

See our fabulous media room *Makeover of the Month* p. 102

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homeimprovement

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Constructing Containers

The best container gardening practices

BY STAFF



Photo courtesy of Allgood Outdoors

When it comes to the best container gardening practices, there are a number of methods worth pursuing to ensure a successful experience. Fran Hopkins, CEO and founder of the STEPABLES' creeping perennial plant line, and Dan Heims, president and co-owner of Terra Nova Nurseries, recommend the following for producing eye-catching, dazzling containers in an array of locales around your home.

Establish a theme

Home gardeners and landscape designers alike are using containers to serve as focal points and to define emphasis and proportion. Add color and texture to your space and break up lateral eye movement by creating balanced groupings and plantings in a continuous theme that incorporates your home's exterior design components.

Keep the container in mind

The hottest trends in today's pot-scaping are monochromatic color, minimalist geometric shapes, supplementary textures and lightweight materials. Attractive and striking accessories for exterior spaces—such as containers crafted in contemporary styles, designer colors and clean lines that modernize the look of any outdoor room—have become container-gardening staples.

Refresh with flexible style

Renew your outdoor space in a simple yet stylish manner by adding designer-quality containers. While garden beds and plantings require work and maintenance, designing with innovative containers can be accomplished in any size location. From modest plantings to ostentatious groupings, the portability and flexibility of incorporating containers makes it easy to refresh your space with seasonal plants.

Choose fashionable foliage

The recent trend and influx of stylish, chic and elegant perennials has created what many in the landscaping field are calling a "foliage fad." From an aesthetic standpoint, unique and distinctive foliage serves as a backdrop for garden activity during all growing seasons. It provides color, shape, texture and interest to your container garden even when blooms are absent. Foliage plants also are often easier to maintain than bloomers and offer instant impact upon planting. 🏡

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incorporating color

When choosing foliage or flowers for your container garden, try to **echo or repeat the colors** of your outdoor walls, furniture and plantings. This will create a cohesive, stylish design.

—Dan Heims, Terra Nova Nurseries

when to water

Check the soil moisture often by poking a finger about 1 inch into the dirt. Water plants when, not before, the soil feels dry.

—Fran Hopkins, STEPABLES

pick the perfect pot

You'll need to **estimate how large of a pot** is needed to support the plants involved. Put together a group of plants at the garden center and ask a knowledgeable sales person for help in selecting the right-sized container.

—Dan Heims, Terra Nova Nurseries

shady business

Don't shy away from **containers in shaded locales**. Heucheras and other shade-tolerant plants like Pulmonaria not only brighten up a dark spot but also significantly reduce a container's water needs.

—Dan Heims, Terra Nova Nurseries

placement particulars

Container gardens can act as **borders for walkways or define wider spaces** such as your lawn. Entryways are more welcoming when flanked by attractive urns, each containing a tall, foliage-filled plant with colorful flowers surrounding it.

—Fran Hopkins, STEPABLES



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504-0469, www.pulloutshelf.com. Regal Closets, (770) 979-0098, www.regalclosets.com. Professional Organizing Solutions, (404) 309-2614, www.neworganizer.com. SpaceMakers of America LLC, (770) 422-6464, www.spacemakersclosets.com. The Container Store, www.containerstore.com. The Professional Organizer LLC, (770) 579-9866, www.theprofessionalorganizer.com.



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