

Massachusetts Master Gardener Association

FACT SHEET



Have Gardening Questions? The **Master Gardener Help Line Hours** are 10 a.m. – 2 p.m. on Fridays (all year) as well as Wednesdays (March-November) and Mondays (April-October).
Phone: 617-933-4929 Email: mghelpline@masshort.org.

Creating a Fairy Garden



Imagine a little world of fairies in your garden full of interest, fun, surprises and whimsy.

A fairy garden is a small garden created by you, limited only by your imagination. The size can vary from a large area under a tree to

a medium sized fairy garden in an old dresser drawer to a small table top creation in a container. Fairy gardens contain miniature or dwarf plants, found objects such as sea shells, created objects like a Popsicle stick picket fence as well as miniature figurines of fairies or gnomes.

To create a fairy garden first choose a location for your garden, this will help you when choosing plant material. If you choose to create a fairy garden under a tree make note of how much sun/shade the area receives as an in ground garden is harder to move. A large fairy garden area allows for placement of fairy homes too.

Next choose a container if you are not planning a spot directly in the ground. Containers need drainage holes. You may need to drill some holes if you choose an old dresser drawer or tin pail. Old bird baths that no longer hold water work well. Even a terra cotta pot can provide a home for fairies.

Fill the container with potting mix (not garden soil) up to one inch from the rim. Tamp potting mix down lightly. Play with the placement of your plants and objects before committing to planting. It is fun to experiment with different designs.

Choose your figurines first keeping in mind the scale of your garden area/container. Figurines are available at many garden centers and on line. Toys from kids meals work too. Keeping the figurines and objects in scale, ie

1:10, will make the garden appear more realistic. When you have chosen your fairies decide on the other garden objects that you wish to include. Items such as arches, benches, wheel barrows can be purchased or made. For example a sea shell found on the beach could be used as a small pond or birdbath.

Next consider your overall design plan. Decide if you want a home garden scene, forest scene or sea side retreat. Consider including stone pathways (pebbles), water features, gazing ball (glass marble), fences (twigs), or boulders (rocks). The plants you choose should be small in scale and complement your design. Choose “dwarf” or “miniature” specimens or ones that can be easily pruned to maintain size.

Once you determine your design and have chosen your plant material, plant your plants to the depth they were in their nursery container. Firm the soil. Add granular, slow release fertilizer following the package directions. Granular fertilizer usually lasts for several months which decreases some of the work of maintaining your garden. Organic liquid fertilizers such as fish emulsion can also be used but will need to be applied more often. Water in well.

Water your fairy garden when the soil in it becomes dry to touch at the depth of one inch. Keep your garden neat and clean by pinching off dead blooms and leaves and removing debris. Many container gardens can be brought inside in cold climates and overwinter on a bright shelf.

Finally place your garden objects, stones, paths, arches and figurines. Remember to stop by often and enjoy your garden and visit your fairies!

Plant List for fairy gardens: small annuals and perennials, succulents and sedums, small cactus, mosses, mini conifers, miniature bulbs, grasses and houseplants.

The Massachusetts Master Gardener Association is a non-profit organization whose mission is to share knowledge and experience with the public through outreach programs in education, horticulture and gardening; to provide the Master Gardener Training Program to interested members of the public; and to provide graduates of the Master Gardener Training Program with educational and practical opportunities to extend their knowledge and interests in gardening and related topics. <http://www.massmastergardeners.org/>