

Container Gardening



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Why ?

Mobility. What gardener hasn't wished that a plant grew somewhere else?
Plants in pots are easy to move around (even inside).

Focus. Potted plants and pots create interest. Grouped in strategic places, they break the monotony of a terrace or a patio and create a scene.

Pizzazz. Nestle containers of bright annuals among duller plants in the garden for added color

Limitation. Contain thugs that are too invasive to let loose in the garden, such as mint or ornamental grasses.

Scope. Plants that require a longer growing season than you have to offer can be started indoors to bloom outside in summer and fall.

Reachable. You can reach it and the rabbits can't.



Let's Start with the pot

Homemade pots



Some tips for container selection

Not too porous

Not too dark

Well drained

Protect roots from freezing



Location, Location, Location

Ask yourself 2 more things:

Am I ever going to move it? Indoors, another spot in the yard.

Sunny, Shady or Partially Sunny spot? Will determine type of plants.

WIND!

Pick the pot accordingly.



Let's start with the soil

How Much soil do I need? You only need about 6 inches more depth than the container that the plant came in. You can fill the rest of the pot with styrofoam beads or old plastic pots. Be careful not to let critters have access.



Place rocks at the bottom to prevent soil from leaching out.

All-Purpose Potting Mix

8 quarts potting soil with vermiculite or perlite

1 quart coarse sand

4 quarts sphagnum peat moss, compost, and/or rotted manure

Watering

You need more water than if the plants were in the ground because of evaporation.

Extend the drip system through the bottom of the pot.

Use mulch on top to keep water from evaporating.

If you can't hand water every 2-3 days, get innovative. Look online for ideas.



Fertilize

Add organic fertilizer once a month during growing season.

Winter over

Protect top and bottom from freezing if needed. Move next to house to get radiant heat from house and less wind exposure.

Container Garden Design Basics

By applying the principles of color blending and mixing leaf textures and plant shapes, you can follow one simple recipe to create winning combinations. Three ingredients are all it takes to plant one gorgeous pot after another -- it's as easy as one, two, three.



One: Thriller

The first ingredient is an attention-grabbing plant, also called a thriller. This plant takes center stage in a container, serving as the star of the design production. All other plants relate to this player in some way.

Usually the thriller plant features an in-your-face shape with a strong upright growth habit. Thrillers typically unleash flower power by blooming nonstop all season, or they unfurl dramatic leaves.



Two: Filler

The second ingredient, known as the filler, complements the thriller, but it never steals the spotlight. These supporting players typically have rounded mound or misty shapes.

Fillers accomplish several tasks. They complement the thriller with leaf or flower color, texture, or other special characteristics. They help disguise the thriller's base and add colorful substance in the space between soil and thriller. Aim for fillers that grow to one-third to two-thirds the height of the thriller.

Place fillers around the thriller between it and the pot rim. For a pot that looks instantly full, use three fillers in a 14-inch pot. If you're willing to let plants slowly fill in, you can plant just two fillers: one in front and one in back, or, if they are in pots that will be in a corner or against a wall, one on each side of the thriller.



Three: Spiller

The third ingredient is a plant that trails over the edge of the container and helps tie it to its surroundings. It's called a spiller plant. When you're looking for a spiller, seek a plant with a sprawling shape. Leaf or flower color should contrast or echo that of the thriller and/or filler.

Plant spillers along pot edges in the openings left between filler plants. It might be a tight squeeze, but feel free to shove and shoehorn plants into place. Anticipate using two spillers^[L]_[SEP] for a 14-inch pot viewed from one side, or two or three spillers for a container viewed from all sides.



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Flowers



Dichondra



Variegated mint-leaf (*Plectranthus madagascariensis*) has exceptionally long trailing stems.

Ivy

Sun Container



Black-eyed Susan serves as a thriller, Dragon Wing begonia and 'Buddy' Gomphrena as fillers, and silver thyme as spiller.

Choosing the Plants

Don't mix sun and shade plants

Don't mix early and late bloomers

You can mix annuals and perennials

Go to your local greenhouse or go online for inspiration

herbs



veggies



annuals



Eye catching



Container Gardens can also be permanent above ground installations for veggies



Consider cover crop over winter or manure mulch. Rotate veggies.

Hanging baskets



Vertical gardens

