FLOWERS · A SUNNY PORCH OR PATIO AFTER FROST

Let's grow petunia.

Petunia × hybrida

This plan is for **Compact multiflora petunia**

Is this your plant? Choose a nursery plant labeled around 12 inches wide at maturity. Vigorous spreading types, including many Wave and Supertunia selections, are outside this compact one-plant recipe.

A pot of color for the front steps.

12-inch pot **1 compact start**

Before you start

Plant outside after frost danger has passed and the weather has warmed. Ease a greenhouse-grown start into outdoor sun; this is a seasonal patio-flower plan.

By jennyzhuang

Sources checked September 26, 2026 View sources ↗

LIGHT

Plenty of sun

Choose about 6 hours of sun or more for good flowering.

WATER

Check the pot daily

Container roots dry faster than plants in a garden bed.

FEEDING

Regular flowering-season feed

Use the bag's feeding start point, then a measured 14-day flower-feed routine while growing.

BEFORE YOU START

Your little kit.

- ✓ One 12-inch-wide pot, at least 10 inches deep
- ✓ 1 compact multiflora petunia nursery start
- ✓ Fresh potting mix and small scissors

THE SOIL

Miracle-Gro Organic Potting Mix (US; contains starter nutrients—check your bag)

Start with what's on this list. Add plant food only when the feeding section says it's needed.

YOUR SIMPLE GROWING PLAN

One pot. Here's the plan.

A sunny porch or patio after frost. Start with **nursery start**.

THE POT

12-inch pot

At least 10 inches deep, with drainage holes.

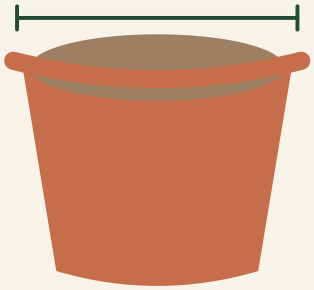
HOW MANY

1 compact start

Choose one compact multiflora petunia whose nursery label gives a mature spread around 12 inches.

THE CONTAINER

12-inch pot



Drainage holes

START WITH

1 compact start

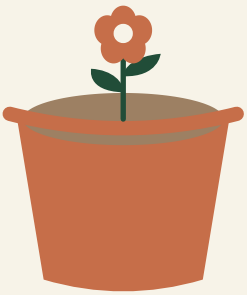


Illustration · not to scale

12-inch pot · 1 compact start At least 10 inches deep, with drainage holes. Choose one compact multiflora petunia whose nursery label gives a mature spread around 12 inches. Original illustration; not to scale.

01

Check the mature spread

Pick a compact multiflora plant with a spread around 12 inches on the tag. Wave and other vigorous trailing types need their own space and feeding plan; a small nursery pot does not predict the plant's final size.

02

Plant after frost

Use damp potting mix and keep the root ball at its nursery soil level. Water thoroughly.

03

Ease it into a sunny place

Give a greenhouse-grown start some shelter from harsh midday sun and wind for its first few days. Move toward the sunny position in this plan as it settles in, keeping the pot easy to reach for moisture checks.

04

Remove tired flowers

Snip spent blooms along with the small seed-forming base beneath each bloom. Clear fallen flowers from the mix.

Help with the setup: drainage holes and saucers · potting mix vs. garden soil.

Other ways to start

Raise plants from seed

Seed-grown petunias need an early indoor start, often 10–12 weeks before planting out. Surface-sow the tiny seeds in moist starting mix; they need light and should not be buried. For one pot, buying a small nursery plant is the shorter route.

YOUR EVERYDAY ROUTINE

Water & fertilizer at a glance.

WATER WHEN

Check daily. Water when the top inch is dry, then drain. Check a new plant's original root ball too; wait if wet.

FERTILIZER

Miracle-Gro Water Soluble Bloom Booster Flower Food (US 15-30-15)

AMOUNT

1 tablespoon in 1 US gallon of water

WHAT THAT AMOUNT COVERS

Mix into water. Apply enough solution to wet this pot and drain; the gallon is a mixing batch, not a per-pot dose.

HOW OFTEN TO FEED

Every 14 days during active growth and flowering.

