

Containers

There are many types of containers from which to choose. A good container should be large enough to provide room for soil and roots, have sufficient head room for proper watering, provide bottom drainage and be attractive without competing with the plant it holds. Containers may be fabricated of ceramics, plastic, fiberglass, wood, aluminum, copper, brass, and many other materials.

Clay and Ceramic Containers - Unglazed and glazed porous clay pots with drainage holes are sometimes still used by commercial house plant growers and are frequently left with the plant when it is purchased. Ornate containers are often nothing but an outer shell to cover the plain clay pot. Clay pots absorb and lose moisture through their walls. Frequently the greatest accumulation of roots is next to the walls of the clay pot, because moisture and nutrients accumulate in the clay pores. Although easily broken, clay pots provide excellent aeration for plant roots and are considered by some to be the healthiest type of container for a plant.

Ceramic pots are usually glazed on the outside, sometimes also on the inside. They are frequently designed without drainage holes. This necessitates careful watering practices. Containers with no drainage are not good flower pots. Small novelty containers have little room for soil and roots and are largely ornamental. They should be avoided. It should be noted that putting pot chips, clay pot shards or gravel in the bottom of a pot does not improve soil drainage; they only provide a small space beneath the soil where some excess water can drain inside the pot.

Plastic and Fiberglass - Plastic and fiberglass containers are usually quite light and easy to handle. They have become the standard in recent years because they are relatively inexpensive and quite attractive in shape and color. Plastic pots are easy to sterilize or clean for reuse, and because they are not porous as clay pots are, they need less frequent watering and tend to accumulate fewer salts.