



# 13 Backyard Container Gardens

.....  
*for Perfect Planting*  
.....

# 13 Backyard Container Gardens


.....  
*for Perfect Planting*  
.....



ALTERNATIVE  
DAILY

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

3	Container Gardening Is For Everyone
4	Reusable Grocery Bags
5	Raised Pallet Garden
7	Child's Plastic Pool
8	Colanders
9	Log Herb Garden
10	Gutter Gardens
11	Old Baskets
12	Plastic Bottle Containers
15	Old Boot Garden
17	Coffee Sack Potatoes
19	Old Cans
20	Old Book Herb Planter
22	PVC Planter On A Post
23	More Creative Planter Ideas
24	Keys To Success





# CONTAINER GARDENING IS FOR EVERYONE

Container gardening is so much fun! Not only do containers make gardening a possibility for everyone, even those with little space, but they are also make great conversation pieces. This is especially true when you use recycled, free or cheap containers.

Most garden veggies, herbs and fruit are happy in any kind of a container as long as there is great organic soil with excellent drainage. Container food gardening is quite popular, especially for people who have limited space. Containers are so flexible, you can move them or hang them anywhere. You will be amazed at how many possible planting containers you throw away daily and how much landfill debris you can save by using recycled options.

Here is my list of very cool container ideas that are environmentally friendly and lots to fun to make.



## REUSABLE GROCERY BAGS

Everyone has a few of these bags hanging around. If you don't, you can purchase them for about \$2 or less each. Reusable grocery bags are great for tomatoes, lettuce and herbs. Be sure to use the kind that has a plastic coating on the outside and fabric on the inside.

### SUPPLIES

- Reusable grocery bags
- Plastic screening
- Scissors
- Soil
- Seeds



### HOW TO MAKE IT

1. Cut some holes in the bottom and line the bag with plastic screening.
2. Using scissors, create slits half an inch from the bottom. Putting some slits on the side will allow for good drainage if you place your bag on a non-porous surface.
3. Fill with soil and plant



## RAISED PALLET GARDEN

Pallets are a dime a dozen and usually free if you ask the right people. Look on Craigslist or check with your nearby home and gardening store – chances are they will be relieved to get rid of a few extra pallets!

With just a few supplies, you can make a cool and useful raised pallet garden. This raised bed is perfect for plants with a shallow root system such as strawberries, most herbs and greens. Don't plant anything that has a deep root system such as potatoes, carrots, beets, onions or rhubarb.

### SUPPLIES

- Nail bar
- Wooden pallet in good shape
- Scissors
- Garden fabric
- Organic potting soil
- Staple gun and staples
- Plants



## HOW TO MAKE IT

1. Check the pallet for any nails that are sticking out and remove them.
2. Turn the pallet over. Lay garden fabric on the back. Allow enough excess to cover all four sides at the end and the top.
3. Trim the fabric.
4. Staple the fabric to the back of the pallet. It is great to have a helper for this part to hold the fabric taut. Staple the outer edges first. Put additional staples on the center beams.
5. Turn the pallet over and staple the top. The idea is to seal all places where dirt could escape, apart from the front side.
6. Position your pallet bed in the desired location.
7. Fill the pallet bed with soil and plants.





## CHILD'S PLASTIC POOL

Don't throw away that kids pool just because it has a small crack! Use it for a small raised garden bed instead. Herbs and salad greens do best in shallow kiddie pools. Be sure that you put some holes in the bottom and slits along the sides for drainage.

### SUPPLIES

- Plastic kids pool
- Utility knife
- Soil
- Seeds
- Woods or bricks (optional)



### HOW TO MAKE IT

1. Using a helper to keep the pool steady, cut several large holes in the bottom, approximately one square inch each.
2. On the sides of the pool, create slits half an inch from the bottom.
3. Fill with soil, then pat down gently.
4. Make rows in the soil and plant seeds.
5. If necessary, prop plastic pool up on wood or bricks to allow for proper drainage.





## COLANDERS

Old metal colanders are one of my favorite recycled containers for planting. They are the perfect depth for herbs such as mint, basil or oregano. They offer built-in drainage and they look really cute. I find most of my old colanders at thrift shops or yard sales.

