



Organic Newsletter

Winter Edition, 2011

Terrific Terrariums!

Sometimes trying to keep houseplants thriving is a bit challenging; right amount of light, watering, insects, diseases, dry air or maybe you just have a busy life. Terrariums are the solution for the house plant impaired!

Terrariums were discovered in 1827 accidentally by a London doctor named Nathaniel Ward and is why they are also sometimes referred to as Wardian cases.



According to Ron Gladkowski, "Dr. Ward built a fern rockery in his backyard, but the ferns kept dying, poisoned by the fumes from the city's factories. Ward was also studying moths and caterpillars and, while experimenting with a cocoon in a covered jar for observation, he noticed that several plants

had grown in the bit of soil at the bottom of the jar. Among the bottled plants was a fern and, unlike the ferns in his garden, it looked healthy; Dr. Ward concluded that plants could flourish in London if they could be protected from the city's polluted air. Ward pursued his discovery in miniature greenhouses, which he named fern cases, and which are now known as Wardian cases or terrariums."

To begin your terrarium you need to select your container. Usually for beginners it is suggested to use something with a wide mouth, such as fish bowl or fish tank for easier access as well as not needing any special tools. If you do decide to try a

container with a small mouth, you will most likely need a funnel- for the growing medium-, a long thin tool for digging, and another long thin tool for lowering the plants, such as chop sticks.

No matter which container you decide to use it must be clear glass, the opening accommodating for the plants you intend to insert and can either be open or closable.

The next step is plant selection. When selecting your plants you want to consider several factors. First, the plants must have compatible environmental needs, light, humidity and water. They must also be slow growing and miniature. An important step in selecting your plants is to inspect them for any signs of insects or diseases. Lastly consider the point-of-view of your terrarium. If it is to be viewed from all sides place a tall plant in the center then plants with decreasing height around it. If it is to be viewed from one side the taller plants should be towards the back and again, plants of decreasing height towards the front. Also consider differences texture and color to create an interesting landscape.



Plants for low light:

- Club Moss (*Lycopodium clavatu*)
- Heart Leaf Philodendron (*Philodendron scandens*)
- Rattlesnake Orchid (*Goodyera pubescen*)
- Snake Plant (*Sansevieria trifasciata*)

Plants for Moderate Light:

- Aluminum Plant (*Pilea cadierii*)
- Artillery Plant (*Pilea microphylla*)
- Asparagus Fern (*Protasparagus setaceus*)
- Baby Tears (*Helxine soleirolii*)
- Begonia Rex (*Begonia rex-cultorum*)
- Bird's Nest Fern (*Asplenium nidus*)
- Emerald Ripple Peperomia(*Peperomia caperata*)
- Strawberry Begonia (*Saxifraga stolonifera*)
- Wintergreen (*Gaultheria procumbens*)

Plants for High Light:

- African Violets (*Saintpaulia ionantha*)
- Iresine Bloodleaf (*Iresine herbstii*)
- Button Fern (*Pellaea rotundifolia*)
- Dragon Tree (*Dracaena marginata*)
- Earth star (*Cryptanthus bromelioides*)
- False Aralia(*Dizygotheca elegantissima*)
- Flame Violet (*Episcia dianthiflora*)
- Golden Pothos(*Epipremnum aureum*)
- Ivy (*Hedera helix*)
- Maidenhair Fern (*Adiantum raddianum*)
- Miniature Peperomia(*Pilea depressa*)
- Moses in a Cradle (*Rhoeo discolor*)
- Nerve Plant (*Fittonia verchaffeltii*)
- Parlor Palm (*Chamaedorea elegans*)
- Pin Cushion Plant (*Nertera granadensis*)
- Pink Polka Dot (*Hypoestes phyllostachya*)
- Prayer Plant (*Maranta leucoreura*)
- Purple Passion Plant (*Gynura aurantiaca*)
- Rosary Vine (*Ceropegia woodii*)
- Shamrocks (*Oxalis oregona*)
- Spider Plant (*Chlorophytum comosum*)
- Swedish Ivy (*Plectranthus australis*)
- Tahitian Bridal Veil (*Gibasis geniculata*)
- Watermelon Peperomia(*Peperomia argyreia*)

After selecting your plants, it is time to prepare the terrarium environment. After thoroughly cleaning and drying your container, place a one inch layer of pebbles, gravel or very coarse sand at the bottom for drainage.

On top of the drainage layer you should sprinkle a thin layer of activated charcoal (like a fish tank); this will help control the smell of decomposing organic materials.

The next layer should be three to four inches of a soilless mix, a soil with a high percentage of peat moss, or some garden centers sell terrarium soil. (If using a narrow opening container, this is where your funnel becomes necessary.)

When designing your terrarium including land contours such as valleys, hills and adding special stones or interesting pieces of wood create a beautiful landscape to accent your plants. (However if using stones or wood pieces be sure to rinse them thoroughly with hot water.)

Next it's finally time to plant! With most of the terrarium plants it's not necessary to loosen the root ball before planting. You also don't want to crowd the plants close together and make sure they don't touch the sides of the container. (This is where you would need a long narrow tool for digging holes as well as something like chop sticks to lower the plants into your narrow container) Make sure the hole that is dug is sufficient to encompass the root ball. After placing in the hole gently firm the soil around each plant. After all plants are in place, lightly moisten the soil. Once satisfied with placement, you can now close up the terrarium.



How do you keep from getting cold feet?

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Don't go around BRRfooted!

