

Test your soil or use containers in your city garden. So, you've got some yard space in back or front of your townhouse or apartment building. It's got adequate sun and you aren't too far from a water source. The soil, however, doesn't look so great. Mixed into the weeds are broken glass and trash. Upon digging, you find that the weeds are so pervasive they almost form a network in the soil. On top of that, you start to wonder what else is in the soil.

You could get the soil tested by sending out a sample to a soil testing lab but that would take time and money. The weather is warm and just right for starting a garden so what do you do? Container gardening is the answer. A container can be anything from a raised bed box of 2' x 2' or larger, to large pots, fence boxes or window boxes. The choice is yours depending on your budget and ability to bring in soil and water. If all you've got is a stoop, try using large pots for cherry tomatoes, herbs and salad greens. Got some fences around the yard space? Use fence boxes for greens, herbs and small vegetables. If all you have to look at is a brick wall, look for a grid system to hang pots or boxes off of. It is important to have your soil tested or use containers if you want to eat what you grow. Common urban soil contaminants can be:

- leakage from old oil tanks
- landfill contaminants
- industrial waste
- solid waste seepage
- excess pesticides (for rodents, etc)
- medical waste
- construction materials like paint, thinners, etc.

You get the picture. It's always better to be on the safe side if you are planning on eating what you grow. There are many kits for easy assembly of raised bed boxes. Now, there are more "vertical growing" tools for small urban spaces like the Gro-Box and the Garden Tower. Search online and you can find a solution that fits your space and your budget. Happy city gardening!

<http://mycitygarden.net/>