



All Planting in containers



Planting containers is a terrific activity that makes an immediate impact on the growing space. The simple process ‘transplants’ young plants grown in small pots into larger containers. Many fruit, vegetables and herbs will do well in containers, so experiment to see what does best for you. Planting instructions follow.

Resources

- Prepared containers
- Growing medium, eg compost (see below)
- Plants, eg glasshouse cucumbers, herbs, fruit bushes, etc
- Watering can

Activity

- 1 Plan which containers you’re going to plant with your group.
- 2 Follow planting instructions on the next page, adapting as required for your chosen containers and plants.

Extended activities

- 1 Make a year plan as to how the containers will be used, eg different crops for each season, replacing/feeding soil, etc.
- 2 Tell everyone what you’ve done!

Top tip



Where containers fit in

- Containers are basically large pots but the term is used here to refer to final planting location.
- Pots and trays are generally smaller and used for seedlings (A18).
- Seedlings in pots and trays can be potted on into larger pots (A21) or ‘transplanted’ into the soil (A22) or larger containers (this Activity).

Health & Safety

Be careful when handling containers (empty and full). See B3.4 Manual Handling and back care. Follow safe practice for handling soil (eg cover open wounds, wear gloves if necessary, wash hands; keep tetanus vaccinations up to date).

See also Health and Safety Guidelines (Section B3.3)

Further information

A22 Transplanting young plants
B4.6 Growing in containers

Instructions for planting in containers

Top Tip



Choosing what to plant

- 1 Try fruit bushes and trees, vegetables, herbs, edible flowers and plants to attract beneficial insects. The choice is yours. The best advice is to experiment.
- 2 Choose a container large enough for the plants (see B4.6). Simply put, bigger containers suit bigger plants (or lots of little ones). If possible, move the container to its final position before filling. Containers can be too heavy to move when full.

- 1 Add 1-2cm wide drainage holes if the container doesn't have any (at least five per 30cm²). Also put a 5-10cm layer of coarse materials at the bottom to improve the drainage, eg gravel.



- 2 For growing medium, mix 50:50.
 - Compost - home-made (B5.7) or bought organic, peat-free potting compost
 - 'Topsoil' - bought (the best quality sold as 'loam') or from a spare pile in your garden digging out paths (A17) or a stack of rotted grass turves (A14).



- 3 Water plants thoroughly before planting and leave to drain.



- 4 Start adding the growing medium to the container, firming lightly with fingertips. Continue filling until you reach the same depth as the bottom of the pots you're transplanting, allowing for 2.5cm gap at the top of the container for watering.



5 To remove plants from pots, turn over and support the stem with a finger on either side, gently squeezing the sides and bottom of the pots to loosen the root ball so it falls out whole.



6 Put the plant in the container and infill with a little growing medium to secure.



7 Continue transplanting until the container is full, infilling and firming the growing medium until all the root balls are covered.



8 Water the container well and always keep the growing medium moist (but not wet).



Top tip



Getting water to deeper roots

If using larger containers, bury a small pot so it's level with the surface. Add water through this pot; the water will drain through the holes and reach deeper roots.

