



Vegetable Container Gardening

Vegetable container gardening can be fun and prosperous; especially in our harsh climate, as you can more easily bring in or cover the tender plants when needed. Just about any vegetable can be grown in a container, but there are some special considerations to take into account that will save you a lot of gardening troubles!

1. **Sun requirements:** Most vegetables need full sun, which translates to at least 6 hours of direct sunlight per day. It is easy to overestimate the amount of sun your location receives, so log the time of day the area starts receiving sun and the time of day it recedes to shade and make sure there will be enough. Place plants in your container according to their sun requirements.
2. **Water requirements.** Yes, your vegetables are going to need a lot of water. Take care not to under or overwater. Check your container daily, in the morning, by sticking your finger about an inch into the soil. If the soil feels dry, add water. If it feels moist, check back later on in the day (especially if your container is getting a lot of afternoon sun).
3. **Temperature requirements.** Yes, most of your veggies like to be warm. This is where container gardening can be very productive when gardening in Northern Arizona. Whenever the nighttime temperatures get too cold for your vegetables, if your container is small enough, you can just pick it up and bring them inside at night. If your container is too large, you'll need some form of protection – such as a **Wall O' Water** or **Frost Cloth**.
On the other hand, you may also need to watch out that you don't fry your plants with too much heat. If they're placed in a full sun area during the hottest part of the day, check on them to make sure they don't need water or even moved to a less sunny location. You also want to stay away from metal or dark colored containers in full sun, as they can heat up too much and burn your plants' roots.
4. **Soil requirements.** Quality soil is very important when growing vegetables. Container vegetable gardens require a special potting mix that doesn't drain too slowly or quickly, and that will give your veggies the nutrients they need initially. A good potting mix for a Veggie Container Garden is **Warner's Potting Soil**.
5. **Feeding requirements.** Your veggies need to eat, too. There are many organic fertilizers available to choose from, so you don't have to worry about what you're eating. Vegetables planted in a container need to be fed more frequently, as

many of the nutrients get washed out with watering; and the veggies will be using all the nutrients they can get to produce. We recommend fertilizing every other week with **GrowMore's Fruit & Veggie food**.

6. **Drainage.** Inconsistent watering is the single most common reason plants don't survive. Ensure your container has adequate drainage holes so that they won't sit in water; but not so large that the soil flows right out. If the hole is large, add some pottery shards or gravel to keep the soil in the pot and slow down the water flowing out of the pot.
7. **Container selection.** Choosing the correct container is an important consideration. Almost any container will support your container garden, but remember these factors when making your selection.
 - a. The larger the container, the easier it will be to maintain.
 - b. Wooden containers make great vegetable gardens, particularly redwood or cedar.
 - c. Self watering containers are a good choice if you travel often or forget to water - but make sure your plants aren't sitting in water if we get a lot of rain. (Not usually a problem in Northern Arizona!)
 - d. Plastic or ceramic are both good choices, but may not last as long given our extreme weather. Remember to store them indoors during the winter months.
 - e. There are lots of options for an inexpensive vegetable container garden. A large plastic bucket, laundry basket, trash can, or anything around the house could work – as long as it has good drainage.