



The Ultimate Guide to Fairy Gardening



Fairy gardening has taken off all across America and the UK, though it is by no means a new practice. There is a mysterious power to fairy gardening that has a magical effect on the imagination. You will find that designing a space for your creative spirits to play in gives your garden a sense of wholeness and intention (not to mention a beautiful aesthetic touch) that it didn't have before.

Where there is care and love, beauty and nature will flourish. Fairy gardening not only gives your garden that cherry-on-top extra touch, but helps your flowers bloom just a little more colorfully than before.





Fairy Gardening 101

You want to start a Fairy Garden but don't know where to start. You've looked at so many beautiful pictures of Lilliputian houses, elaborate tree stumps turned fairy mansions, and you're nervous that you couldn't make such intricate sets.

Fear not! We have you covered.

We'll show you how to achieve your desired fairy garden step by step.



At the outset all you need is a garden space that you want to transform, and of course, the desire to do so!

The most important first step is for you to decide where you'd like to build a haven for your fairy friends. While some people may automatically think that a fairy garden has to be outdoors among flowers and vegetables, it can go anywhere you wish. As a matter of fact, getting such a small touch to mesh with your outdoor garden can be overwhelming at first; the difference in scale between a large flower bed and a petite fairy garden can be a challenge to manage.

Indoor or outdoor, you should approach a space in your home that feels like it's calling for that extra touch. Maybe there's an old stump in the yard that hasn't been yanked out yet. Or maybe there is that cozy corner in a sunroom or foyer that has always felt a little empty. A lone tree that stands watch at the edge of the garden is a perfect candidate. Find a quiet in-between space that feels like it could be home to some wonderful characters.



Keep in mind that you will be using your creativity and will want to find a space or an object or a container that piques your imagination and flows with your aesthetic. Maybe your style is countryside charm and a wicker basket would go well with other objects inside. Or perhaps you're more of a minimalist who likes simple, uncomplicated materials and a simple steel trough works as a better container. Think about what looks good to your eye and use your interests and style as a starting point.





If you're having trouble making a choice about what to build your fairy garden in, on, or around, here are some tricks to get you going!

- **Collaborate!** The activity of building a fairy garden is fun and spontaneous and ever-evolving process. Sharing it with a friend or family member makes it that much more special. Having someone to build your garden with can be an enjoyable and inventive process. Making fairy gardens with children is especially fun as kids have no shortage of ideas and imagination.
- **Upcycle!** If you can't find the right container or starting point, go somewhere that has a lot of curiosities: an antique market. Maybe you come across a beautiful old planter that looks like it has already lived a long and eventful life. Maybe it's a colorful stone that looks like a fairy's prized possession. An old bell jar can be the perfect starting point for an indoor terrarium-style fairy garden
- **Good 'ole Pinterest.** Ok, you've probably already perused hundreds of ideas on social media sites, but it's never too late to go back for a little more inspiration when you're ready to get started! Get the creative juices flowing and implement ideas on the spot with online images and Pinterest at the ready!



Setting the Scene

Once you've established where you would like to build a fairy garden, next you need to decide how you would like it to look!

There is no right or wrong answer as to how your fairy garden should look. It is all about how you want your garden to feel. Remember: it should be aligned with you and your decoration and design aesthetics. It could be a boisterous and colorful fairy garden with bulbous red-capped mushrooms, and filled with fairies and their animal friends. Or perhaps you are a minimalist and your fairy garden is more reminiscent of a bonsai zen garden with a lone swing on which your fairy can sit and enjoy the scenery!

Let's take a step back for a minute and think about the fairies themselves.

We all grew up with stories of these winged spirits that occupy the forest, but have maybe taken the archetype of the fairy for granted. So where do fairies come from? As with any mythic being, their origins are shrouded in mystery and are difficult to trace back to any one culture or set description. A fairy is almost always a supernatural being that exists on the periphery of mankind. They are nature beings that occupy the forests, streams, mountains and even our homes. For centuries all sorts of European peoples had tales of sprite-like creatures who granted protection and good fortune to those who showed respect and reverence to their natural homes. Even the ancient Romans had household altars to honor tutelary spirits called Lares.





