

Balcony & Rooftop Gardens

Before you get started with either your balcony garden or gardening on your rooftop, there are some very important factors to consider.

Firstly, and of course the most obvious, make sure that the structure can withstand the weight and the rooftop will not be comprised with anyone walking on it, let alone creating extra weight or watering difficulties.

Most apartment and condominium balconies will definitely support gardening in containers and planters. The ones that are built with wood may not support extremely large and heavy pots; however, gardening can still be done with smaller planters. Where you have concrete floors, there is little damage to the surface, however, be sure to avoid using very heavy containers. This is where research into other planter materials is prudent, your resin garden planters do not contribute weight in of themselves and larger containers therefore may be used. Spread the load over a wide area using wooden slats, brackets and hooks to take the weight of hanging pots or baskets.

Secondly, check the microclimate of your balcony or rooftop. Note the direction of the wind and how much sun it gets during the day. Some balconies are very sheltered and receive no direct sunlight; others are fully exposed and take the direct sun all day. Of course, the rooftop garden may be sheltered by service structures or you may place your own trellis to give some protection from the wind and sun. Many balcony plants do not get much rain because they are situated under an awning or protected from the balcony above. In this case, make sure that the containers are kept moist by watering daily.

What to plant. Just like planning your landscape garden, you may wish to consider your balcony and/or rooftop a private place to relax and entertain.

Start with a framework around your space. Create a distinct border to surround your new space. This can be done with plants that spill onto the space like lady's mantle and geraniums or you can create clusters of height with grasses and small shrubs. All of your plants can be in garden planters and containers. They are easy to move around to see what works best and easier to control the intense heat or winds during certain times of the day.

Your planters may be incorporated into wonderful garden benches - the benches can delineate the space and provide additional seating. One simple way is to create a platform for your containers - then the plants can be easily seen and of course it is nice to have scented plants all around. Some of the best scented plants may be roses, heliotrope, jasmine, gardenias and sweet peas. You can be very creative with the placement of the planters and containers - cluster them in different sizes and shapes and filled with a wide variety of plant material.

Privacy on your balcony, rooftop or terrace is easily accomplished using well situated raised planters or by adding a pergola or trellis to block unsightly maintenance or ventilating equipment. Just plant a climbing hydrangea, wisteria, magnolia or jasmine vine and the garden décor is complete.

Linking your home, apartment or condo to your outside space can often be the best of all worlds. There are so many options to have a garden for enjoyment inspired by your own aspirations.

About the Author

Marion Stewart is an avid gardener. She loves sitting on her deck surrounded by so many varied flower-packed and herb planted containers. In her continued research she has found some spectacular fine quality resin planters and garden containers and now offers them in numerous colors, sizes and styles. [Find your best planter at the GardenPlanterStore.com](http://www.gardenplanterstore.com)

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