The care of your terrarium is simple. If using an open container you may have to water it on a weekly or monthly basis. For closed terrariums, there will always be some condensation on the inside of the container. However, if it forms large droplets, you need to open it to let some of the water evaporate. In some cases you may need to leave the lid slightly ajar to allow for air circulation. With closed terrariums the only time water is to be added is when no condensation appears on the glass. When adding the water however, add it in a small amount and check the next day to see if condensation has reappeared, if not more water may be added. You also must occasionally check for insects or diseases and if discovered removed infected plants immediately. More than likely it should not need fertilizing, but if you notice the plants appear malnourished applying an all purpose house plant food at ¼ of the normal rate should suffice. Finally place your terrarium in indirect light.

Following these steps will ensure you can have a virtually care free house plant garden!

Fun Fact:

On average, one inch of rain equals ten inches of snow!



On average in the U.S. we are affected by 105 snow producing storms each year. They can last anywhere from two to five days and can drop snow on portions of several states!

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Hoping the winter season brings happiness, warmth and joy to you and yours!

~The Organically Green Team

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"My little horse must think it queer
To stop without a farmhouse near
Between the woods and frozen lake
The darkest evening of the year.

He gives his harness bells a shake
To ask if there is some mistake.
The only other sound's the sweep
Of easy wind and downy flake.

The woods are lovely, dark and deep.
But I have promises to keep,
And miles to go before I sleep,
And miles to go before I sleep."

- Robert Frost

Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening

Organically Grown



Mediterranean Eggplant Gratin

INGREDIENTS

1/2 cup low salt canned kidney beans, drained
3 tablespoons organic virgin olive oil + 2 teaspoons to be used
to toss on the eggplant before cooking.
2 medium yellow onions, quartered
1 large organic green bell pepper, seeded, cut into 1 inch squares
3 Asian eggplants or Long Purple eggplants - about 3/4 pound, cut crosswise into 1 inch thick slices.
3 zucchini - about 3/4 pound, cut crosswise into 1 inch thick slices
4 cloves organic Chesnok Red Garlic*
1 1/2 cups (9 ounces), organic peeled, seeded and chopped tomatoes
1 cup organic vegetable stock
1/4 teaspoon red pepper flakes
1 tablespoon organic pizza seasoning
1/4 cup chopped fresh organic basil
Organic sea salt to taste
Mixed organic ground pepper to taste
3/4 cup freshly grated Parmesan cheese.

PREPARATION

Move the oven rack up to the upper third position in your oven. Preheat oven to 375 degrees. Coat a shallow 2-quart baking dish with a thin layer of organic virgin olive oil. Wipe off the excess olive oil with a paper towel and set dish aside.

Place the eggplant in a small bowl. Toss the eggplant in 2

teaspoons of olive oil to coat. Sprinkle 1/2 tablespoons of organic pizza seasoning over eggplant and toss to coat, set aside.

In a large frying pan over medium heat, warm the 3 tablespoons of organic olive oil. Add the onions, bell pepper and cook for a few minutes (5-10), stirring occasionally. Add the eggplant and zucchini and continue to cook over medium heat, stirring occasionally for another 7-10 minutes. Add the garlic, stirring to combine, and cook for another minute.

Increase the heat to high and add the tomatoes, organic vegetable stock, red pepper flakes, 1/2 tablespoons organic pizza seasoning, basil and kidney beans. Bring to a boil over high heat. Reduce the heat to a medium-low and simmer uncovered for about 30 minutes. Stir occasionally and season with salt and pepper.

Pour the mixture into the prepared baking dish. Sprinkle the Parmesan cheese evenly over the top. Bake until golden and bubbling around the edges, about 20 minutes. Let cool for about 10 minutes before serving.

Serve Mediterranean Eggplant Gratin with fresh sourdough bread and a small organic spinach salad.

Recipe Substitutions: You can substitute chick-peas or garbanzo beans for the kidney beans. Yellow crookneck squash or yellow zucchini can be substituted for the green zucchini and sometimes I add an extra red bell pepper or yellow bell pepper for color and flavor!

Chesnok Red Garlic is a hard neck organic garlic that retains its subtle spicy flavor even after intense heat cooking. A beautiful garlic, Chesnok Red has large, plump purple striped cloves that have a very high oil content and are ideal for Mediterranean cooking or Italian cooking. Chesnok Red garlic is difficult to find in stores but easy to grow yourself.



Note: We recommend using certified organic ingredients, when available, in all recipes to maximize flavors and nutrition while minimizing your risk of exposure to pesticides, chemicals and preservatives.

Services for 2011:

We offer the following services to help increase the enjoyment and beauty of your property:

Tree / Shrub:

- ❖ Shrub & Tree Spraying / Fertilization Programs
- ❖ Integrated Pest Management
- ❖ Soil Restoration
- ❖ Plant and Soil Stimulation Program
- ❖ Deep Root Feeding
- ❖ Root Growth Enhancement
- ❖ Mature Tree Restoration
- ❖ Air Spading
- ❖ Radial Trenching
- ❖ Vertical Mulching
- ❖ Anti-Desiccant Spraying
- ❖ General Tree and Shrub Maintenance Removal

Turf:

- ❖ Lawn Renovation
- ❖ Fertilization
- ❖ Overseeding
- ❖ Core Aeration
- ❖ Estate / Property Purification

Organic Pest Control:

- ❖ Flying Insect
- ❖ Deer / Geese
- ❖ Rodent Repellent
- ❖ Organic Tick & Flea Control

We also offer Outdoor Holiday Décor.

Call (631) 467-7999 for a free estimate!

