

**T**erraria are a fun and attractive way to bring nature indoors. Using easily found and inexpensive materials, small worlds of wonder can be created for children and adults alike. With figurines, plants, and found objects, children can construct a magical scene that activates their imagination and connects them to natural materials. After careful assembly, children can help care for the terrarium, and as plants grow, watch micro-ecosystems come to life!

### THEMES

Be creative in choosing a terrarium theme - a wild jungle, prehistoric dinosaurs, a farm scene with favorite animals, or wherever the children's fancy leads. Go on a nature hunt with children. Look for special, exciting, evocative, natural objects to guide the terrarium theme. Use small rocks or stones with complex shapes and textures to enhance the theme. Allow imaginations to run wild with endless design possibilities.

### CONTAINERS

Terraria containers can be 'open' or 'closed.' Open are easier to create and manage (compared to the more finicky 'closed' approach), and are recommended as a starting point for novices. Containers can be purchased or repurposed from clear glass or plastic receptacles (goldfish bowl, cookie jar, large mason jar, shallow dish, etc.). Any transparent container with a relatively large opening will do.

### PLANTS

Open terraria are dryer and better suited to succulents and cacti - needing misting a few times a week. Choose plants based on light conditions (direct sun; indirect, bright light; low light). Enclosed terraria will be more humid, making them better suited to low-light plants such as ferns and mosses. Tropical plants may get burned if placed too long in direct sun. Remember that since plants will share a habitat, they require similar light and moisture levels. In general, select small plants that won't quickly outgrow the container.

### STEPS

1. Choose a location. Observe its light conditions. Use a plastic covering or newspaper to protect the surface.
2. Thoroughly wash the container, pebbles/rocks, and other items before assembling. Allow to dry.
3. Cover the bottom of the container with a 1-inch layer of pebbles for drainage.

### MATERIALS & TOOLS:

- Glass or transparent plastic container
- Small rocks or stones with interesting textures/shapes
- Small plants
- Potting soil/succulent & cactus potting soil mix (depending on desired plants)
- Small pebbles (for drainage)
- Water mist spray bottle
- Natural materials (sticks, pine cones, shells, miniature tree cookies)

### Optional:

- Figurines of all kinds
- Moss
- Newspaper/plastic covering



4. Depending on the shape and depth of the terrarium, add a layer of potting mix that is at least 2-inches deep. Lightly pat down into an even layer.
5. Carefully tease roots apart. Arrange each plant in a preferred location. Use a finger or a spoon to create small holes for each plant. Make sure to leave space for plants to breathe and grow.
6. Gently nestle each plant in its hole and cover with excess soil to secure it in place.
7. Once all plants are placed, use decorative elements such as rocks, stones, miniature tree cookies, mosses, figurines, and found natural materials to create the terrarium theme.
8. Lightly mist plants and soil until damp but not wet.
9. Place terrarium in selected location and check once a week for moisture and plant health. Enjoy!

## RECOMMENDED PLANTS

### For bright light (sunlight directly shining on plants):

- Aloe, *Aloe vera*
- Hens & Chicks, *Sempervivum*
- Echeveria, *Echeveria spp.*
- Panda plant, *Kalanchoe tomentosa*
- Zebra cactus, *Haworthia attenuata*

### For indirect sunlight (sun not directly shining on plants):

- Baby's Tears, *Helxine soleirolii*
- Friendship plant, *Pilea involucrata*
- Lemon Button Fern, *Nephrolepis cordifolia*
- Moon valley, *Pilea mollis 'Moon Valley'*
- Nerve Plant, *Fittonia spp.*
- Pink Polka Dot, *Hypoestes phyllostachya*
- Watermelon Peperomia, *Peperomia argyreia*

### For low light (little to no light):

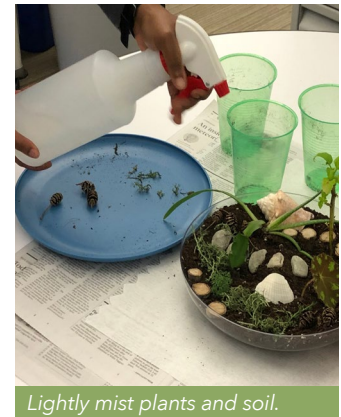
- Bird's nest Fern, *Asplenium nidus*
- Golden club moss, *Selaginella kraussiana 'Aurea'*
- Maidenhair Fern, *Adiantum raddianum*



Poke small holes in the soil with finger or a spoon for each plant.



Place decorative elements.



Lightly mist plants and soil.



Place terrarium in a location with appropriate light level and enjoy!

See short NLI video:

[Making a Terrarium](#)

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