



Container Gardening Ideas for Children

Even if you don't have a yard, you can still introduce your child to the enchantment of Nature through imaginative container gardening on your porch or in your living room. Engage your child in selecting the theme and picking out the plants to grow. Let your child help in watering and caring for the plants. Talk together about the changes in the flowers, fruits, and leaves as the plants grow. When it is time, involve your child in harvesting and using the plants. Here are some fun ideas to try:

Mini Salad Garden

Using a wooden wine box, large window box, or other large pot, sow seeds for salad greens, parsley, and herbs. If the container is large enough, miniature carrots or radishes could also be grown. Your child can collect the leaves and vegetables for salad-making.

Pizza Garden

Plant a large pot with tomato, basil, oregano, pepper, chives, and parsley. When ready, harvest the ingredients and make a mini-pizza with your child.

Kitchen Garden

Turn your leftover kitchen waste into houseplants, by using the pips of lemon and orange, the tops of carrots or pineapples, or the seeds of passionfruit, mango, and avocado.

Edible Flowers Pot

Plant a pot with violas, pansies, marigolds, nasturtium, or scented pelargoniums. Use the petals in salads, or candy the flowers to use as decorations on cakes, cookies, and ice cream for an enchanting effect.

Herb Pot

Plant a pot with kitchen herbs—oregano, globe basil, cilantro, dill, thyme, mint, chives. Share their smells and tastes with your child, and show how the leaves are used in foods.

Carrot Pot

Growing carrots is fun and easy, but the simple addition of rocks in the soil creates an unexpected twist—the rocks cause the roots to deviate, resulting in carrots with lots of personality. Start by filling a deep pot with soil. Mix in some compost, pebbles and rocks. Sprinkle the carrot seeds on top and just barely cover them with soil. Keep the soil moist. Thin out carrot seedlings later as needed. When ready to harvest, let your child pull the carrots and discover the surprises there.

Bulb Pot

Grow bulbs of narcissus, tulip, hyacinths, crocus, or grape hyacinths in the winter months to bring the promise of Spring indoors.

Daisy Chain Pot

Plant a pot with English or Shasta Daisy plants. Clip the flowers to make daisy chains with your child.

Fragrant Pot

Plant a pot with a combination of hyacinths, lemon thyme & dianthus or of chocolate cosmos, daylilies, & lilies. Explore the scents with your child.

Relaxing Bath Pot

Plant a pot with lavender, chamomile, lemon verbena or balm. After exploring the scents together, snip branches to steep in the your child's bathwater.

Desert Pot

Plant a pot with cactus and succulents and cover with a layer of pebbles. Your child can add rocks and a plastic lizard or snake to create a scene.

Butterfly Pot

Plant a pot outdoors with any combination of the following--aster, chrysanthemum, primrose, thyme, daisy, dwarf butterfly bush, sea thrift, marjoram, yarrow, mint, and catnip. Sit quietly with your child and watch the butterflies visit the flowers.

Faerie Basket

Line a basket with plastic wrap and fill with soil. Plant primroses, pansies, thyme, maidenhair ferns, shamrocks, and moss. Keep in a well-lit indoor spot and water when dry. Your child can build a little fairy house of bark and sticks to sit among the plants.

Window Ledge Meadow

Make a window box out of galvanized wire mesh, line it with rolls of turf, fill with multi-purpose compost, and seed with meadow wild flowers. Your child can water and watch the insects and butterflies that visit.

Boot/hat/glove Gardens

You can fill your porch or yard with personality by using unusual containers such as boots, hats, and gloves. Let your child select containers from old family clothes. Drill holes in the bottom of old boots, fill with soil, and plant them with seedlings and grass seed. Line a garden hat with a plastic bag, and fill with soil and plants. Fill old work gloves with soil and tack to a fence or post. Tuck in plants and seeds.

Broom Pot

Grow broom corn in a pot (or grow broom corn to form a privacy fence between houses or to create a maze.) Sow the broom corn when the soil is warm, laying mulch after the seeds sprout. It takes 100 to 110 days for broom corn to mature. Gather the tops for broom-making right after the blooms fade but before the seeds ripen and become brittle. Make a simple broom with your child by tying a handful of broom straw with twine to a long stick.