

# Vertical Gardening

Vertical gardening has been used in Europe's larger cities due to limited ground space. By going "up", they have increased their gardening space. Ivy weaves and crawls up walls. Building and balconies are decorated with beautiful flowers and fruit vines. Plants have been turned into artwork. This greenery also helps provide shade, produce oxygen, provide habitat for animals and birds and, is appealing to the eye.

In 2012, the Philadelphia Flower Show created a wall of edible landscaping that was an impressive 9 foot high and 40 feet wide with 3,000 plants.

Your options for vertical gardening can be the usage of wall space (a flat unattractive garage wall), chain link or wooden fences, tubes and/or trellis. It is more than training wisteria to vine up an arbor or hanging a basket of petunias. Vertical gardening can add a whole new dimension to your landscape. They can become visual works of art to captivate the imagination with color or edible plants.

Growing up can be good for your plants, too. Air can circulate around them, which can mean less disease, mildew and fungus. Vegetables and fruits that are not lying on the ground will be cleaner and less likely to rot, and yield more per square foot of garden space.

Creating your own living wall is simple. You will need:

- Wall or railing to hang your living garden
- Living wall planters (window boxes, wells, hanging half baskets, etc. with drainage)
- Plants
- Soil
- Watering system

Most wall planters come with hangers to attach to the wall. Make certain the wall or fence you are attaching to can support the weight of the plants.

It is important to choose the right plants. Remember to look at the area where you are going to hang your living wall. The amount of sun you get will help determine the type of plants suitable for the wall. Plants with a shallow root system do better than plants with large root systems (due to the amount of space in your planter).

If there is a lot of sun, succulents, and sun loving annuals such as ivy geraniums, alyssum or petunias and/or short herbs are good choices. Remember if grown against a wall, more heat will reflect or radiate, potentially drying out your plants faster. For shadier spots, choose ferns, ivy or shade loving annuals such as begonias, lobelia or fuchsia.

Add soil to your containers, then your plants. Design your "garden" by mixing and matching plants or use all one variety. Lastly, all plants need water. And, when grown vertically, their containers are smaller requiring more water. If it is a large area, consider a drip irrigation system. Otherwise, your "wall" will require a daily watering, especially in sunny locations.