

Think of a container garden as a **LIVING flower (and/or foliage) arrangement with roots that needs LIGHT, FOOD, AIR and WATER. Container gardens NEED your COMMITMENT and DEVOTION!**

CONTAINER OPTIONS:

TERRA COTTA OR CLAY: Economical, heavy but soil dries out quickly and is subject to cracking and breaking
CERAMIC/GLAZED: Expensive, heavy, but very insulating and subject to breaking and cracking during winter
STONE/CEMENT: Expensive, strong, heavy but very insulating and subject to breaking and cracking during winter
METAL: Durable and long lasting but little insulation absorbing heat and can be easily damaged

Cast iron is extremely heavy and rust is inevitable.

FIBERGLASS/RESIN: Expensive, lightweight, and easy to move, very durable, and can last almost indefinitely

PLASTIC: Least expensive, lightweight, unless high-end can have a cheap feel, become brittle and crack easily

WOOD: Most “natural” but should be sealed against wood rot

IMPORTANT: All of the above containers NEED DRAINAGE HOLES

POTTING SOIL, also called POTTING MIX, is a soilless blend of ingredients BEST used to grow plants in containers - NOT your garden soil.

DO NOT USE ROCKS, GRAVEL, PACKING PEANUTS, CHARCOAL, ETC. TO AVOID WATER LOGGED ROOTS OR TO BE ABLE TO USE LESS POTTING SOIL.

CARE AND MAINTENANCE –

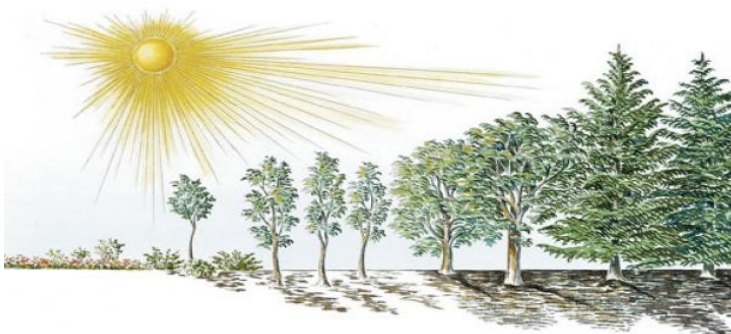
- water when needed (more during hot, dry spells) - in the morning is best.
- fertilize correctly for optimal plant growth
- keep plants looking good by pruning, pinching and deadheading as needed
- regularly check for evidence of pest or disease problems
- FEARLESSLY replace plants that are past their prime or seasonally

CHOOSE THE RIGHT PLANT FOR THE RIGHT SPOT... Not all plants can be good neighbors.

HOW MUCH SUN DOES THE SITE ACTUALLY GET THROUGHOUT THE DAY?

LIGHT AVAILABILITY

The density of trees serves as a gauge for degrees of light and shade.



FULL SUN
6 to 8 or more
hours of sun
mostly between
10am and 4pm

LIGHT SHADE
Less than 6 hours
of full sun with
shade mostly in the
morning

PART SHADE
4 to 6 or more
hours of sun with
most of shade in
the afternoon

FULL SHADE
At least 3 to 4 hours
of sun mostly in the
morning or late
afternoon

DEEP SHADE
Less than 3
hours of sun
most of the day

A shady location has at least 6 hours of direct sun,
but not less than 4 hours or all day dappled sun.

**FULL SUN - 6 to 8 or more
hours of DIRECT sun**

READ PLANT LABELS!

**PICK THE RIGHT PLANT for
your LIGHT LIMITATIONS**



SUMMARY

- **FULL SUN** - 6 to 8 or more hours of **DIRECT** sun (mostly between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m.)
- **FULL SHADE** - At least 3 to 4 hours of sun mostly in the morning or late afternoon.
- Anything in between is **PART SHADE/PART SUN**.

PURCHASING PLANTS

When selecting plants think about their **eventual height, shape, growth habit** and **cultural requirements**.
Check out the root system to see if it's healthy and if the plant is pot or root bound.

PLANTING - Fill the container with ONLY moistened potting mix to 3" from the rim with **NO GRAVEL**.
Place pots where you'd like them to go or do all the steps at their final destination.

Give each still potted plant a good soak prior to planting...

