



SNAP-Ed

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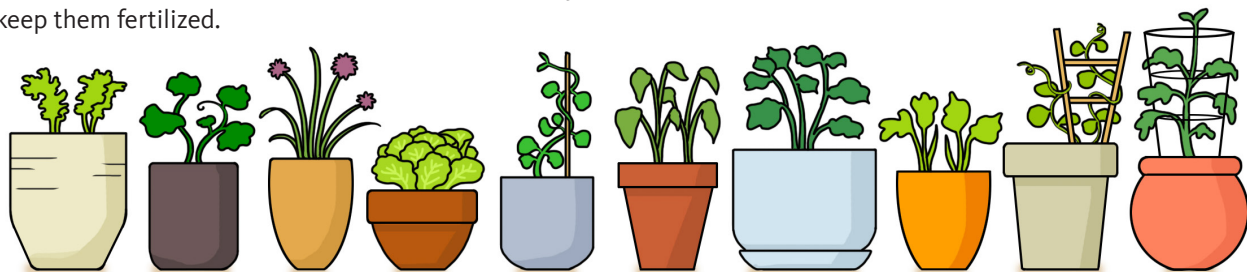
Growing in Washington

Growing Plants in Containers

Almost all plants need containers at least 12 inches deep so they have enough soil to grow deep roots. Some need even more room. For example, carrots need deeper containers to allow space for the carrots to grow. Plants with vines, like squash or watermelon, can be grown in a 12-inch deep container, but their vines will grow 6 to 8 feet out, so make sure there is space for them! Growing in a five-gallon container will help maintain soil moisture.

Here are some plants that grow well in containers, with some growing tips:

- Carrots:** The depth of your container should be double the length of the type of carrots you are growing when they are ready to eat.
- Eggplant:** When planning which type to buy, consider your climate. Many types of eggplant do not do well in cool temperatures (lower than 50 degrees F).
- Herbs:** Many types of herbs grow well in containers. These include basil, chives, dill, mint, sage, thyme, and more. Grow rosemary in a large container to allow for a larger bush.
- Leafy greens:** Spinach and leaf lettuce are among the many greens that you can snip to eat one day and then snip again a few days later. Keep these cool-season crops in partial shade.
- Peas:** Put tall supports in the container. Water frequently, and keep them fertilized.
- Peppers:** Try bell peppers, or spice it up with hot peppers that are perfect for homemade salsa.
- Potatoes:** Some potatoes need a 120-day growing season, so look for types that mature early.
- Radishes:** Containers don't have to be very large for this spring vegetable.
- Summer squash, zucchini, and cucumbers:** Choose bush varieties rather than the sprawling vine varieties. One plant can fill a 24-inch pot quickly, so don't crowd your seeds or seedlings. A trellis in the pot will support the plant and allow air to flow around it.
- Tomatoes:** Like peas, tomatoes need a support system. Use a rod or tomato cage to keep your plants upright.



Tips for your plant's health

If you live in a hot climate, you might need to shade your container plants during the heat of the afternoon, so they don't overheat. It may also help not to use metal or darker colored containers, because they can become very hot and cook your plant's roots. A shade cloth can help with this on very dark pots. On the other hand, many vegetables do not like cold soil. So, if you live in a cool climate, bring your containers in at night until you know the overnight temperature will be warm from night to night.



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