

HOW TO Care for plants



CARING FOR YOUR POTS

FINDING THE RIGHT LOCATION FOR YOUR POTS

- Outdoor areas you spend most of your time in
- Where you often look out to from inside your home

That way you can see if they need watering, picking or pest control.

WIND

They may need some shelter if the wind is very strong. A small shrub or shade cloth as fencing could help.

WARMTH

- In summer pots need a little shade from afternoon sun
- In winter they need a warm sunny spot. Brick and concrete paving or walls store heat and are good for pots in colder weather.

SUNLIGHT

After seedlings are planted out into pots, for a day or two they need to be out of direct sun, and in semi-shade.

- Plants need about 5 - 6 hours of sunlight a day.
- They prefer morning sun and afternoon shade if that's possible.
- Face them in a northerly direction. Use the compass on your phone to find north.
- As seasons change so will the pattern of sun. Move your pots to follow the sun.
- A window box on a north or east facing window suit small veggies like leafy greens or herbs.
- Herbs will grow inside beside a sunny window.

WATER

- Water regularly if needed, in the morning is best.
- Check if watering is needed by putting your finger in the soil. If your finger comes out with some soil attached there's no need to water. If your finger comes out clean, then water is needed
- In hot weather they may need watering every day if there's no rain. Don't wait until your plant is limp from drying out.
- Whatever container you plant in make sure it has drainage holes. If you have saucers under pots don't let them sit in water for long periods, it rots their roots. Sit pots on pebbles or chunks of wood if they are in a dish.

FEEDING

Many potting mixes contain fertiliser but after a few months apply some liquid fertiliser. Only use an organic fertiliser free of chemicals.

PESTS

Your plants will probably get pests. This just happens but sometimes it can be a sign of not enough light, too little or too much water, not enough nutrients/food or the plant is dying from old age. Check the internet for online advice about dealing with pests. Only use organic insecticides as they are safer and do not pollute.

HARVESTING

You don't always have to harvest the whole plant. Pick the outside leaves of lettuce, silver beet, chard, celery, parsley, etc. and let the plant continue to grow.

Cut chives level with the ground and the roots will grow more chives

With herbs cut just enough leaves to use at the time.

In time your plants will go to seed. They grow flowers which turn into seed pods. If you can let the seeds form and dry on the plant. Then sprinkle the seeds around to grow more plants.

WHAT STOPS US FROM GARDENING?

Usually time, space, costs, confidence and knowledge. Here are some tips to overcome these barriers:

TIME

- Start small with just 1 or 2 pots or a small patch.
- Grow plants that are
 - easy and quick growing like leafy greens, cabbage, cauli, broc, onion take 3 months to grow, read the seedling labels in the store it will tell you growing time, where to plant, how much sun is needed, etc
 - check what your neighbours are growing, then you know it's suitable

SPACE

- Use a balcony
- a window ledge
- clump pots together and elevate the ones at the back on bricks so they all get sun
- grow plants that climb like beans, peas, squash

COSTS

Save money by

- grow the foods you like to eat
- cook up surplus food and freeze e.g. soups
- Use recycled pots
 - wash them out to with soapy water to remove disease
 - find them at tip shop or ask professional gardeners for discarded ones
- make your own liquid fertiliser with manure or weeds, check how on the internet
- make your own organic insecticides, check how on the internet