

Grow Gorgeous *Container Gardens*

Inspiration from

Costa
Farms®

getting started

Container Gardening Basics

One of the best things about container gardens is that you can grow and move them anywhere. Their portability is perfect if you want to decorate your deck one day and perk up your porch the next!



Annuals

Annuals, including calibrachoa, coleus, geranium, petunia, and verbena, offer nonstop color in pots. There's an endless array of annuals from which to choose, in just about every color you can imagine. You have to replant them every year so you can keep your outdoor spaces looking fresh.

Mix Annuals and Perennials

Get a look all your own by mixing beautiful annuals and perennials in your containers (don't forget tropicals, too!). As long as you select plants that like the same amount of moisture and sun, they thrive together, so you can enjoy them all season long.



Perennials

Many perennials are ideal for container gardens, as well—they often hold up to harsh conditions better than annuals. And, you can plant them in the ground at the end of the season to get twice your money's worth from them.



know before you grow

5 Tips for Container Design

- 1. PAY ATTENTION TO PLANT SIZE.** Use plants that stay in scale with one another, that way you don't have one variety that overgrows another.
- 2. TAKE ADVANTAGE OF FOLIAGE.** Choose plants that have interesting or colorful foliage to keep your container looking good if the blooms fade.
- 3. SELECT A COLOR SCHEME.** Make the most impact with just a few plants by coordinating colors.
- 4. ADD COLOR WITH COOL POTS.** An interesting planter is an easy way to accent your container garden.
- 5. LOOK AT TEXTURES.** After you choose the colors you like, make your containers sing by employing contrasting textures.

5 Tips for Container Care

- 1. WATER WELL.** Your plants rely on you for moisture. If you have an especially hot spot, consider an automatic drip-irrigation system to do the job for you.
- 2. FERTILIZE.** Keep your potted plants thriving with an application of timed-release fertilizer at planting time.
- 3. PINCH FOR PERKINESS.** Don't be afraid to pinch or trim any plants that get leggy or overgrown.
- 4. ADD MULCH.** Use a layer of mulch over the top of your container to keep it cool and reduce water loss from evaporation. You have to water less with mulch!
- 5. ENSURE GOOD DRAINAGE.** Unless you're growing a water garden, be sure your container has drainage holes so excess water can escape.

Top 5 Easy-Care Container Plants by Season



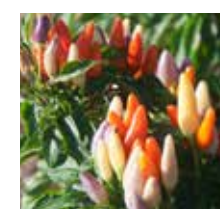
Spring

Calendula
Pansy
Snapdragon
Sweet alyssum
Viola



Summer

Angelonia
Coleus
Lantana
Pentas
Vinca



Autumn

Flowering kale
Mum
Ornamental pepper
Pansy
Purple fountain grass



Winter

Cyclamen
Dianthus
Flowering kale
Primrose
Sweet alyssum

plant your container garden

Designing and planting beautiful hanging baskets is easy,
and just takes a few minutes!



Step 1: Select Your Basket

Choose a basket that matches your style. Hanging baskets come in two types: plastic and moss. Plastic baskets are easy to plant and care for. Moss baskets consist of a wire frame with a moss or coconut-hull lining. They look more natural than plastic, and you can plant them on all sides to create a ball of bloom. Moss baskets dry out more quickly and need a bit more water to keep them looking good.



Step 2: Look for Drainage Holes

Good drainage is essential. If you're working with a plastic hanging basket, make sure it has drainage holes in the bottom. Quality plastic baskets have a drip tray attached to prevent water from spilling down on your head when you water. Moss and coir are permeable so drainage isn't a problem.



Step 3: Buy Potting Soil

Choose a quality potting mix designed for use in containers. Never use soil directly from your garden; it hardens into a concrete-like ball when dry. Some potting mixes contain granules of dry, slow-release fertilizer, which is an added bonus.



Step 4: Start Planting

Add potting mix until it's an inch below the basket rim. Press into place. Then make holes large enough for your plants. Place the tallest plant in the center of the basket. Surround with bushy, medium-size plants. Tuck in trailing plants around the basket edges to cascade down. After the plants are in place, sprinkle more potting mix to cover the roots.



Step 5: Fertilize

If your potting mix doesn't contain fertilizer, sprinkle granular, timed-release fertilizer when you plant. Scatter it over the top as if you were adding pepper to a salad. Every time you water, fertilizer will release into the soil, feeding your plants.



Step 6: Just Add Water

Once you've planted your basket, water it thoroughly. Use a watering can or gentle mist from your garden hose until you see water running out of the drainage holes on the bottom of the container.



containers for shade

No sun? No worries! Create gorgeous potted gardens that thrive in shade.



Impatiens and New Guinea impatiens are longtime favorites for shade. They're available in a wide range of colors and flower sizes, and some have variegated foliage, too. Accent impatiens as we did here with the fabulous foliage of caladium and lush texture of Kimberly Queen fern.



A



B

A: Beautiful Begonias. Tuberous begonias are show stoppers for shade and part shade in cool-summer areas. They sport double, rose-like flowers in a wide range of colors. Many have interesting foliage, and some offer fragrant flowers.