### SUPPLIES:

- Old metal colander
- Vinegar
- Spray paint
- Coffee filters
- Chain (or flower pot hanging kit)
- Potting soil
- Seeds or plants



### HOW TO MAKE IT:

1. Wash your colander with vinegar to remove oil and residue.
2. Spray paint the colander to the color of your choice. Let the colander dry before adding coffee filters, soil and plants.
3. Add a light layer of coffee filters to the bottom of the colander.
4. Add one inch of potting soil over the coffee filters, then add in plants or seeds.
5. Using the chain, hang the colander on your porch.



## LOG HERB GARDEN

If you have a few logs hanging around, put them to use as a planter. Here is how to make your very own log herb garden.

### SUPPLIES

- Drill with 16" drill bit
- Wood-boring tri flute spade drill bit and paddle bit
- Vacuum
- Dry and flat log
- Potting soil
- Plants

### HOW TO MAKE IT

1. Bore holes in the top end of the log. Use the widest paddle bit to get the biggest and deepest hole. Keep drilling to at least 8 inches and desired width.
2. Vacuum out the shavings from time to time as you drill.
3. Create a drainage hole in the log using the paddle bit.
4. Fill the planting hole with soil and plants.





## GUTTER GARDENS

Gutter planting is perfect for people who have plenty of room to grow vertically but are limited on space otherwise. Gutter gardening allows you to transform a plain and bare wall into a living masterpiece. For supplies, ask around or check your local Craigslist for pieces of non-rusted guttering material.

Herbs and strawberries are wonderful plants to grow in a gutter garden. Try a combination of both for a focal point on a wall or fence.

### SUPPLIES

- Piece of guttering
- Scrub brush
- Spray paint
- Drill and small drill bit
- Screws for attaching
- Lightweight potting soil
- Plants



### HOW TO MAKE IT

1. Clean the gutter and be sure that there is not any flaking paint or other debris.
2. Paint you gutter to match your decor.
3. Attach the guttering to the chosen location. Add screws to keep the guttering firmly in place.
4. Fill the gutter 3/4 full with lightweight potting soil, then add your plants.



## OLD BASKETS

Baskets come in all shapes and sizes, and many offer natural drainage so there is no need to alter them. Strawberry plants love baskets as do most herbs, salad greens and annual flowers. To make your basket really shine, consider investing a few bucks for a can of your favorite color spray paint and paint the outside of the basket.

### SUPPLIES:

- Old basket
- Spray paint
- Potting soil
- Plants

### HOW TO MAKE IT:

1. Spray paint your old basket to the color of your choice. Wait for it to dry before adding soil.
2. Add a few inches of potting soil.
3. Add plants, then cover with more soil until filled to the brim.





## PLASTIC BOTTLE CONTAINERS

Using plastic bottles for growing food is a great recycling project that the whole family can be a part of. It is a wonderful way to teach children the value of not only growing food but also making something useful from trash. Like other shallow containers, recycled plastic bottles are great for shallow plants such as herbs, strawberries and greens.

Here is how you can make your own plastic bottle growing containers using recycled bottles.





## **Upright Half Plastic Bottle Container Garden**

Cut bottles in half and use the neck side down. Turn bottles upside down and attach them to a wooden frame in such a way that the neck side is just above the open side of the bottle below. This way the water will drain down into the next container. This system allows you to grow a ton of food in a very small space.



## **Hanging Plastic Bottle Garden**

With this method, cut a space out on one side of the bottle, leaving the top and end intact. Attach bottles to each other and to a frame using string.



## OLD BOOT GARDEN

I love using old boots that I find at thrift stores to make little mini herb gardens. These boot gardens look great on your patio, by your front door or even on a table inside your home.

### SUPPLIES

- Pair of old boots
- Drill and large drill bit
- Lightweight potting soil
- Plants







## HOW TO MAKE IT

1. Remove insoles from boots.
2. Drill at least five drainage holes, one inch apart, in each boot.
3. Fill your boots with lightweight potting soil and plants.





## COFFEE SACK POTATOES

Potatoes grow especially well in bags. There's no need to purchase a special potato bag when you can make your own from recycled coffee sacks! Not only are coffee sacks cute but they are sturdy and will last for at least a couple of growing seasons. Here is how to make your own potato garden from a coffee sack.

### SUPPLIES

- Recycled sack
- Potting soil
- Potato seeds



## HOW TO MAKE IT

1. Roll the edges of your sack down to make a short bag about six inches high.
2. Fill the sack with five inches of loose soil.
3. Place your potatoes on top of the soil six inches apart with the eyes facing upwards.
4. Cover potatoes with six inches of soil.
5. In a couple of weeks, you will see the leafy plant push up through the soil. At this time, mound the soil around the plant to promote more growth. Leave a little bit of the green about the soil.



