A terrarium is a vessel, generally a bowl, cylinder or box, of glass or plastic, with a tight-fitting lid, featuring plants and sometimes small animals, like turtles, too.

A terrarium creates its own microcosm on your table-top.

Small space terrarium gardens are decorative, easy and even magical. (In this Growing Guide we are only considering a terrarium that features plants.)

They need very little attention to thrive and actually can do better with a touch of neglect. Even those of us with no prior experience can develop a “green thumb” with a terrarium. And, it’s a great way to spark a child’s interest in gardening.

The vessel you select for your container garden may be as simple as a pickle jar or a grand structure made from leaded glass. What makes a terrarium so magical? Closed terrariums can go a month or more between waterings because they recycle their water.

Many plants do well in terrariums. Slower growing plants require less trimming and are less likely to take over. Diminutive groundcovers are ideal.

Suggested plants include:

- Baby Tears – very aggressive grower
- Small ferns
- Miniature African Violets
- Creeping Jenny
- Boxus (boxwood)
- Wandering Jew – aggressive grower
- Mosses

Planting Instructions:

1. Place a ½ inch layer of small gravel in bottom
2. Sprinkle some activated charcoal on top (optional)
3. Add a layer of good draining potting soil. If soil clumps when squeezed, add perlite or vermiculite to lighten it up
4. Select plants. Number depends on size of container and size of plants. Don’t overplant.
5. Install plants. Push soil aside. Place a plant in the depression. Firm the soil around it. Leave room for growth. Repeat for each plant.

Terrarium Care

1. Neglect it!
2. Water lightly when dry. Generally once every few weeks. Never over-water.
3. Place in bright, not direct sunlight. (Approximately enough light to read by.)
4. Pinch off newest growth to encourage bushier growth.

Do not fertilize. As growth slows down, refresh by scraping off the top layer of soil and adding fresh potting soil.

Enjoy your terrarium!