Hypertufa Pots



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Andrea Mason shares an easy and inexpensive way to make your own garden pots.

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*The Martha Stewart Show, January 2010*

Make beautiful garden containers that will last for years with this wonderful hypertufa technique. The term "hypertufa" refers to a type of artificial stone, and is a conglomerate of the words "tufa," a natural volcanic rock, and "hyper," a prefix meaning excessively or extremely; hypertufa are extremely rock-like containers.

You can use almost anything that has an interesting shape for a mold, such as an old tub, bin, or nursery pot. Keep in mind that this mixture is an approximation, and not an exact science -- you can play around with the measurements.

This recipe will make really light pots; if you want heavier, sturdier pots, simply add more cement to the mixture.

Tools and Materials

* Rubber gloves
* Dust mask
* Perlite
* Peat moss
* Portland cement
* Cement pigment (optional)
* Acrylic fibers (if making larger-size pot)
* Plastic tub
* Water
* Spray cooking oil
* Mold (Martha used a nursery pot)
* Small wooden dowel (optional)
* Plastic bags
* Wire brush or sandpaper
* Buttermilk (optional)

Hypertufa Pots How-To  
1. Wearing rubber gloves and a dust mask to avoid breathing cement dust, mix 3 parts perlite, 3 parts peat moss, and 2 parts Portland cement in a plastic tub. If desired, add cement pigment for color. If making a large pot, add acrylic fibers for strength.

2. Add water to tub, a bit at a time, until the mixture has the consistency of moist cottage cheese.

3. Spray inside of mold with cooking oil. Push a handful of wet hypertufa mixture firmly against the bottom of the mold. Repeat until you have made a bottom base that is approximately 1 inch thick. Push handfuls of wet hypertufa mixture firmly against the sides of container approximately 3/4 inches in thickness. Continue until rim of mold is reached. Press bottom and sides firmly to remove air pockets.

4. Create drainage hole by pushing finger or small dowell through the bottom of mold so that it penetrates the hypertufa mixture.

5. Cover with plastic bag, let dry for about 48 hours.

6. Take off plastic bag and remove pot from mold (pot with be slightly wet). Using a wire brush or sandpaper sponge, rough up the surface of the hypertufa for a more rustic appearance. Let sit for 2 to 3 weeks to dry completely.

7. If desired, coat pot with buttermilk and moss; the moss will grow around the pot.

Resources  
Peat moss, perlite, and Portland cement are available at [The Home Depot](http://www.homedepot.com/webapp/wcs/stores/servlet/HomePageView?storeId=10051&catalogId=10053&langId=-1) or your local hardware store or garden center. Acrylic fibers can be found at craft, hardware, and building supply stores.

Planting Succulents in Hypertufa Pots  
Hypertufa pots are extremely versatile; many plants will grow well in them, including all types of succulents. Completely weatherproof, these pots work indoors or out and can freeze and thaw naturally as a result of their porous nature.

When planting, be sure to cover the drainage hole with a pottery shard to prevent soil from washing away. Half-fill container with potting soil suitable for succulents, such as [Scotts Cactus Mix](http://www.scotts.com/smg/catalog/productTemplate.jsp?proId=prod70400), or make your own with 3 parts high-quality soil-free potting soil, 1 part coarse sand, and 1 part perlite.

Arrange succulents on top of soil. Once happy with their placement, fill in around the root balls with potting mix, firming it down -- the base of the plants and the top of the soil should be 1/2 to 1 inch below the container rim; gently water. Top soil with pebbles or crushed stones for a neat finished appearance, if desired.

WATCH VIDEOS:

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<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mgcpeTeiztw>