B: Tropical Treasures. Add tropicals! Many houseplants, such as Colorful Aglaonema, are native to rain forests and thrive in shade. Here, 'White Calcite' Aglaonema blends beautifully with a perennial heuchera and white begonia.



C



D

C: Play Up Leaves. Embrace bold foliage for shaded container gardens, such as ti plant with its purple-and-pink leaves. We accented it with white New Guinea impatiens, purple wishbone flower, and Persian shield for season-long color.

D: Go for the Gold. Use bright foliage and flowers in shaded spots to help your container gardens shine! Here, 'Wasabi' coleus grows up out of a dark container and complements the waterfall effect of trailing golden sweet potato vine.

TOP PLANTS

Here are a few of our experts' favorite plants for creating stunning shade gardens.

ANNUALS

Begonia
Coleus
Impatiens
Lobelia
Polka-dot plant
Sweet potato vine
Tuberous begonia
Wishbone flower

PERENNIALS

Ajuga
Carex
Golden creeping Jenny
Heuchera
Hosta
Hydrangea
Irish moss
Japanese painted fern
Juncus
Lamium
Liriope

TROPICALS/HOUSEPLANTS

Anthurium
Bird's nest fern
Bromeliad
Caladium
Colorful aglaonema
Elephant's ear
Ferns
Jungle queen
Majesty palm
Snake plant
Spider plant
Stromanthe
Ti plant
Vinca

So-easy succulents

Low-water succulents thrive in hot, sunny spaces and thrive with little care.



A

A: Show Off Sedum. Use different sedums (such as golden 'Angelina', variegated 'Frosty Morn', and purple-tinged 'Sunsparkler Dazzleberry') to create a lovely, winter-hardy container.

B: Use Plant Shapes. Mix 'Campfire' crassula and variegated portulacaria for an intriguing blend of textures that thrives in hot, sunny decks, patios, and porches.

C: Enjoy Different Varieties. 'Campfire' crassula, echeveria, fuzzy panda plant, and Senecio crassissimus are a lovely, no-fuss quartet that display a delightful mix of colors and textures.

D: Consider Hardy Succulents. Short on time? Transplant a little patch of hardy sedum 'Angelina' in a small container for an elegant party accent.

E: Grow Up. While many succulents are low-growing, employ upright types such as variegated agave and Euphorbia trigona for a striking look.



B



C



D



E

bold hanging baskets

A beautiful hanging basket is the perfect way to decorate your porch, patio, or deck.



A

When designing hanging baskets, start by selecting plants suited to your growing conditions—light, moisture, temperature, etc.

Because most baskets are viewed from below, look for plants that will spill over the sides. Some of our favorites include verbena, lobelia, calibrachoa, and petunia, but the list is practically endless!

Just like with traditional container gardens, it often works best to stick to a color scheme. Monochromatic baskets, where you have varying tones of the same color, have a subtle beauty, whereas multi-color baskets are bold and attention-getting. Choose a color scheme you like best. Don't worry about what anyone else thinks!

A: Flowers and Fragrance. A cheery mix of basil, nemesia, sedge (Carex), petunia, and vinca add bold color and texture for spring.



B



C



G

B: Grow Anywhere. Wishbone flower (Torenia) thrives in sun or shade.

C: Primary Colors. Blue lobelia, yellow petunia, and red verbena look good all summer.

D: Golden Beauty. Yellow bidens and yellow petunia offer a monochromatic, but bold basket.

E: Purple Passion. Purple calibrachoa, lavender petunia, and bicolor verbena put on a lovely tone-on-tone show.

F: One Plant, Two Colors. Orange and pink calibrachoa are surefire winners for all-summer color.

G: Black and White. Silver licorice vine, black pansy, purple osteospermum, and yellow petunia ring in spring.



D



F



E

creative clusters

Make the most of your container gardens by grouping them together.



Pick a Color Theme. A cluster of colorful containers is much more impactful than one by itself. Here, a series of five containers combine the warm tones of colorful calibrachoa, snapdragon, croton, kangaroo paw, and lantana.



A



B



C

A: Mix Annuals and Perennials. Make the most of your container groupings by creating impact with the containers themselves. Here, contrasting containers house a colorful display of blue delphinium, golden sweet potato vine, red begonias, golden creeping Jenny, celosia, and calla.

B: Employ Repetition for Success. Get a cohesive, consistent look by using similar containers and repeating a color or texture theme through your containers. Here, red canna, purple sweet potato vine, orange lantana, red pentas, red gaura, and red verbena create an elegant and eye-catching show.

C: Use Tall and Small Plants. This collection of containers in our Costa Farms Trial Garden shows off wildly colorful, easy-care plants, including coleus 'Henna', golden millet, yellow portulaca, apricot canna, coral SunPatiens, and purple-leaf hibiscus.

perennials for pots

Gorgeous, low-maintenance perennials put on a show every year.



Perennials aren't just for landscapes—they're also ideal for creating stunning container gardens. They offer unique textures and colors, plus many will bounce back more readily than annuals if they dry out.

