



# ITALIAN TERRACE

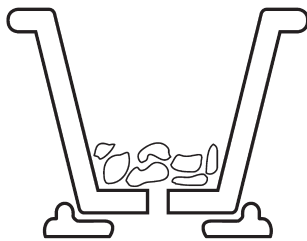
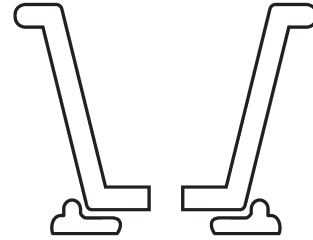
## ADVICE

These important instructions are vital to the life of your pot. Before planting up please take a few moments to familiarise yourself with this guide. Providing these steps are followed your pots can endure the winter climate.

**Drainage** is very important for the health and growth of plants, in the ground and in pots. Since Italian Terrace began we have planted up many pots and have seen that those with poor drainage have an adverse effect on the condition of plants and pots.

1.

Raise the pot from the ground with pot feet or other risers.

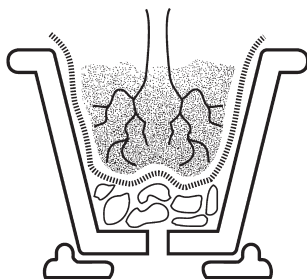
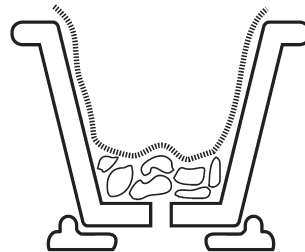


2.

Place crock carefully in the bottom of the pot to about a 1/4 full.

3.

Put the provided liner **above** the crock and up the inside of the pot.



4.

Add some shingle to cover the base of the liner and spread out. Add your plants, soil and slow release feed.

5.

Check your pot regularly. We suggest repeating steps 2 and 3 every couple of years. First remove the plants, liner and crock. Clean out, replace the crock and liner and add new compost. Prune the plant roots to keep your plants looking their best, then replant.

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**Pot feet – which pot, which foot?** If you are unsure, it is best to ask us on ordering. As a guide, narrow based pots could become unstable so we recommend more crock in these to improve stability. Small pots can look a bit clumsy with some feet, so it is best to use a small mosaic tile or slate to raise them a little. This allows air to pass under the pot helping evaporation and drainage. It will help to stop debris from building up and blocking the drainage hole. Also slugs, snails and ants are less likely to make a new home under and in your pot.

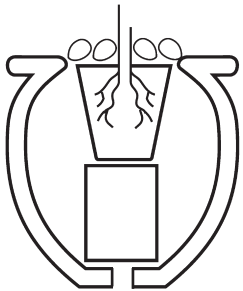
**Crock** is broken bricks, stones or tiles. If you want to lighten the pot for moving, or to place it on a roof terrace, then polystyrene can be useful instead – it also adds some insulation for tender plants.

**The Liner** is a geotextile and is used as a weed barrier and stabiliser for paths and roads. Your pot will come with a piece of liner. We can sell you more by the metre and the offcuts are very good to use in your ‘potting on’ plastic pots, instead of shingle. The liner we provide with each pot prevents the soil sifting and washing through the crock and blocking the hole. It creates a membrane between the soil, plants and the drainage material, it also helps retain the roots and nutrients. To assist the liner staying in position before adding the compost, spread a little shingle over the base, just like blind baking pastry. After planting tuck in the excess liner; when repotting this extra bit will assist removal of the plant roots and soil.

**Compost** depends on your plants’ needs but as a general guide, use peat free, or a low percentage peat mix, using fine shingle or grit to assist drainage and prevent compaction. We mix loam based John Innes with our compost, it’s up to you how much. It is always a good idea to ask your grower what compost or soil to use. One tip we had was to use Ericaceous compost in all our pots – as our water is very hard, it helps to balance out the PH levels, very good too if you are watering from a mains supply. After a couple of years compost and soil will loose its natural body in a container. it is advisable to replace it to keep your plants looking their best and keep your pots looking great.