Keep in mind:

- **Vantage point for planter to be seen**
- **Plant's mature size and shape**
- **Plant's light and moisture needs**

PLANT CHOICES

- An annual (an herbaceous plant that's not hardy in your zone) including tropicals and houseplants
- An edible plant (a veggie, a fruit plant, or an herb)
- A perennial (an herbaceous plant hardy in zones 5 and lower to survive winter in your zone)
- A hardy shrub or tree (a woody plant hardy in zones 5 and lower to survive winter in your zone)
- A grass (choose from any ornamental grass in the nursery, hardy or not, – turfgrass excluded)

ANNUALS

Purchase annuals in cell packs – less costly

GROW YOUR OWN PLANTS from seed, which may take longer than anticipated, especially those that need to be started weeks indoors before the last frost.

Pick annuals that are long bloomers and DON'T NEED DEADHEADING - *Angelonia* spp., *Begonia semperflorens* (Wax Begonia), *Ageratum houstonianum* (Floss Flower), *Cleome hasslerana* (Spider flower), *Lantana* spp., *Tagetes* spp. (Marigolds), *Catharanthus roseus* (Vinca, Periwinkle), *Salvia* spp., *Browallia speciosa* (Amethyst Flower), *Euphorbia hypericifolia* 'Diamond Frost', *Cosmos*, *Cockscomb* (*Celosia* spp.), *Impatiens walleriana* (Busy Lizzy), *Calibrachoa* (Million Bells), *Torenia fournieri* (Wishbone Flower)

Have a plan for using and mixing cool weather annuals (including veggies) and hot weather plants. Be ready to **SWAP OUT** plants as the season progresses.

Cool-season annuals that HATE the HEAT (use them in spring or in fall)

<i>Calendula</i> (<i>Calendula officinalis</i>)	<i>Nemesia</i>
California poppy (<i>Eschscholzia californica</i>)	<i>Osteospermum</i> (Cape daisy)
Cobbitty Daisy (<i>Argyranthemum frutescens</i>)	Pansy (<i>Viola x wittrockiana</i>)
<i>Diascia</i> (Twinspur)	Pot Marigold (<i>Calendula hybrid</i>)
English daisy (<i>Bellis perennis</i>)	Snapdragon (<i>Antirrhinum majus</i>)
Flowering kale (<i>Brassica oleracea</i>)	Stock (<i>Matthiola incana</i>)
Forget-me-not (<i>Myosotis sylvatica</i>)	Swan River Daisy (<i>Brachyscome</i>)
Larkspur (<i>Consolida ajacis</i>)	Toadflax (<i>Linaria maroccana</i>)
Lobelia (<i>Lobelia erinus</i>)	Wallflower (<i>Erysimum linofolium</i>)

GO FOR COLORFUL FOLIAGE.

CONSIDER THE PROPORTIONS OF YOUR PLANTS TO THEIR CONTAINER FOR A PLEASING COMBINATION.

Try to have at least one plant that is as tall as the container or taller (the “THRILLER”)

- **DRAMATIC and EYE-CATCHING CENTERPIECE PLANT**, usually big, bold and beautiful, giving the arrangement height and beauty

Have plants that spill over the sides soften the edges and add texture and interest (the “SPILLER”)

- anchor the container with foliage and/or flowering plants that add colorful or textural contrast or complement but not overwhelm the main player (the “thriller”)

Then add plants to fill the area in between the tallest and the spillers (the “FILLER”)

- Important plants that add mass to the overall composition and bridge the gap between the thriller and spiller but won't be the center of attention

BELOW ARE ANNUALS, TROPICALS AND PERENNIALS for pleasing combinations.

