
Fairy Garden in a Pot

Gardening | Spring | Ages 4-7

Last April, my daughter insisted our backyard needed "a house for the flower fairies." We grabbed a wide terra cotta pot from Family Tree Nursery in Overland Park and spent an afternoon building her a miniature world. She's checked on it every morning since.

What You Need

- One wide, shallow pot (12-16 inches across works great)
 - Potting soil
 - 3-5 small succulents or mini plants (hens and chicks, sedum, Irish moss)
 - Small pebbles or aquarium gravel for paths
 - Tiny figurines (fairies, animals, mushrooms — we found ours at Hobby Lobby)
 - Optional: small twigs, moss, a bottle cap for a "pond"

How to Build It

Fill your pot about three-quarters full with potting soil. Let your kid press it down with their hands. This is their project — messy hands are part of the deal.

Now comes the fun part: planning the layout. We set our plants still in their nursery pots on top of the soil and moved them around until my daughter liked the arrangement. She wanted a "forest" on one side and an "open meadow" on the other.

Once you've got a plan, dig small holes and plant your succulents. Pat soil around them gently. Succulents are forgiving — they'll survive a little rough handling from enthusiastic four-year-olds.

Create paths with your pebbles. My daughter made a winding trail from one side of the pot to the other. She was very specific about which rocks went where. Let them be specific. That's the whole point.

Add the MagicPlace your figurines. We used two tiny fairies, a miniature bench, and a ladybug. She arranged and rearranged them for twenty minutes. The bottle cap became a pond (add a drop of blue food coloring if you're feeling fancy).

Tuck in bits of moss around the plants. Press small twigs into the soil as "trees." We broke a few sticks from our backyard and they worked perfectly.

What Actually Works

Succulents are key. Regular flowers need too much water and attention. Succulents forgive forgotten waterings and don't mind being poked by curious fingers.

Keep the pot outside in a spot that gets morning sun. We set ours on our front steps where she can check it before school.

Water lightly once a week. The figurines will fade in the sun and weather. That's fine. She's already planning "renovations" for next spring.

The best part? She's outside every day telling elaborate stories about what the fairies are doing. Last week they apparently had a "very important meeting" about the ladybug situation. I have no idea what that means, but she's been out there for an hour.

