



## ***... Plant Strong Families and Communities ...***

***Connecting with Nature .... as YOU Enjoy and Grow Your Own Healthy Herbs, Fruits, and Vegetables***

### **Food Safe Containers for Your Home Garden**

Functional, food safe containers, seedlings, seeds, soil, natural fertilizers, water, and sunlight empowers you to grow delicious food at your very home all year long!

Choose containers that serve optimal growth while complimenting your space. The best container materials are natural clay, terracotta, wood, ceramic, glass and BPA free fiberglass and plastic. These materials ensure durability and generally are not too heavy. Clay, ceramic, and glass pots are a stylish and durable choice but should not be chosen in freezing climates due to breakage. Large pots, such as a 5-gallon pots for tomato plants, should be used for plants that require a lot of room to grow. Long narrow pots can be used for smaller plants, such as lettuce. A drip hole is usually a feature, to prevent over-saturation, and allow some aeration. A small potting area should be nearby to offer you storage for your supplies and a surface to work with your plants on.

Stone containers, such as terracotta or clay are good options for food grade vegetable and fruit gardening. Take care to choose pots that are NOT glazed and previously used. If you are considering using recycled pots, know where they came from. Clay and terracotta is porous and can easily soak up unhealthy materials when used for other purposes. Due to its porosity, Terra cotta pots will require more watering than plastic pots.

Wood is a common material used to build container boxes for gardens. You can also purchase pre-built boxes in a variety of styles and sizes. Never use treated wood for your container vegetable and fruit garden. Also, don't stain or seal the wood with unsafe products. The best types of wood to use for gardening purposes are Cedar, Redwood, and Juniper. These woods are rot resistant and can last for many years. In fact, Cedar and Redwood can last up to 20 or more years, while Juniper can last upwards of an astounding 50 years! Building your own small container boxes out of wood can be an investment in your container garden for years to come. Plus, you can be assured of a safe, natural place to grow healthy, organic vegetable and fruit plants.

Yes, it's true, you can actually purchase food grade, BPA free, five gallon and 2 gallon plastic buckets in which to plant your vegetable and fruit garden. These particular buckets are now commonly available at local stores like Home Depot and Lowe's. In fact, they actually are designated food grade and BPA free for gardening purposes. plastic buckets are often lighter and more durable in cold weather.

The color of the pots can have an effect on your plants. Light pots will absorb less heat by reflecting more sunlight, and in areas and times where heat is a concern, these will work better than dark colored pots.

In summary, food safe containers can be easily use for growing food anywhere you have a small space such as a patio, deck, backyard, fire escape, balcony or front steps or even placed among your more traditional in-ground or raised garden beds. The sky or should we say the container size and material is the limit !!!

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