

# Container Gardening Basics



## Container Selection

- Be sure your container has good drainage.
- Container should be slightly larger than the combined rootballs of the plants you will put into them. Containers that have a lot of unfilled space retain too much water and encourage root rot.

## Selecting Soil

- Always use an all-purpose potting soil that contains perlite, vermiculite, to allow for good drainage and compost, peat moss, or bark to provide organic matter that will hold moisture.

## Selecting Plants

- Mix different plant shapes that include plants that are spiky (usually in the center), mounding plants to fill in, and trailing plants that cascade over the sides.
- Use a variety of leaf colors and textures.

## Planting & Care

- Moisten potting soil before planting.
- To take up space in your large containers, turn plastic pots (e.g. one gallon pots) upside down and line the bottom with these to take up space. This will reduce the amount of soil you will need to fill the container.
- Plant to within 1" of the lip of your container, this will allow you to create a water reservoir when watering.
- After planting, water thoroughly.
- For the rest of the season, water when the top 1-2" of soil is dry, water thoroughly so that the water is coming out the bottom of your container to be sure you have saturated the soil.
- Use a slow release fertilizer or worm castings and apply several times throughout the season. Both of these can be added at the time of planting also.
- To encourage lots of annual blooms use a fertilizer high in phosphorous (e.g. 10-60-10).
- Deadhead your annuals throughout the season to keep looking fresh by removing spent blooms.