

## Perpetual Perennial Pots

Container planting is becoming a must for people-on-the-go and busy professionals, as well as those who prefer low-maintenance, yet creative, gardening. Containers can be used to light up an un-plantable space as well as becoming a beautiful, changeable focal point in the landscape.

Decorating a patio or deck, around a pool or fountain, containers are quickly becoming a favorite of savvy gardeners. There are many types and sizes of containers to enhance whatever area you wish: plastic, ceramic, wood, window boxes, topiaries, shoes, and old wheelbarrows and sinks are some of the ideas that people have come up with to suit their style of “decorating”, from formal to whimsical.

Whatever you decide, don’t miss out on the fun and compliments you will receive when neighbors, friends, and family see your creations. Follow these steps and be on your way to a wonderfully simple spring, summer, and fall.

### Easy steps to potting success:

1. Use a clean container with adequate drainage holes.
2. Only use SOILESS potting mix. (We use Fafard) Make sure your “soil” is damp: place appropriate amount in another container, water or mist sparingly, and mix until just damp. Do not miss this step!
3. Fill your container about 2/3 full with “soil”.
4. Remove plants from pots, checking roots to see if they are root-bound; gently coax roots apart. (If very tightly root-bound, you may “butterfly” cut the root ball half way up and spread the two sections apart before planting.)
5. Arrange plants in container, placing tallest plant in the center or back and allowing room for the eventual size of each plant.
6. Make holes large enough for each plant’s root system, place plants in holes, and fill in with “soil” to reach the soil level of original root ball.
7. When finished, cover all with enough soil so that you have 1” of empty space from the top of the soil to the edge of the pot. This allows you to easily water your container thoroughly without overflow.
8. Water container thoroughly with a root stimulator, such as Bonide “Root and Grow”.
9. Place your container in its new spot and enjoy! You might like to add seasonal artistic objects as well.

### Maintenance:

Water thoroughly when soil is dry. Check the container by inserting your finger up to the first knuckle, or use an easy Moisture Meter. In mid-summer, you may need to water your container every day; in spring or fall, when temperatures are cooler and evaporation is low, less attention is needed. You may use Osmacote slow-release fertilizer once or twice each season if you wish.

In fall, you can remove perennials from your container and plant in your garden, or put your planted container in a protected place, such as a garage or shed, so that the container does not freeze.

## Perpetual Perennials Combinations

### A Shade Container

In spring, plant with:

Heuchera 'Palace Purple'



Lamium 'Orchid Frost'



Primrose 'Pacific Giant'



Annual Pansies



In summer, replace pansies with impatiens, begonias, or lobelia. Transplant the primrose to an eastern exposure in your garden. Consider adding a spiky, grass-like Carex, a dwarf hosta, or a fern for a soft effect.



In fall, remove annuals and replace with plumbago; add miniature pumpkins and gourds.



### A Sun Container

In spring, plant with:

Dianthus 'Firewitch'



Sedum 'Lidakense'



Hemerocallis 'Stella D'Oro'



Annual Pansies



In summer, replace pansies with sedum or coreopsis for different foliage effects, or campanula for color. Annual Angelonia or Nemesia provide constant bloom.



In fall, add a mum or ornamental kale, as well as pumpkins and gourds.

