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DIY TERRARIUMS

BY HAYLEY GIRARD



Completed terrarium.

A terrarium is a perfect way to bring the beauty of nature into spaces without greenery, such as apartments or offices. With only a few needed materials and minimal upkeep, it's easy to create and maintain your very own terrarium.

Choose similar plants you would like to include by grouping them together based on environmental needs. For example, cacti and succulents, such as aloe, thrive in open containers and require bi-monthly spritzing. Ferns and tropical plants, like African violets, should be placed in closed containers to retain moisture.

Robert Silva, manager at Cornelius Nursery in Houston, recommends moisture-loving plants for first-time gardeners.

"Plants that are enclosed in a terrarium create their own respiration cycle," says Silva. "They're self-sustaining and require almost no maintenance."

Once you choose your plants, start with a clean, translucent glass container. Measure your container and plan for one plant for every inch of diameter.

For closed terrariums, add a base layer of pebbles. For open terrariums, use a layer of sand. The base layer should cover one-half to 3 inches, depending on your container size, to collect water drainage. To keep soil fresh in closed terrariums, sprinkle in a thin layer of charcoal.

Layer 2 to 3 inches with potting soil or cactus soil. There





Step 1: Choose your plants and a select a clean, translucent container.



Step 2: Brush away excess soil from roots, plant selections, one inch apart.



Step 3: Make sure to follow offered tips, and then set in indirect sunlight.



Selecting plants for your terrarium.

should be enough soil so that plant roots will be fully surrounded.

Remove your largest plant from its container and brush away excess soil from the roots. Using a spoon, make a hole for the plant roots, place the plant inside and press the soil down around the plant. Repeat the same process for the largest to smallest plant.

After planting, add pumice stones to fill the gaps between plants. For open terrariums, add a one-quarter inch layer of white sand around the plants. For closed terrariums, arrange moss to help wick away excess moisture. Finish off your terrarium by decorating with fun trinkets or materials from nature like sticks and shells.

Place your terrarium in indirect sunlight and lightly mist the plants and soil. Closed terrariums only need to be watered once or twice a year. If large water drops appear on the glass, leave the lid open until the moisture evaporates. Open terrariums require watering every one to two weeks. The soil should be barely moist at all times.

Enjoy your new indoor garden world!

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