

# TEXAS A&M AGRI LIFE EXTENSION

<http://soiltesting.tamu.edu/webpages/forms.html>



# CONTAINER GARDENING MADE EASY



Presented by Dianne Spradling, Tarrant County Master Gardener



# Usual Suspects





## Creative & Recycled Ideas



# Growing herbs and vegetables in containers

- Any container can be used to grow herbs and vegetables as long as:
  - There is a drain hole
  - The depth and width is sufficient for plant roots to spread
- Choose a good potting mix or supplement soil with 25% composted organic matter and 25% perlite or vermiculite.
- Group plants by their need for sunlight and water.
- Plan on adding supplemental water frequently during hot weather as containers dry out more quickly than the soil.
- When growing in containers: Add fertilizer when planting if the potting mix does not have fertilizer. Fertilize annuals monthly during the growing season; perennials should be fertilized at the beginning of the growing season.
- Add compost to provide plants with trace nutrients and mulch to reduce moisture loss and moderate soil temperature.





## Container Size Matters

If you want easy - large containers are better. Large containers have larger soil volume, so the plants won't need to be watered as often. More soil also means your plants can grow a bigger root system. Plants with lots of roots tend to be healthy, happy plants. Pour or scoop soil into your container. Do not pat the soil down, this is unnecessary and will actually negatively affect your plants. Once you fill the planter simply wet it down, gently with water to settle the soil and add a bit more if necessary. Add your plants and then water the plants in, the soil should settle just enough to give you the head space you need in the container.

**Easy way to space and water  
in the soil before you plant.**



An easily installed drip system will insure the best success in container gardening. There are several options on the market to fit everyone's pocket book.



**SODA BOTTLE DRIP FEEDER**



Lots of very small holes.  
Barely stick with ice pick.



**Place drip hose up through the bottom using one of the pots drain holes or drill another one.**

**Then add 2" of small rock, cover with landscape cloth then fill with soil and space drippers.**





Using Olla's  
“oy-ya”



Rain barrel drip  
into ollas or pots

**Using non glazed terracotta plant pots with saucers: Plug up the hole at the bottom of the pot with BlueTak, or a generic white mounting putty. There's a piece stuck to the pot from the inside, and another from the outside. This type of putty is non-toxic and safe around edible plants.**



# Growing Potatoes in a Bag

## Yes! It's This Easy



**Step 1**  
Half fill Gro-Sack with soil or compost. Plant tubers 4in deep.



**Step 2**  
As plants grow add more soil or compost to fill Gro-Sack.



**Step 3**  
Water regularly and harvest in as little as 7 weeks.

# Today's Lagniappe “lanny-yap”

A little something extra from me to you.



Share the  
information with  
someone else.



