



## CONTAINER WATER GARDENS

You can grow a complete water garden ... including fish ... in a container on your porch! A tub garden can be quickly and easily established in a space no larger than two to three feet in diameter. There are two easy ways to get started:

- 1) Place a pre-formed liner into a half whiskey barrel.
- 2) Use terra-tub planters which are available without drain holes ... perfect for a water garden. These planters look just like clay terra pots, but because they are made of plastic they are 80% lighter than clay. Plus, they come in a wide range of styles and sizes.



Next, decide where your container water garden will be displayed. Remember that ponds must receive five to six hours of sunlight a day. Once in place, fill your container with water and let it set for 2-3 days. This will rid the water of chlorine which is toxic to plants and fish. For a quick start add "Fresh Start" to the water. It quickly eliminates toxic chlorine and conditions the tap water making it suitable for fish.

When the water is ready, it's time to add the water plants. All plants (except floaters) should be in a pot with ordinary garden soil or top soil. To keep the soil in place, cover the top of the pot with small rocks. For the standard whiskey-barrel-size water garden, we recommend:

- **1 water lily** (Every water garden needs a water lily!)  
Select any water lily that is recommended to be planted at a depth of 6" - 24". Deeper varieties are better left in larger water ponds.
- **2-4 small oxygenating plants** (parrot's feather, anacharis, etc.)  
These are small plants and underwater grasses that are submerged. They are the most important plants in balancing the pond. They will oxygenate the water and compete with algae for nutrients. The rule of thumb is one bunch per 2 square feet of surface.

continued on back...

# JOHNSON'S • GARDEN • CENTERS

- **2 floaters** (water hyacinth, water lettuce, creeping jenny, water clover, etc.)  
These plants float on the surface of the water and block out sunlight, preventing algae growth. Floaters should cover 40% to 60% of the water's surface.
- **1 bog/marginal plant** (water iris, lizard's tail, taro, umbrella palm, etc.)  
Larger submerged plants that provide shade for fish, add beauty to the pond and once established also help maintain a balance in the pond. For container gardens, use small bog plants—varieties that reach no more than 10-12" above the water surface.

Now you're ready to add the fish and snails. For a standard whiskey-barrel-size water garden, we recommend:

- **2-4 small goldfish**  
The rule of thumb is one inch of fish per 1-2 gallons of water.
- **2-3 snails**  
The rule of thumb is one per square foot of bottom surface area.

Fish DO NOT like quick temperature changes, so it's important to acclimate them to their new home. Leave the fish (and snails) in the plastic bag and place it into the water garden so that it floats on top of the water. Make a small opening in the bag to let air in but be sure that there is no water exchange. Keep the fish floating in the bag for a minimum of 1 hour or until the temperature in the bag is similar to the temperature in the pond. Ideal water temperature for your new fish is around 60° but they can handle ranges of 40° to 80° for short terms.

Do not feed your new fish for the first 2-3 days, then only feed them what they can eat in a 5 minute period. Overfeeding can cause problems with water quality. We recommend Tetra Pond Floating Food Sticks.

Now you're ready to enjoy a summer water garden on your patio! Remember that the water will evaporate over time and your container will need to be refilled. In order to keep chlorine out of your pond, fill a two-gallon watering can and place it near your water garden. This way, you'll always have a quick, safe source of fill water for your pond.