

Planting Herbs - Using Recycled Containers and Pots.

Being able to upcycle or recycle an old pot, crate, bath, tea caddy or plastic milk bottle, enhancing its use to grow plants, whether from seed or potting on, cuttings or plants which have been divided, herbs thriving in a butler sink or an old farm trough housing succulents, can give a great sense of achievement and wellbeing as well as create a home for plants which may have otherwise been thrown on the rubbish pile.

As long as the pot or container has adequate drainage almost any container big or small can be used, giving a rustic style to a working garden.

Recycled containers can be versatile and easily upcycled to suit life outdoors.

Containers can be made from plastic, terracotta, wooden, metal and plastic.

They may have served previously as biscuit tins, drawers or even suitcases.

- Plastic and metal containers are durable and will fare well during time spent outside and retain moisture well.
- Terracotta containers give a great rustic and almost Mediterranean feel to a garden, especially if filled with herbs.

If using Terracotta containers and pots, be mindful that during warmer months, plants which are growing in them will need watering more often than if they were in a plastic pot as the terracotta absorbs moisture.

Terracotta containers and pots can break and crack if moved around frequently.

Wooden containers are a great addition but will have a limited life span if not lined with plastic and treated with a wood preserve, remembering to make sure drainage is adequate.

Larger objects can also be used such as old discarded baths and are able to accommodate many plants. But bear in mind if the bath has a position in the garden awaiting it ready to grow plants, vegetables or herbs you will have to fill it with hundreds of litres of growing media! As well as having a predominant drainage hole, other drainage will be needed.

If your recycled containers are made of wicker or leather, they will not stand the colder months and could become brittle and broken so they will have to be put inside a protective environment until the cold and frost has passed.

A good drainage system is needed with all recycled containers as it allows the water in the soil drain out of the container allowing air to reach the roots. Without adequate drainage roots of the plant will eventually rot.

Using old or discarded items to give plants a home will bring a sense of fun and conversation, architecture and artistic design to a working garden.

Work sheet and Quiz

1. What sort of recycled containers can be used to home plants outdoors?
2. What are the disadvantages of using clay/terracotta pots and containers?
3. How would you have to treat a wooden container for it to withstand being outside all year round?
4. What is the advantage and disadvantage of using an old bath as a container in a working garden?
5. Why is a good drainage system needed in a recycled container?

Activity

Can you find an item that can be recycled and create a home for a plant, herb or vegetable, filling it with growing media and sowing seeds?

Check on the packet when is the right time to sow seeds and if the container will have to be kept on a windowsill or within a protective environment

Or you might already have planting plug or bedding plants ready to go!

Good Luck

Angela's Top Tip 🧐

Bedding plants should not be planted outside until after the 3rd week of May when the frost has passed