



## Don't Let Lack of Space Prevent Growing Vegetables

There are lots of reasons for growing vegetables in small spaces. A shady landscape allows sunlight to reach a postage-size plot; lack of property limits vegetable growing to containers on a patio; or the only opportunity for growing vegetables is a trellis dividing your deck from the neighbor in the next apartment.

The health benefits of growing your own vegetables are many. Homegrown vegetables are rich in nutrients. If you have ever tasted a fresh picked tomato or a freshly dug potato, you will certainly attest to the better taste! And there is something uniquely rewarding about planting, nurturing, harvesting and cooking your own vegetables. Don't let the lack of space prevent you from sharing in the experience.

Plant two different types of vegetables together. Interplanting allows you to squeeze two vegetables in the space normally used for one. Plant a row of a fast-growing crop like radishes in between two rows of a slow-growing vegetable like carrots or slicing onions. You'll harvest the radishes in plenty of time to leave room for the carrots or onions to expand.

Plant a second crop as soon as the first is harvested. Called succession planting, a cool-season vegetable like lettuce is planted first. As soon as it is harvested, beans or tomatoes are planted in the same spot.

Eliminate rows. Planting in blocks eliminates the wasted space in between rows. Sometimes referred to as square foot gardening or intensive planting, it is often done in raised beds and works best with shorter types of vegetables such as radishes, carrots, lettuce, spinach, kohlrabi, broccoli and cauliflower.

Plant on trellises. Cucumbers, small melons and squash are just as happy growing up as they are out. Another plus: trellis-grown vegetables are less likely to rot as those sitting on soil. Position trellises on the north or east side of the garden where they won't cast shade on other vegetables planted in front of them. Trellises laden with foliage and fruit are also effective as privacy screens.

Plant vegetables in containers. Choose the largest containers possible. Soil dries out faster in pots so the more soil, the longer it will stay moist. Make sure containers have drainage holes. Never use soil from the garden in containers, instead use a light potting mix. Add Dr. Earth Tomato & Vegetable organic fertilizer and you are ready to plant.

Compact and bush-type varieties work best in containers. Herbs grow beautifully in pots. For nearly guaranteed success, start with lettuce, spinach and radishes.

Include vegetables in your container gardens. Leaf lettuces and Swiss chard are beautiful foliage plants lovely planted in pots of pansies and sweet alyssum. Grow carrots in a

summer container. Their ferny foliage adds charming texture while carrots are growing below. Herbs are easily included with flowering perennials. The fuzzy, colorful leaves of sage mix well with flowers; thyme flows over the edges of containers.

I plant all my vegetables in containers on my sun-drenched deck. I love earthboxes and have grown everything from broccoli and cauliflower to tomatoes and peppers in them with amazing results. Terra cotta pots are planted every year with strawberries and herbs. Herbs are also tucked into the bounty of other decorative glazed containers that adorn the space.



*Twelve different types of vegetables grow on the author's deck.*

Don't let the lack of space thwart your vegetable-growing thumbs from turning green. Choose an approach to small space gardening that works for you and realize the satisfaction of growing your own.

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