



Container Gardening

Gardening in containers is a great way to add color and natural beauty to your environment. Accentuate a deck or patio with colorful pots of annuals. Fill window boxes with trailing blooms so you can enjoy the view from inside and out. Take advantage of the flexibility of container gardens to decorate an area for a party and then move them back after the festivities are over. Use containers on steps, balconies, fences; and around trees, mailboxes and flagpoles.

1. Select a container that has a bottom hole for drainage.
2. Use a well-draining potting mix such as *ferti·lome* Ultimate Potting Mix.
3. Add a slow-release fertilizer like *ferti·lome* Start-N-Grow, and **Soil Moist** to increase the moisture holding ability of the potting soil. Fertilize during the season with *ferti·lome* Blooming & Rooting (9-59-8) soluble plant food to promote more blooms.
4. Choose your plants according to the sun exposure they will receive — full sun, afternoon shade or shade. (See other side for plant suggestions.)
5. Place plants closer together than you would if planting in the ground, but allow a little space for growth.

Check moisture daily. To determine if your plants need water, stick your finger into the soil. If the soil feels dry give it water until it's running out of the drainage hole.

Design Tips

1. Use a variety of plants for color and texture.
2. Plant taller varieties toward the center or back of the container, depending on whether it will be viewed from one side or all around.
3. Surround the center plant with low to medium growing plants.
4. Finish with trailing plants around the edge.

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Annuals for Full Sun

(need 1/2 day sun)

Angelonia
Blue Daze (Evolvulus)
Cosmos
Dahlberg Daisy
Diamond Frost Euphorbia
Gazania
Gomphrena
Hibiscus
Lantana
Marigold
Melopodium
Mexican Heather
Pentas
Purslane
Rose Moss
Salvia (Blue)
Scavolea
Sunflower
Vinca
Wave Petunia
Zinnia

Annuals for Afternoon

Shade

Ageratum
Alyssum
Bacopa
Begonia (bronze leaf)
Bidens
Celosia
Dahlia
Dianthus
Diascia
Geranium
Heliotrope
Lotus Vine
Margarita Daisy
Million Bells
Nemesia
Petunia
Salvia
Snapdragon
Straw Flower
Sun Coleus
Verbena

Annuals for Shade

Begonia
Caladium
Coleus
Impatiens
Lobelia
Mimulus
Torenia

Accent Plants

(most work in afternoon shade to shade)

Asparagus Fern	Sweet Potato Vine
Dracaena Spike	Swedish Ivy
Dusty Miller	Tradescantia
Fiber Optic Grass	Wire Vine
Ivy	Vinca Vine
Licorice Plant	



Create Sensational Pots and Planters

Gone are the days when you could feel good about just picking up a couple red geraniums and some pink wax begonias. The pressure is on. Your pots and planters need panache! So before you head out to buy plants for your porch, deck or patio, learn what it takes to create planters with style.

Plan the structure

When you're selecting plants in 4" or 6" pots, you need to think about their eventual height, shape and growth habit. Most plants are either upright, broad or trailing. The most successful container combinations usually include at least one of each form. We call them **Thrillers, Fillers and Spillers**.

Start with a tall, upright plant (thriller), such as Purple Fountain Grass (*Pennisetum setaceum* 'Rubrum') or a fancy-leaved, dwarf canna lily. Add one or two broad, mid-height plants (fillers) such as heliotrope, coleus, African daisies (*osteospermum*), or dwarf dahlias. Then select one or two trailing forms (spillers), such as ivy geranium, sweet potato vine, bacopa, or licorice plant.

Another sure-fire way to create a strong, architectural statement is to place just one bold plant in the container. Consider flanking an entryway with a pair of dwarf Alberta spruce. A clump of ornamental grass, such as feather reed grass, makes a bold statement. Or a trailing form; such as a tall urn filled with nothing but a burgundy-colored sweet potato vine.

Consider the growing conditions

Think about where the pot will be located and then select plants that will like living there. Plant labels usually list sun/shade requirements. It's also important to combine plants with similar moisture requirements.

Contrast textures

A mix of coarse- and fine-textured foliage helps create interest in plantings. Foliage is just as important as color in creating a successful container planting. Think about the size of the leaves and their surface texture. Leaf textures range from waxy (ivy geraniums) to shiny (croton), to prickly (asparagus fern) or velvety (dusty miller). Contrasting foliage really grabs the eye.

Be bold with color

Don't be afraid to try some bold color combinations. Generate energy and excitement by combining complimentary colors such as purple and orange or yellow and blue. Or paint a more visually soothing composition by limiting yourself to related colors such as blues and pinks or reds and yellows. You can also create a stunning, very sophisticated look using nothing but greens, whites and silvers.

When selecting flower and foliage colors, you may also want to think about the color of your house, the color of your deck or patio pavers, and the color in adjacent beds and borders. That said, pots and planters present a great opportunity to experiment with dramatic color combinations that you'd probably never dare to use in your permanent landscape.

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THRILLERS

Agave
Angelonia
Bamboo
Banana
Canna
Corydalis
Dahlia (upright varieties)
Dracena
Elephant ear (taro)
Fuchsia (upright varieties)
Grasses
Hibiscus
Millet
Papyrus
Phormium (New Zealand flax)

FILLERS

Argyranthemum (Marguerite daisy)
Begonia
Caladium
Coleus
Diascia (twinspur)
Euphorbia (especially Diamond Frost)
Impatiens
Nasturtium (mounding types)
Nemesia
Osteospermum (African daisy osteospermum)
Pelargonium (geranium)
Petunia
Salvia (small-flowered types)
Verbena

SPILLERS

Callibrachoa
Dichondra
Helichrysum (licorice plant)
Ipomoea (sweet potato vine)
Lobelia
Torenia (wishbone flower)

Plants For Sun

African daisy (osteospermum)
Alyssum
Argyranthemum (chrysanthemum)
Brugmansia (angel's trumpet)
Calendula
Dahlias
Geranium
Heliotrope
Petunia
Salvia
Scaveola
Verbena
Zinnia

Plants For Hot, Dry Sites

Aeonium
Echeveria
Gomphrena
Geranium (ivy-leaf and scented-leaf)
Kalanchoe
Lantana
Portulaca (moss rose)
Sedum
Texas sage (Salvia greggii)
Zinnia angustifolia

Plants That Look Good Alone

Agave
Bougainvillea
Fuchsia
Sweet bay (Laurus nobilis)
Boxwood (Buxus sempervirens)
Yucca
Cordyline
Phormium (New Zealand flax)
Tibouchina (Princess flower)
Bamboo
Chamaecyparis (False cypress)
Arborvitae (Thuja occidentalis)
Monterey cypress (Cupressus macrocarpa)
Dwarf Alberta spruce (Picea glauca)

Plants For Shade

Flowering maple (abutilon)
Impatiens
Begonia
Hosta
Caladium
Coleus
Persian shield (Strobilanthes dyeranus)

Ornamental Grasses

Feather reed grass (Calamagrostis x acutiflora)
Big bluestem (Andropogon gerardii)
Fountain grass (Pennisetum setaceum 'Rubrum')
Tufted fescue (Festuca amethystina)

Information from gardeners.com