

Terrariums and other planters

Terrarium

- A terrarium, a garden in an enclosed glass container, makes a delightful way to grow a collection of small plants.
- With proper care, a terrarium will create a humid atmosphere that protects tender, tropical plants that are difficult to grown in the normally dry atmosphere of our homes.
- Under controlled conditions it can also help to start new plants.

- Terrariums as we know them came about years ago when an English botanist devised the Wardian case, a glass box used to transport plants collected in distant countries back to the British Isles. Within the glass enclosure he could grow plants in conditions almost like those of their natural environment and protect them from the harsh conditions on board sailing ships . Because the plants inside their glass enclosures were decorative, the idea was soon adapted for home interior decorating.

Soil and Drainage

- A soil mixture of one part sand, one part peat moss, and one part loam should be used in terrariums. Ordinary garden soils used alone are too heavy for plants to grow well. One level teaspoon of 5-10-5 fertilizer should be added to a six-inch potful of the soil mixture.

Containers

- Almost any type of clear glass container can be used as a terrarium: old-fashioned candy jars, fish bowls or tanks, goblets, or bottles. Cloudy or colored glass filters out too much light for good plant growth. While the containers should have covers or lids, clear plastic film may be used to cover open containers.
- Some kind of cover is necessary to control the moisture and humidity inside the terrarium.
- The size of the container is optional, but the opening should be large enough to permit manipulation of the contents.

- The size of the container will determine the size of the plants and accessories you may use.
- Small evergreens and deciduous tree seedlings can be used in large containers such as aquariums and dish gardens. Always
- keep the scale of the plant suitable to the size of the container.
- Since terrariums have no drainage hole, provision must be made for the escape of excess water

- A layer of moss on the bottom of the terrarium can serve as a drainage layer in very small containers.
- For large containers, broken pieces of clay flower pots or charcoal, or a layer of sand or fine gravel may be added before the moss layer.

Plants to be used

- Many varieties of plants may be grown in a terrarium, including native and tropical plants.
- Philodendron, Philodendron species Pothos, Croton, Dracena, African Violet
- Cactus and succulent plants should not be used in terrariums since the high humidity causes them to rot.

Planning

- After selecting a container, plan your terrarium layout. You can arrange plants in whatever design you wish. You may want to include small pebbles, some driftwood, or even stones to create interest, but don't clutter your plan with too many ornaments; they will only ruin its natural look.
- Consider how the terrarium will be displayed. If it will be viewed mainly from one side, plan to build toward the back of the container. Extra soil, moss, and larger plants can be placed toward the back, with smaller plants clustered toward the front. If the terrarium will be viewed from all sides, cluster larger material near the center

- Different plants can be used to achieve different effects. Taller plants simulate trees, while creeping vines, mosses, and lichens make good ground covers. Open spaces can be filled with a “sheet moss,” pebbles and lichens, or even a stone partially buried to create a miniature ledge.