5 Cost-Effective Ways To Home Container Gardening – DIY

Container gardening allows you to anyone to garden at home without the need of a big, spacious area. You can set up your garden on your patio, balcony, deck, porch or inside your home, anywhere you like as long as there is enough air and sunshine for your plants. Container gardening not only maximizes your space, it offers cost-effective solutions to growing organic fruits, vegetables, herbs, and spices right on your own doorstep.

Here are five ways to save money as you create a container garden.

Big Cans and Plastic Bottles

How much do garden pots, containers, and planters cost today? Depending on their size, style, and material, they can range from $5 to $100 each. But you don’t really need to spend money for your plants to have their own shelter. Your cans or tins at home, big or small, are a great alternative. Baby formula cans, food cans, and all sort of metal containers are perfect. Of course, you will use large cans for big and tall plants (ex. tomatoes, peppers, eggplants, and fruit trees) and small containers for smaller types (ex. basil, parsley, rosemary, mint, and onion).

When it comes to plastic bottles, you need to cut them in two for horizontal hanging garden and just take off one side for a vertical hanging garden. The best seedlings to transfer to these plastic containers are spinach, lettuce, and other leafy vegetables.

Note: Do not forget to create holes on the back base of the cans and plastic bottles to avoid water clogging and for the

plant’s roots to breathe well. Use a nail and a hammer to make a few holes, about 10 to 15, just enough to cover the base.

Animal Manure

Animal manure is a great source of nutrients and organic matter to improve the quality of soil, and of course, to increase plant production. Just to highlight, the manure from grass-eating animals like cows, goats, horses, and buffalos, contain almost all of the nutrients that your plants need including nitrogen, potassium, magnesium, phosphorus, manganese, zinc, iron, and calcium.

Note: Make sure to dry the manure before putting to your potted plants. Otherwise, flying insects will feast on it.

Compost Pit

Aside from animal manure, compost is also a great fertilizer for your plants. And, you don’t have to source other materials so you can create one. All you need are dried leaves, wood ashes, fruit and vegetable peels, kitchen leftovers, and other biodegradable waste.

Get a large can. Put the compost ingredients alternately with the soil as the base. Leave this compost for 3 to 6 months for moderate to full decomposition. When decomposed, you can use the compost as a fertilizer. And, unlike animal manure, you can just go ahead and spread it around the plant’s base.

Note: Always provide adequate moisture to the compost so that the microbes will continue to break down the particles. In order to determine the level of moisture, get a long and thin stick, push it towards the can’s base, and then, pull it off quickly. Feel the compost soil on the stick and see if it is moist enough.

Human Urine

Like animal manure, human urine is full of nutrients promoting plant growth. It has nitrogen, phosphorus, and potassium. And, if ever you wonder if it’s actually safe to store your urine in a chamber pot, especially at night as you wake up and pee – it is. Human urine is free from any health risks unlike human feces, which can carry E. coli and salmonella. In fact, the International Space Station astronauts drink urine after a purification process.

Note: Human urine has a pungent smell, so before you start using your chamber pot, make sure that you put water to it, 2 to 3 inches high. The water will help neutralize the bad smell. And, after dispensing the urine to the plants, clean your chamber pot using a laundry washing powder and bleach. This will effectively remove the urine stains left on the chamber pot.

Recyclable Plastic Wrap or Paper

To protect vegetables and fruits from scratches or insect bites, wrapping is very important as soon as they appear. Food wrappers and old newspapers are perfect wrapping materials. Just use a stapler to close the wrap’s opening.

Note: If you use food plastic wrappers, clean them using soap and water, and then let them dry beforehand.

So, who says you need to spend money in order to start or maintain a container garden at home?

Further Reading:

- *Fall Container Gardening*
- *How Vertical Gardening Could Help Save the World*
- *How to Make Organic Compost*
- *Why Grow Your Own Organic Food*

Sources:

- *Best Cost Effective Veggies & Herbs to Grow at Home* – Garden Aware
- *Why Go Organic?* – Nutrichium
- *Fruit in Containers* – Royal Horticultural Society
- *The 35 Easiest Container and Pot Friendly Fruits, Vegetables and Herbs* – DIY & Crafts
- *Reusing Our Plastic: Vertical Hanging Garden* – Moomah the Magazine
- *Managing Manure as Fertilizer* – Government of Saskatchewan
- *Gee Whiz: Human Urine is Shown to Be an Effective Agricultural Fertilizer* – Scientific American
- *NASA: All Systems Go for Space Urine Recycling System* – Scientific American