

Container Gardening: Fabric Pots vs. Plastic Pots



CONTAINER GARDENING:

Fabric Pots vs. Plastic Pots

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I love to plant crops in containers, especially finicky plants like eggplant and peppers. I use a variety of containers in my

garden, including fabric pots. If it gets too cold, it's simple enough to haul them inside. Containers are also great for those living in rental properties or those with limited space. It's easy to shuffle them around a deck or balcony and you can manage to plant quite a bit in multiple containers. I've collected many [plastic pots](#) from the garden center over the years. I reuse them to plant herbs, tomatoes, and whatever doesn't fit in the rest of my garden. But plastic pots have their pros and cons, and they aren't the only option for your gardening needs.

The Trouble With Plastic

Black plastic pots are great for heat-loving plants because the dark material is a heat magnet. What's not so great about plastic? Unless you've purchased self-watering containers, plastic pots require careful monitoring so that plants are evenly watered. Without proper drainage, plants may become root-bound or drown if [over-watered](#) (always make sure there are drainage holes underneath). Plastic doesn't breathe very well, either. Imagine wrapping yourself in a sheet of plastic instead of breathable clothing. You'd end up a sweaty, suffocated mess.

That doesn't mean plastic pots aren't useful. They're typically very inexpensive, easy to find, and they're available in all shapes and sizes. But there's already SO much plastic in the world. If there's a worthy alternative, why not try it? By choosing a different type of plant pot, you can reduce your ecological footprint and stop creating unnecessary plastic waste.

An Alternative: Fabric Pots

You could use any pot for planting, but fabric pots offer a few distinct advantages:

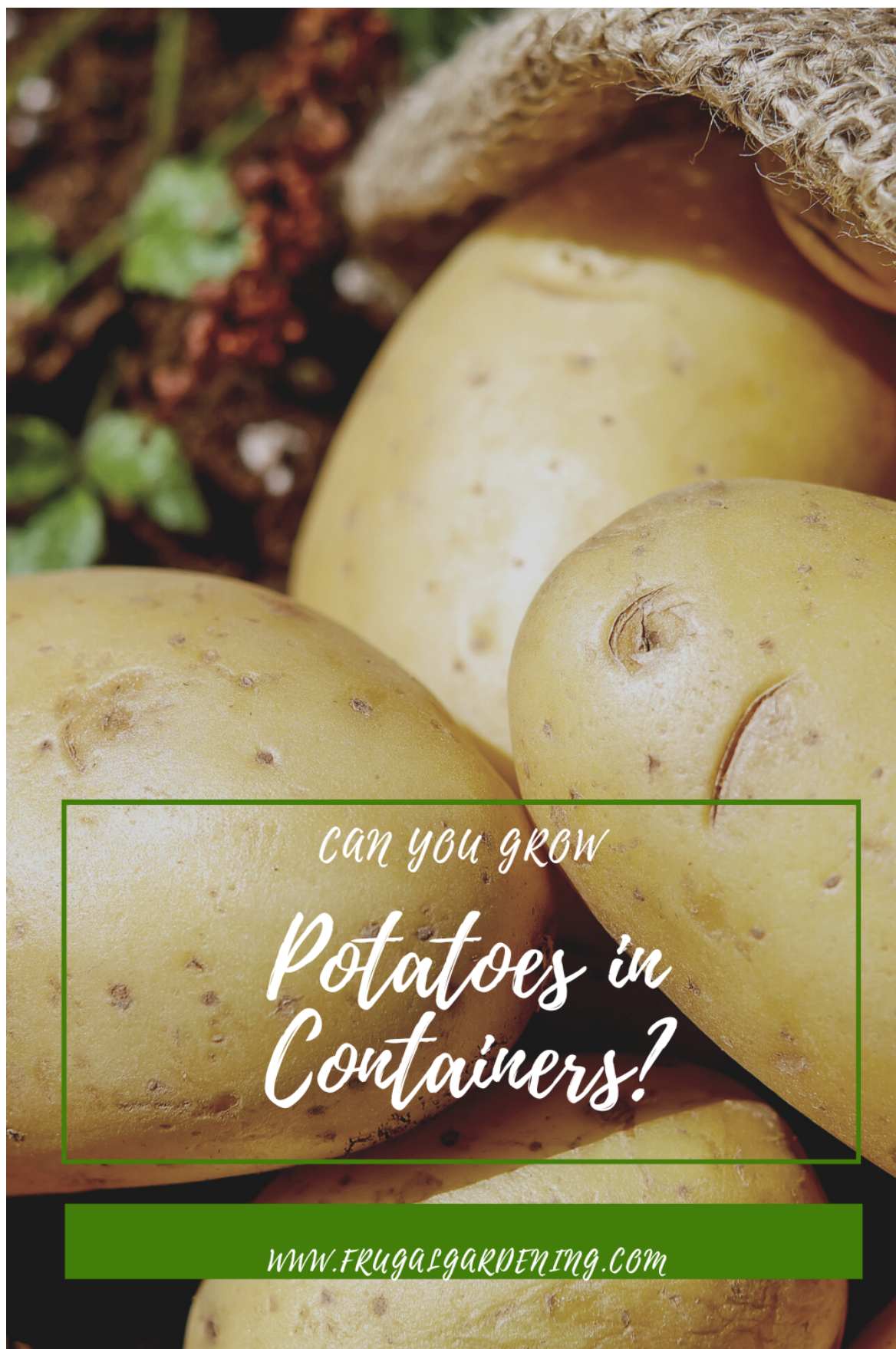
- **They're relatively cheap.** Often sold in packs, fabric containers are a suitable option for frugal gardeners.
- **They last a long time.** Cracked plastic and broken ceramic pots begone! Fabric pots are made of sturdy materials that won't rip, even when filled with wet soil. Re-use them year after year.
- **They're breathable.** The fabric allows for optimal airflow.
- **No water-logging.** You won't have to contend with rotted roots using fabric pots, the material allows for proper drainage.
- **Easy to handle.** Handles make it easy to drag fabric pots around the garden.
- **Foldable sides.** Fabric pots are ideal for growing [potatoes](#) since the edges can be rolled down.

