadow, NY 11554
516 228-0426

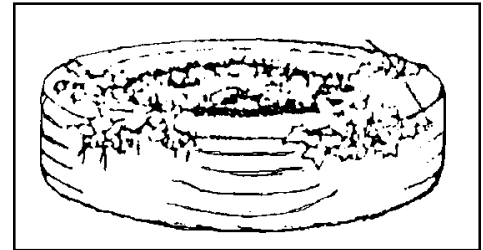
Small Space Gardening



Do you have a green thumb but no space for gardening? Container gardening is a solution for many apartment dwellers, renters and senior citizens. Let's consider the apartment dweller. By taking advantage of the rooftop, valuable space in full sun can be made available. Be sure to check with your building superintendent before beginning such a project.

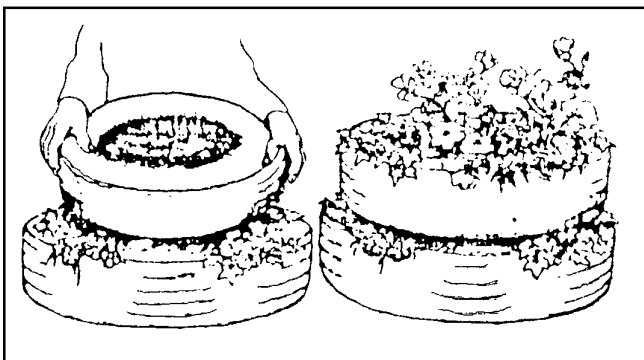
Containers can be made from various materials: flower pots, old painted tires and plastic buckets are just a few. Be sure there are drainage holes at the bottom. Since rooftops (especially dark-colored ones) get very hot, light-colored buckets must be used. They will

not absorb much heat. By covering the ground below the plants with newspaper, heat that can dry out roots will be cut down drastically. Senior citizens or handicapped gardeners can stack their containers on sawhorses to eliminate bending and stretching.



Plan your garden

Remember, since you are gardening to save space, a succession of crops is important. Plant varieties of vegetables that will mature at different times. For example, plant one early tomato variety and one late variety to provide a harvest over a long period of time. Make successive sowings of salad crops such as radish, onion and lettuce about 14 days apart so when one containerful has been picked, another is ready to mature. Beans are another easy vegetable for successive sowing. Since vegetable varieties change from year to year, contact your county Extension office for the latest recommended varieties.



Before choosing your vegetable varieties, ask yourself:

1. Will my family use this vegetable?
2. How many plants will we need?
3. What varieties are conducive to this kind of environment and will be resistant to our common disease problems?

Containers should be at least 8" deep for small and medium- sized vegetables. They should be 12" to 18" deep for vegetables such as tomato, corn and eggplant. (In the case of corn, a 4' square space is required for good pollination.)

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Building Strong and Vibrant New York Communities

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When growing in small spaces, you must not only choose vegetables conducive to intensive cropping, but you must learn to grow plants efficiently. The following chart gives the approximate number of plants a square foot of garden space grows:

Vegetable	Approximate number of plants per square foot	Vegetable	Approximate number of plants per square foot
Beans	3-4	Mustard greens	9
Beets	2-5	Onions (cooking)	16
Broccoli	3	(hamburger)	9
Brussels sprouts	2	(green bunching)	100 ****
Cabbage	2	Parsley	16
Carrots	100 **	Parsnips	2-5
Cauliflower	2	Peanuts	4 ***
Chard, Swiss	9	Peas	2-5 ***
Corn (dwarf)	4	Peppers	4
Cucumber (standard)	1 ***	Potatoes	1
(dwarf)	2 ***	Sweet Potatoes	1
Dandelion	6	Radishes	144 *****
Eggplant	1	Rutabaga	5
Endive	4	Spinach	4
Garlic	3-6	Summer squash, bush	1
Kale	4	Winter squash, bush	1
Kohlrabi	4	Tomato (regular)	1 ***
Leeks	6-4	(dwarf)	2
Lettuce (head)	4	Husk tomato (Physalis)	2
(leaf & semi-head)	6	Watermelon (dwarf)	1 ***
Muskmelon	1 ***		

** Thin every other one when "fingerlings" and let others grow.
 *** Train on trellis.
 **** Thin to eat and let others grow into cooking onions.
 ***** Thin small ones to eat and let others grow.

Insect control

When gardening in containers, spend an extra few minutes while watering each day to check for insects. Most small gardens are easily debugged by hand picking on a regular basis. This decreases the need for pesticides and encourages beneficial insects.

Maintenance of the garden

Container grown vegetables need more feeding and watering than those that grow in the ground. Vegetables that experience fluctuations in moisture are subject to increased physiological problems such as misshapen fruits in cucumbers and blossom end rot of tomatoes. Keep container gardens evenly moist. It is sometimes helpful to keep the containers off the ground slightly to enhance drainage - a few rocks or wood under each container serve the purpose. Harvest vegetables early and regularly to ensure a bountiful and continuous supply.