



Make a Terrarium

It's a great idea to have indoor plants. Sometimes, though, if you're really busy or you're away a lot, it becomes difficult to maintain them. That's where a terrarium is a great idea, because you're creating a self-maintaining microclimate in which your plants can thrive for years with very little maintenance. Terrariums look good too, and they're very easy to create.

What you will need

- A clear glass or plastic container
- Pebbles or coarse gravel/sand
- Activated charcoal
- Coir or sphagnum moss
- Potting mix
- Plants
- Spray bottle filled with water
- Ornaments

Method

1. To start, place a layer of gravel or pebbles in the container, about 2 ½ cm deep. This creates a base so the plant roots never sit directly in water where they could get root rot.
2. Add a layer of activated charcoal. Activated means it's been through a process where it's made more porous and therefore more absorbent. Wet soil can smell, and charcoal is great at absorbing and removing any nasty smells.
3. Add a layer of sphagnum moss, which will stop the potting mix from settling down into the lower layers of the gravel and charcoal.
4. Potting mix is the next layer - at least 4 cm deep. You can even create hills and valleys.

Planting

Many indoor plants work really well in a terrarium - go for a range of heights and colours. Plants to try; peperomia, helxine, calathea, little ferns, and hypoestes phyllostachya.

To start planting, you may need to reduce the size of the plant's rootball to fit the space you have. You can trim up to half the roots and the plant will be fine.

If a terrarium is to be viewed from all angles, arrange the plants with the tallest one in the middle. If it's viewed from one angle, position the tallest plants to the back. A

range of different heights, colours, and leaf shapes will create interest exactly as they would in a garden bed.

Water the plants with just enough to settle the plants roots in. When positioning your terrarium, make sure you keep it away from direct sunlight and away from heaters because otherwise they will get too hot and dry out.

And there you have it! You've created your own living masterpiece!

From Gardening Australia

