

Annual Container Tips

Sun or Shade

- Determine where the container will be placed and the light conditions that exist in that location. Different plants excel in different light conditions.
- Partial shade plants (4-6 hours of light): Begonias, Fuschias, Lobelia, Alyssum, Salvia, Impatiens, Coleus, Ferns, English Ivy, Pansies, Violas
- Full sun plants (more than 6 hours of light): Petunias, Portulaca, Zinnias, Strawflower, Snapdragons, Geraniums, Cosmos, Verbena, Gazania

Thriller, Spiller, and Filler

- Thrillers can be used to provide interest and excitement to the container. They are usually the plants which provide height in the center of the container or to one side for an asymmetrical arrangement. Generally, a thriller should provide 2/3 of the overall height of the container and plants. They are often an interesting foliage plant such as Dracaena, Ornamental grass or Purple Millet. Sometimes a spectacular flowering plant can be used such as Canna lily, a tall Osteospermum, Geranium, Coleus or a tall perennial such as Astilbe.
- Spillers are plants that will drape over the sides of the container as well as provide some filler at the edge of the container. These can be placed in groups of odd numbers around the containers edge in between the fillers.. Some of the best plants to use are Lobelia, Ivy, Bacopa, Vinca Vine, Fuschia or any plant which fits with your color scheme and light requirements and has a training to semi trailing habit.
- Fillers are plants that will be used to make the planter look full and lively. Some examples are: Bidens, Dusty Miller, Impatiens, Million Bells, Petunias, and Portulaca. These fill out the spaces left in the container and are the main body of the planting plan; they should provide interest from flowers and foliage. Choose one or two varieties depending on the container size.

Colours, Themes, and Styles

Choose a theme or style and stick with it for the whole container. The traditional round container consists of a central thriller, 3 to 5 fillers placed evenly around and fillers placed at the edges in between the fillers. Asymmetrical containers may be arranged with a thriller to one side of the container and fillers placed in the center: the fillers may consist of a medium ht plant which would bring the ht down from the thriller and another lower filler placed around these. The style may represent a cascading planting style, a low mounding representation or a monotone color scheme: whatever you like! Stand back and look at it from the side which will be most visible or the 'good' side.

Care and Maintenance

- Fertilizing: Using a slow release granular fertilizer (once or twice per season) or with a water soluble fertilizer, like Miracle Grow (usually once per week).
- Watering: Water every day during dry sunny periods. Check water frequently by feeling the soil.
- Deadheading: Pinch off spent blooms and do not let plant go to seed.