WHEN TO START OR PAUSE

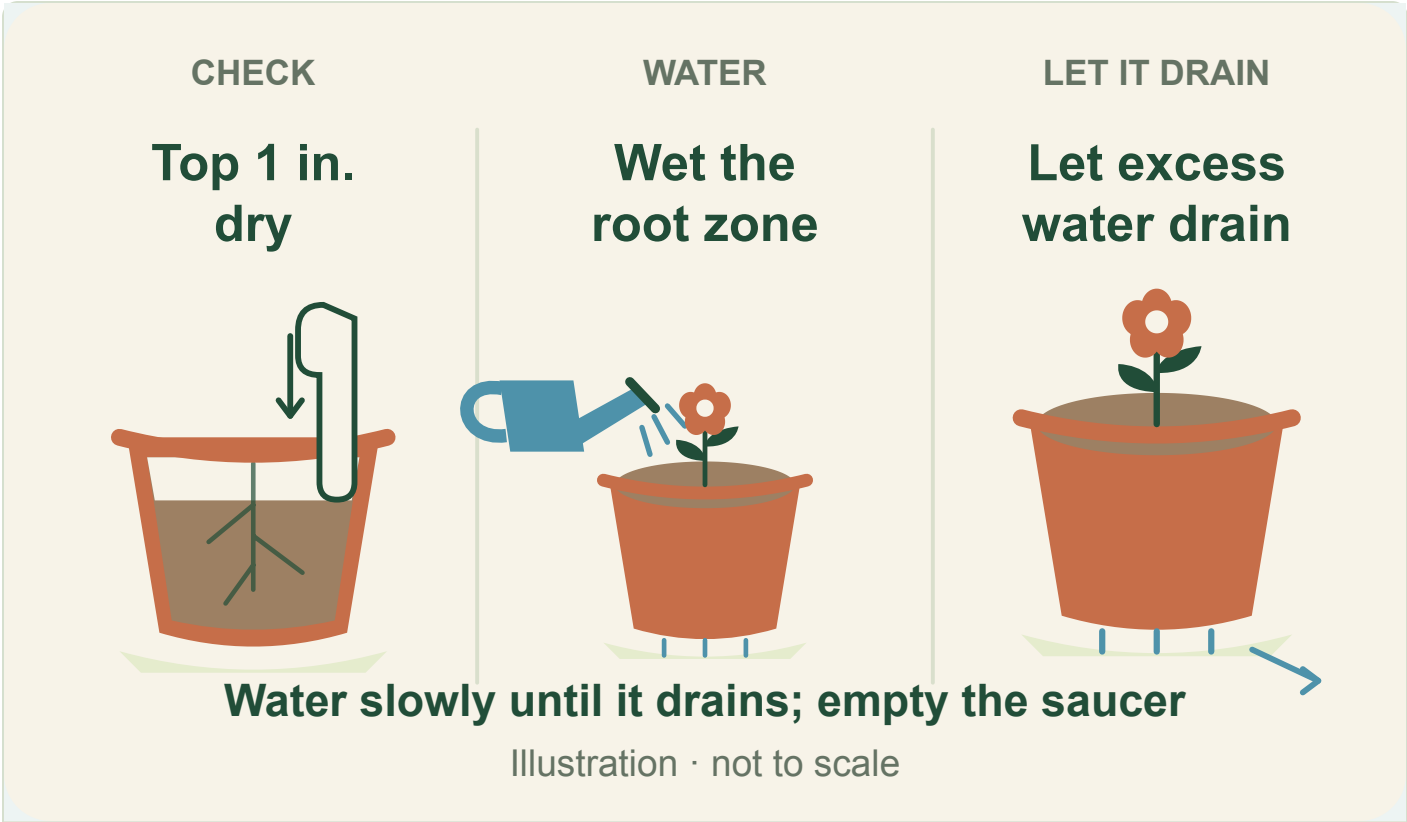
Start only when the potting-mix bag calls for extra feeding. Correct wilt or waterlogging first, and do not combine ongoing fertilizer programs.

This uses the US product's outdoor concentration and the slower end of its 7–14-day interval. Check your purchased label.

01 / EVERYDAY CARE

When to water.

Check each morning. Water when the top inch is dry, applying water slowly until it begins draining below. Also feel the nursery root ball while a newly planted start is settling in; it should not become dry inside damp surrounding mix. Empty the saucer and wait while roots are still wet. Recheck in hot, windy weather. Daily checking does not mean daily watering.



Check before watering. Check daily. Water when the top inch is dry, then drain. Check a new plant's original root ball too; wait if wet. Original illustration; not to scale.

> **The easy rule**
>
> Check first. Water only when the plant needs it.

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02 / PLANT FOOD

Exactly what to feed it.

Start with the nutrients already in the named potting mix. Read your purchased bag for when extra feeding should begin; do not assume every enriched mix lasts two months. Do not add a second full feeding program at planting. Begin the flower food below only when additional feeding is due and the plant is actively growing.



