

Why Make Container Gardens?

You want the natural beauty of a garden, but space is limited. Container Gardening allows you to create beautiful living bouquets to enjoy during every season of the year. You will marvel at what can be done in a simple pot on the step or window sill. Container gardening offers dimensions beyond the limitations of the container itself. Containers are an open canvas upon which the gardener is free to express themselves. The colors and type of flowers are limited only by the gardener's imagination. Container gardens provide landscape space on a small scale.

Tips for Making Container Gardens

Mix plants with at least three textures of foliage to make a container garden interesting.

Use plenty of plants that are foliage plants (with no flowers) in your designs. In most cases, foliage color, leaf shape, and texture are just as important as the flowers themselves.

Some good foliage contrasts would include: downy with glossy; dark with gray; small with large; yellow with violet.

Use colorful foliage (like Coleus) to "echo" the color of flowers in the container.

Vary the shape of the flowers in the container garden to add interest.

Bicolor flowers are becoming more available and are great for color echoing.

Sometimes you just have to do some "snipping and tucking" of faster growing plants when they are mixed in with slower growing ones. Otherwise, you will lose the slower ones and your design gets destroyed.

Vegetative annuals mix well with other annuals, perennials, tropical, and bulbs. Everything and anything goes as long as it is pleasing to your eye.

Nothing lasts forever! Container gardens need to be gardened. Plants in container gardens need to be trimmed, dead-headed and replaced.

Manage the container

1st Year: Do some experimenting with combinations of colors, species, and new introductions during the season.

2nd Year: Eliminate any combinations that didn't work so well and try new combinations. Develop a "Basic" group of combinations that grow together well and grow those in large quantity.

Each Year: Keep records so that adjustments as to number of plugs per pot for different species and total number of plugs per pot, can be made. Add new plants to combinations that worked. Make adjustments to your arrangement.

Design Principles

There are a few design principles to consider when planning container gardens.

Form: Vary the form of the plants and plant material you choose; use tall linear species to add height; mounded species to add mass; and low growing, cascading species to fill in, add depth, and soften the edges of the container.

Balance: A feeling of stability. Symmetrical balance is equal, almost identical elements on each side of a central axis, with the highest point over the center. Asymmetrical balance is when the two sides of the central axis are not mirror images but have the same visual weight.

Enjoy your Garden