

Aging Your Terracotta Pots

WITH GARDEN LIME

Aged terra cotta pots evoke a sense of history and timeless beauty, reminiscent of classic English greenhouses. Naturally aged terracotta can take years to achieve the desired look, but with a simple technique using garden lime, you can speed up the process and enjoy the aesthetic benefits almost immediately.

WHY WE LOVE TERRACOTTA POTS

Aesthetic Appeal | English Greenhouse Feel | Character and Texture

The Natural Aging Process

Naturally aging terracotta pots can take many years. The process involves exposure to the elements, including rain, sun, and varying temperatures, which gradually create a weathered surface. This slow transformation can result in beautiful, unique patterns and textures, but waiting for years might not be practical for everyone.

Speeding up the Process with Garden Lime

Fortunately, you can achieve the look of aged terracotta pots in a fraction of the time with garden lime. This method is not only effective but also allows for creative variations to suit your personal style.

Getting Started

Materials needed:

Terracotta pots (I usually get mine at Lowe's or Home Depot - although I've noticed Walmart has started carrying them as well)

Garden lime (also known as agricultural lime or hydrated lime)

Water

Paintbrush or sponge

Protective gloves

Drop cloth or newspaper





Step 1: Prepare your Workspace

Lay down a drop cloth or newspaper to protect your working area. I age mine in the greenhouse and my favorite thing to lay down is an opened, flat old cardboard box. I wear gloves from this step on.

Step 2: Mix the Lime Solution

In a container, mix garden lime with water until you achieve a thick, paint-like consistency. The ratio can vary, but a common mix is 1 part lime to 1 part water. Play with consistency and find out what you like. I typically have two plates of lime going, one with a thicker consistency and one pretty thin.

Step 3: Apply the Solution

Using a paint brush or sponge, apply the lime mixture to the terracotta pots. You can cover the entire surface or focus on specific areas to create a more natural, uneven look.

Step 4: Let it Dry

Allow the pots to dry completely. This can take a few hours to overnight, depending on the humidity and temperature

Step 5: Repeat as Desired

For a more pronounced effect, you can apply additional layers of the lime solution, allowing each layer to dry in between applications.

Step 6: Optional Distressing

To add more character, you can lightly sand some areas or use a damp cloth to wipe away parts of the lime mixture before it fully dries.

Variations to Consider

Moss Addition

Mix a small amount of moss or yogurt into the lime solution to encourage moss growth, adding a green, lush look to the pots over time

Color Tints

Add a small amount of natural pigment or clay powder to the lime mixture to give the pots a subtle tint. I've used brown paint to "tap on a dirt look" in places.

Texture Play

Experiment with different application tools like sponges, cloths, or even your hands to create varied textures. Play with this step, and you'll soon find what you love the most, and the texture being added just takes them to the next level.

Other Aging Methods

If you're interested in exploring other ways to age your terracotta pots, consider these methods:

Yogurt and Buttermilk Mixture

Coat the pots with a mixture of yogurt or buttermilk and let nature take its course. This encourages the growth of moss and lichen. I've never tried this but when I explored this method, I found that you can create quite an odor.

Milk Paint

Use milk paint to create a soft, worn appearance. This eco-friendly paint adheres well to porous surfaces like terracotta.

Acrylic Paint Wash

Dilute acrylic paint with water to create a wash that mimics the look of age and wear. Apply in layers for a more authentic appearance. I have used this but prefer the Garden Lime.

If you're wanting a weather look without the wait, aging terracotta pots with garden lime is a simple and rewarding DIY project. With a little creativity, you can customize the look to perfectly complement your garden's aesthetic.

Happy DIY-ing!

-Shannon