THRILLERS

African marigold (<i>Tagetes erecta</i>)	Croton	Millet (<i>Pennisetum glaucum</i>)
Agapanthus	Cuphea	New Zealand Flax (<i>Phormium</i>)
Agastache 'Golden Jubilee'	Dahlia (upright varieties)	Ornamental Grasses
Agave	Dracaena	Palms
Amaranth	Elephant Ear (<i>Colocasia</i> , <i>Alocasia</i> , <i>Xanthosoma</i>)	Papyrus
Amsonia hubrichtii	Eryngium spp. (Sea Holly)	Perilla frutescens
Angelonia	Euphorbia spp. (Spurge)	Persian shield (<i>Strobilanthes dyerianus</i>)
Banana	False Spirea (<i>Astilbe</i>)	Phormium (New Zealand Flax)
Basil	Ferns	Plectranthus (Spurflower)
Beardtongue (<i>Penstemon</i>)	Fiber Optic Grass (<i>Isolepis cernua</i>)	Plumbago
Bleeding Heart (<i>Lamprocapnos 'Gold Heart'</i>)	Flowering tobacco (<i>Nicotiana</i>)	Purple Fountain Grass
Bloodleaf (<i>Iresine herbstii</i>)	Fuchsia (upright varieties)	Rex begonias (<i>Begonia rex-cultorum</i>)
Bougainvillea	Gaura (Whirling Butterflies)	Rubber plant
Bugbane (<i>Actaea 'Black Negligee'</i>)	Hellebore (<i>Helleborus</i>)	Russian Sage (<i>Perovskia</i> spp.)
Caladium	Hibiscus (tropical)	Sage (<i>Salvia officinalis</i>)
Canna	Hosta	Salvia guaranitica
Carex	Joseph's Coat (<i>Alternanthera</i>)	Shrubs
Castor Bean (<i>Ricinus communis</i>)	Juncus	Small trees
Celosia	Lantana	Snake plant (<i>Sansevieria</i>)
Cleome	Lemongrass (<i>Cymbopogon citratus</i>)	Spurflower (<i>Plectranthus</i>)
Clivia	Mandevilla	Verbena bonariensis
Coleus	Meadow sage (<i>Salvia</i> spp.)	Wormwood (<i>Artemisia</i> spp.)
Cordylone		

FILLERS

Fiber Optic Grass (<i>Scirpus cernuus</i>)	Amsonia 'Blue Ice'	Nicotiana (Flowering Tobacco)
Fleece Flower (<i>Persicaria</i> spp.)	Angelonia (Summer Snapdragon)	Osteospermum (Cape daisy)
Gaura (Whirling Butterflies)	Annual Candytuft (<i>Iberis</i>)	Pelargonium (geranium)
Gazania	Argyranthemum (Marguerite daisy)	Pentas
Geranium (<i>Pelargonium</i>)	Beardtongue (<i>Penstemon</i>)	Perilla frutescens
Globe Thistle (<i>Echinops Ritro</i>)	Begonias (Rex, fibrous root or wax)	Petunia and hybrids
Golden Alexanders (<i>Zizia</i>)	Black-eyed Susan (<i>Rudbeckia</i> spp.)	Plectranthus (Spurflower)
Gomphrena (<i>Globe Amaranth</i>)	Blanket flower (<i>Gaillardia</i>)	Polka Dot Plant (<i>Hypoestes</i>)
Grasses	Bleeding Heart (<i>Dicentra</i>)	Purple-leaf Tradescantia
Heliotrope	Browallia	Russian Sage (<i>Perovskia</i>)
Heliotropium	Caladium	Salvia spp. (Sage)
Hellebore (<i>Helleborus</i>)	Calamintha	Sea Holly (<i>Eryngium</i> spp.)
Heuchera (Coral Bells)	Calathea	Shamrock Plant (<i>Oxalis</i>)
Heucherella	Calibrachoa a.k.a. Million Bells	Spiderwort (<i>Tradescantia</i> spp.)
Hostas (<i>Hosta</i> spp.)	Carex	Spurflower (<i>Plectranthus</i>)
Impatiens	Catmint (<i>Nepeta</i> spp.)	Stonecrop (<i>Sedum</i> spp.)
Intensia Phlox hybrid	Chenille Plant (<i>Acalypha hispida</i>)	Strawflower (<i>Xerochrysum</i>)
Iresine (<i>Iresine herbstii</i>)	Cleome (Spider Plant)	Sunpatiens
Joseph's Coat (<i>Alternanthera</i>)	Coleus (<i>Plectranthus</i> , <i>Solenostemon</i>)	Tickseed (<i>Coreopsis</i> spp.)
Juncus	Columbine (<i>Aquilegia</i>)	Tricolor Ginger (<i>Stromanthe</i>)
Lady's Mantle (<i>Alchemilla</i>)	Cranesbill (<i>Geranium</i>)	Trifolium hybrid
Lantana	Cuphea	Verbena (<i>Verbena peruviana</i>)
Lavender	Daylily (<i>Hemerocallis</i>)	Verbena Superbena®
Lobularia hybrids	Diascia (twinspur)	Vinca (<i>Catharanthus rosea</i>)
Lungwort (<i>Pulmonaria</i>)	Dusty Miller (<i>Senecio cineraria</i>)	Yarrow (<i>Achillea</i> spp.)
Marigold (<i>Tagetes</i>)	Euphorbia spp. (Spurge)	Yellow Archangel (<i>Lamiastrum 'Herman's</i>
Melampodium	False Spirea (<i>Astilbe</i>)	Pride')
Nemesia	Ferns (Annual, perennial)	Yellow Buttons (<i>Chryscephalum</i>)
		Zinnia

