

Patio Gardening

Gardens come in all shapes, sizes and colors. There's everything from perennials, mixed with brilliantly colored annuals, to xeriscape plantings that provide low maintenance options and a mixture of shrubs and dwarf trees.

These unique mini-spaces do much in the way of making a garden look welcoming and lived in. And when it comes to spaces where we plant, patios are king. A patio or small space provides an opportunity to take advantage of replicating what we typically see in a large landscape but without the maintenance hassles.

In order to get the most from your patio garden, consider these tips to get started or to continue with your patio garden space:



1. Use large pots for plants that mature into huge plants and/or flowers (e.g. tropicals like elephant ears, yuccas and ornamental grasses). The bigger the plant, the larger the pot. It's also important to realize that larger plants take longer to mature and you may need to consider a larger pot.

2. When planting a fruiting plant (e.g. peppers and tomatoes), use more soil. Fruiting plants are great options for container and patio gardens.

3. Make certain to not overcrowd your plants. Go ahead and use a variety in your planter; however, when you crowd them, they tend to grow spindly. So, don't over crowd. You can put one tomato plant in a large planter and have more fruit than planting 3 or more in the same size pot and having leggy, spindly plants that don't produce as much fruit.

4. Our Oklahoma summers can be brutal and most pots get thirsty. Terracotta pots dry out quickly, so you may find that you're watering early morning and early evening. Try to keep your pots evenly moist and don't let them dry out between watering.

5. Some pots may not have drainage holes. If this is the case, create a few holes in the bottom to prevent water from sitting around the roots of your precious plants. Fill the entire pot with only potting soil as it will drain more consistently with that medium.

6. If your plants require full sun to help create luscious blooms and your patio lacks light, select plants that require low sun like hostas.

7. If your patio or space gets lots of wind, consider surrounding your garden with a windbreak (like a nice lattice) that you can stain with a rich color and place in a strategic location.

8. It is very appropriate to use a potting mix, but make certain it's rich in compost. Many nurseries have their own unique blend of potting soil that works well.

So, go ahead and plant in containers and watch your garden grow while you enjoy the bounty. Whether you have a small space, low light or full sun, gardening in small spaces can be quite enjoyable and fun.

