

Containing Mint

It's not cool when mint takes over your garden!



Introduction

Mint is a rigorous perennial plant that enjoys full sun and well-drained, light, soils. In fact, you will often see them growing near streams and rivers in the wild. Additionally, they are easy to grow and care for – offering many years of harvests. To learn more about the appropriate growing conditions, see “Additional Resources” below.

The Challenge

However, because mint spreads via rhizomes through its roots, it tends to overgrow areas adjacent to it – including your garden and lawn. Though it is relatively easy to control, certain preparations can certainly save time and headache in the future.



Figure 1: Mint that has colonized a vegetable garden. (Source: <https://bushgarden.wordpress.com/2012/07/12/a-cautionary-tale/>)

The Solution

To prevent mint from spreading its rhizomes requires a barrier between the roots and your garden or lawn. Here are some ways you can contain and grow mint:

1. Grow them in patio containers or other container that completely encloses them while allowing them to drain.
2. A good place to grow them is between the house and a sidewalk
3. In an open-bottomed containers (like in a garden or in your lawn), insure the barrier is at least 1” above the surface of the ground and 18” deep. Monitor on a regular basis to insure that the barrier you create is allowed to drain.

Examples



Growing mint within a container and burying within your garden is a good way to keep it contained while maintaining an aesthetic appeal. Notice the lip of the container is approximately 1” above the ground.

(Source: [Southern Living](#))

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The gardener has used large storage containers and coolers, completely enclosing the mint. It is important to insure drainage by drilling holes on the bottom of the container.

(Source: <http://extension.msstate.edu/news/southern-gardening/2012/enjoy-growing-mint-without-any-trouble>)



Mint being grown between a building and the patio or sidewalk barrier.

(Source: [Gardening Solutions](#))



This raised bed is at least 18" deep and dedicated solely to growing mint.

(Source: [Spoon and Ink](#))

Additional Resources

The Old Farmers Almanac

<http://www.almanac.com/plant/mint>

SFGATE: The Best Way to Plant Mint Without It Taking Over the Garden

<http://homeguides.sfgate.com/way-plant-mint-taking-over-garden-100869.html>

Utah State University Cooperative Extension: Mint in the Garden

https://extension.usu.edu/files/publications/publication/Horticulture_Garden_2009-05pr.pdf

University of Illinois Extension – Herb Gardening: Mint

<http://extension.illinois.edu/herbs/mint.cfm>

Oregon State University Extension Service: Hints for Growing and Taming Aggressive Mint

<http://extension.oregonstate.edu/gardening/hints-growing-and-taming-aggressive-mint>