

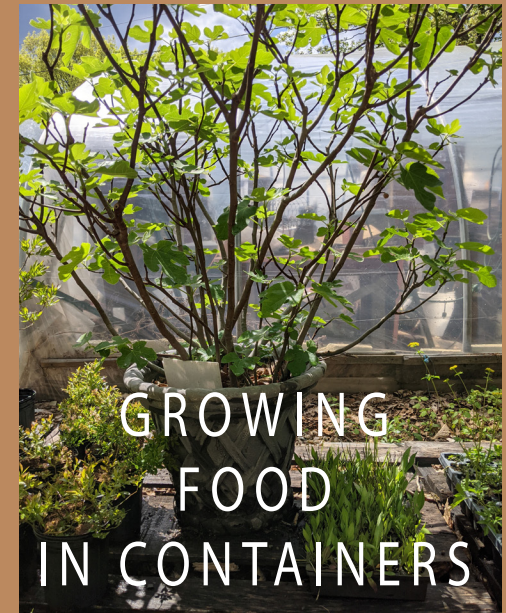


WATER

- Plants cannot live without water; and watering techniques for container-grown plants is a bit different than growing in the ground where plant roots can access a larger volume of soil.
- High summer temperatures; winds; and bright midsummer light increases the need for regular and frequent watering.
- Water as often as necessary to keep the soil moist and plants from wilting. If the pot feels light – then water. This may have to be done every day in hot, dry weather.
- Study your plants to get familiar with the appearance of leaves on well-watered plants and how they appear when the soil is dry – there will be subtle wilting, noticeable to a keen eye, before excessive wilting occurs.
- Water slowly and deeply, allowing the water to drain into the soil; keep adding more water until you see the water drain out through the holes in the bottom of the pot. A one-gallon pot will need about ½ to ¾ gallon of water each time to water thoroughly. Discard any water that collects in a tray under the pot.

FERTILIZING

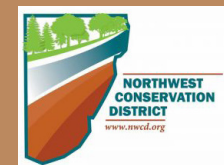
- Plants need a regular supply of fertilizer to nourish and support the growth of nutritious plant parts that we want to eat. Mixing fertilizer into your soil medium will help provide a continuous supply of nutrients to your plants.
- In pots, there is less soil than in a garden and less soil means fewer nutrients.
- Watering properly may leach nutrients out of the pot, so it is important to replenish with liquid fertilizer.
- If you have used dry fertilizer in your soil medium, you may also use a liquid fertilizer every 10 -14 days as a supplement. If there is no fertilizer in your medium, use the liquid fertilizer twice a week.
- It is very important to make sure you follow the directions on the fertilizer bottle and not exceed the amount used. In general, for twice-weekly applications, use 1 teaspoon per gallon of water. For occasional fertilizing, follow the product instructions which are usually about 1 tablespoon per gallon.
- Be careful not to over-fertilize. If the edges of the leaves become dry or brown it may be because of excess fertilizer. To counteract this problem, flush the soil with three thorough waterings, and reduce the amount of fertilizer used after this.



WHY GROW FOOD IN CONTAINERS?

- No access to garden space
- Less work
- Grow your edibles close to where you will use them
- Ability to place the containers in an area with the most sun exposure
- Portability – if you move to a different address, your garden can come with you!
- Container gardeners are raised above the ground and give easier access for people with physical limitations.

ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS OF CONTAINER GROWING:
CONTAINERS; SOIL; LIGHT;
WATER; FERTILIZER



1185 New Litchfield St, Torrington, CT 06790
info@nwcd.org, 860-626-7222

Funding provided by Northwest Connecticut Community Foundation



CONTAINERS

- Many kinds of containers or pots can be used to grow vegetables – be creative:
 - Wooden boxes
 - Clay pots
 - Half-barrels
 - Bushel baskets
 - Buckets/pails
 - Hanging baskets
 - Tires
- 6" pots – for herbs (cilantro, chives, parsley, basil etc.)
- 12" pots for mixed groups of vegetables.
- Large tubs for several big plants like sweet corn!
- Hanging baskets for trailing plants to hang down.
- Must have holes in the bottom for drainage.

SOIL

- Must be:
 - lightweight
 - well-drained and well-aerated
 - retains moisture and nutrients
 - free of disease organisms, weed seeds, and pest insects
- Garden soil is too heavy and will become compacted in the pot causing poor growth and stunting; and may contain plant pathogens, weed seeds, or insect pests.
- Commercially prepared "soiless" mixes contain peat moss, perlite or vermiculite, and possibly slow-release fertilizer. They are free of pathogens etc. Commercial mixes are available at garden centers and hardware stores.
- To make your own mix, use this recipe and adjust for your desired volume of mix:
 - 1 bushel vermiculite
 - 1 bushel of shredded peat moss
 - 1 ¼ cups of ground limestone
 - 1 cup of 5-10-5 fertilizer or an organic product like Gro-Pro
- Soiless mix takes more time to get "wetted" than regular soil. Use warm water with a little mild soap (Ivory soap is best). Cold water is ok but takes longer. Add a little water at a time and wait a few minutes before adding more. Don't oversoak – use just enough to moisten. Repeat several times until water drains out of the container.
- Soiless mix is very light in weight; easy to handle.
- It is ok to re-use the medium each year. Clean out the plants and roots as much as possible at the end of the growing season. Keep the containers and medium outside covered with plastic during the winter.
- The following spring, use a trowel to stir the soil around and re-wet it.



LIGHT

- Different kinds of plants have different light requirements, but exposure to sunlight is a critical need.
- Will your plants be in full sun all day, or only a few hours of full sun?
- Vegetable plants are grouped according to their light needs:

Shade Tolerant	Partially Shade Tolerant (4-6 hours of sun)	Needs Full Sun
Leafy Greens:	Root Crops:	Fruiting Crops:
Lettuce	Carrots	Tomatoes
Spinach	Beets	Cucumbers
Kale	Radishes	Peppers
Chard	Turnips	Eggplants
Cabbage	Chives	Squash
Chinese Greens	Leeks	Onions, Potatoes
Collards		Basil, Parsley
Arugula		Beans, Peas

- It is fun to grow a shade tolerant plant in the same pot as a sun-thirsty one. Choose a tall sun-loving plant for the middle – a staked tomato plant, for example. Around the edge grow a circle of lettuce, spinach, arugula, chard, or herbs.
- If light is limited, place a light-colored backdrop behind the container.