

Container Gardening – Spring / Summer

Container gardening is a beautiful and flexible way to bring color, texture, and creativity into any outdoor space. Whether you're working with a small balcony, large garden, or dealing with less-than-ideal soil, containers let you garden anywhere. They can create focal points, highlight pathways, or accentuate corners of your yard. Mixing plant textures, shapes, and colors adds visual interest, and there's plenty of room to be playful. Use your imagination and let your containers reflect your personal style!

Container Choices

Pick a color palette that matches the colors of your house or compliments your existing pots and containers. Ensure you have proper drainage to keep your plants from drowning. You may want to group your containers to make a massive display or use a single container as a spotlight. If you group containers, try a single type of plant in one and another full of color and texture. The possibilities are endless!

Plant Choices

As you choose your plants consider how much time you plan to re-plant each season. Hardy perennials will come back year-after-year while annuals will need to be replaced at least each year, sometimes more often. Are you looking for spectacular color or is depth and texture more important? Consider the light conditions (sun or shade) of your container location and pair with the proper plants. Keeping in mind that container plants require more water than those planted in your garden, make sure your pots have access to a water source. If the spot is remote, drought tolerant plants are a great choice. Be creative and remember, containers can be easily changed and moved.

Planting Specifics

Choose a single plant, considered a **Thriller**, as the focal point of your container. This is usually placed in the center of the planting area and sets the tone. If your container is against a wall or in a corner, your focal plant can be planted in the back. Adjust placement to the configuration of your pots. You will work outward from here by adding other complimentary plants. Match colors and plant types to complete the look you want. This will give you a permanent starting point each time you decide to make changes throughout the year. Next, add some **Fillers** that mound to give your container some depth. Change these out with the seasons to keep a fresh look. Finish up with **Spillers**. They cascade outside the pot, add form, and tie everything together.

Planting your container

- Fill the container about 2/3 of the way with potting soil.
- If you live in a windy area or are using a tall, narrow container, consider adding sand, drain rock, or broken tiles to the bottom before adding soil. This adds weight and helps stabilize the container against tipping.*
- Mix fertilizer in with the potting soil if needed.
- Carefully remove plants from pots and loosen the roots.
- Add the plants to your container.
- Fill in the areas between with soil and gently pack. Do not compress the soil as this will remove the air pockets the roots need for survival.
- Water the container until water comes out the bottom. This means the soil is saturated.
- Check for any gaps caused by the water and fill the soil as needed.
- If the container is large, consider filling the bottom with plastic bottles, broken pots, or even pinecones!

Maintenance & Care of your container

- Water thoroughly and regularly as your plants have restricted areas for water access.
- Use fertilizer each spring and throughout the growing season.
- Deadheading, pinching, and pruning your plants will encourage new growth and blooms.
- Don't be afraid to pull out a non-performing plant and replace it with a similar one.
- Check regularly for pests. In many cases, simply removing the damaged plants will eliminate the issue. You may also spray with a non-toxic fungicide or insecticide.
- As annuals die with colder weather, the perennials will have more room for growth. Adding cold hardy plants, for the cooler season, is another great option.

Plants for Container Gardening

Thrillers	Fillers	Spillers
Aspidistra – Cast Iron Plant	Ageratum	Ajuga *
Caladium	Alyssum	Alyssum
Canna	Alternanthera	Asparagus Fern
Coleus - Tall	Angelonia	Bacopa
Colocasia – Elephant Ear	Begonia - Tuberous	Bidens
Cordyline *	Begonia - Wax	Brachyscome – Swan River Daisy
Cosmos	Brachyscome	Calibrachoa
Chamaecyparis pisifera *	Calathea	Creeping Charlie *
Cryptomeria japonica *	Calendula	Creeping Jenny *
Croton	Coleus - Medium	Diascia
Ctenanthe	Cuphea – Cigar Plant	Dichondra
Dahlia – Tall only	Cyclamen *	Felicia – Blue Marguerite Daisy
Daisy - African	Dahlias - Dwarf	Fuchsia - Trailing
Daisy - Euryops	Dianthus	Geraniums- Ivy - Trailing
Daisy - Marguerite	Dusty Miller *	Hedera - Ivy *
Echinacea *	Euphorbia - Annual	Helichrysum - Licorice Plant
Ensete - Red Banana	Euphorbia - Perennial *	Iberis – Candytuft *
Euonymus japonica *	Gazania	Lamium *
Ferns - Evergreen *	Geraniums	Laurentia *
Fuchsia - Hardy *	Geraniums – Martha Washington	Leptinella *
Geraniums - Zonal	Gerbera Daisy	Lobelia -Trailing
Geraniums – Martha Washington	Grasses *	Lophospermum
Holly – Sky Pencil	Hebe *	Lotus Vine
Hinoki Cypress *	Heliotrope	Mazus reptans *
Lemon Cypress *	Heuchera *	Mandevilla
Millet - Ornamental	Hostas *	Nasturtium
New Zealand Flax *	Hypoestes	Petchoa
Persian Shield	Impatiens - Double	Petunias – Waves -Trailing
Pinus Mugo *	Impatiens - New Guinea	Plectranthus – Swedish Ivy
Podocarpus *	Impatiens - Single	Potato Vine
Rudbeckia	Iresine	Portulaca
Salvia - Annual	Kalanchoe	Sanvitalia
Salvia – Perennial *	Lantana	Scaevola - Fan Flower
Sanchezia	Lobelia - Clumping	Sweet Peas
Snapdragon - Tall	Marigolds	Thunbergia – Black Eye Susan Vine
Strobilanthes	Mimulus	Tradescantia
Stromanthe	Nemesia	Verbena
Thuja * - Tall, Narrow	Oxalis *	Veronica *
Yucca *	Pansies *	Vinca - Perennial *
Zinnia	Petunia - Upright	Wire Vine *
	Phlox – Upright *	
	Poppies - Annual	
	Snapdragon - Short	
	Vinca - Annual	

Shrubs and Perennials for Container Grouping

(This selection of plants is great for planting solo as well as in your groupings)

Blueberries *	Euonymus – Shrubs *	Heuchera *	New Zealand Flax *
Brugmansia	Euphorbia *	Hinoki Cypress *	Rosemary *
Buxus – Boxwood *	Gardenia	Hosta *	Rose – Shrub *
Caryopteris – Bluebeard *	Grasses – Evergreen *	Hydrangea *	Rose – Tree *
Choisya – Mexican Orange *	Heather *	Hydrangea – Tree *	Spirea *
Conifers – Dwarf *	Hebe *	Hydrangea – Dwarf Varieties *	Thuja – Dwarf *
Cryptomeria *	Helleborus *	Japanese Maple – Dwarf *	
Datura	Herbs – Annual	Japanese Maple – Laceleaf *	
Echinacea *	Herbs – Perennial *	Lavender *	

***Hardy Plants**