# THE AMAZING CATTLE PANEL 15'L x 50"W

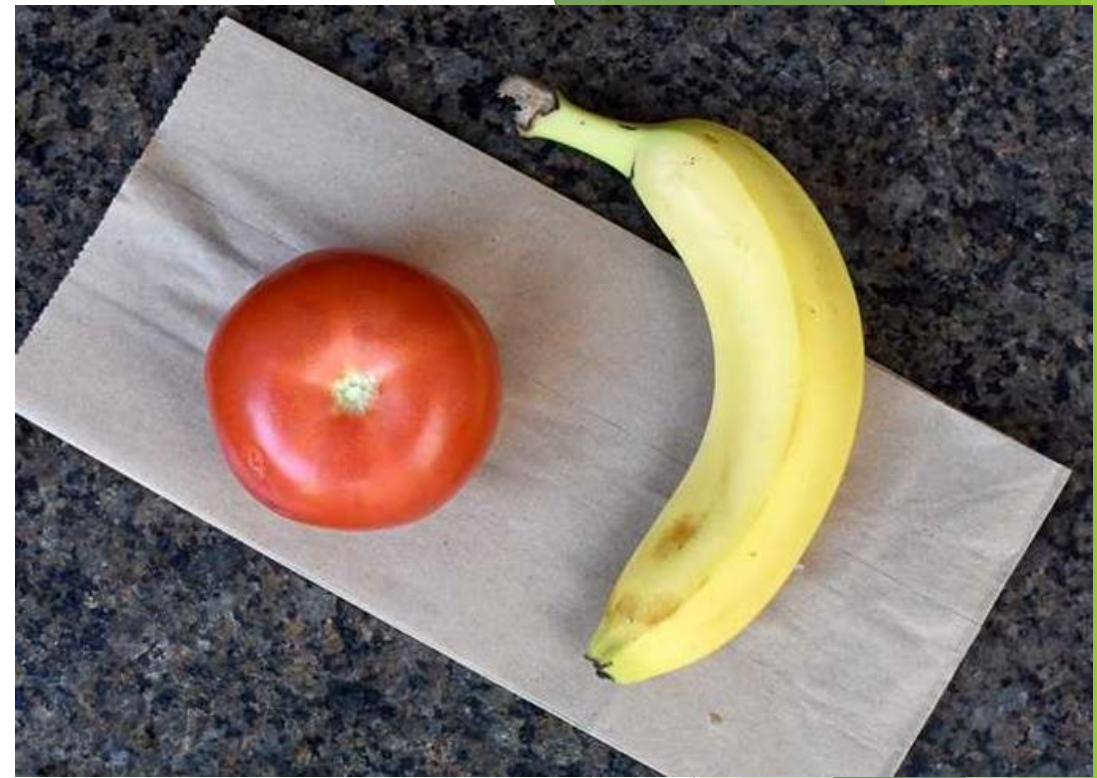


# How to Ripen Tomatoes

Contrary to popular belief, windowsills are not the best place for ripening up tomatoes. Take a close look at your tomato plants and you will learn why: surprisingly, tomatoes often start to ripen on the opposite side of the fruit to the sunny side although not all varieties show this. So, plenty of light is not required for ripening and, in fact, it tends to make the skins of the fruits harder.

Temperature, on the other hand, is a very important factor. The warmer a tomato fruit is the quicker it will ripen. So you can slow down ripening by placing tomatoes in a cool area or speed them up with moderate warmth.

The third factor that speeds up ripening is a gas called ethylene. Placing a ripe banana or apple in with some green tomatoes in an enclosed space helps to speed up the ripening process.



**Place tomato, banana or apple on a paper towel, place in a paper bag and roll up the ends of the bag loosely. More tomatoes do well in a shoe box with lid. Check daily. Works for red or green tomatoes.**

# Storing Tomatoes

**Do Not store in the refrigerator.  
It makes the flesh mushy,  
decreasing juices and flavor.**

**Place tomatoes on a paper towel  
in a container (plastic, shoe box  
or cardboard flat) stem side down.  
Don't overcrowd and **keep out  
of direct sunlight.**  
Check daily.**

