Terrarium Fundamentals

1. **Container choices.** Have you determined the plants you want in the vessel? If so, that is certainly a big factor in your selection.
   - Glass
   - Colored Glass- Light in color and kept closer to natural light
   - Plastic- Can happen, good children’s option
   - Mouth size- decides Hand or Tweezers
   - Covered vs. open Moisture determiner
   - Wardian Case, fish bowl, brandy sniffer, mason jar, spice jar, vase, candle holder, a cloche cover...once you start looking the possibilities are seemingly endless!
   Where to acquire such objet d’art of glass? Dollar store, floral supply, garage sale, curbside on garbage day, supermarket, pet store, garden center, the garage... You get the idea.........

2. **Plant Selection** If you already have the plant or plants, then that has guided your container selection. However, if you found a great container, and you want to create a terrarium...
   You could go for succulents with an open container that would appreciate more sunlight, or assorted other great terrarium plants such as:

Hypoestes (polka dot)  
Soleirolii (Baby Tears)  
Tillandsia (air plants)  
Fittonia (Nerve Plant)  
Ferns ferns ferns  
Selaginella (Club Moss)  
Pilea sp.  
Saxifraga stolinifera(Strawberry begonia)

Miniature orchids  
Creeping fig  
Sagina (Irish Moss)  
Cactus.succulents  
Peperomia  
Miniature Begonias  
Miniature African violets
And with all these choices you could highlight a specimen plant or create a landscape using an assortment.

3. **Materials you will need.**
   - Course sand
   - Pea gravel
   - Potting mix (if planting succulents one formulated for that)
   - Activated charcoal (not needed for an open container)
   - A stick or planting item to create hole
   - Spray bottle

4. **Accessories** are optional but have some fun with it
   - Whether your theme is animals, beach, dinosaurs, glass beads, nature, Asian, there is a lot to be found out there.
   - You can look in the aquatics section of a pet store, the toy section, dollhouse accessories, craft stores, dollar stores, back to the garage, or just about anywhere!

5. **Care for your new terrarium**
   - **Heat:** Closed glass containers trap and hold heat, and excessive heat is perhaps the main cause of death in terrariums. It is important that terrariums not be placed above radiators or in direct sunlight.
   - **Light:** A newly planted terrarium should be placed in shade for about a week. Then adjust light according to the requirements of the plants. Most terrariums do better in diffused or filtered light than direct sunlight. Artificial light can also be used.
   - **Too much sun:** Leaves wilt and develop burned spots. Move the terrarium to a shadier spot.
   - **Too little light:** Plants develop tall, thin stems that are weak and unable to hold up leaves. Leaves are pale and fragile. Increase amount of light slowly.
   - **Water:** Open terrarium: Test soil before watering. For plants that like moist soil, the top earth should feel barely moist before you add water. For cacti and succulents, touch below the surface layer. Lower soil should be only slightly damp.
   - Closed terrarium: These should rarely if ever need water.
   - **Too dry:** Leaves wilt and look pale. Moss becomes brown or faded. Add a little water and mist leaves with spray bottle
   - **Too much water:** Excessive water encourages the growth of molds and causes plant decay. If terrarium walls have more than 25% condensation, remove the cover until walls clear. In a closed terrarium, there should be only occasional clouding.
   - **Molds and Mildew:** The presence of mold or mildew indicates that something is wrong. The terrarium may contain too much water. Air circulation may be poor. Correct this by drying out, with open lid and air circulation