



Container gardens have the power to transform the areas we live in. They can make decks, porches, patios and roof gardens more welcoming spaces. Creating jaw-dropping containers is easy if you keep a few things in mind.

1. Choose a container.

When choosing a container, think outside the box. Windowboxes are fine for planting but there are many other alternatives. Basically, gardens can be planted in anything, provided the container has holes for drainage; if necessary drill holes in the container or add a layer of gravel to the bottom to ensure that the roots do not get waterlogged and rot. Antique milk pails, wine crates, even old boots make fine containers and add an extra touch to your garden. When it comes to containers you are only limited by your own creativity.



2. Know the right dirt.

Typical garden soil is too heavy for container gardens. Choose a quality potting soil that is light, and drains easily. Because daily watering leaches fertilizer out of the pots feeding on a regular basis is important. Either add a slow-release fertilizer to your container, or buy potting mix with it already added. For those who go away often a self-watering container might be a good investment.

3. Find the right plant for the right place.

Most importantly, know your plants. Do not plant flowers that love sun in a shade garden or vice-versa. It is a recipe for failure. Know the cultural requirements of your plants and plant accordingly. Try to vary the forms and textures of your plants. For example, a daisy-shaped flower with spikes, or sharp-leaved plants with delicate trailing ones. I try not to use too many colors but find that staying with two colors in varying tones works well. In the end, however, it's your creation so plant what you like. And don't be afraid to try the unexpected: herbs, small shrubs, perennials. There is no rule that says you can only use annuals in containers.

The best thing about containers is that they are temporary. Each year is a chance to try something new and that's what makes them so much fun.





Thrillers (AKA A FOCAL POINT)

- Abutilon
- Brugmansia
- Caladium (sh)
- Colocasia (sh)
- Cordyline (sh)
- Dahlia
- Hibiscus
- Leonotis
- Millet
- Musa

Fillers (MID-HEIGHT TO COMPLEMENT THE “THRILLER”)

- Alternanthera
- Ageratum “Artist” series
- Asparagus fern (sh)
- Coleus
- Fuchsia (sh)
- Cuphea
- Dianthus
- Gazania
- Lantana
- Osteospermum
- Plectranthus (sh)



Spillers (TRAILING PLANTS)

- Artemesia ‘Silver Brocade’
- Bacopa (Sutera)
- Bidens
- Callibrachoa
- Dichondra
- Ipomea, Sweet potato vine
- Lobelia ‘Laguna’ series
- Lotus
- Lysimachia (sh)
- Muehlenbeckia (sh)
- Sedum ‘Ogon’
- Verbena

sh: Shade tolerant

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