

Surprising Uses For Terra Cotta Pots

You can drive terra cotta pot sales by showing customers how versatile the containers can be around the home when used for more than just planting.

By Meghan Boyer



Top: Hand towels can be decoratively displayed in a terra cotta pot. **Bottom left:** Terra cotta pots are great organizational tools for the home. Customers can use them for pens and more in their offices. **Bottom right:** Terra cotta pots can be used for cooking and serving food in the kitchen. The pot pictured here holds a no-bake "dirt" cake. (Photos: Michael Boyer)



Terra cotta pots are a great low-cost container option that most garden centers carry, but customers aren't breaking down retailers' doors trying to buy these basic gardening staples. Get consumers excited about terra cotta again by showcasing its versatility: With uses in nearly every room in the home, there's a lot more that can be done with these containers than simply planting flowers in them.

To show customers how it's done, display terra cotta pots in different uses in every area of your store from the bathroom to the cash wrap. The more excitement you build around them, the more interested your customers will be and the more containers you will sell. Think about it: Just as terra cotta pots are useful for holding utensils in the kitchen, toiletries in the bathroom or supplies in the office, they can be useful for displaying products in your garden center, too.

Kitchen And Bathroom

The greatest element about containers is they can be used to hold just about anything, which is a fact many consumers may not realize. In the kitchen, utensils such as spoons and whisks can be placed in terra cotta pots near the stove for easy access. Depending on size, the pots can be used as serving dishes, fruit bowls, pantry storage, silverware holders or individual dessert containers.

Food can be prepared and served in terra cotta. Like any earthenware container, terra cotta pots can be heated in the oven and used for baking breads or cakes. Some whimsical recipes are even more fun when prepared and served in a pot (see sidebar, page 50).

In the bathroom, hand towels and toiletries can be placed in terra cotta pots and displayed near the sink. Suggest consumers place small, travel-sized items in pots for guest use. Smaller pots can be used for supplies, such as cotton swabs and cotton balls, and under-sink storage is a good option for pots of all sizes. ▶



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Living Room And Office

With the addition of a glass pane or wood board set on top, large containers can be used for side tables or coffee tables in the living room. The pots-turned-tables can even be used for storing excess pillows or blankets. A medium-sized pot can hold magazines, and a smaller pot is perfect for keeping remote controls nearby.

Suggest customers organize their offices with terra cotta pots. Different sizes can be useful for holding different supplies, from paper clips and spare change to pens and notebooks. The pots' accompanying saucers are especially good for storing small office items.

Additional Ideas

Some other great ideas for terra cotta pots can be used anywhere in the home:

- Smaller pots or their saucers can be used as votive holders.
- String together a few small pots for use as a wind chime or tie a stone in a single pot and hang it to make a bell chime.
- Keep excess firewood in a large pot placed beside the hearth.
- Place a smaller terra cotta pot on its side in an aquarium to give fish a hiding place.

Match Their Décor

Another great aspect about terra cotta pots is they can be customized. Consider holding workshops where participants customize containers for use in their homes. Paint, mosaic tiles, ribbon and more can be used.

Or, if your customers aren't very DIY, recommend a decorative container for home use. While they might not be oven safe, decorative containers still have many of the same applications for consumer use around the home as terra cotta pots.

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Using these ingredients, your staff and customers can create a tasty no-bake treat in a terra cotta pot.

Taste And See

To whet your customers' appetites for using terra cotta containers for cooking, print up recipe cards to distribute with pot purchases. If someone on your staff is handy in the kitchen, you can even have him or her create terra cotta delicacies for shoppers to try.

Here's a no-bake "dirt" cake recipe that the *Lawn & Garden Retailer* staff loves:

Ingredients

- One-half cup softened butter
- 1 (8 oz.) package softened cream cheese
- One-half cup confectioners' sugar
- 2 (3½ oz.) packages instant vanilla pudding mix
- ¾ cups milk
- 1 (12 oz.) container frozen whipped topping, thawed
- 32 oz. chocolate sandwich cookies with crème filling

Directions

1. Chop cookies very finely in a food processor. The crème will mix in.
2. Mix butter, cream cheese and sugar in a bowl.
3. In a large bowl, mix milk, pudding and whipped topping together.
4. Combine pudding mixture and cream mixture together.
5. Layer in flower pot, starting with cookies then cream mixture. Repeat layers.
6. Chill until ready to serve.
7. Add artificial flowers, a small trowel, gummy worms or whatever decorations you like. Enjoy!

Recipe: www.allrecipes.com

Metal containers

These metal containers can be used indoors or out as candle holders or planters. They are available in two sizes: 17x8½ inches and 13x7½ inches. Caffco International. (800) 933-5888. **Write in 1443**



Container set

The Tall Milano Egg Set consists of four containers featuring shades of glaze. They are available in cascade blue/silver and cascade green. Ceramo Company. (573) 243-3138. **Write in 1445**

Italian pottery

This Italian pottery is crafted by artisans using Tuscan clay and drying and firing procedures intended to ensure weather tolerance. Pottery details were forged by the fingers of an individual artist. Jackson Pottery. (877) 533-7687. **Write in 1447**



Planter

Available in 13 hand-applied finishes, the Nichols Planter is made from cast stone. It measures 14 x 30 x 30 inches. Kansas City Art Statuary. (888) 261-3929. **Write in 1448**



Biodegradable pots

These pots are made from natural byproducts of renewable crops. They contain no wood or petroleum and should breakdown naturally when placed in landfills. Three separate product lines are available in six different earth tones. Eco Source. (954) 802-7117. **Write in 1446**

