

Martin-Gatton College of Agriculture, Food and Environment

Making a Terrarium



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What is a Terrarium?

- Growing small plants in a clear container, usually with a lid.



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- Growing small plants in a clear container, usually with a lid.

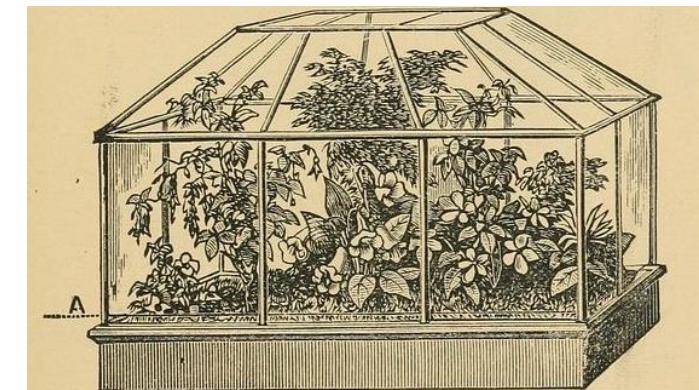


History of Terrariums

- 2,500 years ago, in Greece growing plants in a transparent container¹
- Dr. N. B. Ward from England credited with invention of terrarium and published book in 1842 ^{1,2}
- He designed Wardian Case- miniature looking greenhouse to transport plants across the world ^{1,2}

Source:

1. Terrariums, <https://extension.Missouri.edu/publications/g6520> David H. Tinklein
2. Terrariums, Mike Schnelle, HLA-6438, <http://osufacts.okstate.edu>



Benefits of a Terrarium

- Able to grow tropical plants.
- High humidity required for certain plants
- Small indoor garden to chase away winter blues



Benefits of a Terrarium

- Can propagate plants from cuttings or seeds



Benefits of a Terrarium

- Many types of containers available



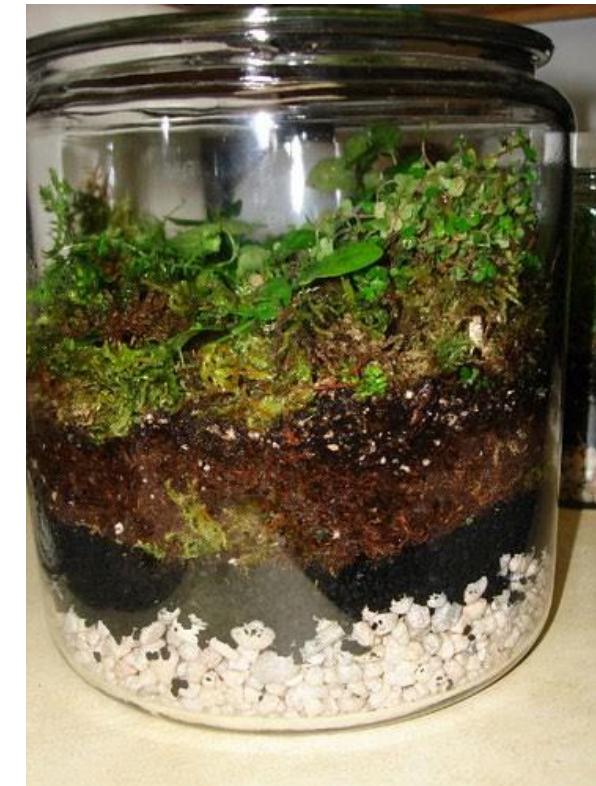
Benefits of a Terrarium

- Takes little care
- Humidity generated in containers keeps it watered
- Use for decoration



Challenges with Terrariums

- Avoid overwatering
- Finding small plants
- Overfilling with soil
- Adding too much rock



Containers for Terrariums

- Clear container
 - Fishbowl, aquarium, large bottle, gallon jar, tall vase, candy jar, pickle jar
- Clean dirty, used containers before use



Plants for Terrariums

- Plants that need high humidity
- Select disease free plants
- Use succulents in open terrariums only



Watermelon Peperomia

Plants under 6" tall

- Baby tears, *Helxine soleirolii*
- Creeping fig, *Ficus pumila*
- Emerald Ripple, *Peperomia caperata*



Creeping Fig

Plants under 6" tall

- Flame violet, *Episcia cuperata*
- Gold dust dracaena, *Dracaena godseffiana*
- Nerve plant, *Fittonia spp*



Nerve Plant

Plants under 6" tall

- Satin pellionia, *Pellionia pulchra*
- Strawberry begonia, *Saxifraga sarmentosa*
- Swedish Ivy, *Plectranthes australis*



Swedish Ivy

Plants under 6" tall

- Watermelon peperomia, *Peperomia sandersii*
- Varigated ovalleaf peperomia, *Peperomia obtusifolia variegata*
- Spider plant, Airplane plant, *Chlorophytum comosum 'Vittatum'*



Spider Plant

Plants above 6" tall

- Aluminum plant, *Pilea cadieri*
- Arrow-head plant, *Syngonium podophyllum*
- Begonia, *Begonia spp*



Arrow-head Plant

Plants above 6" tall

- Bloodleaf, *Iresine herbstii*
- English Ivy, *Hedera helix*
- False aralia, *Dizygotheca elegantissima*



