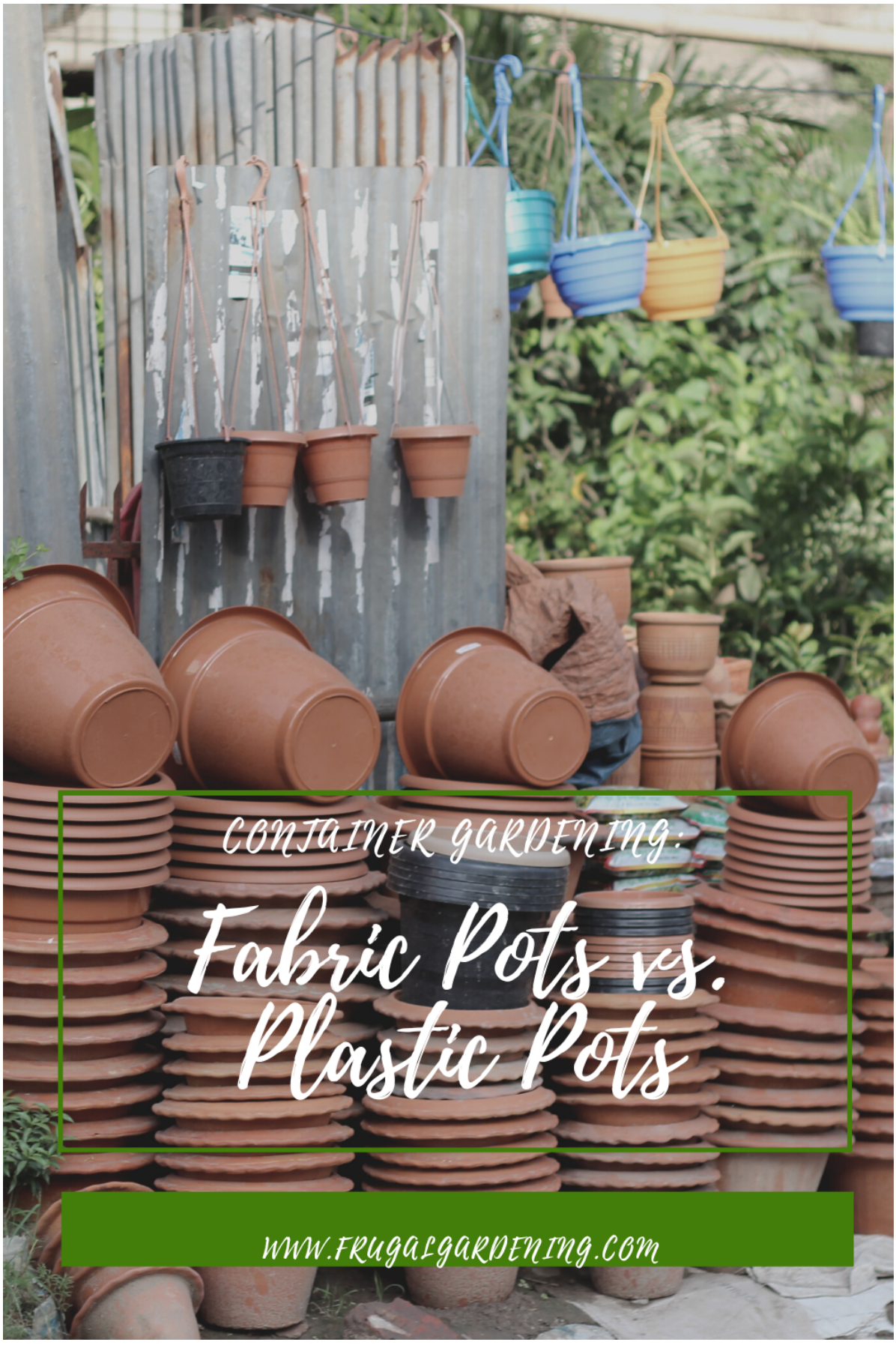
Container Gardening: Fabric Pots vs. Plastic Pots



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!