



Do I Need to Feed My Planter?

Normally, any plant that lives in a planter will require nutrients from adding fertilizers. In the course of their life, plants need more nutrients than what is found in the planter.

The planters provided through Growing Together contain a 'slow-release' fertilizer. This means feeding your plants is already done for you!

If you reuse your planter for more veggies, you'll need a nutrient top-up. There are many options at hardware stores and you can even make your own compost tea by soaking compost, leaves/weeds in the water you use for the planter!

Growing Together



Location

When you bring your planter home, your first thought might be: "Where should this go?"

The answer will depend on what veggies are in your planter. This chart shows the sun requirements of the common fruits and veggies you may have now, or in the future.

And don't forget one of the best features of a planter garden: it can be moved! If you need to relocate a planter, ensure you're not drastically changing conditions (e.g. sun) as that can shock the plant.

What if you have a mix of high sun, low sun? Turn the shade plants away from

Low Sun 3-4 hours/day	Swiss Chard, Lettuce, Parsley, Arugula, Kale, Cabbage
Medium Sun 4-6 hours/day	Beets, Carrots, Peas, Potatoes, Broccoli, Radishes, Turnips
High Sun 6-8 hours/day	Peppers, Tomatoes, Beans, Eggplant, Strawberries, Cucumbers, Squash

the light. If the plants are wilting or leaves look "sunburned" then the soil is too dry or your plants are getting too much light.

Care

Check for dead stems or weak growth and remove it to help prevent disease and mold. You can pinch off dead leaves but plants often put out new growth! Some plants, like tomatoes, benefit from being trimmed (pruned) so they put energy into fruits instead of leaves. Pinch off the side shoots or tallest stem a tiny bit to get a bushier plant. Use herbs the same way, by pinching or snipping off the biggest leaves to let new ones grow.

Water

Depending on the location of your planter, you will likely find it dries out quickly. It is important to check the soil in the planter every day to gauge when to water, especially on hot days.

One of the best ways to know if your planter needs water is to stick your finger 2 inches (5 cm) deep into the soil. If the top two inches are dry, it is time to water!

While we like to enjoy the look of a plant ready to eat, don't admire it too long without eating it! Fruits and veggies can spoil quickly if we don't use them.

Many of these plants will start to die back by the end of the summer. Don't be afraid to remove plants past their prime (like lettuce) and replace it with plants from a garden centre or seeds that will sprout if you keep them warm and moist.

When it is time to water, do so thoroughly. Your planter has drainage holes in the bottom to stop water from pooling. Slowly water the planter until you see water coming out of the bottom.

Never let soil in the planters dry out completely, it is hard to re-wet and not good for your plants.

Creating Planters

If you're happy with your garden planter, you might decide to add more planters to your space or reuse this planter next year. Here are some tips for new or reusing planters:

Planters: Just about any container can be made into a planter! Repurpose old items, check out garage sales, get creative! (*If you want to grow heat-loving plants, choose a darker container that attracts more heat*).

Drainage: Increase or add drainage by drilling, punching or carving at least 1/2 inch (1 cm) diameter holes.

Light: Ensure you have the right amount of light for the plant you'd like to grow.

Food: You need to feed your soil to feed your plants. Slow-release fertilizers are available from most hardware stores. You could instead use a liquid fertilizer mixed with water every two weeks.

Plants: Decide what you want to plant before looking at a nursery or seed packages. Consider the number of pots, sizes, and locations. Take a picture of your planters and bring it with you when plant shopping.

Keep Planting

There are many resources in your community to help you with gardening. Libraries, garden centres and your neighbours might all be very helpful. Here are our top three online resources to get your started:

Neighbours: When choosing plants for your planter, make sure that they get along. The plants in one pot should require the same amount of light and moisture.

Plant Tags: When buying plants, read the tags! They tell you how much light, water, and food they need. The tag also lists the plant's shape and size, which are important to consider for small and medium planters.

Potting Soil: Don't fill your planter with anything but good potting soil. It is specially designed to hold water, nutrients and reduce disease. And don't be shy about filling up the planter. More soil equals a better ability to retain water and in turn provides a larger margin for error for both watering and feeding plants.

Patience: Unfortunately, when we have more plants, we see more plants die. Even expert gardeners sometimes kill plants without meaning to! If you see dead parts on a plant, pinch them off and see if the plant puts out new growth. If the plant continues dying, remove it. Try to find out what the problem was (too dry? too wet? too hot?) and make adjustments.

1. **The Old Farmer's Almanac**
www.almanac.com
2. **Ontario Seed Company**
www.oscseeds.com
3. **Family, Food & Garden**
www.familyfoodgarden.com

Happy Gardening!

Gardening on any scale is healthy for our bodies and minds. We wish you lots of luck, fun, and success with your planter garden!

Please take a minute to share a picture of your garden with us. We'd love to see your green thumb!

Growing
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A huge thank you to the dozens of partners, funders and volunteers who made Growing Together possible.



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