The thing that unifies the tales of stories of fairies is that they are nature spirits. So, logically, you would think that your fairy garden should have plenty of green spaces in which your mystical winged friends will spend their time in. And that could be so. However, they could easily be in sandy seascapes with ocean friends. Rocky terrain for trolls and Nordic figurines. The point is, your fairy land is what YOU make of it. There's no need to be pigeon-holed into what you "think" it should be or what stories have said, simply let your wildest imagination take flight and see your garden come to life.

All of the fine details are up to you. Let this guide help sort out the different categories of houses, doors, decorations, plants, and styles that you can work with.



Fairy Garden Basics



Your fairy garden may have a few core components: plants and flora, a home for your fairies to reside in, some landscaping like paths, walkways, or stepping stones, and perhaps, some fairy friends.

Let's go step-by-step and explain each piece and how you can bring it all together.

Knock Knock: Fairy Houses & Fairy Doors to Enter a New Realm of Creativity

Fairy houses are as varied as the fairies themselves. If you are converting an old stump or a tree trunk into a fairy house, you may only need a whimsical door and a couple of windows will bring that tree to life as a fairy abode. If you're starting in an open greenspace, a unique house or structure could be your centerpiece and a primary focal point.

Doors

Is your fairy door round, rectangular, or angular in shape? Is it laden with ivy or flanked with flowers? Some doors are expressive with facial features, while others are subtle with only a hint of the unusual. Doors can be straight from the swamplands, while others boast a chic and modern portico. Words of wisdom for all who enter may be written upon a door, or knobs and knockers hung to announce visitors and request entry.

Some doors can be medieval while others are mystical. Some are hobbit homes and others are simply hidden hatches. Whether they look like they're made of sticks and stones, steel and copper, or wrought iron, each tell a story of incredible things to come.

If you can't choose just one, opt for a set of fairy doors and lay the groundwork for an entire miniature world in your garden. Doors with seasonal décor also complement your own home accents and decorating for the time of year. Find fall wreaths hanging outside, snow-capped archways and holiday gifts on a doorstep, and flowers blooming for spring - fairy doors can be swapped out with every changing season.

Houses

Large or small, tall or short, solar or stagnant, there's a fairy house for every personality. From towering turrets to shabby chic shacks, the hardest part may be figuring out which house to choose.

Fairies and their friends could live in elaborate chalets or rustic cabins. These homes could be illuminated at night, or decorated for seasonal celebrations. Your house could set the stage for the style of garden you choose to create, or it can be an accent to an otherwise natural surround.



Succulents, Moss & Plants

One of the most important parts of fairy gardening is, well, gardening. Fairies are natural spirits and so there needs to be lots of nature. Picking and choosing plants for your fairy garden is an important process, though it doesn't have to be top priority (nor does it even have to be live plantings – faux flora can be just as effective in providing that “natural” touch.)

This guide will help you pick some of the best plants for your fairy garden without having to think too hard about what will and will not work given your climate and whether your garden is indoors or outdoors.

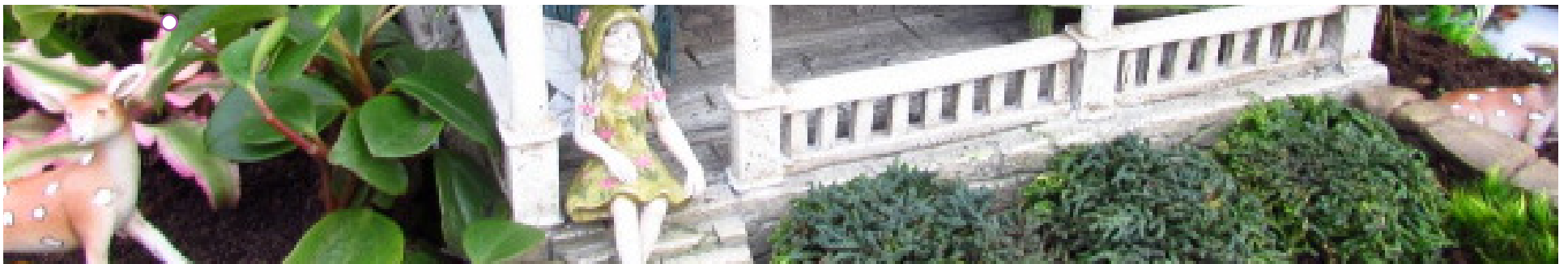
- **Norfolk Pine** - While these pines have the capability of growing large, they can be purchased as miniatures and have the appearance of a tiny pine tree.
- **False Cypress** - *Chamaecyparis Lawsoniana* is the taxonomic name if you're searching. Another evergreen that can be purchased as a dwarf.
- **English Boxwood** - For something less evergreen and a little more hedge-like, the boxwood is a perfect pick.
- **Parlor Palm** - For an almost tropical flare to your fairy garden, introduce this easy-to-care-for palm.
- **Ellwood's Blue Cypress** - A perfect “big little tree.” This pine looks like a fully grown tree but at only around a foot high.
- **Dwarf Mondo Grass** - This grass grows in dense tufts and is great for coverage
- **Sugar Vine** - A small creeper that will fit right in, especially if it is climbing from a low part of your garden!
- **Corsican Mint** - Talk about itty bitty leaves! Corsican mint is perfect for micro greenery.
- **Baby Tears** - The tiny petals of this clover-like plant looks fantastical and is perfect for a fairy landscape.
- **Zebra Haworthia** - A common household succulent that requires very little tending and has a somewhat whimsical look.