For best results, keep the soil moist but not soaking. If you live in a rainy climate, you will want to shelter your bag to prevent too much moisture. Harvest in 80 to 100 days by dumping your sack over.



## OLD CANS

Coffee cans, metal cans, watering cans... I love to use interesting old metal cans for planters. You can use large coffee cans as well and paint them before planting. Just be sure that you drill holes in the bottom and a few along the sides of cans to allow for drainage. Deeper cans make excellent growing space for tomato plants, carrots, beets, and other root veggies as well as annual flowers.

### SUPPLIES:

- Old cans
- Spray paint
- Hammer
- Nail
- Small rocks
- Soil
- Plants



### HOW TO MAKE IT:

1. Remove the labels on the can by soaking in soap and warm water.
2. Turn the can upside down, and nail a few holes into the bottom using a hammer.
3. Color the cans with spray paint in the hue of your choice. Wait until dry before completing the next step.
4. Place small rocks at the bottom, then fill with soil and plants.

## OLD BOOK HERB PLANTER

If you are a book lover, this creative planter idea is for you. These planters make great centerpieces at a wedding or just sitting on a table in your living room or kitchen.

### SUPPLIES

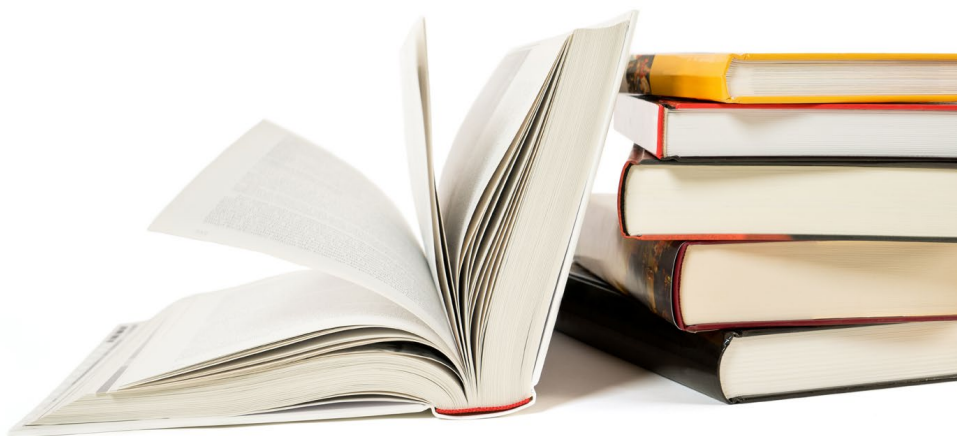
- Old book
- Wood glue
- Plastic see-through bag
- Pencil
- Ruler
- Craft knife
- Lightweight soil
- Herbs



## HOW TO MAKE IT

1. Spread wood glue along the edges of the book to hold the pages together.
2. Mark a square on the front cover of the book where you plan to cut.
3. Using a craft knife, cut through the book at least six inches, preferably eight.
4. Glue a piece of plastic bag into the hole and along the edges.
5. Fill the space with lightweight potting soil.

**Note:** This planter does not have drainage but does well for herbs such as oregano and thyme. Just keep soil evenly moist using a spray bottle. Do not overwater.





## PVC PLANTER ON A POST

It's amazing what a piece of PVC plumbers pipe can do for your garden. Not only is it inexpensive but it is also tough and creates a great place to grow greens, strawberries, annual flowers and herbs.

### SUPPLIES

- 4" diameter PVC pipe
- 1" diameter galvanized steel pipe
- Scrap wood
- Chop saw
- Drill
- 3" bit
- 1" bit
- Rubber mallet
- Sandpaper
- Paint for plastics
- Measuring tape
- Pencil



## HOW TO MAKE IT:

1. Cut the 4" pipe to 12 1/2 inches long. Cut an extra thin slice to use later as a template.
2. Find the center of the pipe and mark it. Use the 3" drill bit to make a hole in the center.
3. Make two additional 3" holes spaced evenly between and lined up with the center hole at the ends of the pipe.
4. Turn the pipe over and directly opposite the center hole, drill a 1" hole in the center of the pipe. This is for the post that your planter will sit on.
5. Drill two smaller drainage holes on each side of the 1" hole.
6. Use the thin slice of 4" PVC as a template to make end caps for the planter. Trace around the inside of the slice to the scrap wood. Make two end caps and tap them into the PVC planter with a rubber mallet.
7. Attach your post.
8. Sand the rough edges on the planter.
9. Get creative using paint for plastics.
10. Fill the planter with lightweight potting soil and plant.

