

Ever wanted to make your own hanging flower baskets or patio containers? This handout will guide you through selecting plants, planting them, and keeping your containers and baskets looking beautiful through the seasons.

**Containers can be made for sun or shade, edible, or full of colorful annuals and lasting perennials.**

## Choosing The Right Plants for Your Pot

When selecting your plants you will want to choose ones that have similar sun or shade needs. Once you have decided on sun or shade and how much room you have in your container, the fun begins!

### **Sun or Shade**

Obviously there are a lot of degrees of sun and shade. Every plant tag should tell you the sun or shade requirements of the plant. Generally, shade plants like bright indirect light and most of them enjoy the morning sun until 12. Part Shade plants really like to have some direct morning or midday sun. Part Sun plants are those that like to have at least 4 hours direct midday to afternoon sun. Sun plants need at least 6 hours of full direct sun- afternoon is best.

What happens when you put a plant where it doesn't prefer to be? Well, sometimes it works out fine. However more often than not, they will be prone to burning, overwatering, and pest issues. Plants with bright, dark, or variegated leaves may turn back to green. The spectrum of sun or shade needs corresponds like this.



Full Sun   Part Sun   Part Shade   Full shade

### **Room to Grow**

Making sure that roots have enough space for the whole season and having a nice full container are usually the tricks here. With annuals you usually want to use more plants, because they need to look good right away and will only last the season. Perennials need a little more root room if you plan to leave them in the container for more than a year. Clearly, it depends on your container. In general, for a 14 inch wide hanging basket 5 plants in a 4" pot would work great. If you plan on having trees or shrubs, such as bamboo, in a container- you will need to plan on pulling out the plants and pruning the roots every few years.

## Planting Your Containers

### **Design**

There are so many wonderful plants to choose from. Creating a successful design for your container can be simplified by using the Thriller, Filler and Spiller rule. Thrillers are generally taller showy plants. Fillers add fullness and body. Spillers are trailing or flowing plants that soften the edges of the pot. Choosing plants from each of these categories will help create a balanced and layered pot.

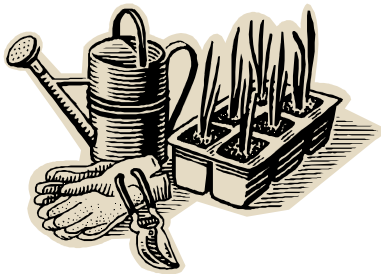
### **Planting Hanging Baskets**

1. For plastic or pulp pots: Gather your basket, plants, and all-purpose potting soil.  
For wire baskets: You can line it with moss or coir. If you have chosen to use moss, moisten it by presoaking it in a bucket of water. If you are using coir in your basket lay it in the frame. You can make holes in the liner to slide plants in the side if you wish, this works especially nice with Spillers.
2. Fill the basket 1/3 of the way with potting soil. Lightly moisten the potting soil if it is old or very dry.
3. Take your plants out of the pots and place them into the basket. It helps to gently loosen the roots of each plant to enhance root development. Fill dirt in

around the plants and firm the soil around them. Water well- until water comes out the bottom. Hang up and admire your beautiful basket, because you are done!

### **Planting Containers**

1. Fill your container 2/3 of the way with all-purpose Potting Soil.
2. Mix some fertilizer into the soil in the container. We have always had exceptional results with *E.B. Stone Sure Start*.
3. Moistening the soil so that it is damp is an important step if your potting soil is old or on the dry side. Most fresh bags of soil should take up water evenly when you water the plants in.
4. Plant your container. It helps to gently loosen the roots of each plant to enhance root development.
5. Fill the nooks and crannies with moist potting soil. Firm soil gently.
6. Water your newly planted container thoroughly (until water comes out the bottom) and enjoy!



### **Tips for When to's and How to's**

**When to plant:** Plant your containers and baskets as soon as 4" annual basket stuffers become available in nurseries. If there is danger of frost, bring the basket into an unheated garage or other sheltered area. If it is a container throw a sheet or piece of tarp over it for the night-don't forget to take it off during the day! The earlier you can get a start on your containers, the sooner they will be full.

**Water:** In a hot sunny spot you may need to water every day. Terra cotta pots in particular usually need more frequent watering. If you want to decrease water usage, mix Zeba in with the potting soil. Keep in mind water needs change with the weather. For best results poke your finger into the soil. If it is damp, no water is needed!

**Fertilizer:** You can mix a time release fertilizer in with the potting soil at planting time. Annuals are heavy feeders so if you want them to grow they need food! For best results with annuals use a liquid fertilizer every two weeks (or as directed on the package).

**Grooming:** Remove the spent old flowers to encourage new ones (deadhead) by pinching just below the spent blossom.

Written by Jemae McCanna

# Planting Baskets and Containers

## The Basics



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