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Container Water Gardening

A mini-aquatic garden in a tub or other container located close to the house on a deck or patio, can provide you with a unique gardening experience. Containers are a great way to try out the idea of water gardening without committing to a larger, more permanent pond. A container aquatic garden is a small commitment in terms of finances and labor. It doesn't require special aerators or filtration if set up and properly managed.

The Container

A container with a capacity of 15-25 gallons is practical. Many commercial containers are available or you might consider things like small kiddie pools, horse watering troughs, lined whiskey barrels or even old bathtubs. Remember that water weighs about 8 pounds per gallon, so be sure the location of your container will be able to hold the weight. Locate the garden so it receives a minimum of six hours of sun a day. Most aquatic plants need full sun. Some of the bog plants can survive in less. Less than six hours will decrease the blooming potential of aquatic plants. Choose containers with interiors that are dark in color. Dark green charcoal or black colors are suggested because they give the container an impression of greater depth, discourage algae growth, and make algae less obvious when it is present. Stones and slate can be added for interest, but keep in mind that choosing dark colored rock will help discourage algae.

Planting the Garden

Plants used in small aquatic gardens are grown in separate pots. Make sure that there is a ½ to ¾ inch layer of pea gravel on top of the soil to keep it in place. Fill your container with water and set the plants in place. Some aquatics prefer to be placed at certain depths in the water. Adjust the depth of your plants by placing bricks under the pot so the crown of the plant is at the preferred depth. About 50-60% of the water surface should be covered with plant material. Take note of the type of water used to fill your container. City water supplies are commonly treated with chlorine. If this is the case, you might want to purchase a product to remove the chlorine. These are available from your local garden center. Do not use water from the water softener.

Your miniature ecosystem

A container garden is a miniature ecosystem of plants, water and fish. This system must come into balance which means that the plant and animal life are able to hold the algae growth in check. It will take approximately 3-4 weeks for this to occur. Two weeks after you set up the garden, the water will turn cloudy with algae. In another week or so, the water will clear and remain that way. The aquatic plants and animals keep the algae under control by reducing the sunlight entering the water and competing with the algae for nutrients in the water.

Clear water formula

One bunch of oxygenating plants per 2 square feet of pond surface area.
One snail per square foot of pond surface area.
One inch of fish per square foot of pond surface area.



*Making the world beautiful
one flower at a time.*