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the Rainbow



Flowers



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**Big Green Marble :: Fabulous plants for spring**

by Mike Diamond  
EDGE Contributor  
Friday Apr 4, 2008

It's that time of year again people- Earth Day! As spring hits its flowery peak, Earth Day (April 18) is a reminder to us that our planet is a living thing, and we are not just squatters here, we are -or should be- the Earth's caretakers. For 24 hours, let's feel terrible about our gas guzzling/hairspraying/plastic using ways, shall we? As my Jewish grandmother (the omnipotent Dee Dee) proved time and time again, guilt is a powerful tool.



Hope is powerful too; and so is action. We *can* do something to help the Earth, by 'greening up' our home environments, both indoors and out. All of the oxygen we breathe comes from plants, and NASA scientists proved that plants remove harmful toxins from the air, including formaldehyde, benzene, and carbon monoxide. The best part of all of course is that while plants are "working," they're also beautiful, ornamental accents, as well as fascinating living 'Earthings' in their own right.



sensation hailing from Papua New Guinea, and thrives with full sun and plentiful moisture. Simply gorgeous.

All you spice girls out there should check out another new offering from the good folks at Logees, *Cinnamomum zeylanicum* "**Cinnamomum zeylanicum**" "**Cinnamon**". That's right, you can grow an actual cinnamon plant right at home! This is a slow growing, warmth loving plant with attractive oval leaves and sprays of delicate white flowers in summer. Byron Martin, co-owner of Logees, appeared on the **Martha Stewart Live** show recently, where he and the domestic diva utilized this curious plant to make 'perpetual cinnamon'. Yum!

While in that culinary state of mind, why not try growing *Olea europaea* "**Arbequina**" "**Black Olive**"? Described as 'self fertile' (I know the feeling honey), this rugged but lovely plant thrives in a Mediterranean climate (think: Cypress, or less glamorously, San Diego), bringing an exotic effect as well as dark, delicious olives!

**Tasty!**

The incomparable **Logee's Greenhouses** is a treasure trove of fabulous tropical greenery, and my default destination when I'm looking for plants that are uniquely beautiful. Among their new selections for 2008 is the **Begonia bipinnatifida** "**Lace Leaf**". This strange yet lovely little begonia boasts foliage that is fringed, the dissected leaves tinted an ethereal shade of deepest ruby bronze. The overall effect is feathery yet substantial; the pretty pink flowers are a nice bonus!

Logees also has what is sure to be the tropical plant for 2008: **Musa acuminata** "**Siam Ruby**". This fantastic looking banana plant makes a dramatic addition to the garden, its large, reddish bronze leaves liberally splashed with chartreuse. Siam Ruby is a horticultural

**Hey, take it outside!**

Spring fever has you ready for the great outdoors? **Terra Nova Nurseries**, out of cool, temperate Oregon is world renowned for creating some of the choicest **Heuchera** hybrids available. Their catalog includes some fab selections for those seeking cold



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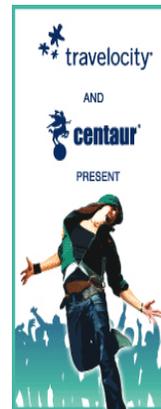
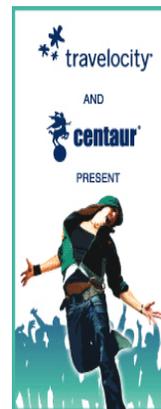
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hardy plants to add to the garden.

Among the new goodies for 2008 (their plants are available at better nurseries and garden centers nationwide) are [Bergenia 'Solar Flare'](#) a beautiful, evergreen specimen with cream edged foliage that tints pink in the cool weather of fall. 'Solar Flare' thrives in part shade and has dainty, rosy hued spring flowers. For a bright sunny spot, nothing can outshine the new [Echinacea 'Tiki Torch'](#). This vigorous sun lover sports dazzling, 'pumpkin orange' daisies all summer long. Like a meadow wildflower on a big hit of acid! My favorite Terra Nova item for 2008 is [Heucherella 'Alabama Sunrise'](#). From spring to mid-summer the foliage is deeply cut, gold with ruby red veins. Come autumn, the

older leaves turn a pink-orange color. Fierce! It's a plant with multiple personalities; believe me honey I relate!

*Mike Diamond lives in New York City, requires a nap every day at 3PM, and loves watching Judge Judy, our next Supreme Court Justice.*

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## 'Cooking' With Containers: Container-Friendly Plant Combination Recipes

Content Provided By Terra Nova Nurseries



Terra Nova Nurseries (ARA) - When spring has sprung, the chill of winter has gone, cooking up plant container combination recipes can invite life back into the garden. Plants add colorful texture, contrast and variety to an array of outdoor spaces.