You can plant perennials in your landscape in fall to enjoy them as garden plants next year. Or, if you grow varieties that are a zone or two harder than the one you live in, they often survive the winter in their pots. Tip: Moving the pots to a sheltered spot, such as a garage or shed for the winter, also helps them come back in their containers.

While most perennials have a more limited bloom season than annuals, you can enjoy them for their foliage and texture.

Some of our favorite perennials for container gardens include blanket flower (Gaillardia), catmint (Nepeta), coreopsis, creeping Jenny (Lysimachia), dianthus, heuchera, hosta, juncus, lavender (Lavandula), ornamental grasses, pincushion flower (Scabiosa), roses, and sedum.



B



C



D

A: Porch Perk Up. Beautiful 'Black and Blue' salvia is a dramatic perennial (in warm-winter zones; in colder areas consider it an annual) that looks fabulous with easy-care sedum and chartreuse heuchera.

B: Simple Single Pots. You don't need big spaces for potted perennials. Double coneflower and pink veronica look elegant paired together.

C: Grow Fun Foliage. Use foliage for big effect! Here, the spiky look of juncus makes a perfect complement for green and gold Irish moss.

D: Go Bold with Roses. Shrub roses thrive in large containers, and bloom nonstop all summer and autumn.

E: Play with Plant Shapes. Twisted juncus is eye-catching on its own, but becomes more elegant when paired with bold foliage, such as this variegated ajuga.



E

hot, hot houseplants

Use versatile houseplants to add a tropical touch to your container gardens.



A

One of the fun things about using easy-care, inexpensive houseplants outdoors in your container gardens is that you can make them do double duty by bringing them indoors and growing them for the winter.

One bonus about growing houseplants outdoors for the summer is that they often put on a lot more lush, luxuriant growth than they do indoors over the same time period. You might be amazed at how fast and full they grow outside!

Happily, just about any houseplant will work in an outdoor container garden if you have the right conditions (amount of light, moisture, etc.), but some of our favorites include: anthurium, aralia and false aralia, Colorful and Red Aglaonema, croton, dieffenbachia, dracaena, ficus, ivy, majesty palm, money tree, Norfolk Island pine, peace lily, philodendron, ponytail palm, spider plant, snake plant, indoor succulents, ti plant, and ZZ plant.

Because most houseplants are tropical, wait to bring them outdoors until night temperatures stay above 50 degrees F (10 degrees C), and then bring them back indoors in autumn when temperatures begin to consistently dip below this point.

A: Enjoy Indoor Succulents. Easy-care, low-water succulents, including senecio, echeveria, and anacampseros thrive all year long if they live outdoors over summer, then inside come fall. For success indoors, give succulents a sunny windowsill or grow them under plant lights.

B: Combine with Perennials. Colorful aglaonema, blue fescue, and red calla lilies combine elegantly to offer a low-fuss container with complementing colors and contrasting textures.

C: Choose Easy-Care Classics. Snake plant thrives everywhere—indoors, outdoors, sun, shade, etc. We love the way it looks as a counterpoint to easy-care 'White Calcite' Colorful Aglaonema and 'Whopper' begonias on this shaded patio in our Costa Farms Trial Garden.



C



B

TIPS FOR ENJOYING HOUSEPLANTS OUTDOORS

Most houseplants thrive outdoors in shade. Keep tender, thin-leaf varieties such as peace lily, ferns, fittonia, and anthurium out of the hot, direct sun.

It's important to acclimate indoor plants to outside conditions by gradually exposing them to a little sun each day. If you bring them right outside, especially in the sun, they can develop sunburn.

If you bring your houseplants back inside for winter, pull out any annuals and add fresh potting mix to fill the holes left by their roots. Acclimate them to indoor conditions by gradually increasing the amount of time they spend inside over a two- or three-week period.



Tropic Escape® Patio

Make your favorite outdoor space spectacular with bold, colorful tropical plants. You can count on tropics to hold up even in the hottest summer weather. Not sure where to start? Our experts put together these ideas for you!



Tropic Escape® Hibiscus

These beautiful heat-loving hibiscus show off big, long-lasting flowers, sometimes in wild color combinations. Our growers have hand-picked the very best varieties available (many of them are exclusive to Costa Farms) to ensure you'll enjoy lots of success with these amazing plants.



Tropic Escape® Mandevilla

Available in both mounding and climbing forms, there's a mandevilla for every sunny spot! With gorgeous, jewel-toned flowers in shades of pink, red, and white, Tropic Escape® mandevilla are some of the easiest and most versatile plants for your container gardens.



A

A: Plant in Layers. A Tropic Escape® hibiscus tree is the perfect focal point for dwarf hibiscus and golden creeping Jenny.

B: Use Contrasting Colors. Pair a flamboyant hibiscus with lush red mandevilla and a dose of Neon pothos.

C: Climb Up. Make color coordination a cinch with a climbing red mandevilla and dwarf red hibiscus. Here, a Kimberly Queen fern adds extra texture.



B



C