

CONTAINERS FOR HOUSEPLANTS

A good indoor plant container should be large enough to provide room for soil and roots, have sufficient room above the media to allow for proper watering, provide bottom drainage and be attractive without competing with the plant that it holds. Containers may be ceramic, plastic, fiberglass, wood, aluminum, copper, brass, and many other materials.

Clay and Ceramic Containers

Unglazed and glazed porous clay pots with drainage holes are widely used by commercial indoor plant growers and are frequently left with the plant when it is purchased. An ornate container is often nothing but an outer shell to cover the plain clay pot. Clay pots absorb and lose moisture through their walls. The greatest accumulation of roots is frequently next to the walls of the clay pot because oxygen levels are highest there. Although easily broken, clay pots provide excellent aeration for plant roots and are considered by some to be the healthiest container for a plant.

Ceramic pots are usually glazed on the outside and sometimes on the inside. They are frequently designed without drainage holes, which can make proper watering difficult. Small novelty containers have little room for soil and roots and should be avoided. Putting pot chips, clay pot shards or gravel in the bottom of a pot does not improve soil drainage. It provides only a small space beneath the soil where some excess water can drain inside the pot. To overcome this problem, re-pot the plant in a container that has a drainage hole and place this pot inside the decorative ceramic pot.

Plastic and Fiberglass Containers

Plastic and fiberglass containers are usually light and easy to handle. They have become popular because they are relatively inexpensive and come in attractive shapes and colors. Plastic pots are easy to clean for reuse, and because they are not porous, they need less frequent watering and tend to accumulate fewer salts than unglazed clay pots.

MSU Master Gardener Training Manual, Indoor Plants, P. 9.

The **Master Gardener Hotline** is open from April to October, Monday through Friday. Lines are available 9:00 am to noon and 1:00 pm to 4:00 pm at 888-678-3464

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