

5 Compact Plants For Small Gardens



5 COMPACT PLANTS

*For Small
Gardens*

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You're probably interested in frugal gardening tips because you're on a budget. But I'll bet that many frugal gardeners also have to carefully budget gardening space. Most people

don't have a lot of room to work with. And even if you have a large property, it's likely that not all areas are conducive to growing plants.

Growing within a constrained space is also a fun challenge. It's a great way to try out new plant varieties and come up with ways to grow upward.

I'm a big fan of [compact plants](#) because even though I'm lucky enough to have plenty of space to work with, I love the neat and tidy look of compact varieties.

Here are some of my favorite compact plants for growing in small spaces or [containers](#). Their miniature sizing also makes them great for growing indoors.

Orange Hat Tomato

This teeny-tiny tomato plant is one of the smallest I've ever grown. It doesn't get taller than 9 inches and takes up minimal space. If you're a fan of cherry tomatoes, it's a great variety to grow on a balcony or patio. Because the plants are mighty small, consider planting a few for a bigger yield.

Seeds available from [Baker Creek Heirloom Seeds](#)

Orchard Baby Sweet Corn

I don't grow corn often because squirrels usually make off with the ears before I can enjoy them, but this variety is an excellent pick for tiny, squirrel-free gardens. The small ears of corn are ultra-cute, and the stalks don't get taller than 5 feet. Don't plan a corn roast after planting these mini corn plants, though. Each stalk produces just a couple of ears. That said, it's a fun way to try out this crop that usually takes up a lot of room. And it's a great plant to grow with kids.

Seeds available from [Baker Creek Heirloom Seeds](#)

Baby Milk Bok Choy

Bok choy is one of my favorite crops to grow, and this variety is perfect for compact gardens. I love the unified look of the plants after harvest and the bright white stems. Their miniature size makes them great for steaming or stir-frying whole.

Seeds available from [Baker Creek Heirloom Seeds](#)

Little Gem Lettuce

This is actually the first variety of lettuce I ever grew. And it remains a staple crop to this day. I have some growing in my indoor hydroponic garden right now! Head lettuce can sometimes take up quite a bit of room, but this plant produces crispy, shrunken heads of lettuce that are perfect for one or two people. And the leaves are super tender and tasty.

Seeds available from [Baker Creek Heirloom Seeds](#)

Parisian Carrot

Here's another variety that was a first for me back in my newbie gardener days. These small orange globes pack so much carrotty goodness but don't require as much soil depth as regular-sized carrots, making them an excellent choice for containers. They also look fancy when cooked and plated. Like little gem lettuce, Parisian carrots are a variety I still grow.

Seeds available from [Hudson Valley Seed Co](#)

5 Winter Squash Varieties for the Frugal Gardener Short on Space



5 WINTER SQUASH VARIETIES

*for the Frugal
Gardener Short on
Space*

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Wondering which types of winter squash are best for small gardens? Read on to find out about compact winter squash varieties that provide the most bang for your buck. They're

perfect for the frugal gardener!

Summer squash gets all the glory. It grows quickly and provides a high yield. My all-time favorite variety patty-pan matures in less than two months in the right conditions and keeps on giving throughout the season.

On the other hand, winter squash requires a longer growing season and, in most cases, needs more space than summer squash. Does winter squash belong in the frugal garden? Absolutely! Squash—winter or summer—is a nutritious, staple vegetable that's worth growing. Pumpkin is a winter squash variety that I covered about a week ago. The [post](#) contains information on the challenges of growing a large vining crop like pumpkins.

Difference between winter and summer squash

Winter squashes have hard flesh and thick skins, unlike their delicate summer cousins. I should point out that winter squashes aren't actually harvested in December, as the name suggests. Instead, they're picked in the fall and are easily preserved throughout the winter months because of their thick-skinned character. Winter squash keeps much longer than summer squash. To ensure your squash lasts as long as possible, be careful not to prick or damage the outer skin.

Note that some winter squashes don't keep as long. Use these up first!

Best varieties to try out

If you're tight on space, vining varieties are a no-go unless you have the patience to train and trellis your squashes vertically. Personally, while I love seeing vertically grown produce in other people's gardens, I haven't yet mastered the

technique. In the past, my handmade trellises haven't been strong enough to hold heavy squashes, and they mostly ended up taking up ground space.

Bush or semi-bush varieties are a viable option for space-starved gardeners. Bonus: they don't take as long to mature as other squash types. Most compact squashes have cute names that signal their miniature plant size.

Here's a handy list of compact winter squash varieties for those with less room:

- [Sugar Dumpling](#)
- [Bush Delicata](#)
- [Burpee's Butterbush](#)
- [Red Kuri](#) – One of the first winter squashes I ever grew in a shaded patch of garden at my parent's home. I managed to get a single beautiful bright red squash. I barely knew what I was doing, and it's insane that anything grew in that patch of dirt, but this will forever be a favorite of mine.
- [Sugarbush](#)

Tips for growing winter squash

Some folks prefer to start seeds indoors and transplant winter squash seedlings in the early summer months, while others find direct seeding is more successful. I've had some success with direct sowing, but the very variable weather is always a challenge.

Planting squash of any type, even compact winter squash varieties, gives your plants plenty of room. Crowding your squash babies is likely to stunt growth and result in a less than stellar yield.

Finally, don't be afraid to experiment. If you want to try your hand at vertically growing butternut squash or letting

those pumpkin vines flow along your garden path, go for it. No rule says you can't.

Source:

<https://extension.umn.edu/vegetables/growing-pumpkins-and-winter-squash-home-gardens>
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