If you're looking for a good beginner's guide to growing in pots, I highly recommend the [Vegetable Gardener's Container Garden](#). It's a book that I still refer back to!

I also recommend checking out this handy YouTube video on how to grow potatoes in containers:

What's your favorite vegetable to grow in fabric pots? Leave us a comment to let us know!

Can You Grow Potatoes in Containers?



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Growing potatoes is so incredibly fun. With a little bit of patience, you'll be digging up spuds towards the end of the season. The taste of freshly dug potatoes is unparalleled.

People say the same about tomatoes, but I genuinely think potatoes win the contest for best-tasting garden edible. Compared to a storebought potato, one from the earth has a creamy, potato-y quality that's impossible to match. There's also so much more variety available when choosing seed potatoes compared to shopping the root vegetable aisle at your local grocer: fingerling potatoes, red-skinned varieties, and even blue spuds. But how do you grow potatoes if you don't have tons of in-ground space?

Can You Grow Potatoes in Containers?

Yes! Absolutely! I wholly recommend growing them in containers instead of using in-ground real estate or large raised beds. A single 5-gallon container yields about 1.5 pounds of potatoes.

Benefits of Growing Potatoes in Containers

What's the advantage of growing potatoes in containers? Here are the benefits of growing in containers:

- **Inexpensive.** There's no need to build a garden bed, there are plenty of cheap container options available from fabric pots to upcycled vessels like empty recycling bins.
- **Easy to relocate.** Did you plop the containers somewhere where you've realized there's not enough sun? Simply drag the containers to a sunnier spot.
- **Easy harvest.** No need to dig around for hours to find spuds. Dump out the container and sift through the dirt. Since you're less likely to leave behind diseased potatoes, there's also a decreased chance of pest and disease in the following year.
- **Great for small spaces.** Don't have a large garden? You might think it's time to give up on planting potatoes. Not so fast! Containers are great for gardeners with

limited room. Grow taters on your porch or balcony.

How to Grow Potatoes in Containers

Plant 1-2 seed potatoes in a single 5-gallon bucket and double that amount for large containers. Fill your container up with enough soil (mixed with plenty of compost) to cover those newly planted seed potatoes.

As days go by, you'll notice foliage start to appear. Continue to add enough soil mix to cover the stems and tubers, but don't bury the leaves.

Potatoes need plenty of sun and regular watering. However, it's best to avoid high-nitrogen fertilizers as they will increase foliage production but reduce tuber formation.

When Do I Harvest Potatoes?

Potatoes are ready to harvest when the tops have completely died back. Attempting to dig them up too soon may hinder tuber development and leave you with a smaller crop. Still not sure when the time is right? Read more about [harvesting potatoes](#).