Outdoor plants, depending where you live, what your soil conditions are, and how harsh the seasons may or may not be in your neck of the woods, will vary. Designing a fairy garden in Maine and one in Arizona are going to have very, very different plants that will thrive in their environments. So prior to taking any of the following into consideration, we advise you to research the impacts your local climate may have on these plants.

An example of outdoor plants for fairy gardens may include:

- **Miniature Juniper** - This is an iconic Bonsai addition to your garden. She likes well-drained soils.
- **Sky Pencil Japanese Holly** - Great for a hearty leaf cover even at small sizes, but beware: this one can grow large.
- **Dwarf Mugo Pine** - One of our favorites. This one grows well in most climates.
- **Jean's Dilly Dwarf Spruce** - Resembling a dwarf's hat, this spruce fits in perfectly with a fairy garden
- **Just Dandy Dwarf Hinoki Cypress** - For a more shrubby evergreen, this is your pick.
- **Miniature Daisies** - For some familiar flowers, just smaller!
- **Platt's Black Brass Buttons** - This small fern-like plant both gives the fairy garden a mystical feel and has a purple color that gives the eye a break from all the green.
- **Cranesbill** - This small geranium is versatile and beautiful.
- **Small Hens & Chicks** - These iconic miniature succulents are resilient and fun!
- **Irish Moss** - This miniature plant (*Sagina Sublata*) is not a true moss despite it's name. It loves well-drained soils.





If true moss thrives in your environment, transplanting moss is remarkably easy. Find wherever moss is growing near your home —usually near a decaying log or in a shady area. Pull up a section of moss carefully. Try and get a sheet-like section. When moving it to your garden make sure stray roots are separated. When placing transplanted moss onto a soil medium, make sure it is very wet, almost muddy.

You can also “paint” moss onto rock formations. To do so, get fresh moss from your local environs. Blend it up in the blender with a little water and butter milk. Take this slurry and paint it over rock surfaces or even on the walls of your fairy house. Mist it daily with water until, after a few weeks, voila! You have new mossy growth.

With all of this said, your fairy garden is yours at the end of the day. You have your favorite plants and who’s to say that they should look proportional to the scale of the fairy’s world. Some people love to make miniature fairy worlds amongst large plants and enjoy the idea that these small fairies go through our world as the tiny beings that they are!





Fairies & Friends

What would a fairy garden be without...fairies? We'd be remiss to not have some fairies in our garden.

Picking the perfect fairy is a matter of choice and should be an entirely personal matter. One need only consider the garden they are building to choose the perfect fairy. Does your fairy garden have a swing? Then the fairy that belongs in your garden is one that reflects the playful nature of her surroundings. Is there a small pond next to their house? Perhaps a fairy that has gone fishing is in order!

Fairies don't need to be one thing or another. They merely need to fit in and feel at home in their garden and with their human neighbors!

An important addition that needs to be considered are the fairy's friends. As beings of the natural world, fairies are deeply attuned to nature and their animal neighbors. It's well known that fairy folk and the animal kingdom are deeply connected. It's therefore appropriate that some friends make their way into your fairy gardens.

