

DESIGNING AND PLANTING A DISH GARDEN

By Peggy Madison

Your dish garden container should not be too deep, probably around two inches high. A large saucer used to catch water from a plant is ideal. Be sure it is clean!

The first step is to put in about a half inch of pebbles or large grain perlite in the bottom as a reservoir or drainage for excess water that passes through the soil. Remember, the container has no holes for drainage.



1. I start with a layer of pebbles.



2. Next, damp sphagnum moss is put as the next layer to act as a filter. You could also use a layer of nylon net.



3. I now sprinkle charcoal on the filter layer. Charcoal will absorb 80 times its bulk in ammonia gas and is the best purifier for your soilless mix.



4. Now I place my tree in its proper place in the back of the dish. The root ball gives it some height so that when you look at it from the front, it is higher than the rest of the garden. You can also use a rock to give your tree height.



5. I now add damp, sterilized soil to cover the tree support. As I add other plants, I add soil to root them.

6. I then add the rest of my plants, keeping the smaller ones in the front, and gradually putting the taller ones toward the back. The dirt is then covered with moss or ground cover such as pilea. A small pot is inserted where the African violet will be planted. The pot is removed so there will be a place to plant the violet later.

