Container Gardening
To Enhance Landscapes
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Among the popular gardening trends of the past few years is a renewed interest in 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 annum*
Vinca
*Catharanthus roseus*
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.
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