

Guide to Plant Topiaries

Place the topiary form over a living tree or plant

Place the topiary empty frame over a live plant and let the plant (box wood, euonymus, ivy) grow into the form. Trim the live plant until it fills the topiary form. Once planted, fast growing and small-leaved ivy can completely cover a small to medium wire frame, creating a topiary in a few short months is a nice achievement.

Add plants to the outside of the mossed frame

Soak the moss filled form in water and let drain. If you have 'cell pack' sized plants (3/4 inch - 1 inch square) you can poke a hole into the damp moss from the outside of the form and insert the plant.

Add plants to the inside of the wire frame

Soak the moss filled form in water and let drain. Snip the plastic connecting ties and open the form into its parts. (exclusive to our topiary) Pull out some of the moss. Remove a little of the soil from around the root ball and insert your plant into the form. Wiggle the leaves up through the wires. Repack the moss around the roots. When planted, reattach the form with the cable ties provided.

Watering

Water with starter fertilizer (10-52-10) and keep in a shaded area, out of the wind for several days before moving to the selected area in your garden. Check for water daily, as you would a hanging basket. Fertilize every other week.

Use plants to mimic animal texture and color

Take a few moments and study the look of the animal you are replicating - pay close attention to its textures and colors. Are they smooth, fluffy or maybe scaly? Consider fur, feathers, manes and coats, and don't forget details like whiskers for kittens, stripes for bees, and eyes for personality. Then look for plants which best represent the those characteristics. For instance, grasses would be a good choice to represent a long slim mane and tail on a horse. Low growing plants will give the body a smooth look, and are also a good drought tolerant pick.

Use Coloring

The use of color is fun and plant color can create a pattern in your animal. To make a pattern, use a plant that is available in variegated colors like green and gold. It can also be an unexpected bonus when your plant flowers. For instance, a horse could have a dark mane and tail, and light body (or vice versa)

Scale: Choose a plant with a leaf size that is small enough for the frame

The smaller the animal the smaller leaved plants work best. The idea is to compliment not overwhelm the form. Smaller leaved plants work best on smaller animals. The idea is to compliment, not overwhelm the form.

Choose plants that like similar conditions

It is best to use a mix of plants that like the same growing conditions. Succulents are a good drought tolerant choice. Because smaller portions of the topiary (ears, legs, tails) tend to dry out faster than fuller areas, it may be necessary to leave some areas just mossed as plants can quickly wilt in these thin or elevated areas in dry conditions.

Determine the how many plants to use to fill the wire frame topiary

Are you having a garden party and need spectacular results, instantly? Plant every 2 inches. If you plan to watch the seasonal growth unfold, plant every 4 to 6 inches.

Storing a topiary during the winter

Water well before frost and move to a protected area or unheated garage near a window. Water once a month.