Common fairy friends are toads, snails, birds, and butterflies. These small creatures all linger in places where fairies like to spend time: toadstools, tree trunks, under shady leaves, and at the edge of calm ponds. It is no wonder that they've become a fairy's most likely companions. You may in your travels encounter miniaturized versions of humans' animal friends like cats and dogs. If their presence is called upon in your fairy garden, then let them in!

What is important is that you find a fairy and some friends that speak to your garden. And if your fairy is shy and likes to stay inside until no humans are looking, that is ok too!



Additional Details

You've got almost everything in place for your fairy garden: a house for your Thumbelina-sized friends, a garden in which they can dance and play, and maybe even some animal friends. But perhaps there are details that seem like they are missing from your set up. Here is a list of ideas to help you think of finishing touches for your fairy garden!

An example of outdoor plants for fairy gardens may include:



ToadStools - Where does a fairy like to sit more than a toadstool! The iconic agaric mushroom with the red cap with white spots is a common sight in fairy gardens.



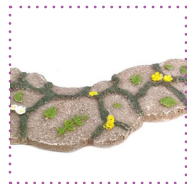
Wishing Wells - Fairies are optimistic little sprites that are always manifesting things much bigger than themselves! A wishing well



Swings and benches - Small swings and benches where fairies can rest and watch their worlds pass by are great additions to gardens.



Decorations - There are so many possibilities. Lanterns, wagons, wheelbarrows, you name it—there are endless possibilities for extras in the world of fairy gardens!



Landscaping - This includes paths, ponds, stone walls and fountains! A small pebble stone wall is a simple and elegant DIY project to give your garden that extra pop.



Other mystical friends - Don't be stingy with your whims! If your fairy has a gnome friend, so be it! Dragons, witches, the sky is the limit.

There are so many DIY opportunities with additional details. Gather acorns and transform them into furniture. Hand-collected branches can be cut to even lengths and turned into simple log bridges or ladders. You can even take a tradition crafting approach and use beads and wire to create colorful arch-ways for your garden!

When it comes to decorating your fairy garden, your imagination is the limit!



Themed & Seasonal Fairy Gardens

There is a growing movement for fairy gardens to have a theme. We love themes and believe that they absolutely have a place in the fairy gardening world.

Choosing a theme is simple! Just ask yourself what you enjoy doing and then let your fairies do it too!

For some, this means a fairy garden that is camping theme, fishing themed, farm themed, or adventure themed. Many theme sets already exist out there, so if you are looking for a particular interest group just give it a quick internet search. The likelihood is that your hobby has already been turned into a theme for fairy gardens.

For many who have indoor fairy gardens in particular, we find that marking the changing the seasons with decor makes us desire a change of scenery for our fairies. This, of course, is perfectly natural and we should embrace the shift!

With this in mind, run with your desires and make your fairy garden seasonal! There are themed sets for almost any holiday you can think of: Easter, 4th of July, Christmas, or Halloween. You name it and there is a set out there!

If you can't get enough fairy gardening, it is a perfect venue for little shifts and adjustments. Believe us: your friends and family will notice and will begin to be as invested in the lives of your fairies as you are.



Cracked Pot Gardening

For those with a sense of poetry about their gardening, you must consider creating a cracked pot fairy garden. This is an innovative form of fairy gardening turns something broken into something new. Much like the Raiku ceramic techniques of Japan, the act of turning something fractured and broken into something more than it was is the epitome of beauty.

Cracked pot fairy gardening is exactly what it sounds like. It is taking a broken pot and its pieces and creating a three-dimensional garden out of it.