1 tablespoon in 1 US gallon of water Mix into water. Apply enough solution to wet this pot and drain; the gallon is a mixing batch, not a per-pot dose. Every 14 days during active growth and flowering. Start only when the potting-mix bag calls for extra feeding. Correct wilt or waterlogging first, and do not combine ongoing fertilizer programs. Original illustration; not to scale.



US PRODUCT REFERENCE

Miracle-Gro

Water Soluble Bloom Booster

15-30-15

Soluble: mix into water

Check the official US product ↗

Illustrated reference; check the manufacturer's current packaging and US label.

A SPECIFIC US PRODUCT

Miracle-Gro Water Soluble Bloom Booster Flower Food (US 15-30-15)

Dissolve 1 tablespoon of Miracle-Gro Water Soluble Bloom Booster Flower Food (US 15-30-15) in 1 US gallon of water. Use every 14 days during active growth and flowering once extra feeding is due. Wet the root zone and let excess drain; the gallon is a mixing batch, not this pot's serving. Do not feed a waterlogged or wilted plant; correct its watering problem first. Follow your purchased US package if directions differ, and use only one ongoing feeding program.

Check the manufacturer's product page ↗

Use the named US formulation. A different product or concentration needs different directions. The amount mixed is a batch, not a dose to pour into one pot.

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03 / WHAT HAPPENS NEXT

When to expect flowers

A nursery start with buds can give you color soon after it settles in. Flowering depends on light, weather, and the particular plant; a tiny start will not fill the pot on day one.

When to plant petunias outdoors

Plant outside after frost risk has passed and the weather has warmed. This first-pot plan treats petunia as a seasonal outdoor flower.

For regional planting windows, find your local Cooperative Extension office ↗.

Something looking off?

Why plenty of leaves but few flowers?

Check sunlight before increasing fertilizer. Petunias flower less in shade. Remove faded flowers and check that the roots are draining well; feed only when the existing program calls for it.

The stems are long with flowers only at their tips. What now?

On this compact multiflora, pinch back leggy tips just above a healthy leaf to encourage side shoots. This removes some flowers temporarily. Check light as well; trimming does not correct a shady position. Do not automatically use the same pinching routine on spreading or milliflora types.

Why is it drooping when the pot feels wet?

Do not add another drink or flower food automatically. Check that the drainage holes are open and the saucer is empty. Waterlogged roots and root diseases can cause trouble; persistent wilt needs a closer check, not a stronger fertilizer dose. Ask local Extension if the cause is unclear.

Pot spacing and choosing flower food

Leave one compact plant room to grow

Our 12-inch pot with one compact start is a simple editorial layout. It may look open at first; it is not an instantly packed retail hanging basket.

Understand what the named flower food can do

This is one US product option, not proof that extra phosphorus guarantees more flowers. Its outdoor rate is 1 tablespoon per US gallon, not the much lower indoor rate. The 14-day interval is the slower end of the manufacturer's 7–14-day directions and fits this compact container plan. It is not a trial result or a schedule for every spreading petunia.

Help with your next step.

Check the starter food in your mix

Read the potting-mix bag before beginning a second feeding program.

Make sure the pot can drain

Check the holes and saucer before treating a wet, drooping plant as thirsty.

BEHIND THIS GUIDE

Where the advice comes from.

Plant care is based on the sources below. Planting layouts and beginner routines combine that guidance into one practical plan; they are editorial choices, not results from a Plant Care Steps growing trial.

- University of Minnesota: compact types, care, and seed starting ↗
  https://extension.umn.edu/garden-and-home/yard-and-garden/gardening-in-minnesota/growing-petunias
- NC State: garden petunia identity and growing conditions ↗
  https://plants.ces.ncsu.edu/plants/petunia-x-hybrida/
- Illinois Extension: feeding container gardens ↗
  https://extension.illinois.edu/container-gardens/fertilizing
- Manufacturer: US fertilizer formula and application directions ↗
  https://scottsmiraclegro.com/en-us/brands/miracle-gro/products/plant-food-and-care/miracle-gro-water-soluble-bloom-booster-flower-food/3001921.html
- Manufacturer: starter feed in the named potting mix ↗
  https://scottsmiraclegro.com/en-us/brands/miracle-gro/products/potting-mix/miracle-gro-organic-potting-mix/78951430.html
- Iowa State: checking container moisture and nutrient supply ↗
  https://yardandgarden.extension.iastate.edu/how-to/care-plants-growing-containers

Something needs updating? Suggest a correction

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Compiled with AI assistance. These first-edition guides have not yet had an independent horticultural review. Read our editorial approach.