

The Essentialist

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Soil for Container Gardening

Container plants need loose, well-drained soil, generous in organic matter. that holds moisture and nutrients but drains well and is lightweight. A full pot can be very heavy.

Wet soil mix thoroughly before seeding or transplanting.

Synthetic vs. Conditioned Soil

Synthetic "soils" are best suited for vegetable container gardening, and for use in large pots (to minimize weight). Typically they contain: horticultural grade vermiculite, peat moss, limestone, superphosphate, and garden fertilizer. They are available from garden centers, or you can mix your own:

- 1 bushel horticultural grade vermiculite
- 1 bushel peat moss
- 10 tablespoons of limestone
- 5 tablespoons of 0-20-0 (superphosphate)
- 1 cup of garden fertilizer such as 6-12-12 or 5-10-10

Mix the material thoroughly adding a little water to reduce dust.

Conditioned soil:

A good soil mix consists of one part each:

- potting soil
- perlite
- sphagnum peat moss
- compost

You can also use sawdust, wood chips, and vermiculite – most any loose, well-drained soil mostly made with organic matter that is disease and pest free.

When using compost, make sure temperatures were high enough in the compost to kill pest organisms and not add volunteers.

Add a slow release fertilizer by following label recommendations to each pot. This provides additional nutrients slowly over a longer period when there is active growth and fruit production.

Sources for above information

Unknown; contact Sally Janover (aduzi@earthlink.net or 837-4429) for more information.