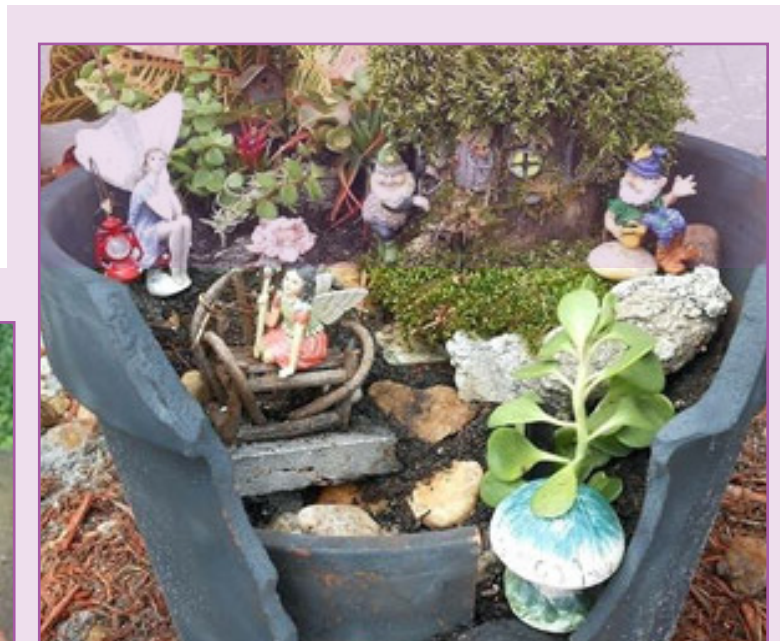
For some it involves using a pot that has already cracked or broken. For those unlucky not to be in possession of a broken terra-cotta vessel, you can break a pot yourself! To do so simply take a rubber mallet and a clay pot and (carefully) give it a proper whack near the rim. The result is a pot with a large portion that has shattered, but that is still capable of holding soil.

The next step is to layer in soil bit by bit. As you do so begin to use the remaining shards of the terra-cotta pot to build up terraces. Use smaller shards to create a staircase appearance. From there, layer in the remaining shards to build up the terrace toward the top of the pot to your liking.

Once the layering of the soil and the shards of pot is complete, the plant life can be inserted along the terraces. The effect is that of a clay pot that is tiered and has a very dynamic composition with plant life moving from the bottom of the pot to the top! It is a beautiful balance between the green of the plants and the orange of the pot.

And what should sit at the very top? Your fairy house of course! At the peak of this mystical arrangement lives your fairy. The entire composition leads to the quiet little hideaway that is your fairy garden.

Cracked pot fairy gardening has truly taken off. It is one of the most aesthetically pleasing gardening techniques available and has seen many creative arrangements. A simple internet search will show you just how dynamic some of these gardens can get! Gardens have gotten to the point of incorporating several broken pots and making entire fairy villages!

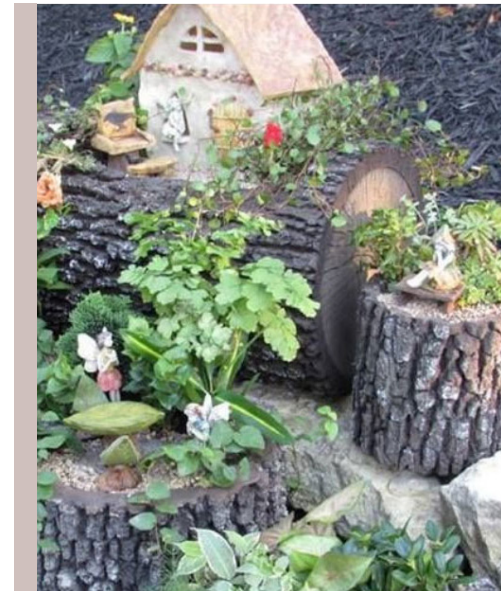




Public Gardens

There is a growing movement to incorporate fairy gardens in public spaces. Many city gardens are beginning to incorporate a fairy garden or two into their green spaces in order to attract a different sort of interest.

Fairy gardens are rapidly becoming a way to engage young people in the community. Many arboretums are using fairy gardening as a way to bring young people in for workshops. They get to select a tree and are supplied with the materials to build a fairy garden around the base of their new potted plant.





Fairy gardens are an amazing way to not only reconnect with your imaginative and crafty self, but to also remember the magic and wonder of nature from the years of your youth. Think back to the days when there was mystery and supernatural magic in the smell of the earth and the way that the forest seemed so impossibly big around you.

This sense of wonder and magic is what fairy gardening is all about: reconnect with the mystery and the joy of building something and getting your hands dirty!

We hope that you've been bitten by the fairy gardening bug in this guide and we absolutely cannot wait to see how your garden comes out!

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