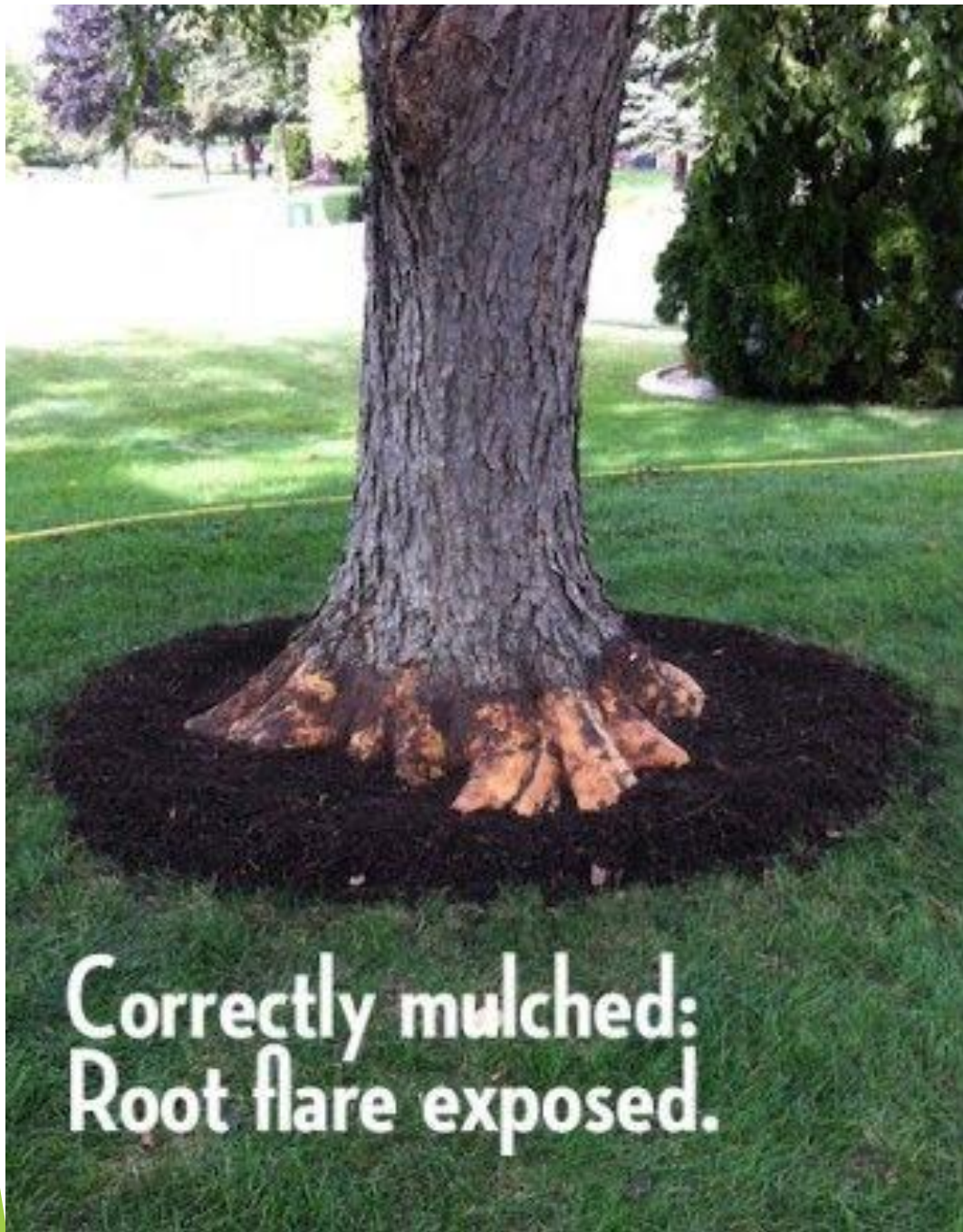


# How Not to Mulch Around Trees



- More than 4 inches of mulch depth restricts soil oxygen exchange with the tree and its roots.
- Mulch against the trunk of the tree also creates a moist environment which promotes cracking of the bark, creating an entry point for insects and fungal growth, as well as, favorable conditions for rodents to chew the bark and damage or girdle the tree.
- Mulch around the base of a young tree may promote the roots to grow into the mound of mulch and not into the surrounding soil.





## Tree Root Flare

A broadening of a tree's trunk just above the soil line.

Tree trunks flare out just above the soil line, indicating where the root system begins. If the flare is covered with soil, the roots cannot get the oxygen the tree needs.



## Seven Second Rule

Vets advice for owners is to place the back of their hand on the surface for seven seconds. If they struggle to hold it down, it's too hot to walk a dog. Dogs' paws can be just as sensitive as humans' feet. Please be a responsible pet owner.