False Aralia

Plants above 6" tall

- Maidenhair fern, *Adiantum cuneatum*
- Polka dot plant, *Hypoestes sanguinolenta*
- Pothos, Devil's ivy, *Epipremnum aureum*



Polka Dot Plant

Plants above 6" tall

- Waffle plant, *Hemigraphis 'Exotica'*
- Heart-leaved philodendron, *Philodendron scandens oxycardium*
- Parlor palm, Neanthe bella palm, *Chamaedorea elegans*



Parlor Palm

Materials to Make Terrariums

- Clear container
- Decorative rock
- Activated charcoal
- Soilless media
- Plants
- Decorations



Making a Terrarium



- Add cleaned rock for drainage in bottom of clean container
- Can use aquarium rock
- Rocks are used to promote water drainage
- Add to the depth of about $\frac{1}{4}$ to $\frac{1}{2}$ inch

Making a Terrarium



- Layer activated charcoal on top of rocks
- This absorbs odors

Making a Terrarium



- Use soilless media such as potting soil
- Do not use garden soil which drains poorly and contains weed seeds and disease organisms
- Ideally use a potting mix containing peat, perlite, or vermiculite
- Lightly moisten soil
- Add to the depth of 1 ½ to 2”

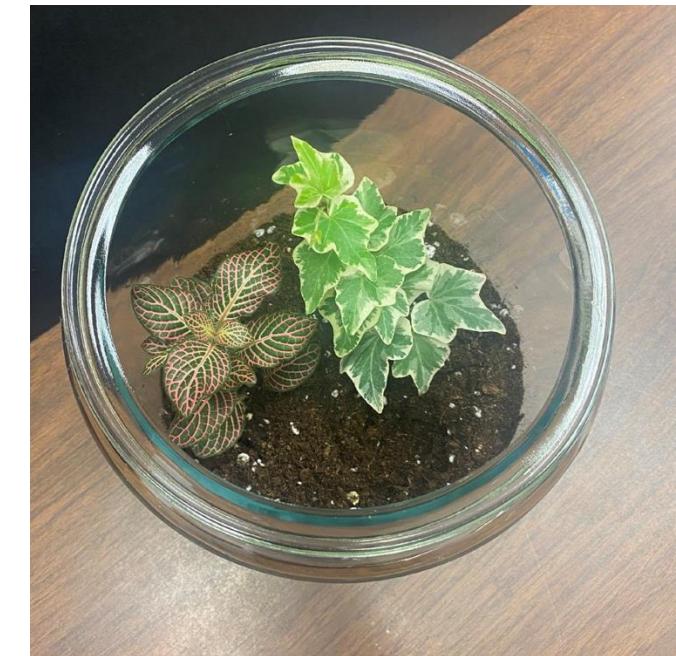
Making a Terrarium



- Remove plant from container and remove soil if necessary
- Make depression in soil
- Place plant in depression
- Gently fill around plant with media

Making a Terrarium

- Continue to add plants
 - a) Can be placed in a group toward one side or near middle
 - b) Spread plants out equally



Making a Terrarium

If plants are too large:

- Remove stems by dividing
- Cut off leaves or stems



Making a Terrarium



- Odd number of plants is best.
- Mist soil lightly around plants.

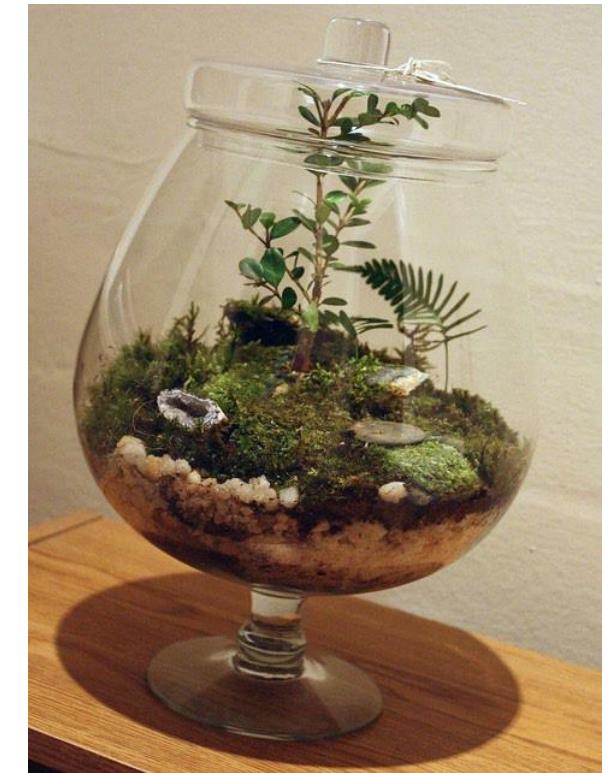
Making a Terrarium

- Add clean rock or sand to mimic pathways or a field
- Create a small scene in a world of its own



Care of terrariums

- Place in bright but indirect light-north or northeast window or site away from window
- May not need water for a few months
- Water with a few teaspoons, only when soil is dry



Care of Terrariums

- Rotate container to keep plants from leaning toward the sunlight
- Open lid if inside becomes foggy
- After 1-2 years- prune or remove overgrown plants



Terrariums = Fun and Enjoyment





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Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights
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