

Gardening in Small Spaces

What is it?

Gardening in small spaces is a way for people with little garden space to grow a wide variety of plants. Some ways to garden in small spaces include vertical growing using trellised vines, or espaliered trees, gardening in containers and using dwarf or small cultivars of garden plants.

Why do it?

Gardening is a way to enjoy time spent outdoors and to connect to the natural world. Planting a garden enhances the appearance and value of your home, but also feeds you, your family, friends, neighbors and wildlife. Growing plants and the presence of green space has been shown to reduce the stress of living in an urban setting, promote healing for those recovering from illness and increase productivity in workers.

How to get started

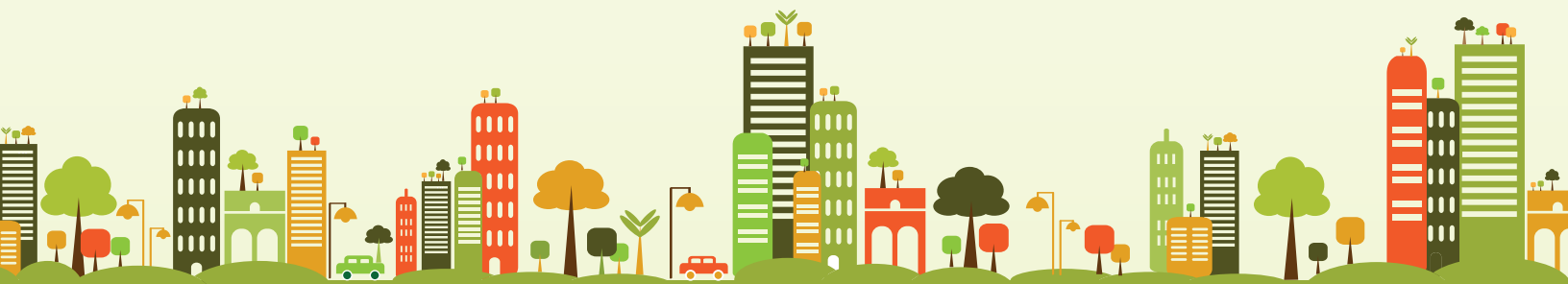
Assess the space you have available to garden. This can be a balcony, front entry, curbside patch of ground, patio, or a windowsill. Next, determine the goal of your garden: to produce food, to enjoy beautiful and fragrant plants, to provide screening from a view or close neighbors. You can use the internet or the Hoffman Library at the Civic Garden Center to research plants that will fit your site and goals.

Prepare a garden bed or container by amending the soil or adding fresh potting mix and compost. Always use a specialized potting mix or container garden blend for planting in containers. Top soil does not behave well in pots! Once your garden area is ready to be planted, you can purchase seeds and plants at a local nursery or through mail order. For vertically grown plants like vines or espaliered trees, you will need to build or purchase a structure on which they can climb or be trained.

Hops being trained to an overhead support.



A container for shade tucked into a corner adds color and life.



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Key Factors to Consider

- Mature size of plants, size of containers or garden beds
- Amount of sunlight needed and available
- Soil condition: containers may need a light fertilizer or compost top-dressing to maintain appropriate nutrient levels. Garden soil should be tested and amended periodically.
- Cold hardiness of plants: Cincinnati is Zone 6
- For annuals and vegetables, be sure to plant at the appropriate time of the year. Perennials, shrubs and trees can be planted once the soil can be worked in spring, and again in fall before the soil freezes.
- Planting depth: see seed packet for this information, and for plants, the root ball should be kept flush with the soil level
- Water plants and seeds in well, and keep well watered until they are established and during times of drought. Containers dry out quickly and must be watered regularly. Sub-irrigated planters (SIPs) are a style of container garden that waters itself from a reservoir. You can purchase them or build them yourself.



Grow potatoes in a box or other container that you can add height to during the growing season.

Local Resources

- THE Plant Sale at the Civic Garden Center, held annually the first weekend in May
- Classes, workshops and the Hoffman Library at the Civic Garden Center
- Local nurseries and greenhouses for dwarf cultivars of plants
- One Small Garden for red cedar patio gardens: www.1smallgarden.com

Recommended Reading

- *Vertical Gardening* by Caroline Boisset
- *Vertical Vegetable & Fruit* by Rhonda Massingham Hart
- *All New Square Foot Gardening* by Mel Bartholomew
- *The Small Garden Book* by John Brookes
- You can find instructions for building Sub-Irrigated Planters (SIPs) out of 5 gallon buckets on the Resource page of www.civiggardencenter.org.



A raised bed with an attached trellis allows cucumbers to climb.

