



## PLANTING A TERRARIUM

*In 1829 Dr. Nathaniel Ward, an English physician with a passion for botany, discovered he could germinate spores of a fern within a closed glass jar. He designed what is known as the Wardian case, a glass topped box resembling a miniature greenhouse. Within the glass case he could grow plants in conditions much like their natural environment. They were quite decorative and the idea was soon adapted for home decorating and is a delightful and fun way to grow a collection of small plants.*

### **Materials needed:**

- Clean, clear, colorless glass container with or without a lid. Using a container with a wide mouth is easier to plant and maintain.
- Potting soil (2-3 cups or about a 3 inch depth)
- One cup 3/8" pebble or about 1 inch of pebble to cover the bottom of the container
- One heaping tablespoon of charcoal (helps keep it smelling clean)
- Three or four dwarf miniature plants that are slow growing and tolerate low light and humidity
- Add an ornament or accent if you like

### **Prepare the base**

Sprinkle the pebbles into the container so it's about 1 inch deep. Next sprinkle the charcoal evenly over the top. Add 2 to 3 inches of slightly moistened potting soil and gently tamp it down.

### **Add your plants**

Design your space like a garden scene. A simple formula for a great look is to plant a vertical plant, a bushy plant and a ground cover. Avoid damaging the root system by gently removing the plants from their pots. Plant at the same depth they were grown in their pots. Dig a small pocket to place your first plant (tallest) and firm it in making sure no roots are exposed. Next plant the bushy plant and then a low, ground cover. Be sure not to crowd the plants against each other or the sides of your container.

### **Water your terrarium**

Add small amounts of water from a spray bottle (set at a course stream) or from a drinking straw. Do not over water the potting medium - it should be moist not wet. Avoid getting the foliage wet. You can wipe the walls if needed with a paper towel to clean them.

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### **Add a focal point**

You can create a visual berm by varying the depth of potting mix. Provide additional interest by adding natural rocks, bark with lichen, seashells, a votive or any small interesting object you may have. Be creative!

### **Maintain your terrarium**

Place your terrarium where it can get some bright light near an east or west window but no direct sun. If you are working with an open terrarium you may need to water once a week. Look to see if the top of the soil is drying out. Again use the straw or spray bottle. If your container is closed, it will need water less often. Open the lid every couple of weeks for half a day to air it out and then close it again. If condensation appears on the glass, no need to water. If not, give a slight watering.

*Now sit back and admire your mini-garden!*



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