SPILLERS

Ajuga reptans	Ivy Geranium (Perlargonium peltatum)	Portulaca
Annual Spiderwort (Tradescantia fluminensis)	Joseph's Coat (Alternanthera)	Setcreasea (Tradescantia)
Bacopa (Sutera)	Lantana	Shamrock Plant (Oxalis)
Bidens	Licorice plant (Helichrysum petiolare)	Spurflower (Plectranthus)
Blue Star Creeper (Laurentia , Isotoma axillaris)	Lobelia	Stonecrop (Sedum reflexum ('Blue Spruce'))
Brachyscome	Lobularia hybrids	Stonecrop (Sedum rupestre ('Angelina'))
Browallia	Lotus Vine	Swedish Ivy (Plectranthus)
Calibrachoa a.ka. Million Bells	Lysimachia nummularia 'Aurea' (Creeping Jenny)	Sweet Alyssum (Alyssum maritimum)
Callirhoe (Wine Cups)	Maculata Greater Periwinkle (Vinca major)	Sweet Potato Vine (Ipomoea batatas)
Creeping Jenny (Lysimachia auria)	Mecardonia	Torenia (Wishbone Flower)
Creeping wire vine (Muehlenbeckia axillaris)	Myrtle Spurge (Euphorbia myrsinites)	Trailing Vinca (Catharanthus roseus)
Creeping Zinnia (Sanvitalia procumbens)	Narrowleaf Zinnia (Zinnia angustifolia)	Verbena
Deadnettle (Lamium maculatum)	Nasturtium (Tropaeolum)	Verbena hybrids - Superbena
Diascia	Norfolk Friendship Plant (Pilea involucrata)	Vinca Vine (Vinca major, minor)
Dichondra argentea 'Silver Falls'	Parrot's Beak (Lotus berthelotii)	Wandering Jew (Tradescantia spp.)
Fan Flower (Scaevola)	Petchoas	Yellow archangel (Lamiastrum galeobdolon)
Geranium x 'Rozanne'	Petunia	
Glory Flower (Eccremocarpus scaber)	Petunia hybrids (Supertunia®, Wave)	
Helichrysum (licorice plant)	Plectranthus (Spurflower)	
Ivy (Hedera helix spp.)		

FOR CONTAINER GARDENING SUCCESS...

- **GROUP PLANTS with similar light, heat, moisture and soil needs TOGETHER**
- **FOCUS ON DETAILS:**
Look for compelling flower shapes and forms as well as interesting foliage colors and textures and how they make your container shine.
- **REMEMBER TO FERTILIZE.**
Most potting soils are not nutrient rich and frequent watering leaches away nutrients. Fertilization is needed to maintain a lush and thriving container.
- **HAVE FUN AND BE CREATIVE.**
There are LOTS of great plant choices to experiment with. You can push outside your comfort zone and surprise yourself with a living masterpiece!

Useful Websites and Other Sources of Information

- Rutgers Publications and Fact Sheets <https://njaes.rutgers.edu/pubs/>
- Rutgers Soil Testing Laboratory <https://njaes.rutgers.edu/soiltestinglab/>
- Jersey-Friendly Yards Plant Database www.jerseyyards.org/
- <https://www.google.com> Type in plant name and rely on site links ending in .edu and .org.
- Most .com sites are commercial entities selling plants.

Contact the Master Gardener Helpline

- Our Master Gardeners answer gardening questions, identify insects and weeds, diagnose plant pests and diseases, and test soil pH
- You can purchase Rutgers Soil Laboratory soil test kits for \$20 (cash or check) that you use to mail your soil sample to the lab and receive a full laboratory analysis report within a few weeks
- Helpline and office hours are Monday through Friday 9 am-4 pm

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