

Container Gardening To Enhance Landscapes



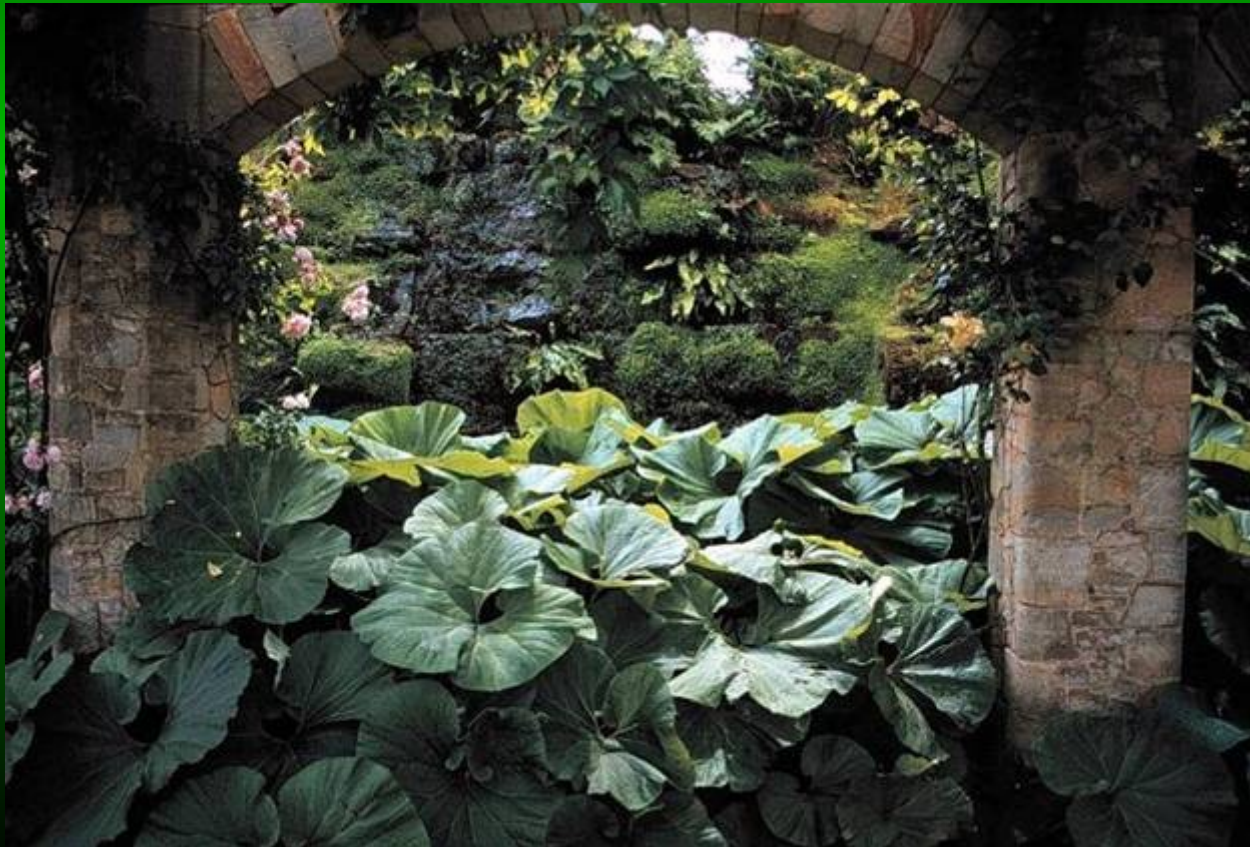
Larry A. Sagers
Extension Horticulture Specialist
Utah State University
Thanksgiving Point Office



Among the popular gardening trends of the past few years is a renewed interest growing plants in areas besides the garden



Planting plants in containers is a rich historic pastime



It is hard to identify the first container gardens but Egyptians, Babylonians and others planted container gardens



