

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 (e.g., 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 early on for plants that take longer to mature as the plant/pot may be too heavy to do so later.
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 not to overcrowd your plants. Go ahead and use a variety in your planter. However, when you crowd them, they tend to grow spindly so be careful. You can put one tomato plant in a large planter and have more fruit than planting three or more in the same size pot which may result in leggy, spindly plants that do not produce as much fruit.
4. Our Oklahoma summers can be brutal, and most pots get very thirsty. Terracotta pots dry out quickly and you may find that you are watering early morning AND early evening...every day. Try to keep your pots evenly moist and do not let them dry out between watering as this produces undue stress on the plants.
5. Some pots may not have drainage holes. Be sure to check for this. If this is the case, create a few holes in the bottom to prevent water from sitting around the roots of your precious plants. Some people prefer to put gravel

or even Styrofoam at the base of their pots before filling them with soil, but this is not required.

6. If your plants require full sun to help create luscious blooms and your patio lacks light, select plants that require low sun (e.g., Caladiums, Hostas, Hydrangeas, Heuchera/Coral Bells, Coleus, Impatiens, Begonias – to name a few).

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