**Slow release feed** pellets like Osmocote work very well and help if you are short of time in the summer months and miss twice monthly liquid feeds. Tomorite is a good value liquid feed for all plants. Miraclegrow also works well.

**Saucers** are only recommended for interior use to catch moisture, not for watering plants by absorbtion. We have a range of round saucers to fit most pots. They are made of plastic and have a good texture and colour, please refer to our website to see a picture of them.



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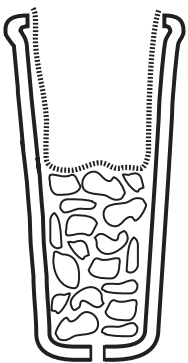
**Pot in a pot**, using interchangeable pots. Black plastic pots with holes in the base for drainage are ideal for continual interesting planting during the season. Raise the base level to fit the inner pot by using an upturned pot, bricks, wood or polystyrene. Rotate your pots with spring bulbs, hostas, lavender, agapanthus, cosmos and box for the winter. We recommend this method also for very strong and tight rooted plants like agapanthas, it makes for an easy task to repot those tight roots.

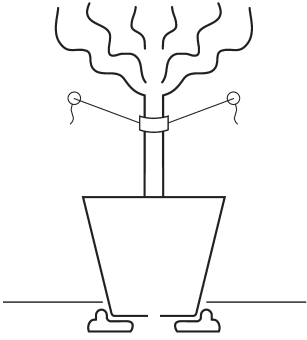
**Oil jars** are not suitable for full planting. The plant’s roots will quickly invade the widest space in the pot and it will become impossible to remove. If you wish to plant an oil jar it is best to use the ‘pot in a pot’ method.

**Ciotola** and other small pots need special care. They are low to the ground where the frost persists for longer and with more soil area than the clay of the pot, they tend to retain moisture and stay damp in the winter. If you suspect you are at risk then raise the small pots off the ground and protect over the winter months.

**Tall alto** pots require more crock. Fill more than half of the pot with crock, which adds weight and prevents the plant’s roots from growing too deep.

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**Windy positions** are not advisable for pots containing tall plants, especially narrow based pots. Choose the right pot for the plant – consider the height of the plant ensuring it is not too top heavy. Securing to a wall will prevent the pot blowing over. Attach a tree tie to the neck of the plant to hide it and make two positions on the wall/fence. Use a strong twine to attach to the tree tie creating a triangle.

**Decorative toppings** placed on top of the soil create interest. Try using pine cones, pebbles, shells or bark. Covering the exposed soil will reduce evaporation and stop splashing when watering in summer.

**Snails, pots and garlic.** We love to grow hostas in pots, however the snails love them too. Tie a copper band around the rim of the pot to stop the snails and slugs climbing up or use eggshells in the pot, which they hate. Snails also dislike garlic. Rub cloves around the edge of the pot or use garlic paste. There are also various pellets which do not harm wildlife.

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**Winter protection.** Following our planting advice is the best protection. However if your garden is in a frost pocket then fleece or bubble wrapping is advisable if you are at risk. Some areas do suffer from large amounts of rain and have sudden temperature changes, from freezing to sun, so it is best to protect. At Versailles in Paris, the statues are wrapped for the winter with very stylish hessian and string, so it need not look ugly. Put a layer of wrap around the rim of the pot and tape up or use an elastic spider to secure it.

**Weathering.** In time your pots will weather and grow lichen – this seems to be appealing to most people, it is a matter of taste. Minerals in the soil and water will be absorbed into the clay and have an effect on the pot's future appearance. To help keep the pots 'clean' you could use the 'pot in a pot' technique.

**Cleaning pots** should not be necessary. However if they get excessively green with a lot of algae growth then use Armillatox, a soap based cleaner. If your pots become very green it maybe because they do not have enough light, are under foliage or may not have sufficient drainage. If this is the case then we suggest you repot and reposition.

