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McGee & Stuckey's Bountiful Container: Create Container Gardens Of Vegetables, Herbs, Fruits, And Edible Flowers



Synopsis

With few exceptions-such as corn and pumpkins-everything edible that's grown in a traditional garden can be raised in a container. And with only one exception-watering-container gardening is a whole lot easier. Beginning with the down-to-earth basics of soil, sun and water, fertilizer, seeds and propagation, The Bountiful Container is an extraordinarily complete, plant-by-plant guide. Written by two seasoned container gardeners and writers, The Bountiful Container covers Vegetables-not just tomatoes (17 varieties) and peppers (19 varieties), buttharicots verts, fava beans, Thumbelina carrots, Chioggia beets, and sugarsnap peas. Herbs, from basil to thyme, and including bay leaves, fennel, and saffron crocus. Edible Flowers, such as begonias, calendula, pansies, violets, and roses. And perhaps most surprising, Fruits, including apples, peaches, Meyer lemons, blueberries, currants, and figs-yes, even in the colder parts of the country. (Another benefit of container gardening: You can bring the less hardy perennials in over the winter.) There are theme gardens (an Italian cook's garden, a Four Seasons garden), lists of sources, and dozens of sidebars on everything from how to be a human honeybee to seeds that are All America Selections.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Finally, here's a book on container gardening that focuses on vegetables (and also herbs, fruits and edible flowers). I was tired of looking through tons and tons of books on container gardening that were full of stuff about houseplants and flowers but had zilch when it came to the edible stuff. Was vegetable gardening out of bounds for apartment dwellers like me? I thought so till I came across this book. This book is a godsend for people who want kitchen gardens of their own but who can only garden with containers. The book has no photos, only illustrations (but then again, who needs

another coffee table kind of book with pretty pictures and little content) but it has lots of good advice and instructions. It starts off with the basics (container types, soil, fertilizing, pests etc.), then it moves on to a hefty section each on vegetables, herbs, fruits and edible flowers. Each section has a number of entries with detailed instructions on the particular veggie/herb/fruit/flower in question. These include stuff like planting, fertilizing, soil depth, plant size, light requirements and so on. Interspersed throughout the book are interesting projects, for example, creating a garden for children or a kitchen garden with an asian/italian/greek theme. All in all, this book is extremely useful and a real treasure.

When I started growing a vegetable garden in containers on my balcony, I looked to several books for guidance. Bountiful Container was the most helpful. Bountiful Container addresses garden basics such as equipment and fertilizer, but the bulk of the book is specific information on a variety of vegetables, herbs, fruit, and edible flowers. Each plant is addressed for several pages, with information such as when to plant, sun and water requirements, general care, and varieties suitable for containers. One unique feature of this book is that they actually address container depth for every plant listed. I was amazed at how few container gardening books spent any significant time on container selection. For instance, I learned that salad burnet, a small plant, requires a deeper container than many larger plants in order to allow its taproot to develop (lo and behold, I was able to grow it for a change!). It discusses the advantages and disadvantages of several container materials, and addresses issues such as reducing the weight of oversized containers. One frustration I had with other container gardening books, was that they assumed you had at least a small yard in which to plant and much of their information was useless for people who were limited to containers. Not a problem with this book. Bountiful Container is beautifully written, and the information is well organized and easy to reference. I highly recommend it.

The Bountiful Container is simply a delight -- with it on my bookshelf, I now have the courage to move beyond my tiny pots of basil and jalapenos to the exciting world of zucchini and sugar-snap peas. The detailed discussion of specific plants is invaluable (now I know why my tomato plant did so poorly last year); general commentary on soil additives and the differences between plot and container gardening are informative without being overwhelming. Moreover, the text is interspersed with design projects that are as appealing to the eye as they will be to the stomach. This book is ideal for the casual container gardener who is more concerned with produce than Latin plant names.

Most of the book(300 pages worth) is spent covering each type of plant, spending 2-6 pages on each. I liked all the specifics on sowing/transplants, care and harvesting. As a beginner I felt much better equipped with the information I found here than in other sources. Instead of generic "plant 4-6 weeks after last frost", they discuss day and night temperatures, something I can measure by putting my digital thermometer outside. And the fact that it focuses on growing just edibles and only in containers is very valuable. Recipes and suggested groupings are scattered throughout. The lack of photos didn't bother me, since I know what I eat looks like--and that one of the points of the book--grow what you can/will eat. Diagrams and good simple explanations make things very clear. They don't mention broccoli or cauliflower--perhaps they just consider it not good for containers although other mustards are in the book. But I doubt any one book to be all encompassing and complete. I also have Square Foot Gardening which gave me another set of timing and spacing information for edibles.(update) Five years later I still use it as a reference when having problems with a variety or starting the season. I find this is still a bible for the plants it covers, even though I've moved onto planting in the ground. One of the greatest finds in the book is their recommendation of liquid seaweed fertilizer. This has become the magic fix & helper on plants. I've rescued sick plants and consistently have healthy gardens and potted plants. I use it at seeding and on seedlings, full grown, flowered and fruited plants without concern. It is a foliar as well as in-ground fertilizer. It simply helps plants to be healthier. And that lets them fight off disease and produce well.

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