

GROWING AN EDIBLE CONTAINER GARDEN



Alabama 4-H
Alabama Cooperative Extension System

Learn to grow herbs in a container for culinary use based on their savory and aromatic properties.

Learn how to care for your herbs so they are growing to their fullest potential.

Create an edible container garden, and use the herbs in your family's meals.

From meats to vegetables, savory and aromatic herbs have been used to add flavor to everyday meals for centuries while also rewarding us with aromatic enjoyment. Growing a variety of herbs in a container can make accessing them for use in the kitchen a whole lot easier.

Planning and planting an edible container garden is a lot like making a grocery list that includes selecting the right herbs to use in your cooking. Just keep in mind that while selecting the herbs you want to grow in your container, think about growing habits such as height or cascading behavior, perennial vs. annual, blooming, spreading ability, and other factors.

By selecting the right herbs, you will be able to include them in your cooking throughout the year.

What You Do

- Select a container for your project. It can be anything from a decorative planter, a recycled container, or a rustic repurposed item (be creative). It must assemble into a single container and be transportable by one person.
- When selecting herbs, choose varieties that you can include in your cooking as you will need to provide recipes that you have made that use each of your herbs (can be one herb per dish or multiple herbs).
- Select a minimum of five different herbs that can be grown together.
- Keep the cost at \$60 for the complete container garden, including plants.
- Keep a journal (include your recipes in the journal).
- On Competitive Events Day, it will be judged on how it looks as well as how you have used it in meal preparation.

LEVELS OF COMPETITION

For details on eligibility, see the General Event Policy.

Junior Level I:

9 to 11 years old on December 31 of the current calendar year (compete only at local and regional levels).

Intermediate:

12 to 13 years old on December 31 of the current calendar year (compete only at local and regional levels).

Senior Level I:

14 to 15 years old on December 31 of the current calendar year.

Senior Level II:

16 to 18 years old on December 31 of the current calendar year.

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The Rules for the Project

1. Container can be anything as long as it meets the other rules.
2. Container must be assembled into a single container and transportable by one person (adult or youth) with the help of a hand truck if necessary.
3. All plants selected for this container garden must be edible and marked with some type of plant tag.
4. All plants in the container must be growing in the container for at least six weeks.
5. Homegrown plants and commercially grown plants are allowed.
6. All herbs you include must also be listed in the recipes that you make and documented in your journal.
7. Total cost for the entire container garden may not exceed \$60. Receipts must be kept for documentation. If an object is donated or is recycled, a fair value must be placed on it and included in the total expenses.
8. Containers need to be viewable from all sides.
9. A journal must be kept documenting the total process of the planning, planting, and growing of the container garden.
10. The container must be the exhibitor's own efforts.
11. Senior Level 4-H member must submit a community service report. Failure to do so will result in disqualification.

Refer to the [Alabama 4-H Competitive Events web page](#) to review the General Contest Policy and the Age and Eligibility Chart.

