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## Container Gardens

Versatile, colorful, low maintenance. Container gardens are more popular than ever, but they present special challenges as well. Consider these points before purchasing or planting your own container gardens:

**The container** should be of sufficient size to support plant growth. Small containers require frequent watering and have less soil to buffer against harmful drying. Larger containers hold more soil and retain moisture longer.

**Use a soil mix** with good drainage. Add one part quality soil mix or perlite to two-to-three parts of an inexpensive soil to help keep the cost down.

**Select the right plants** for your location. If you are combining plants, make sure you select compatible plants. Some plants will dominate and smother other plants. Don't overcrowd! They will be growing in this container for 5-6 months, so give them room.

**Maintain soil moisture.** Some plants can tolerate drying out, but this should be the exception rather than the norm. Excessive drying kills the root system, creating undue stress for the plant.

**Fertilize regularly.** Every 5 to 6 times you water your plants you should water them with a water-soluble fertilizer such as Miracle-Gro.

**Pinch 'em!** To keep most annuals looking good, the old flowers need to be removed. Long, scraggly stems should also be cut back. Do just a few every other week. This will rejuvenate your planter, keeping it looking good all summer.