



How to have a FABBY GARDEN

Container Gardening Like A Boss!

We've all seen those mixed plant containers, so often offered up as "easy" and "ideal" in so many home and garden magazines, how-to videos and blogs over the last decade. Chock full of plants, they look really cool – don't you want to make some just like it (of course you do!)? They look really cool until, well, they start growing! I always imagine what they'll look like in a few months. Look closer at the photos next time and you'll likely see a mix-mosh of plants with widely divergent requirements. Some will want sun, others shade – you know, like those Coleus-succulent combination pots. Crazy – I know! We realize this may never work out, but they're so darn pretty!

Another big problem I almost always see is that there is usually one plant used that is naturally a large and/or rapid grower that will soon completely overwhelm and smother its fellow pot-mates. Final result: Large plant = 1,

pot mates = 0. Which brings me to the main problem I see with these container gardens, they're just crammed too full of plants. None of the plants will be very happy. The competition for growing space, root space and nutrients is vicious, and no one in the pot will ever realize their full glorious potential. It becomes fairly obvious, these photo perfect plantings are just that – perfect for a photo taken right after they're put together.

Now, if you've ever visited our nursery, you'll have seen our huge displays of mixed container arrangements and boy, are they healthy and gorgeous! Here's what I've learned over years of trying to make beautiful container displays.

Plant multiple containers with 1 plant if it's going to get large, or several plants of one variety per container. For instance, you would plant one large plant, say, a tall grass, sunflower or Ceanothus in 1 large pot. If they're smaller growers or annuals, you can plant several of the same variety, so that the pot will look full and fabulous when it reaches full bloom. Each planting is allowed to attain its full glory and you can arrange them to suit your eye by height, color, shape or texture. The beauty of multiple container arrangements is that they will last much longer, because when one container is finished blooming – be it annual or perennial – it can be whisked out of sight to be refreshed by cutting back (perenni-

als) or replanted by season (annuals). You'll get an exciting, ever-changing display, much more interesting and fun to play with.

Finally, take note of a few important container growing tips: Use the right size pot to provide PLENTY OF ROOT SPACE and to keep the soil from heating up and drying out too fast – 10-15 gallons and up, especially for larger plants (we use 25 gal). And very important, if you are buying soil, use a good quality "planting mix" not "potting soil", which is really designed for houseplants and dries out too fast. Fertilize soon after planting with a 1" top-dress of good compost or a good quality slow release fertilizer like Osmocote. Fertilize again whenever you cut back or whenever foliage begins to yellow. Water according to need, and you'll love your beautiful container arrangements!

Annie



If we've offered it for sale, then we've tried it in a container! Watch our VIDEO for Annie's tried-and-true tips for doing containers right!

<http://blog.anniesannuals.com/video/>



Convolvulus tricolor 'Blue Ensign'

Riveting, totally technicolor 2.5" royal blue blooms with flashy, starburst centers make a garden come alive, especially as you get so many! Held in profusion for months on trailing stems, it's great in containers (imagine them in a pot on your front steps) and merrily combines with the lime green foliage of Tanacetum parthenium aureum (online). To 12" x 36". Self-sows! Full sun. Avg. water. Annual. All zones. #277 \$4.95 3+ \$4.50



Coreopsis tinctoria 'Calliopsis'

Cultivate clouds of instant sunshine with this beyond EASY Coreopsis, truly one of the most bloomiferous annuals you can grow! With a wondrous flower show that starts in June and goes all the way to Fall, an abundance of vivid yellow, 2", Cosmos-type flowers feature wine red centers on long, wiry stems, perfect for posies. Growing 3' tall x 2' around, it's outstanding in a container (5+ gal.). Not fussy about soil, self-sows! Sun. Avg. water. Annual. All zones. #282 \$4.95 3+ \$4.50



Alonsoa meridionalis 'Red'

This South American bloom machine will always remain on my list of Top 10 Faves. Blooms lasting 3 months or more will impress you as much as me. When it slows down, just cut back to 6" tall, add a bit of compost and boom – it's back with another explosion of lovely roundish Snapdragon-like flowers. A bushy 30" x 18." Full/Part sun. Avg. water. Short-lived perennial, USDA zones 9-10, annual elsewhere. #28 \$6.95 3+ \$6.50



Anchusa capensis 'Blue Angel'

Smothering itself in richest royal blueness, EASY and deer resistant 15" x 15" Anchusa capensis creates a quick explosion of captivating color with its foliage obliterating super dense clusters on sturdy, branching stems. Happiest with plenty of sun – right up in front of your garden or in a container, I love it combined with reds and yellows. Blooms for about a 1.5 months, then cut it back to 3" for a second blast of color. Tolerates some dryness and clay but best in rich, well drained soil. Adored by bees and butterflies, self-sows! Sun. Avg./Low water. Short lived perennial USDA zones 9-10, annual elsewhere. #45 \$4.95 3+ \$4.50



Orostachys iwarengae 'Chinese Dunce Cap'

One of our favorite rarities, it's like growing 3 plants in one! Starting as a low, dense spreading mat (to 12" across) of lovely small blue-grey rosettes, it soon forms a multitude of totally cool, pinkish conical spires inspiring one to imagine a little elfin cityscape. Late Summer thru Fall, the spires reach 6" tall, blossoming with pink and white frilly flowers much like a miniature Echium 'Tower of Jewels' (p. 53). Charming! Ideal for containers, rock gardens and fairy gardens! Will die after flowering, but it self-sows and makes side rosettes to repeat its magic every year! Sun/Bright shade. Avg./Low water. Monocarpic USDA zones 5a-10. #2620 \$7.95 3+ \$7.50



Linaria reticulata 'Flamenco'

Long-blooming, scented, drought tolerant, snail and deer resistant, this flamboyant annual from North Africa self-sows, too! Gobs of bright little scarlet and gold, bi-colored "snapdragon" blooms are displayed for months above soft, ferny foliage. Cut back after bloom and it'll re-bloom quickly and vigorously. To 12" x 12", it's a stunning container subject. Sun. Avg./Low water. Annual. All zones. #611 \$4.95 3+ \$4.50



Viscaria oculata 'Blue Pearl'

Another terrific annual that seems to have disappeared from the seed world! We're determined to keep it around for those who cherish this bountiful (photo shows 1 plant), beautiful annual. Always in motion on a 2' x 2' mass of slender, branching stems, enchanting, lavender-blue, 1.5" blooms dance and sway with the slightest breeze. Pinch spent flowers to prolong bloom. Best in rich soil in the front of your garden or in a container. Wonderful cut flowers! Sun. Avg. water. Annual. All zones. Available in March. #1478 \$4.95 3+ \$4.50

Our favorite easy, super bloomy container plants! Find more online!