



Container Gardening Basics



Advantages to Gardening in Containers

No matter your budget, taste and gardening experience container gardening is right for you. Here are some great reasons why:

- **No Ground Necessary!** No digging or weeding, plus less pest damage.
- **Instant Garden Gratification-** Create a focal point, liven-up a static area, cover-up an eyesore, or improve an already wonderful garden display.
- **Movable and/or Changeable-** When you are bored with a plant remove it!
- **Small Space Gardens-** Great for city dwellers, patios, and porches.
- **Tender or Fickle Plants-** Now grow plants that require specific environments, soils, and protection (e.g., rock garden plants prefer dry, gritty soils not clay).
- **Comfort Gardening-** Physically challenged individuals can position their containers for comfortable gardening while seated or standing.

Selecting a Container

There are thousands of containers to choose from, so consider the materials in which they are made and where you are to display them in order to select a type.

- **Materials**
 1. **Terra cotta or Glazed Ceramics-** the classic choice with a lot of new updates, low to medium pricing, roots have good air exchange due to the porosity of the clay, requires protection in harsh winter environments, but if the drainage hole is kept clear year-round, they should be long lasting.
 2. **Stone or Concrete-** typically very formal looking, lasts forever and looks better as it ages, can be medium to high priced and very heavy.
 3. **Plastic or Resin-** very light pots that can be movable, low to high in price depending upon “realistic” looking qualities, can become brittle in winter. Foam resin can help insulate plants’ roots.
 4. **Wood or Baskets-** under-utilized, easy to build, can last forever depending upon craftsman ship and polyurethane protectants, low to medium price except for cedar products.
 5. **Metals-** copper, galvanized steel, iron all great choices, can look contemporary to old world, may be heavy to light, and long lasting.
 6. **Recycled Materials-** old boots, sinks, tires, etc. give high garden personality at minimum cost.
- **Types**
 1. Hanging baskets or pots
 2. Wall planters or sconces
 3. Window boxes or baskets
 4. Floors planters, pots, troughs, cradles, bowls
 5. Misc. planters, tiered planters, topiary forms, pedestals, self-watering, etc.

Essentials of Container Gardening

- **Drainage/Liner-** hardware cloth, gravel, Styrofoam peanuts, coco-liners, sphagnum moss, etc.
- **Potting mix-** Petitti Potting Soil or Petitti Planting Mix for larger containers.
- **Fertilizer-** Liquid vs. solid. For easier maintenance, Angelo recommends a granular, slow-release food like Osmocote® and/or Plant-tone®.
- **Water-** Hydretain™ or polymers like Soil Moist® can help reduce watering maintenance.
- **Theme-** formal, informal, simple, eclectic, tropical, Asian, monochromatic, etc.

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Plant Selection

- **Know your site-** sun, wind, rain, snow, and temperatures to be considered.
- **Do research-** go to the library, get on the web, visit our stores, and find some inspiration.
- **Flower vs. Foliage-** always remember to incorporate exciting foliage plants in your container garden to provide interest when the flowers are not in bloom like Coleus, Dichondra, Lamium, sweet potato and licorice vines.
- **Plant shape or growth habit-** consider a combination of upright plants, medium sized fillers, and trailing plants “thriller (T), filler (F) & spiller (S)” to create depth and interest in the container garden.

Plants:	Annuals/ Tropicals	Perennials	Fruits/ Vegetables	Herbs	Trees/ Shrubs
Comments:	All do excellent in containers, site & habit important	Best with invasive or fickle plants; protect over winter in the garage	Most work well; try a combination of bush & trailing types	Most work well especially annual types that you can bring indoors for the winter	Best if dwarf/ miniature varieties are used; protect over winter in the garage
Suggestions:	Sun	Sun	Cold Crops	Annuals	Sun
	Alyssum F	Achillea F	Broccoli	Basil	Alberta Spruce
	Bacopa S	Alcea T	Brussel Sprouts	Borage	Barberry
	Bidens F,S	Armeria F	Cabbage	Calendula	Boxwood
	Cannas T	Artemisia F	Cauliflower	Chamomile	Cherry
	Citrus T	Bamboo T	Collards	Chevril	Crabapple
	Dahlia T	Campanula F,S	Endive	Cilantro	Dogwood, shrub
	Diascia F	Coreopsis F	Kale	Curry	Euonymus
	Dianthus F	Dianthus F	Kohlrabi	Dill	Forsythia
	Geranium T,F	Echinacea F	Lettuce	Fennel	Hinoki Cypress
	Heliotrope F	Gaillardia F	Radish	Hyssop	Juniper
	Hibiscus T	Grasses T	Spinach	Lavender, some	Lilac
	Lantana F,S	Geranium F	Warm Crops	Lemon Grass	Magnolia
	Mandevilla T	Hemerocallis F	Beans	Marjoram	Mugho Pine
	Nasturtium F	Iberis F,S	Beets	Parsley	Roses
	Nemesia F	Leucanthemum F	Blueberry	Pennyroyal	Spiraea
	Osteospermum F	Liatris T	Cantaloupe	Rosemary	Weigela
	Petunia F,S	Ligularia F,T	Carrots	Rue	Shade
	Pentas F	Oenothera T,S	Celery	Sage	Clethra
	Scaevola S	Papaver T	Corn	Salad Burnet	Daphne
	Salvia T	Sedum F,S	Cucumber	Savory	Dogwood, tree
	Vinca F	Veronica F	Figs	Scented Geranium	Fringe tree
	Verbena F,S	Shade	Gourds	Stevia	Holly
	Zinnia F	Anemone T	Honeydew	Tarragon	Hydrangea
	Shade	Astilbe T,F	Melons	Perennials	Japanese Maple
	Ageratum F	Brunnera F	Okra	Bee balm	Leucothoe
	Begonia F	Dicentra T,F	Onions	Catnip	Microbiota
	Browalia F	Epimedium F	Peppers	Chives	Mountain Laurel
	Caladium T	Helleborus T,F	Pumpkins	Flax	Pieris
	Coleus T,F	Heuchera F	Strawberries	Garlic	Rhododendron
	Cyclamen F	Hosta T,F	Squash, Summer	Lady’s Mantle	Viburnum
	Fuchsia F,S	Lamium F,S	Squash, Winter	Lavender	Boxwood
	Impatiens F	Liriope F,S	Swiss Chard	Mint	
	Lamium F,S	Myosotis F	Tomatoes	Mullein	
	Nicotiana F	Polygonatum T	Watermelon	Oregano	
	Pansy/ Viola F	Primula F	Zucchini	St. John’s Wort	
	Streptocarpella F	Tiarella F		Thyme	
	Snapdragon T	Trycirtis T,F		Valerian	
	Torenia F,S	Vinca S		Wormwood	