

Bog Garden in a Pot

Janet Novak, January 8, 2011

A bog garden needs to replicate the wet, acid, low-nutrient environment of a bog.

Container

Bog plants should have their crowns around 2 inches above the water level. Three easy ways to do this:

- Set a pot (one with a drain hole in the bottom) in a deep tray of water (change the water often to keep the mosquitoes down),
- Line the pot with a sheet of sturdy rubber to 2" below the top, or
- Take a pot with no holes and drill drainage holes 2" below the top.

Growing medium

50% peat (the standard baled peat or long-staple sphagnum)

50% sand (all purpose sand, builder's sand, cement sand, or traction grit, but not play sand)

a pinch of charcoal (horticultural or aquarium charcoal) — around a teaspoon per gallon-size container

Basic Care

Grow in full sun.

Water often. Tap water is OK if it is low in minerals (soft). Never use water that has been through a water softener. If you don't have soft water, you can use:

- rain water
- water from a dehumidifier
- distilled water

Never fertilize.

Protect from squirrels, if necessary, using bird netting or chicken wire, or just placing the container away from their usual paths.

Winter care

Indoors: cool, bright location (e.g. unheated sunroom)

Outdoors: give your bog some protection

- set the pot into the ground,
- put in a cold frame, or
- cover the bog with pine branches or other light-weight mulch as insulation

Plants for small bog gardens

*Sarracenia*s (pitcher plants). Note that our local native, *Sarracenia purpurea*, is more difficult than most others. For any pitcher plant, cut the old pitchers off in winter or early spring, before the new ones emerge.

Droseras (sundews). Our local species, *D. filiformis*, *D. intermedia*, and *D. rotundifolia*, all do well.

Dionaea muscipula (Venus flytrap). This is the least hardy of the plants listed, so be sure to give it winter protection.

Lobelia kalmii

Vaccinium macrocarpon (cranberry): This is a vigorous plant that will probably need to be pruned back every year or two.

Bog orchids: *Spiranthes cernua*, *S. odorata*, *Calopogon tuberosus*, and *Pogonia ophioglossoides* are all easy.