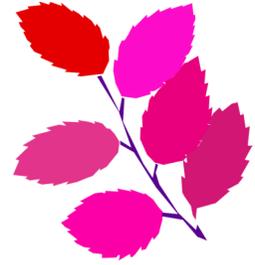


Container Gardens for Fall

Prolonged summer heat can take a toll on some of your plants, so now is a good time to refresh and/or rejuvenate your container gardens.



Plant Choices

Fall is the time for stuffing in lots of plants, since they will not grow as quickly as those planted in spring. The goal is to quickly create a lush full container that will provide color for months.

When choosing plants for fall, their ability to withstand cooler temperatures is key to keeping your containers looking great for months. You may feel the pull toward a warmer color palette, so look for plants with gold, orange and red blooms, but add punch and depth by adding cooler colors like purples and violets.

Fall is a great time to look to foliage for color, including Heucheras, ornamental grasses. Sedums, coprosma and autumn ferns. Coleus, although an annual, has such striking foliage and form that it will add punch to your pots until the first heavy frost. Be creative and tuck in some hardy herbs like purple sage, lemon thyme and rosemary for color and fragrance. Of course, you can always use the classic fall plants like mums, asters, peppers, pansies and ornamental cabbage & kale.

Fall Accents

Play up the harvest theme by incorporating pumpkins, gourds, dried corn, or Halloween decorations. For an even simpler arrangement, carve out a pumpkin and use it as a container, placing a combination of fall plants in it or a single pot of black mondo grass.

Look to your garden for no-cost design accents like interesting branches, seed pods or leaves.

Watering

Fall containers require less water than those planted in spring/summer. Check the soil every other day, but remember that although the top couple of inches of soil feels dry, the bottom zone of the container may be very damp. Check the drainage holes! You may only need to water a couple times a week depending on the pot size.

Fertilizing

Since plants will not be growing vigorously enough to need a lot of fertilizer, an application of water-soluble fertilizer will be more effective than slow-release fertilizers that are temperature dependent. Organic fertilizers, although slow-release, help enrich the soil and provides accessible food for the plant whenever it needs to "eat."

Refer to our handout "Container Gardening through Winter" for information on transitioning your containers to colder temperatures.