

# Your Garden

## Container Gardening: Choosing The Right Plant For The Pot

(NAPSA)—It's a growing trend: Twenty-one million households are planting container gardens. It saves space, helps control pests and overcome soil issues, and lets you enjoy fresh, homegrown produce even without a yard.

To ensure your success, it's important to pick the right plant for the pot. Fortunately, seed companies are developing vegetable seeds well adapted for container gardens.

"Today's container gardeners now have access to even more plants that are compact in size, yield more, taste great and feature unique colors and shapes," said John Marchese of Seminis Home Garden seed.

To help you get started, consider these tips from experts at the University of Illinois Extension:

### Choosing a Container

- Anything that holds soil and has drainage holes in the bottom may be transformed into a container garden for terrestrial plants.

- For vibrant plant growth, the containers must provide adequate space for roots and soil media, allowing the plant to thrive.

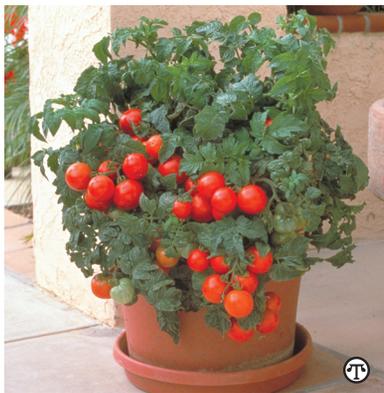
### Soil

- Soils for containers need to be well aerated and well drained while still being able to retain enough moisture for plant growth.

- Never use garden soil by itself for container gardening, no matter how good it looks or how well things grow in it outside.

- Containers often use soilless or artificial media that contain no soil at all.

- When these mixes are used, they should be moistened slightly before planting. Fill a tub with the media, add water and lightly fluff the media to dampen it.



**You don't need a lot of space to enjoy fresh homegrown vegetables.**

- When filling containers with media, don't fill the pot to the top. Leave about a one-inch space between the top of the soil and rim of the pot.

### Fertilizer

- A regular fertilizer program is needed to keep plants growing well and attractively all season.

- The choice of fertilizer analysis will depend on the kinds of plants you grow. High-nitrogen sources would be good for plants grown for their foliage while flowering and vegetable crops would generally prefer lower-nitrogen and higher-phosphorous fertilizer types.

### Choosing Plants For Your Container Garden

- Plants that thrive in like soil, watering and light conditions make successful combinations. When combining plants, size, texture, proportion, color, setting and lighting all play a role.

### Caring For Your Vegetables

- Containers offer the advantage of being portable. As the seasons, temperature and light conditions change, you can move your containers so they enjoy the best

conditions for peak performance.

- Most fruit-bearing vegetables such as tomatoes, peppers, cucumbers, squashes and eggplant require full sun.

- Leafy vegetables such as lettuce, cabbage and spinach can tolerate more shady locations, unlike root vegetables such as radishes, carrots and onions.

- There are no hard and fast rules when it comes to watering. You have to watch your containers and understand how much moisture each plant needs. Feel the soil—if the first inch or so is dry, add water until it starts to drip out of the drainage holes.

### Special Seeds

"Just because they are using a smaller space to grow the plant doesn't mean the fruit has to be small, too," Marchese explained. "For example, if container gardeners are looking for a compact plant that produces large and tasty tomatoes, they should try a new hybrid tomato variety called Debut."

Container gardeners don't have to sacrifice flavor for a more conveniently grown plant either. "Husky Red is a medium-sized tomato hybrid that has great flavor. We have also developed a cherry tomato hybrid version called Husky Cherry Red that has the potential to set lots of sweet, flavorful fruit," added Marchese.

Other compact hybrid tomato varieties include Patio, which produces about a 4-ounce tomato, and a saladette tomato variety called Yaqui that produces large-sized fruit.

### Learn More

For more information on home garden varieties, visit [www.seminis.com](http://www.seminis.com).