

HANGING BASKETS

Hanging baskets are a great way to bring instant color to your entry ways, patios and porches. Here are some important tips to keeping these living works of art blooming all summer long!

Watering is an important factor in the care of hanging baskets and containers. The root systems in hanging baskets are not able to reach out for moisture and nutrients as it would in the ground, so it is important to closely monitor the plant's needs. (This is even more important for moss-lined wire baskets.)

- Water only when the top of the soil is dry to the touch. You can lift the baskets to test how heavy or light they are. Over-watering can be just as harmful as under-watering.
- Apply water until it just begins to run out the drainage holes.
- Do not allow your plants to wilt. Wilted plants are stressed and more susceptible to disease problems.
- Check containers at least once a day and twice on very hot, dry or windy days.

MORE TIPS:

- Add a good organic/slow release fertilizer to provide a steady supply of nutrients throughout the growing season.
- As your planter gets bigger and more beautiful, augment the slow release fertilizer with weekly applications of a water-soluble fertilizer. This is especially important for heavy blooming annuals that require lots of "energy". Frequent watering causes vital nutrients to leach out more quickly.
- Remove spent flowers and foliage regularly. Pinch back to keep plants full.
- Hanging baskets can become a bit stretched over time, even when you are doing everything right. Give your baskets a light "haircut" in mid to late summer.
- Check for insects and infections whenever you water. Treat with insecticidal soap or organic fungicides as needed.