**Note:** There are also many other neat ways to use PVC pipe to accommodate more plants including hooking pipes together in a PVC frame. This allows you to grow lots of food in a small space. Veggies like greens and herbs thrive in this type of container garden.





## MORE CREATIVE PLANTER IDEAS

The sky is really the limit when it comes to making planters. Drainage, soil quality and depth are all important considerations when creating recycled and inexpensive planters. Here are some more ideas to try.

- **Old wooden drawers:** Stack old wooden drawers on top of each other to make a creative planter tower.
- **Cooking pots:** Big stock pots are great for tomatoes, carrots and other root veggies and well as annual flowers.
- **Basketball:** Don't throw that old basketball out! Cut out a spot to plant and a place to hang some chain and you have a creative, sports-minded planter.
- **Vintage bathtubs:** Vintage bathtubs make a great focal point in any garden. Since they are deep, a multitude of plants can be grown such as root veggies, cucumbers, melons, tomatoes and lettuce.
- **Wheelbarrows:** Turn a retired wheelbarrow into a fantastic herb and annual flower container.

- **Paint cans:** Recycle your paint cans into creative planting containers by simply drilling a few holes in the sides and bottom and lining with a plastic bag.
- **Toolbox or tacklebox:** Open up a toolbox or a tackle box and you will find a great place to showcase small herbs and dainty annual plants.
- **Little red wagon:** Wagons make a great conversation piece and an even better place to plant herbs and leafy greens.
- **Vintage tins:** Shop your local thrift store for fun novelty tins. Most tins are big enough to hold one or two plants and are great for growing greens.
- **Wooden boxes:** Vintage wooden boxes are a great place to grow salad greens and herbs. I especially like the ones with dividers.





- **Feed Sacks:** These are deep enough to plant melons, cucumbers, tomatoes and root veggies. Just give the climbers a trellis and the tomatoes a cage for support.
- **Straw bales:** These are cheap and make excellent planters for all sorts of garden veggies. Water the bale for a week and let it start to decompose. Cut out a section and put in your planting medium such as rich compost and organic soil.
- **Old galvanized tubs or feed troughs:** These big containers are excellent for dwarf fruit bushes or trees.
- **Old hot tubs:** You can plant an entire garden in a hot tub! What a great way to make an inexpensive raised bed.



## KEYS TO SUCCESS

As with any type of gardening, plants grown in containers will do best if you follow a few simple steps for success.

- Always be sure you have proper drainage for plants.
- Choose an adequate pot for the mature size of your plant. Remember, they don't stay small forever!
- Water and fertilize your plants for best growth and harvest. Containers are prone to drying out quickly.
- Place containers where they will get at least six to eight hours of sun for veggies and fruit.
- Always use a high quality organic and lightweight potting mix that drains well.
- Never use second season soil as it may contain harmful bacteria.
- Select high-quality organic plants when growing fruit, veggies and herbs.
- Remove dead flowers and brown foliage weekly.
- Check regularly for insects.

## *Happy Planting!*

Copyright © Splash Campaign, LLC DBA TheAlternativeDaily.com

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means: Electronic, photocopy, recording, or by an information storage and retrieval system.

**Disclaimer:** All material on TheAlternativeDaily.com and in this book are provided for your information only and may not be construed as medical advice or instruction. No action or inaction should be taken based solely on the contents of this information; instead, readers should consult appropriate health professionals on any matter relating to their health and well-being. If you think you may have a medical emergency, call your doctor or 911 immediately. The content of this book (text, graphics, and images) is not intended to be a substitute for professional medical advice, diagnosis, or treatment. Always seek the advice of your physician or other qualified health provider with any questions you may have regarding a medical condition. Never disregard professional medical advice or delay in seeking it because of something you have read on TheAlternativeDaily.com or in this book. The information and opinions expressed here are believed to be accurate, based on the best judgment available to the authors. Readers who fail to consult with appropriate health authorities assume the risk of any injuries. Reliance on any information and content provided by TheAlternativeDaily.com and this book is solely at your own risk. In addition, the information and opinions expressed here do not necessarily reflect the views of every contributor to TheAlternativeDaily.com. TheAlternativeDaily.com acknowledges occasional differences in opinion and welcomes the exchange of different viewpoints. The publisher is not responsible for errors or omissions.