

# Container Gardening for Beginners

by Patricia A Terry

Would you like to grow your own vegetables and herbs without digging up your lawn? No worries, try container gardening. I wanted to grow my own vegetables, however, I wasn't sure if I wanted to dig up my lawn - which I loved. I attended a "how to start a container garden" workshop at a local nursery, and watched numerous YouTube videos to gather additional information prior to starting. I liked the idea of container gardening, started it and wanted to share my experience with others.

Which leads me to the following six steps:

## **Step 1. Have a plan** (the first year I kept it simple)

- What would you like to grow? herbs, vegetables, flowers  
I wanted to grow vegetables that I love to eat - tomatoes and cucumbers
- Location - I used my deck which gets full sun and was close to a watering source
- Decide if you would like to start by planting seeds or using transplants

## **Step 2. Decide on a container type**

There are many different types of containers you can use or you can make your own self-watering container. After much research, I selected the self-watering Earthbox container kit.

- Earthbox
- Pros
  1. Available in 3 sizes - original (2 1/2 feet x 15 inches and 1 foot high), root & veg, and junior size
  2. Earthbox kit includes: fertilizer, dolomite lime, mulch cover (which reduce weeds and allow rain water to run off your container)
  3. planting instructions per container for easy assembly (for example: 2 tomatoes plants per container, 4 cucumber plants per container) and how to position the plants in the self watering container
  4. You water through a filing tube - the reservoir holds 2-3 gallons of water - when the reservoir is full, the water drains out of the overflow hole. This was a great feature for me, I couldn't over water the plants
- Cons

Cover the watering tube with a cap to reduce mosquitoes from hanging around or plant mosquito deterrent flowers near the container (ex. marigolds, lavender)

## **Step 3. Gather supplies**

- 2 cubic feet growing media for the large container, 1 cubic foot for smaller container  
I purchased my growing media (potting soil or potting mix) from a local nursery - the Earthbox website has a recommendation list
- plants - purchased plants from the Chesapeake Master Gardeners plant sell or local garden center
- water - it helps to have a watering source nearby. I used a garden hose from my well water spigot to the container garden

## **Step 4. Planting Day**

- Set aside time to carefully plant. Follow the planting guide instructions included with the Earthbox

## **Step 5. Maintenance**

- Maintain a consistent watering schedule
- Inspect plants for insects or disease

**Final step.** Harvest time - enjoy eating what you've grown

The second year my gardening confidence increased and I planted more vegetables, herbs and flowers. You can buy the Earthbox kit individually or buy the individual items that make up the kit (fertilizer, dolomite lime, and growing media).

Thank you and Happy Gardening

**References:**

"Gardening Systems." *Earthbox.com*. <https://earthbox.com/gardening-systems/the-original-earthbox-gardening-system>, 2018 Novelty Manufacturing Co. 1330 Loop Rd., Lancaster, PA 17601

"Recommended Growing Media." *Earthbox*, <https://earthbox.com/approved-for-earthbox>. 2018 Novelty Manufacturing Co. 1330 Loop Rd., Lancaster, PA 17601

"McDonald's Nursery." <https://www.mcdonaldgardencenter.com/> 2019 McDonald Garden Center

"Chesapeake Master Gardening." website: [cmgv.org](http://cmgv.org)