Romans used terracotta vessels or clay pots for container growing



In royal gardens of Europe, elaborate container plantings graced the palace grounds



Today's interest is spurred by many developments in the horticultural industry



While most containers adapt to grow plants, durable, lightweight, attractive pots make container gardening easier



Any garden center carries a myriad of styles, sizes and color of pots to delight any gardener



They are usually frost proof,
less likely to break while being handled and
moving them does not require visits to the
chiropractor



Use a variety of sizes and shapes of pots with four common characteristics



Avoid dark, black pots unless they are going into another container



Black pots get too hot so, unless you are trying to grow steamed plant roots, select a lighter colored container



Avoid growing plants in containers that are too small



Use containers that are at least 16" in diameter and hold several gallons of media so they do not dry out too quickly



If you have large cast iron or concrete planters, grow the plants in other containers and then slip them inside the heavy unwieldy containers



Another important improvement for growing plants is artificial soils



These soil-free mixes or peat-based soils are light weight and they have excellent water and air drainage



They are free of harmful insects, diseases and weeds so they are excellent growing mediums



Use artificial or soil-free mixes



Commercial mixes have peat moss,
vermiculite, and perlite



These mixes are free of pathogens and drain freely so there are no problems with root rot or over-watering



Address the horticultural aspects of growing



Plant roots need oxygen, so make certain they have good drainage



Make certain all of the containers have holes so they drain well



The quickest way to kill container planters is to have them sit in water



Adequate drainage is essential for all container plantings



To help plants bloom profusely, include slow release fertilizer such as Osmocote in the pots



You can use liquids and fertilize them
every time you water to keep the plants
blooming



Other developments are the wonderful new plants that make showy, long blooming containers for any growing area



Many new plants and an abundance of exciting new cultivars are some of the best performers in containers



Many trail over the side of the pot with masses of blooms in a myriad of colors



Decide where you want to grow the container and select the plants accordingly



Some plants work well in shaded, protected areas and others work best in full sun



Plants for shade are coleus, many kinds of begonias and impatiens



For full sun, consider some of these favorites



'Imagination' Verbena



‘Symphony’ African Daisies or
Osteospermum African Daisy are larger
and showier than older types



Diascia Hybrids



For trailing plants, try the ornamental
sweet potatoes or Ipomeas



The lime green variety is 'Marguerite'



The dark purple black colored variety is
'Blackie'



The multicolored variety is 'Tricolor'



Bidens

Bidens



Calibrachoa

Calibrachoa hybrid



Ornamental Pepper

Capsicum annuum



Vinca

Catharanthus roseus



Strawflower *Helichrysum*



Edging Lobelia

Lobelia erinus



Nemesia
Nemesia strumosa



Geranium

Pelargonium x hortorum



Annual Fountain Grass

Pennisetum setaceum



Petunia

Petunia x hybrida



Creeping Zinnia
Sanvitalia procumbens



Marigold

Tagetes hybrids



Garden Verbena

Verbena x hybrida



'Twilight Blue Sparks' Verbena



Superbena, 'Pink Shades' Verbena,



Narrowleaf Zinnia

Zinnia angustifolia



New, exciting plants are added each season



Planting The Containers

- The formula is simple:
- Thrills
- Spills
- Fills



When creating containers use taller
flowers for the center
These are the thrills



Fill in with some medium plants
These are the fills



Finally add trailing varieties to cascade
over the container edges
These are the spills



You will end up with some of the most attractive plantings ever to grace your garden



When growing container gardens, keep care of them for the entire summer



Many people plant or purchase container gardens in the spring and they look good



Neglecting light, water and fertilizer often make the containers become overgrown and straggly



Cut them back and or deadhead them
and keep them well watered and
fertilized



Then they will stay attractive through the entire season



Consider creating different types of container plantings with new plant varieties



For educational classes offered by Utah State University Extension on this and other subjects log onto www.thanksgivingpoint.com

