

Which pot should you use for your plants?

Posted by [Jacqui Atkielski](#) On 05/19/2016

HOLLYWOOD, MD-- Container gardening is an easy way to get fresh vegetables and herbs, as well as add color and life to your drab balcony or porch. Container gardens are fun to create and offer almost unlimited possibilities of combinations.

When considering what to plant, you'll need to determine the right containers to keep your investment going for the summer, or however long you decide to have the garden.

Each type of container material has merits and disadvantages, according to [this website](#).

Clay or terra-cotta containers are attractive but breakable. They are easily damaged by freezing and thawing weather. In Northern areas, most need to be stored in a frost-free location to prevent cracking, and are not suitable for hardy perennials or shrubs that will be kept outdoors.

Cast concrete is long-lasting and comes in a range of sizes and styles. These can be left outside in all weather. You can even make attractive ones yourself. Plain concrete containers are very heavy, so they are difficult to move and not suitable for using on decks or balconies. Concrete planters mixed with vermiculite or perlite, or concrete and fiberglass blends, are much lighter.

For both terra cotta and concrete, consider using a cachepot, so you can transfer your plants without shocking them. The material is known for absorbing moisture away from plants, and that can be avoided by placing the plant in a plastic bag or container before putting it in the terra cotta or concrete pot.

Plastic and fiberglass pots and planters are lightweight, relatively inexpensive, and available in many sizes and shapes. Make sure to choose sturdy and somewhat flexible containers. Avoid thin, stiff ones because they become brittle with cold or age.

Containers made of polyurethane foam weigh up to 90 percent less than terra cotta or concrete containers, yet they look remarkably alike. Polyurethane foam containers resist wear and also can insulate roots against both hot and cold temperatures, making them a good choice for potting up plants that will stay outside year-round.

Wood is natural looking and protects roots from rapid temperature swings. You can build wooden planters yourself, but make sure to use a naturally rot-resistant wood like cedar, locust, or pine treated with a nontoxic preservative. Don't use creosote, which is toxic to plants. Consider the inexpensive option of sturdy molded wood-fiber containers.

Metals are strong, but they conduct heat, exposing roots to rapid temperature fluctuations. Metal must be lined with plastic for growing edibles.

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