

DESIGNING A TERRARIUM

A terrarium is a unique indoor gardening container that is fully or partially enclosed in a manner that allows heat and light to enter while confining moisture. Terrariums can be entirely closed to completely prevent the loss of moisture, but more often they are left partially open to allow some airflow. Open terrariums are less likely to experience problems with condensation and fungal plant diseases than closed containers. Succulent plants can be grown in open terrariums, while plants that prefer more moisture/humidity can be grown in closed container terrariums.

Supplies

- Glass container (with or without a lid)
- Pebbles/pea gravel
- Activated charcoal
- Potting soil mix
- Pixie size plants
- Moss
- Stones, glass beads, shells, woodland finds, fairy garden figurines, etc
- Terrarium tools

Step by Step

1. Start by adding a layer of pebbles (about 1 inch) at the bottom of the container for drainage. That means the pebbles should be pretty small in diameter, about 1/3 inch.
2. Add a layer of horticulture activated charcoal, ¼ - ½ inch. The charcoal pulls toxins and bacteria from the soil in the terrarium and helps keep the environment in the container fresh by eliminating any odors and keeping your terrarium mold free.
3. Then add a thin layer of sphagnum moss, about ¼ inch and tamp down. The layer of moss will help keep the soil from falling down and settling in the pebbles and bottom of the container.
4. Next, add a layer of soil mix, about 2-3 inches.
5. Prepare your plants. Remove the plants from their nursery pots. You may find they are root bound, in which case you will want to tease the roots apart, or even

cut some off. By cutting off some of the roots (root pruning) you will also retard your plant's growth, helping the plants stay small for the confines of your container.

6. You'll also want to take off any excess soil, as well.
7. Dig a planting hole for each plant in the soil. Place each plant in its hole and gently pat the soil down around it. Make sure that there are no air pockets between the roots of your terrarium plants and the soil. Avoid placing the plants where they are touching the insides of the container.
8. Decorate with moss, larger stones/glass beads, woodland finds, or fairy garden accessories.
9. Water your terrarium. Using a water bottle, lightly water each plant in the terrarium. You don't want the potting mix to be soaking wet, just damp.

Maintaining the Terrarium

Caring for your terrarium is easy. Check every week to see if the plants need water. Feel the soil to see if it is dry and add water if needed. Because the container is partly or fully enclosed, it will retain water considerably longer than most potted houseplants. If water is needed, use the water bottle to lightly water each plant. Can also use a water spray bottle to lightly mist.

Snip off any leaves that show signs of yellowing or damage and prune plants if they grow too large. Fertilizer is not recommended as this can cause plants to grow too large for the container.