Basic Hypertufa Pots

Hypertufa was developed in the 1930s to replicate the stone troughs that were popular among English gardeners in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The lightweight, porous pots are ideal for creative gardeners AND plants needing good drainage.

Materials Needed

- 1 part Perlite
- 1 part Portland Cement
- 1 part Peat Moss
- Water
- Dust masks

- Goggles
- Molds (plastic pots, yogurt cups, etc.)
- Mold release spray (cooking spray) or plastic wrap
- Concrete/masonry stain (optional)

Basic Instructions

1. *Choose mold*: Make a mold from two nested vessels, so you can pour the mixture in the space between them. Both should have sides that are straight or taper out; the gap between them should be at least 3/4 inch for smaller vessels and 1 1/2 inches for larger ones.

2. *Mix materials*: Wearing gloves and a dust mask, mix equal parts white Portland cement (gray can be substituted for non-tinted vessels), perlite, and peat moss in a large bin; stir in masonry stain if desired. Add water gradually to reach the desired consistency (you want a consistency similar to cottage cheese).

3. *Fill mold*: Coat vessels with mold-release spray (cooking spray or plastic wrap also work well). Work mixture into an outer mold to a 1-inch depth for smaller vessels or a 2-inch depth for larger ones. Set an interior mold inside, centering it (you can fill it with sand to steady it). Continue adding mixture between vessels. Cover loosely with plastic; let set for at least 24 hours.

4. *Finish hypertufa*: After 24 hours (or more) remove mold, drill holes into the bottom of pot using a masonry bit, for drainage; smooth the top edge of pot with a planer file. Wrap it lightly with plastic, and let cure for *at least three weeks* before planting in or moving hypertufa outside.

Advanced: Now get creative! After you've got the basics down, use different materials (bubble wrap, leaves, mesh, wire brushing, etc) to add texture to your creations!

(Adapted from Martha Stewart Living, March 2010)