

## **Patio Gardening**

Gardens come in all shapes, sizes, and colors. There is 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.

To get the most from your patio garden, consider these tips, to get started or to continue maintaining your patio garden space.

1. Use large pots for plants that mature into huge plants and/or flowers (i.e., tropicals like elephant ears, yuccas, and ornamental grasses). The bigger the plant, the larger the pot. It is also important to consider a larger pot for plants that take longer to mature.
2. When planting a fruiting plant (i.e., peppers and tomatoes) use more soil. Fruiting plants are great options for container and patio gardens.
3. Go ahead and use a variety of plants in your planter but make certain not to overcrowd your plants. When doing so, they tend to grow spindly. A notable example - you can put one tomato plant in a 5-gallon planter and actually have more fruit than planting three 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...really thirsty. In particular, Terracotta pots dry out VERY quickly and you may find that you are having to water every day BOTH early morning AND early evening. Try to keep your pots evenly moist and do not let them dry out between watering.
5. Some pots may not come with 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. Creates root rot.
6. If your plants require full sun to help create luscious blooms and your patio lacks that needed light, select plants that have lower sun requirements 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 a rich color and place in a strategic location.

8. It is fine to use a potting mix but make certain it is rich in compost. Many nurseries have their own unique blend of organic potting soil that contains the necessary ingredients for a healthy plant or veggie.

So, go ahead and plant in containers and watch your garden grow while enjoying the bounty.

***Whether you have a small space, low light, or full sun,  
gardening in small spaces can be enjoyable and fun.***