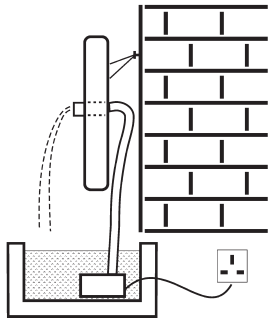
**Repotting** becomes necessary every couple of years, when the soil will lose its retentive qualities and becomes stale. Remove the plants, root prune as necessary and add new soil and feed. Larger pots will require care and the help of more than one person. Lay old carpet on the ground and create a soft bed, use straw in bags to make 'pillows' or bags of compost. Then gently support the plant and pot and turn on its side to remove the plant. if you need to use garden tools to assist removal of the plants, take great care as the leverage can damage the pot. Don't leave it too many years before you repot as the roots will expand and make it very difficult to get out.

**Root pruning** to keep your plants at their optimum size works well with most plants, rather like the bonsai growers clip roots to create miniature ancient oak trees. Remove the plant, the liner will help with this. Some of the roots will penetrate the liner, but you will be able to pull them away and reuse it. Tease the roots and cut back as necessary, depending on the plant type.

**Box** works very well in pots. However, a few tips can help keep the plants healthy. After 2–3 years you will need to repot, root prune and refresh the soil. They will tend to lose nutrients and the leaves turn a bronze colour. A good mineral feed is Vitax Q4 and a liquid foliar seaweed feed helps a quick recovery in greening up. They can take a few months to recover, so be patient. Clipping box is traditionally done on 'Derby Day'. We do it when we can but never on a sunny day. If this is not possible then cover the plant with winter fleece after cutting which prevents the sun bruising the cut leaf edge.

**Moving pots** once planted can be difficult. We recommend that the pots are emptied as advised above. If not the pots risk being damaged and a hairline crack could go unnoticed until the winter weather or roots could open it up.

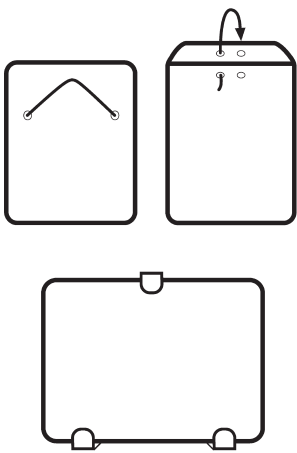
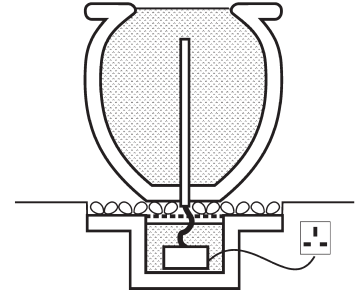
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**Fibreglass lining** the pots to hold water works very well for interior planting and water features. We can arrange this for you at cost.

**Water spouts** using our plaques are easy to fit. Attach to the wall as per the plaque instructions. If you have the pipes showing then try concealing with some plants or add decorative toppings to the pot. Chasing the pipe into the wall and redecorating is the best option. The diagram illustrates the use of a reservoir – this could be a fibreglass lined pot.

**Water features** can take on many forms. We like the oil jar with water spilling over the edge. The diagram shown will require a below ground reservoir. Instead of the long pipe in the pot it can be shortened and a one-way valve attached, so it only opens when the pump is on and the valve closes with the water pressure when off. Do remember to drain your water feature before winter.



**Plaques** can hang on the wall just like a picture frame. Ensure that you have a good strong fixing.

- The plaques arrive with pre-drilled holes containing plugs for you to add screws. Then attach a strong multithread wire and check the tension.
- Some plaques have two predrilled holes in the top that may need clearing out a little. Remember, if you are drilling always do this from the front to the back using a masonry bit.
- Other ways of fixing are to embed the plaque in the wall or to use a bracket. Also, there are some very good adhesives available, although you must test them first. The larger plaques may need brackets as well.

The sundials work on a south facing wall but they are not totally accurate. The brass stick that we supply is called a gnomon and when this is in place, you need to line it up at midday.



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