

Which Vegetables Grow Well in Pots?

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4 of 8 in Series: [The Essentials of Container Gardening](#)

If garden space is limited, consider growing vegetables in pots. With persistence, you can grow any vegetable and other edibles in pots or containers. Some of the bigger sprawling plants, like squash and watermelon, however, do tend to get unruly.

Vegetable hybridizers breed many small-space varieties that are ideal for growing in pots. The following list shows the most common vegetables to grow in containers:

If you can't find the dwarf varieties mentioned here, try anything with the words *compact*, *bush*, *baby*, *midget*, *dwarf*, *tiny*, or *teeny* in the name.

- **Beans:** Bush varieties like 'Provider' and 'Derby' are best; you can grow three to four plants in a 12-inch pot. You can grow pole types in a long narrow box if you attach a trellis.
- **Beets:** Any variety grows well in a pot, and smaller varieties like 'Red Ace' even grow well in smaller pots. Make sure your pot is big and deep enough (at least 12 inches); beets don't like to be crowded. You should end up with about six plants in a 12-inch pot — more if you're growing them for greens or will pick them as baby beets.
- **Carrots:** Carrots are a perfect vegetable to grow in a pot. Start with baby varieties like 'Little Fingers', 'Short 'n Sweet', or 'Thumbelina'. If you water diligently, you can get a bumper harvest in pots as shallow as 6 to 8 inches deep. Longer varieties need deeper pots. After [thinning](#), you should end up with 20 or so carrots per 12-inch pot.
- **[Cole crops](#) — broccoli, cabbage, cauliflower, and so on:** All the cole crops grow well in containers as long as your pots are big enough; try planting three or four plants in a half barrel.
- **Cucumbers:** You can't go wrong growing small cucumber types like 'Bush Pickle' and 'Salad Bush'. Plants dangling over the edges of a hanging pot are something to behold. Plant large-growing varieties in bigger pots and slip a sturdy wire cylinder into the outside edge of the pot for the plants to climb on.
- **Eggplant:** An eggplant's purple foliage and compact habit are perfect for any container that is at least 5 gallons. Plant one eggplant per 5-gallon pot. Push a small stake into the pot to support it.
- **Lettuce and other greens:** Lettuce and greens may be the ultimate container vegetables. The size of your pot doesn't really matter — just sprinkle some seeds in it, keep the soil moist, and then get out your salad bowl for a great harvest.
- **Melons:** Some dwarf melons, like 'Bush Sugar Baby' watermelon, grow well in containers. Plant one to two plants in a big pot (at least 5 gallons) and let the vines sprawl over the edges, supporting the fruit if necessary. And don't let up on water and fertilizer.
- **Onions:** Green onions grow well in containers. Just buy a bag of [sets](#), plant them 2- to 3-inches deep, and you're in business. You can grow onions to full bulb size; just make sure that you use a big pot (preferably 5 gallons) and give them plenty of room to grow.

- **Peas:** Go with dwarf pea varieties like 'Green Arrow' and 'Maestro', English peas, 'Sugar Bon' snap pea, or 'Dwarf Grey Sugar' snow pea. Any variety larger than that needs a trellis. Planting six plants in a 12-inch pot should be fine.
- **Peppers:** You can grow any pepper variety in a pot, but the bigger the pot the better. A 5-gallon pot should hold one to two plants.
- **Potatoes:** Potatoes are fun vegetables to grow in a container. Just place 8 to 10 inches of potting soil in a big pot (at least a 5-gallon size). Plant two to three potato eyes 2 to 3 inches from the bottom of the pot, and then water them in. After the plants start to grow, cover the stems with more soil (leaving the very top exposed) until the pot is full. In a couple of months, you can harvest a pot full of spuds. Start harvesting earlier for new potatoes, later for larger ones.
- **Radishes:** Growing radishes is quick and easy even in the smallest container. Scatter some seeds in the top of a pot, keep the soil moist, and you'll have radishes in less than a month.
- **Squash:** Use a 5-gallon pot (or even larger) to grow space-saving winter squash varieties like 'Cornell Bush Delicata', 'Papaya Pear', or 'Table King'. Plant three seeds in each pot and thin to the healthiest plant.
- **Tomatoes:** Everyone deserves fresh tomatoes, and anyone can grow them in pots. Try a dwarf indeterminate variety, such as 'Bush Big Boy' in a container that's at least 5 gallons (bigger is better), but be ready to stake or cage tall plants. Or grow dwarf varieties like 'Patio', 'Tiny Tim', and 'Window Box Roma', which fit perfectly in pots, even smaller sizes.

If growing herbs is your gardening groove, you're in luck — most herbs grow well in containers.