

## Container Vegetable Gardening

The Ohio Valley is certainly not blessed with good natural soil in most of our residential areas. Many of us have become quite discouraged trying to grow many plants, especially vegetables. Well, read on because the following instructions will give you great success for the fruits of your efforts.

All you need is a good sunny area (1/2 day or more), a pot, plastic or clay, between 14" and 20" in diameter, good professional potting soil, and your vegetable plants or seeds. Fill your container to within 2 inches of the top with your potting medium, firm lightly to eliminate air pockets and then plant. With tomatoes, plant your plants 4 to 6 inches deep, burying up to 1/2 the main stem in your soil. This procedure will give you much stronger and stockier plants. Install a tomato cage or stake your plant with a teepee formation and you're all set.

Cucumbers can be planted by seed, placing 5 to 8 seeds 1/2 inch deep into the soil 2" in from the side of the pot. If you plant the plants you will have cucumbers a couple of weeks sooner. Place a tomato cage into your pot for the cucumbers to grow on. You can plant any other vegetable, including carrots, in your pots by using either seed or purchasing the plants. For full season container planting, plant lettuce, cabbage, spinach, and peas in early spring and replant the same pots after spring harvest with the summer vegetables such as tomatoes, peppers and melons.

### General Tips:

- Containers must have drainage holes.
- Use good sterilized potting soil. We recommend Metro Mix or Fertilome potting soils.
- Feed with liquid plant food every two weeks for the first month then switch to a granular fertilizer (5-10-5 or 6-12-12) and give each pot 1/4 cup monthly.
- Use tomato cages to support upright and vine vegetables.
- With tomatoes and cucumbers, bush varieties are available that do not require a cage.
- Place pots on patio, deck, or on top of existing vegetable garden soil.
- Water when dry; daily when very hot. Consider a simple drip tube system so watering can be done even when you are away for a few days. Ask for info.
- Herbs can also be grown using the container method.
- Early Girl, Patio, Celebrity and Better Boy tomatoes are some of the best.