



Tower block gardening

These are notes from meetings of tower block gardeners.

Conditions vary so much depending on height and orientation that there's little universal advice!

Plants

All have had problems with plants being shredded / dessicated by the wind, and the temperature drop at the higher levels (one member reported that filmy-leaved plants seem to do well in the wind). Plants don't necessarily follow the rhyme or reason of what should thrive.

Recommendations:

Crocosmia (on a high, west-facing balcony)

Corydalis

Climbing Fuchsia

Hostas

Erigeron

Hebe, box, rosemary

Hydrangeas (in enormous planters directly behind the concrete balcony balustrade)

Ivy (al though prone to being blown away when it grows beyond the walls)

Olive trees

All have good results from pelargoniums (scented leaf varieties are particularly hardy)

Succulents do well in general (Columbia Road a good source)

Those of us who met have had limited success with climbers.

On an 17th floor E/S facing balcony: Lavender, rosemary and other Mediterranean plants

Daffodils

Cordylines

And an agave in an enormous pot, facing south

Herbs: Rosemary, bay, Greek or Bush) basil (small leaves), mint but thyme & chives trickier.

One member has successfully grown tomatoes and some other veg at the end of her balcony, where it's all glass, not concrete wall and pretty sheltered.

Recommended resources

Potash Nursery for Fuchsias <http://www.potashnursery.co.uk/>

Crews Hill garden centres, especially the gardening club <http://www.thegardeningclub.co.uk/>

Columbia Road

Chapel Street market

City Flora & Plants (120 Old Street) has a surprisingly good selection

Watering

One member is away from her plants 2 weeks in every four and has found two sorts of equipment which help plants from drying out. She has two low metal covered troughs which are filled with water on which lots of pots are stood, each with a tail of capillary matting connecting into the water tank. And in deeper troughs she has buried tanks with a pipe for refilling which encourage plants to develop good root systems. Depending on the weather (wind as well as sun) both these systems allow the plants to survive for two weeks.

<http://www.twowests.co.uk/>

<http://www.harrodhorticultural.com/>

Water Features

Several members have water features, in different styles, all of the sort that you fill up rather than plumb in.