

How to Create an English Garden Trough

Chicago Botanic Garden Guide #2



English garden troughs have come a long way from the days when small gardens sprouted from abandoned feed troughs. Today these versatile stone-like containers can be potted up year-round to feature the best of seasonal plants -- from spring's bright bulbs to winter's dwarf conifers.

Variations Upon a Theme

Create seasonal garden troughs by using perennials, annuals, herbs, grasses, ground covers and even small woody plants from each of the four seasons. Examples of eye-catching designs can be seen in spring in the Heritage Garden and all season in the English Walled Garden.



Spring Bulbs

For your favorite spring bulbs see the center spread and get the full details.



Summer Herbs

Parsley, sage, rosemary, thyme, wintergreen



Fall Foliage

Artemisia, dianthus, dried grasses, wintercreeper, ornamental kale, curry plant, coral bells



Winter Woody

Dwarf Alberta spruce, falsecypress, dwarf pine, winterberry, golden sedge, English ivy, sedum

For classes on trough making and other botanical arts, please call the School of the Chicago Botanic Garden (847) 835 - 8261

Chicago Botanic Garden

1000 Lake Cook Road, Glencoe, IL 60022 (847) 835-5440 www.chicagobotanic.org

The Chicago Botanic Garden is owned by the Forest Preserve District of Cook County

1. Tools

Dust mask, rubber gloves, trowel, wire brush and safety glasses.



2. Materials

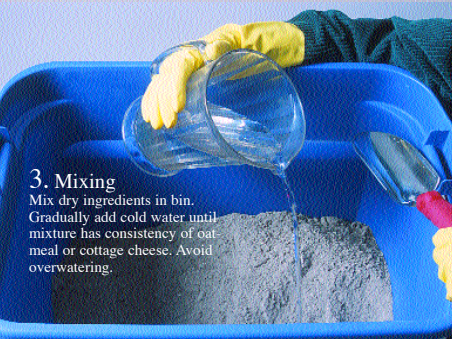
15-gallon mixing bin
4 qts. sifted peat moss
4 qts. all-purpose sand
4 qts. Portland cement
3 to 4 qts. cold water

1 to 4 ml. plastic sheeting
2 wooden dowels 3" tall
15-qt. plastic-lined container, shoebox-sized container wrapped with plastic sheeting



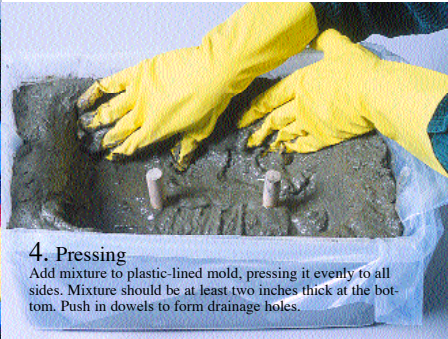
3. Mixing

Mix dry ingredients in bin. Gradually add cold water until mixture has consistency of oat meal or cottage cheese. Avoid overwatering.



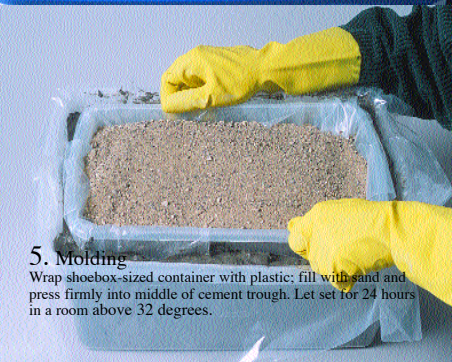
4. Pressing

Add mixture to plastic-lined mold, pressing it evenly to all sides. Mixture should be at least two inches thick at the bottom. Push in dowels to form drainage holes.



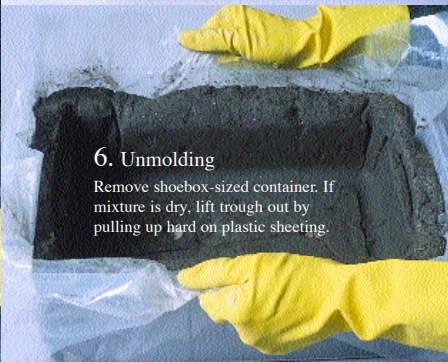
5. Molding

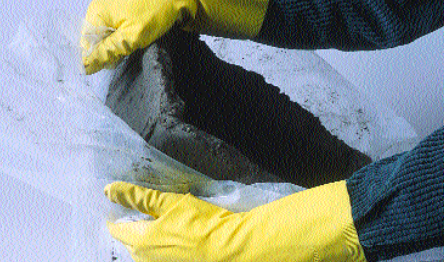
Wrap shoebox-sized container with plastic; fill with sand and press firmly into middle of cement trough. Let set for 24 hours in a room above 32 degrees.



6. Unmolding

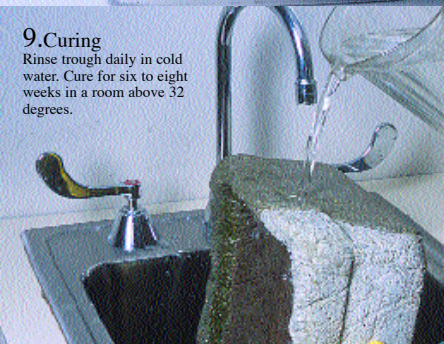
Remove shoebox-sized container. If mixture is dry, lift trough out by pulling up hard on plastic sheeting.





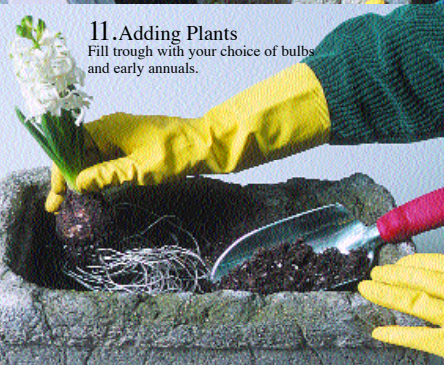
7. Unmolding

Tip trough forward. Remove plastic sheeting and dowels.



9. Curing

Rinse trough daily in cold water. Cure for six to eight weeks in a room above 32 degrees.



11. Adding Plants

Fill trough with your choice of bulbs and early annuals.



8. Finishing

Create a weathered look by scratching surface with wire brush.



10. Planting

Half-fill trough with premoistened soil-less mix.



12. Finished Trough

Add tulips, daffodils, hyacinths, primroses, pansies, ranunculus and snapdragons. Place outside in a bright protected spot.