"Container gardening gives homeowners the opportunity to create striking results for their outdoor living areas without a great deal of time commitment or difficulty," says Dan Heims, co-owner of Terra Nova Nurseries in Canby, Ore. "Whether a novice or seasoned gardener, incorporating the appropriate mix or combination of plants to containers is the most effective way to experience lasting results."

Designed by Heims and his team of horticulturists at Terra Nova Nurseries, these four container recipes will enliven even the shabbiest of winter-hardened locales this spring and summer.

### "Twist of Lime"

Ingredients:  
 Hakonechloa 'All Gold'  
 Xanthosoma 'Lime Zinger'  
 Heuchera 'Mahogany'  
 Heuchera 'Lime Rickey'

The stunning, chartreuse, elephant's ear leaves of Xanthosoma 'Lime Zinger' stand out, adding height and a tropical flare to containers; its leaves reach 3 to 4 feet across. The gorgeous form of golden Japanese Forest Grass that is Hakonechloa 'All Gold' has arching, graceful, upright, and spiky foliage, adding texture and bright color to this container combination. "The glossy, mahogany-red, ruffled foliage of Heuchera 'Mahogany' produces wonderful, dense, shiny tones year-round," says Heims. Heuchera 'Lime Rickey' has chartreuse spring leaves, which turn to lime-green, showy, ruffled leaves for the remainder of the year. This recipe can brighten even the shadiest of spaces.

### "Dawn to Dusk"

Ingredients:  
 Heuchera 'Marmalade'  
 Begonia 'River Nile'  
 Heuchera 'Midnight Rose'  
 Athyrium 'Dre's Dagger'

Stunning, rich, shiny, undulating foliage adorn Terra Nova Nurseries' Heuchera 'Marmalade' in ranges of color from umber to deep-sienna with hot-pink undersides. Begonia 'River Nile' produces distinguishing chartreuse leaves with heavily edged black or red-brown. Its leaf edges are ruffled while the leaf bases swirl inward to the leaf center. The compact plant of Heuchera 'Midnight Rose' has burnished black leaves, which are thickly spotted, hot-pink in spring. Its summer leaves lighten with creamy-pink dots that adorn the foliage. The narrow, deep-green fronds of Athyrium 'Dre's Dagger' are crossed, coming to a narrow point with a terminal crest. Its statuesque form creates a dramatic quality in any container setting.

### "Fun in the Shade"

Ingredients:  
 Heucherella 'Stoplight'  
 Heuchera 'Cinnabar Silver'  
 Polemonium 'Stairway to Heaven'  
 Eucomis 'Oakhurst'  
 Corydalis 'Berry Exciting'

Bright-yellow leaves and a large, stoplight-like red blotch embellish Heucherella 'Stoplight' in spring. The remarkable, purple-metallic leaves of Heuchera 'Cinnabar Silver' transform to silver, giving rise to striking cinnabar-red flowers. Because it is a compact plant with flowers that bloom just above the leaves, it is an excellent choice in container gardens. A favorite of Heim's, Polemonium 'Stairway to Heaven' has broad, bold, cream, variegated foliage with 12-inch stems bearing light-blue flowers; it is an exceptionally hardy, large-leaved, showy selection of Polemonium. The thick, fleshy, broadly linear leaves of Eucomis 'Oakhurst' form in a spear-like rosette with a pineapple-like array of purple flowers in late summer. 'Oakhurst' is a strong, red-purple form that creates an impact in containers. A vigorous, spreading Corydalis with succulent stems and gold, ferny leaves on a wide-spreading plant, 'Berry Exciting' produces fragrant, purple flowers.

### "Purple Passion"

Ingredients:  
 Colocasia 'Black Magic'  
 Brunnera 'Jack Frost'  
 Begonia 'Benitochiba'  
 Heuchera 'Black Beauty'

"One of the few 'true blacks' of the plant world," says Heims, "the exotic form of Colocasia 'Black Magic' is tropical in appearance and loves moisture, making it superb for container gardens located around ponds or other water sources. 'Jack Frost' is a lovely Brunnera with silvered foliage on heart-shaped leaves with green veining and edged with a green border. The large, palmate leaves of Begonia 'Benitochiba' are a metallic, rose-red color; it is shrubby and self-branching with pint flowers and an upright cane-stem. The dark, glossy, ruffled leaves of Heuchera 'Black Beauty' are somewhat

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upright, catching sun from any direction. Attractive year-round and easy to grow, Terra Nova Nurseries' horticulturists recommend it as a striking accent in the Purple Passion container recipe.

"Creating beautiful container gardens using various plant selections, colors, and textures is a therapeutic and enjoyable leisure activity for the whole family," says Heims.

To learn about more plant container recipes, log onto [www.terravanurseries.com](http://www.terravanurseries.com).

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