

## Growing Your Garden in Bags

Recently grow bags have become very popular in gardening magazines and article. These are simply fabric containers rather than traditional containers such as pottery containers, plastic pots, metal containers etc. There are some definite advantages to these grow bags. They are relatively inexpensive. I have been using some of mine for the last three years and they are still useable. Because they are made of a fabric, they are porous, this allows air to get into the sides not just the top to supply the roots with an oxygen source. The exposure to air at the edge of the pot causes the root density to be denser without circling as they do in typical containers. Also, if they are overwatered the excess water “leaks” out of the pot sides, which tells me I have added enough water. Also, regardless of color, the pot releases heat so it will not get overly hot as traditional containers do in the heat of summer.

Bags are easy to place wherever there is sufficient daylight for the vegetable in the container. If placing them on a deck or pad you will want to put some sort of tray under them to contain the water that will leak from them. I place straw or dead grass clippings on the top of the pot around the plant I am growing to reduce water evaporation from the pot. However, as they are porous you will have to monitor the moisture level of the soil to ensure that they do not dry out.

At the end of the growing season, I empty the growing medium in the bags into my compost bin and then I can sterilize the bags to eliminate any disease-causing virus and bacteria that might remain in the bag. I do so by soaking them in a mixture of water and high concentration Hydrogen Peroxide. I use hydrogen peroxide mixed with water and let them soak overnight.

The growing medium I use is one-third compost, one-third potting soil and one-third coco coir aka coco peat. I no longer use peat moss since I learned that harvesting peat moss contributes to global heating as harvesting this non-renewable resource releases carbon dioxide and methane into the air. Also, when sowing seeds or transplanting I will add some organic fertilizer or other specific nutrients such as tomato fertilizer for tomatoes, eggplants, and peppers.

These bags are available in a range of sizes and the appropriate size for any vegetable, flower or even shrubs can be purchased as they can all be grown in containers. For example, cucumbers, cabbage, eggplant, squash, and tomatoes can all be grown in a minimum 5-gallon bag. Carrots and cherry tomatoes can be grown in a 1-gallon bag, and lettuce and green onions can be grown in a half-gallon bag. Local garden centers and online stores have a variety of brands and sizes available.

Check out the links below for specific and indepth information on growing your garden in bags.

<https://extension.tennessee.edu/publications/Documents/D142.pdf> Container tomatoes for the Tennessee gardener

[https://www.pubs.ext.vt.edu/content/pubs\\_ext\\_vt\\_edu/en/426/426-020/426-020.html](https://www.pubs.ext.vt.edu/content/pubs_ext_vt_edu/en/426/426-020/426-020.html) Container and Raised-Bed Gardening

<https://www.pubs.ext.vt.edu/426/426-336/426-336.html> Vegetable Gardening in Containers