



CONTAINER GARDENS

Container Choice. Use an appropriate sized pot for your collection of plants, at least 16 inches wide. Smaller pots will require more care than larger sized containers. They tend to dry out more quickly and are prone to freezing if a hard winter occurs. All containers must contain drain holes or place gravel at the bottom to provide appropriate drainage. Using feet or saucers to support the container has several benefits. These include better drainage, concrete surfaces will not stain and slug bait can be hidden underneath the planter.

Soil. A good potting soil is also required. Use a product that will drain well but retain moisture. If you want to reduce your watering & fertilizer requirements, add waterholding gel beads (Soil Moist) to the potting soil before planting. Remember to soak the beads before you add them to your soil.

Location. Determine the location your container will be placed. The amount of sun or shade will determine what plants would be appropriate. Full sun is considered 6 or more hours of direct light, while shade is considered morning sunshine with afternoon shade. Part shade or part sun is somewhere between the two. Consider the hardiness rating of the plants. Most plants should be at least one zone hardier than if planted in the ground. Since we are in USDA zone 8 (average minimum temperature is 100 F) the plants should be rated at least zone 7 (00 F). If you are concerned about the survival of the plants, move the planter closer to your home or to a more protected place in the winter. If the container is under a porch or patio, it must be watered in the winter.

Plant Choice. Design the planter so the plants will complement the setting. If the container is placed next to you house, consider foliage & texture that will enhance your color and style. Fragrant shrubs or perennials will also give your nose a treat.

Instructions. Place soil in container. Loosen root ball of plants. Plant. Use slow release fertilizer. Depending on your plant choice, a water-soluble fertilizer may be used during the growing season to encourage bloom. Water the plants well. Watering during the growth season will be determined by the container location. Before watering, feel the soil. Actively growing plants or high temperatures usually require watering everyday. Always check the first 1-2 inches of soil for moisture to determine if watering is necessary.