



Dramatic Container Combinations for Every Season

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THE APPEAL OF CONTAINER GARDENS:

- Containerized gardens open up the possibility for all individuals to have their own personal garden, even in the absence of a traditional garden. In addition, container gardening allows us to grow plant material in areas that we would otherwise be unable to do so
- Container gardens are moveable, resulting in portable potscapes, which allow for some freedom and experimentation from season to season. They can function as focal points or help to hide bare spots in the garden or on the patio or balcony.
- What is a container? Any structure, either small or large, that can hold growing media and support plant roots. All containers should have some means of drainage.
- Containers should be considered an investment. In the words of Thomas Hobbs, “*You have to love your container before you can begin to fill it*”. Some containers can be decorative and attractive garden features even if left unplanted.
- The growing media you choose will depend on plant selection. In general. All planting mixes should be porous and free draining. Never use straight topsoil or garden soil in your containers.
- All containers need to be regularly monitored for water needs. Because containers require frequent watering, nutrients are easily leached from the root zone, hence, regular fertilizing is necessary. Be sure to follow recommended rates. Products such as Soil Sponge, an organic alternative, will also help reduce watering.
- Just as **gardens should be viewed and enjoyed all year long**, so too should containers. **Containers in the garden should reflect all four seasons, including winter.** The possibilities are endless.

PLANT SELECTIONS:

Creative and dramatic mixed combinations of both foliage and flowers have regained popularity. When selecting plant material, be sure to select plants that require similar growing conditions yet have different growth habits and bloom times. Do not overlook the importance of foliage in containers to add texture, color, fragrance and structure to your pots. Mix it up, consider combining annuals, perennials, small trees and shrubs, evergreens, vines and tropical plants. Create a combination of plants that includes **Thrillers, Fillers and Spillers**. Stand back and see if the final combination includes height, drama, fragrance (from foliage), color, texture and color echoing.

A FEW FAVORITE PLANT SELECTIONS:

- *Euphorbia x martinii* 'Ascot Rainbow' and *Euphorbia* [Helena's Blush] = 'Inneuphhel' (spurge)
- *Cupressus macrocarpa* 'Goldcrest' (lemon Cypress)
- *Vinca major* 'Wojo's Gem' (periwinkle) and *Trachelospermum asiaticum* 'Summer Sunset' (Asiatic jasmine)
- *Salvia officinalis* 'Icterina' (common sage) with *Pelargonium* 'Vancouver Centennial' (Geranium)
- *Pelargonium x hortorum* 'Indian Dunes' (Geranium)
- *Ocimum x citriodorum* 'Pesto Perpetuo' and *O.* 'African Blue' (basil)
- *Begonia* 'Benitochiba' and *Begonia* 'Fireworks' (Rex begonia)
- *Solenostemon* 'The Line', *S.* 'Tilt-A-Whirl' (Stained Glassworks Series), *S.* [Henna] 'Balcenna', *S.* 'Fruit Stand Lemon' (Coleus)
- *Canna* 'Cleopatra'
- *Euphorbia hypericifolia* [Diamond Frost] = 'Inneuphdia' (spurge)
- *Cyperus involucratus* 'Baby Tut' and *Cyperus papyrus* 'King Tut', part of the Graceful Grasses Series (Egyptian papyrus)
- *Yucca filamentosa* 'Color Guard' with *Echeveria*
- *Begonia boliviensis* 'Bonfire', *B.* 'Unstoppable Upright Fire' and *B.* (Nonstop Mocca Series)
- Succulents, take your pick. *Echeveria* and *Agave* and *Euphorbia*. Some personal favorites *Euphorbia tirucalli* 'Sticks on Fire' (Red Pencil Tree), *Euphorbia platyclada*, *Kalanchoe tomentosa* (Panda Plant), *Echeveria* 'Doris Taylor', *E.* 'After Glow', *Rhipsalis* (Mistletoe Cactus) and *Sedum sieboldii* (stonecrop or October Daphne). (syn. *Hylotelephium sieboldii*)

CHOICE COMBINATIONS:

- *Rosmarinus officinalis* 'Prostratus' (Creeping Rosemary), *Rosmarinus officinalis* (upright Rosemary), *Salvia officinalis* 'Berrgarten' (Berrgarten Sage), *Pennisetum setaceum* 'Fireworks' (purple fountain grass), *Pelargonium lateripes* (ivy geranium) and *Dipladenia sanderi* (Mandevilla)
- *Lysimachia nummularia* 'Aurea' (golden creeping Jenny), *Petroselinum crispum var. crispum* (curly leaf parsley), *Hedera helix* 'Goldheart' (ivy), *Acalypha wilkesiana* 'Tahiti' (copperleaf), *Cyperus papyrus* (Egyptian papyrus) and *Heuchera* 'Lemon Chiffon' (coral bells)
- *Bergenia cordifolia* (elephant ears), *Fuchsia* 'Gartenmeister Bonstedt', *Mukdenia rossii* 'Karasuba' (syn. 'Crimson Fans'), *Acer japonicum* 'Aconitifolium' (Japanese maple), *Selaginella* (spikemoss), *Begonia x hiemalis*
- *Ficus elastica* 'Ruby' (rubber plant), *Fuchsia* 'Autumnale', *Fuchsia* 'Firecracker', *Hedera helix* (ivy), *Guzmania*, Bromeliads
- *Helleborus argutifolius* [Snow Fever] = 'Coseh 900 (Lenten rose), *Guzmania*, Bromeliads, *Begonia x hiemalis*, *Adiantum capillus-veneris* (southern maidenhair fern), *Hedera helix* 'Glacier', *Asplenium nidus* 'Victoria' (bird's nest fern), *Begonia* 'Spitfire'

FALL FAVORITES INCLUDE:

Pansies, Bidens, Ornamental Peppers, *Heuchera* (Coral Bells), Ornamental Grasses, *Rhamnus frangula* [Fine Line] = 'Ron Williams' (alder buckthorn), *Calluna* (Heather), *Hedera* (ivy), *Calocephalus* (Cushion Bush), *Senecio bicolor cineraria* 'New Look' (dusty Miller), Fall Asters, *Buxus* (boxwood) and other assorted conifers. Also consider frost tolerant plant material from the previous season. Accessorize with ornament, branches, mini pumpkins and squash. These can be added to the planter or used to accent around the container.

SUGGESTED REFERENCES:

1. The Complete Container Garden. David Joyce. Reader's Digest
2. Shocking Beauty. Thomas Hobbs. Raincoast Books