

CONTAINER GARDEN



This is the answer to many challenges with home gardens. Perhaps you don't have space for a lot of plants, or maybe you have a lot of critters that like to dig up or eat your plantings, or maybe you want a beautiful spot to sit and relax without having to spend that time maintaining a yard. There are other reasons for a container garden, but those are some we hear about frequently. Our Container Garden demonstrates many of the techniques used to address those issues and is a showcase of many of the perfect plants you can choose from to get the look and feel you want in your intimate garden. Here we show you several ways to mix and match plants, containers and placements so you can have some fun with it. Container gardens can be captivating—the key is variety. That means the types, shapes and colors of containers, *and plants*. Just remember, when placing different plants in the same container, you need to consider their individual watering, sun exposure and soil type needs. You obviously want to pair plants with the same, or similar, needs so they will thrive together. And an added bonus for having a container garden is if you have extreme weather changes, plants that can't tolerate weather extremes can be easily relocated!

Garden Without a “Yard”



One advantage to container gardening, as we have already mentioned, is that you can have an interesting garden with very little space. If you only have a small corner of a yard to plant in, containers are great. Something that adds interest to a small corner garden is height. If you can add platforms of different heights to place the containers on, you will be surprised how much fuller, deeper, and even more lush it will look. Or, since containers come in so many shapes and sizes, you can add a lot of depth to your corner garden using a variety of heights and widths of containers.

CONTAINER GARDEN (continued) Designing a Space



Shapes, sizes and colors: While we're talking about container variety, this display shows many types to choose from. Some deep and narrow, others shallow and wide. Some painted in solid colors, others painted more decoratively. Garden containers can be made of clay, concrete, resin, plastic, ceramic, wood or even cloth. Surfaces can be shiny or not, rounded or flat, and can come in just about any shape you can dream up. With all the choices in containers and plants, the designs are limitless. And a word on watering: in this example the set of seven plants have a drip system. That is also an option with containers.



Drama with Feature Plants: If you want to add some drama to a container garden, you need some plants that stand out. This may be due to size, shape or color. The Euphorbia "Fire Sticks" shown here (left) towers above the lower growing, mound-shaped Aeonium plants to the right. Also, Fire Sticks has a full spectrum of color which stands out in the middle of its surrounding green environment. Fire Sticks are very common and can be found throughout San Diego County. But when they are displayed like this, they appear unique and special. Container gardens are a perfect fit for "stand outs."



Creative Re-purposing: One of our favorite things to do is re-purpose items to give them a new use and keep them out of landfills. Container gardens are a great place to do this. The centerpiece of this display used to be a fountain. You can clearly see all three levels in this photo. By filling it with succulents, it still spills over as a fountain, but now it's alive with beauty. The key to this type of planting is mixing plants. We like to call the mix, "thrillers, spillers, and fillers." Thrillers are the show stoppers that grab your eye. Spillers cascade over the sides. And fillers? Well, they fill the remaining space. It's fun to watch it grow in, too.

CONTAINER GARDEN (continued) Featured Plants



Coprosma “Mirror Plant”: This plant is named for its shiny leaves. There are many varieties of Coprosma, covering a wide range of color choices. They are perfect for borders, rock gardens, and of course, containers. These fast growers, reaching sizes as big as 10’ tall and wide fairly quickly. They also need pruning twice a year to maintain a desired shape, but they compliment nearly any garden design. There are also dwarf varieties that grow closer to 2’ - 3’ tall and wide. They are evergreen, easy to care for, and always interesting to look at. They do well in part shade, but prefer full sun and moist, well-drained soil.



Echeveria, “Burgundy Pearl”: This color-contrasting show off is easily grown in sandy, well-drained soils. It prefers sun, but not direct, hot, afternoon summer sun, so some shade relief is best. The colors are brightest grown in a sunny spot where the reddish edges and tips deepen for a beautiful display of color. But if grown in full shade it turns almost entirely green. Pick a color-contrasting container for even more visual impact. Water only occasionally during summer months and keep it almost dry in winter. Grows to about 6” tall and 12” wide, and can be easily propagated from cuttings in the spring and summer.



Euphorbia, “Crown of Thorns”: This is definitely a plant that excels as a feature plant. Since it is a small shrub, it doesn’t take a lot of space, but commands a lot of attention. This stunning plant is low maintenance, drought tolerant, and heat resistant, even temperatures above 90°. It is classified as a succulent, with its claim to fame being the only succulent with actual leaves. It is also abundantly clad in thorns, as you may have guessed from its name. But if you don’t mind the “armor” you will enjoy full foliage and delicate blossoms year round. It prefers full sun and grows to 3’-6’ tall and 1’-3’ wide.