

Planting a Terrarium

Terrariums

Choose a glass or clear plastic container or a terrarium. Before planting thoroughly clean the terrarium or container to avoid contamination with algae or fungal diseases, which thrive in enclosed and humid environments. Use a 10% bleach solution, rinse thoroughly and allow to dry. Be wary of color-tinted containers because they block out the light. Choose a mixture of tall, upright plants and smaller, creeping ones and decide how to arrange them before you plant. Plan the arrangement with taller plants either at the back or in the center depending on whether the terrarium will be viewed from the front only or from all sides.

Since the terrarium is self-contained, it must have a layer of drainage material, such as gravel or pebbles, as well as horticultural charcoal. The charcoal absorbs gaseous by-products and helps keep the soil mix fresh. A light-weight, free-draining but moisture retentive potting mix is the most suitable planting medium.

Use young plants with root systems that are sufficiently small to establish easily in shallow soil. Soak them thoroughly before planting and remove dead foliage that might encourage rot. Insert the plants into the soil, allowing space for them to spread. Cover bare areas with moss or pebbles to keep the soil from drying out. Add decorative stones and twigs to the landscape. Then water lightly before replacing the lid.

Once established, terrariums require little or no watering. If the glass is continuously obscured by mist, the soil is too wet. Remove cover until the glass clears. Keep the container out of direct sunlight. Trim the plants from time to time so that each has enough light and space.

Terrariums: Step-by-Step

- Plan the arrangement of the plants to be used.
- Cover the terrarium base with 1-inch or 2-inch layer of pebbles and some horticultural charcoal. Add 1-2 inches of moist potting soil.
- Remove plant from its pot and shake off any loose soil mix. Gently tease out the roots, reducing the size of the root ball.
- Make hollows for the plants and insert them in the soil, leaving space for further growth.
- Fill in around the plants with more moist soil and firm the surfaces.
- Place a layer of moss or pebbles over bare areas of soil. Add decorative stones and "logs."
- Spray the plants and the moss lightly with a fine mist of water and replace the lid.



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other side**

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Recommended Plants for Terrarium Culture

African Violet miniatures (Saintpaulia)
Aluminum plant (Pilea cadierei)
Arrowhead (Nephtytis)
Baby tears (Helxine)
Creeping fig (Ficus pumila)
Croton (Codiaeum variegatum)
Fern, Maidenhair and Button Fern
Fittonia (Fittonia verschaffeltii)
Flame violet (Episcia cupreata)
Ivy (Hedera)
Peperomia (Peperomia caperata)
Polka dot plant (Hypoestes phyllostachya)
Prayer plant (Maranta leuconeura)
Pothos (Epipremnum aureum)
Scotch or Irish moss (Sagina)
Selaginella
Spider Plant (Clorophytum comosum)



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