

"Just Add Water"

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Plug it, Seal it

Making a container watertight

Don't let a drainage hole or two stop you from buying or re-purposing a container into the perfect basin for a petite water garden. If its size, shape and appearance are right, the drain holes(s) can most likely be plugged.

After much experimentation, I now use plumber's epoxy putty to fill the holes. It is a stick of putty with a 'string' of hardener shot lengthwise down the center. The plugs are strong, watertight and long lasting. If/when I decide to make the container original, the seal is drillable. Plumber's epoxy putty is available in the plumbing department at local hardware stores and building centers.

Plug it.....

Clean the bottom of the pot, inside and out. To ensure adhesion to a shiny, smooth interior surface, rough up the finish around the drain hole(s) with coarse sandpaper. On the outside, cover the hole with duct tape. Estimate how much putty is needed to fill the opening before cutting the stick but always cut more than you think you need. Fill one drain hole at a time.

Knead the putty, mixing the two parts together until it is uniform in color and feels warm in the palms of your hands. Generally this takes two to three minutes. Immediately press the putty into the opening, working it down to the duct tape and seal it to the sides of the opening. It hardens in less than an hour. I usually wait a day before adding water.

Seal it.....

Not as obvious as a drainage hole is water lost through the porous sides and bottoms of unglazed terra cotta pots. Water seeps through this porous material.

To stop this slow leakage, coat the interior of the pot with a terra cotta pot sealer or spray/brush on exterior polyurethane varnish. Clean and dry the interior before applying the coating.

I found the terra cotta pot sealer at a national chain arts and craft store. The varnish is available at hardware and paint stores and building centers.

With just a few steps, most containers can be made watertight. This makes 'pond' choices for small water gardens almost limitless.





Container Water Garden