

healthy HOME



Planters That Rock

For the past couple of years, I've been spending a pretty penny on garden pots. I often find myself stopping at unique garden centers, where I always seem to find (and purchase) gorgeous garden pots. This happens because, for me, there are few things I find more beautiful or inviting than well-designed entryways, garden areas, or lush garden-inspired patios decked-out with beautiful pots.

But, in a moment of creative clarity, I decided I'd much rather make my own pots, share what I learn and how to DIY with you, and save some money in the process. I set out and researched all of the different DIY formulas and took a great liking to the very contemporary and very affordable poured concrete method.

As I always do in most of my creative pursuits, I sat down and made a list of everything I needed. I then grabbed my wallet, drove to town, made all of my purchases, and scurried back home to get everything organized.

After I felt well prepared, I went ahead and took a stab at it and, surprisingly, I discovered that the entire process is both easy and very fun. I had no idea how therapeutic working with poured cement would be and how simple the DIY process would be for all ages.

When I realized how kid appropriate poured concrete pots are, I hollered for my boys and suited them up in working gloves and facemasks. My boys went to town mixing and designing and had no problems, whatsoever, with any of the materials or steps involved. They prepared and poured pot after pot and each one turned out way better than we could have ever imagined.

So, grab a cup of coffee and tag along with me as I walk you through all of my DIY tips and tricks important for making beautiful poured concrete pots.

Let's start with a few tips...

- You're about to learn how to use poured concrete. Because the mixture comes in a pretty large bag, I recommend making as many pots as possible at one time. This way, you'll save money and not waste any of your cement.
- Easy-to-mix poured concrete is user-friendly, inexpensive, and available at most hardware stores. If you've never purchased it before, just ask an employee at your local hardware store to assist you. Don't be afraid of using cement, it's actually quite fun to work with and safe for kiddos – but,

always make sure to provide safety gear and plenty of adult supervision.

- For this project you'll need plenty of differently sized plastic containers. I searched my basement cupboards, pantry, garage, and visited a few thrift stores to find a wide variety of containers for use.
- Make sure that your large containers reflect your desired design aesthetic and that the inside shape and design is pleasing to your eye. The inside patterns and textures will imprint onto the outside of your pots. I always look for containers with interesting designs or ridges to ensure a mix of differently textured exteriors. You can opt for completely smooth pots too.
- Also, make sure you have smaller containers that fit into the large containers. The small containers are used to create the opening of the pot.
- When you find containers that pair well with one another, keep in mind, when you go to fill the large pot with the poured concrete, that there should always be at least two to three inches between the two containers. This helps to ensure a sturdy walled pot. Don't look over this tip; if your pot's walls are too thin, the pot will not last. Now's the time for my step-by-step game plan...
- Find a flat surface outdoors and lay down a large tarp.
- Wash all of the containers you've collected and let them dry.
- Oil all of the containers according to the areas that will be in contact with the concrete. Use any oil you wish.
- Make sure all of your containers are oiled. Check. Twice.
- Find some gloves to protect your hands and a mask to protect your lungs from any particulates.
- Put your safety gear on and suit up the kids – don't skip this step!
- Grab a large bucket, get the hose ready, and gather some old mixing tools.
- Follow the directions on the poured concrete bag and whip up your mix.
- Stir until the concrete is pudding like.
- When the mix is completely lump-free, it's ready to pour.
- You can remove your safety masks now...the airborne particulates are now in the concrete pudding.
- Prepare your large bottom containers for the concrete and, if you want, use a well-greased piece of tubing or a segment of dowel for a drainage hole.
- Pour the concrete into the large container and place the inner container into the bottom container. Make sure the outside of the inner container is greased!
- If you opt for drainage, make sure to insert a greased item or dowel into the concrete.
- Shimmy your containers to make sure there is enough concrete and, if you need to add more, do so with an old cup.
- Very carefully, softly drop your pots onto a flat surface to smooth out any air bubbles. - Let the pots set.
- Caution: many types of concrete dry in an hour or less, but this quick process creates high heat and can be dangerous. Be careful – don't let the kids touch the pots while they set.
- If you followed the directions and oiled the containers correctly, your poured concrete planters will plop right out.

- You'll see that your concrete pots are pale gray, but, over time, they'll darken. You can seal your pots or infuse color into the cement with special sealants and paints made specifically for porous materials. That, my friends, is all it takes to make your own stunning garden pots. I know what you're thinking – my new skill might cause all of the Spokane garden centers go out of business – but, rest assured, I'm still a sucker for their cool high-end furniture. Eureka...perhaps that will be our next DIY. Stay tuned to find out.

Take care and make pots, Jessa