

reader tips



A section of heavy-duty PVC pipe will keep mint from taking over your garden.

GARDEN E-NOTES

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Keep mint contained

Stephanie Batson, PA
Mint is a great herb to have around. But give this hardy perennial an inch, and it will take a mile. Fortunately, Stephanie found a way to grow mint for her culinary endeavors and keep it from taking over her garden. First, she cut a 12-inch piece from a 12-inch-diameter PVC pipe. Then she dug a hole and placed the pipe in the ground. There's about 4 inches of the PVC above the soil in the photo above and that's enough to keep the mint in bounds. With the pipe in the ground she refilled the hole, planted the mint and watered it in. Now her mint stays put.

Boat planter

Maureen Williams, TX
What do you do with an old boat that's not safe to put in the water anymore? Make it into a planter, of course! Maureen had a leaky old metal johnboat (the type with a flat bottom) sitting in the yard of her lakeside home. Once the boat was moved to its final resting spot, she put some edging and mulch around it to set the area apart from the rest of the yard. Then Maureen put soil between the bench seats and added plants. She set a few containers with mums on the bench seats to add a little height to her "container." A cascading plant, such as sweet potato vine or

Wave™ petunias, spilling over the boat's edge helps it seem more a part of the landscape.

If you don't have a boat, you can still get creative with your planters. Anything will do — a purse, an old shoe, even a teakettle. Whatever you use, the most important thing is to be sure there are a few drainage holes. Use a drill, an awl or a screwdriver to drill or punch holes in the item you're using. Otherwise, your plants may sit in water and rot.

Easy-fill feeder

Elizabeth Smith, MI
Hungry birds mean feeders need to be filled regularly. So you want to do all you can to make this chore easy. The best place for Elizabeth's feeder was hanging from a tree branch, which made it a challenge to reach and fill. Here's her solution: She looped an 18-inch bungee cord over the branch and attached both of its hooked ends to the top of the bird feeder. Now when the feeder needs a refill, she pulls it down with her left hand, removes the lid and fills

the feeder with her right. Then she replaces the lid and gently eases it back into position under the branch of the tree.

Pine basket

D.C. Harrison, OH
When it's time to fill those hanging baskets this year, don't bother buying a liner. Do what D.C. Harrison does and line your basket with pine needles! He just picks up a tangled mass of needles from under his trees and works them together in his wire frame baskets until they're about 2 inches thick. D.C. has found that Scotch pine needles (*Pinus sylvestris*) work best. The short, stiff needles hold together well. When he's tried white pine needles (*Pinus strobus*), the soil falls right through.

Keep track of plant tags

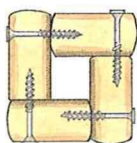
Those plastic plant tags that come with your plants are helpful when you want to know which tomato you grew last summer or when that new perennial blooms. But tags are no help at all if you can't find them. Here are two

QUICK TIP

Cork feet

Pauline Crinnan, MA

Using pot feet to keep containers up off the deck prevents stains. But that can get pricey. Pauline found an inexpensive solution — wine corks! Whether they're natural cork or made of synthetic materials, the pot feet last a long time. Check out the illustration and you'll see how easy it is to assemble one: Just four corks that are held together with four wood screws.



Line the screw up with the hole made by the corkscrew.



