

TERRARIUMS AND DISH GARDENS

Terrariums are indoor gardens, planted, enclosed, or partially enclosed, in transparent containers. The basic idea of a terrarium is a balanced environment. The plants take moisture from the soil through their roots, transpire, or lose it through their leaves, and receive it again from the soil, through condensation.

Any glass container which transmits light makes a good terrarium. Brandy sniffers, bubble bowls, aquariums, finger bowls, apothecary jars, or large water bottles will do.

Dish gardens are just that. The "garden" is planted in low saucer-like containers. When using foliage plants in dish gardens, select plants that stay small, or your garden will only last a short time (six months). Cactus and succulents seem to make some of the best dish gardens. They grow slow and take water only when they are dry.

After selecting the right container, give it a good scrubbing to make sure it is as clean as possible. Allow plenty of drying time so the soil won't stick to the sides of the container.

Assemble the container, drainage materials, soil mixture, plants and woods moss on a convenient work table. If the terrarium is to be seen from all sides, place taller plants in the center and surround with smaller ones. If the terrarium will be seen from one side only, slope the moss and soil upward toward the back of the container. Use the larger plants in back and smaller in front.

SOIL REQUIREMENTS

Using the right soil is important in terrariums. In the bottom of the container place a thin layer of small pebbles or broken pottery. Next, place $\frac{1}{2}$ inch of crushed charcoal. Finally, place a layer of soil approximately 1 to 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ inches deep in the container. We recommend any African violet soil. They are sterilized soil mixes and do not need anything added to them. Note: The charcoal must be a horticultural charcoal. We recommend Shultz Horticultural Charcoal.

The following list of plants is not exclusive as there are many others that could be used:

FALSE ARALIA

Aglaonema – Modesto Variegated
Airplane Plant
Aluminum Plant
Baby Tears
Corkscrew Rush
Bromeliad
Chamaeodorea
Chinese Evergreen
Croton
Dieffenbachia
Dracaena
Euphorbia – Crown of Thorns
Ferns – Dwarf Asparagus and Maiden Hair

FICUS

Ivy – Baby English
English
Fan Leaf
Glacier
Green Ripple
Hahn's Variegated
Pixie
Maranatha Kerchoveana – Prayer Plant
Palms
Peperomia and Pink Splash
Schleffera
Spathphillum
Rex Begonia

WATER

After planting, it is best to use a sprinkling bottle or some sort of misting device to water your container. Water only enough so that you can just see the stones in the bottom start to get moist. In bottle

gardens, it is best to siphon water into the bottle with a piece of small tubing. This enables you to clean the bottle and the plants at the same time. Note: In completing the bottle garden, it is advisable to leave the container uncorked for four to six months.

Terrariums do need water, though very seldom. They are most often killed by overwatering. It is important to check every six weeks or so to make sure the soil is moist throughout. Do not water until absolutely necessary, which may be in two weeks to six months. General appearance of plants, humidity, and slight warmth inside when opened, signifies that the terrarium doesn't need water. If the terrarium stays fogged over, it indicates over watering. Top should be removed temporarily to allow inside to dry out.

LIGHT

Place the planter in a bright light but never in any direct sunlight. The best exposure is a north window or filtered light through your draperies. Terrariums thrive best at normal room temperatures. Turn the terrarium occasionally, so light penetrates all plants, thus encouraging uniform growth. Do not hesitate to pinch plants that grow too tall. Feed very lightly twice a year.

The endless ideas for both terrariums and dish gardens are left only to your imagination. Have fun. We hope this information has helped you.

If you have any question please call, write or drop by:

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