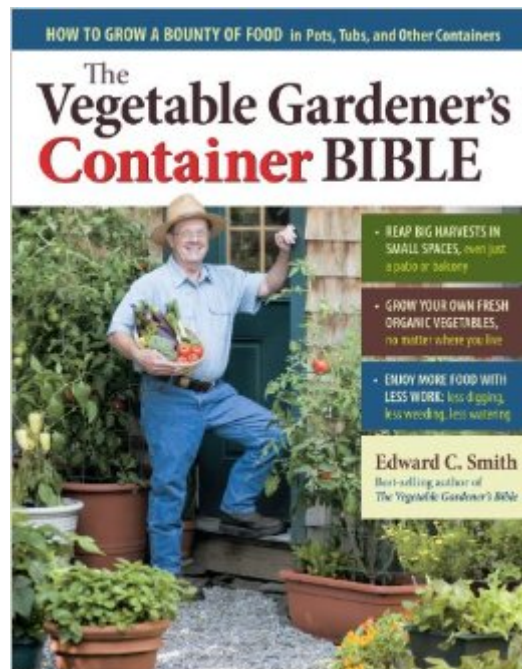


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# The Vegetable Gardener's Container Bible: How To Grow A Bounty Of Food In Pots, Tubs, And Other Containers



## Synopsis

Harvest tomatoes on a patio, produce a pumpkin in a planter, and grow broccoli on a balcony! Best-selling author Ed Smith shows you everything you need to know to successfully create and care for an edible container garden, from choosing the right plants and selecting appropriate containers through controlling pests without chemicals and harvesting fresh vegetables. You'll discover that container gardening is an easy and fun way to enjoy summer's bounty in even the smallest of growing spaces.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

I have been gardening seriously for the past couple of years and really got interested in containers last year. I have been asking myself a lot of questions about container gardening, mainly about the nature of the soil to use for pots and I have always wondered if I could reuse potting soil. I have made my share of mistakes (buying lousy potting soil, for one, or not fertilizing enough) but I have really been craving a seasoned gardener's advice. I already owned the *The Vegetable Gardener's Bible* (10th Anniversary Edition) from the same author and *McGee & Stuckey's Bountiful Container: Create Container Gardens of Vegetables, Herbs, Fruits, and Edible Flowers*. Both were great but the former was really focused on raised beds (which is fine) and the latter lacked pictures and specific guidance. I appreciated that the authors of the *Bountiful Container* leave it to me to decide whether I want to grow organic or not but sometimes you just need somebody to tell you what works! I liked the *Vegetable Gardener's Container Bible* the moment I put my hands on the

book. It is abundantly illustrated (a huge help for a novice gardener like me!!), from pictures of containers with mature plants, to pictures of good quality soil (so you know what to look for) and how to make your own potting mix (loved the advice to mix it all in a rain barrow!). The author encourages you to add a slow-acting fertilizer to the potting mix so you do not have to fertilize too much, if at all, during the growing season (I used Dr Earth fertilizer if you are interested in organic gardening without bone meal, by the way). There are also instructions to make self-watering containers and advice on which veggies like them best. That is the first part of the book. The second part of the book focuses on the various varieties of vegetables that you can grow in containers and the varieties that the author thinks grow better in containers are marked "Ed's Picks." Those include lettuces, various greens, or eggplants (especially if you live in the Northern states). The book has beautiful photos of every herb and vegetable with the minimum information you need to grow them successfully. A few varieties of each veggie are recommended. I find that McGee & Stuckey's *Bountiful Container: Create Container Gardens of Vegetables, Herbs, Fruits, and Edible Flowers* provided more in-depth information on each edible and I liked that the book covered fruit trees and flowers while *Vegetable Gardener's Container Bible* focused (obviously) on veggies. The *Bountiful Container* also was more "poetic" in its descriptions and gave more advice specific to each edible variety, in my opinion. At the end, I would recommend both books. Use the *Vegetable Gardener's Container Bible* to get started and see pictures, then refer to McGee & Stuckey's *Bountiful Container: Create Container Gardens of Vegetables, Herbs, Fruits, and Edible Flowers* for more in-depth information on each variety.

This is a great book for learning about vegetable container gardening, but if you already own Edward C Smith's *Incredible Vegetables from Self-Watering Containers*, there's no need to buy this too. This is basically a rewrite, 9 pages longer. Had I realized before purchasing, I would have bought his *Vegetable Gardener's Bible* instead, to improve my earth garden. Still, this is a very useful book for container gardening. Read either one and improve your vegetable crops this year! Edward C Smith's books are essential to my library when I make my yearly garden plan.

This is my first year with vegetable gardening, and I live in an apartment that has a landlord-maintained backyard. So anything I planted had to be in containers. I'd read Smith's previous book on vegetable gardening and was very impressed with his detailed, practical and comprehensive knowledge. This book is a bit more narrow in focus - less discussion of compost and root structure, which I think would be as helpful here as it was in his previous book, and some

unnecessary repetition of factoids, like how much water a tomato needs in the summer. But I think it's still the best container gardening book I've read, and I've referenced it almost daily as I've planned and built my first garden. He does strongly recommend self-watering containers for pretty much all vegetables, almost sadly admitting that some herbs do better in traditional pots. I would call this bias, but I think he offers convincing arguments for them. To get another perspective, I bought *Bountiful Containers* as well, which only briefly mentions self-watering containers. But I found its information to be a lot more vague and broad, with no mention of how much water and sunlight some plants will need. Much more of a "plant it and see" approach. Where *Bountiful Container* is good for inspiring someone to garden, with a light amount of information for a broad variety of plants, *Bible* is geared to making that garden successful, with deep, detailed information about fewer, more common plants. I definitely appreciate his section on how to build your own containers, because commercially available ones are mostly too small. However, it does assume a certain level of handyman skills, tools and materials. Some apartment dwellers may have a drill, but how many have a hacksaw, caulking gun, and lengths of PVC tubing? I tried to build my own tomato planters out of 18 gallon tote bins, a box cutter, a screwdriver for poking holes, and some yogurt tubs for wicking baskets, but they weren't sturdy enough to hold all the soil I put in. So I gave up and bought some expensive but high quality planters from some of the excellent resources he lists in the back. At times, it's hard to tell what's absolutely necessary and what's just icing on the cake. The soil amendment section in particular involves a mix of hard-to-find and expensive ingredients. Does a first-time gardener REALLY need to buy limestone, azomite, blood meal, phosphate and green sand in addition to high-quality organic potting soil, compost and perlite? I don't rightly know. So I'm making do with the soil, perlite, and some all-purpose organic vegetable fertilizer and seeing how it goes. A section to get first timers like me started out right without a gigantic investment would have been nice. So, in all, not a perfect book, but a very good one that has given me a great first garden so far. I definitely recommend it.

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