

GARDENS Four

Seasons

GARDENDESIGN -
APRIL 2016

*Of all the wonderful things in the
wonderful universe of God,*

*nothing seems to me more
surprising than the planting of a seed*

*in the blank earth and the
result thereof.*

-
Julie Moir Messervy

CLEVER CONTAINER
PLANTINGS

Back in my early days it never occurred to me to plant anything in pots. It always struck me as a wealthy person's style of gardening - you know, growing things, especially flowers in containers. Thank goodness that has changed in my world (& yours! :0

The bulk of the plants in our yards are grown in the ground - that is best obviously for Trees & Shrubs & most Perennials.

As great as they are, the fact that Annuals bloom pretty much all Summer compared to the average 2 weeks for the other plants makes us crave them in our yards. The minute we plant Annuals in the ground however, our maintenance increases exponentially with each one as we do battle with weeds. It is this paradox that makes planting Annuals in Containers very attractive. Aside from the regular watering, potted plants rarely require weeding. So they are left to their own devices to bloom their little hearts out !

I won't get into the dizzying selection of planters (or those that could be used as such). I will say however that aside from occasional exceptions, the finish on the pot is less important than the size & shape & what you put into them.

Without further ado - here are some unusual choices !

1. Treat Perennials as Annuals - Pulmonaria, Heuchera , Sedum, Creeping Jenny, or even Ajuga or other interesting Perennials create luxurious foliage combinations on their own or planted with Annuals.



- Golden Creeping Jenny (Perennial)
cascades down the pot surface as Pink Begonia
& frothy Fern show themselves off
overhead.

2. Use Tropical Plants - Banana Trees, Chinese Evergreen, Palms or Rubber Plants make creative displays & grow much faster outdoors than in. Pick them up at a savings at your local big box store - sometimes cheaper even than using packs of Annuals!

Because they originate in tropical rain forests, they can only tolerate full shade or dappled sunlight (part-shade with no direct sun)

- so be sure to use them in spots that provide that environment.



- Red-leafed Banana Plant luxuriates in a pot amidst in-ground planted Hostas



- Potted Mini-Schefflera takes centre

stage amongst colourful Annuals.

3. Succulents - trust me on this one - Succulents are BEST for full sun. I have done a number of outdoor planters for businesses that have south facing balconies. These sites are exposed to the wind, rain & sun & I only water them once a month (or less if it rains!) Ideal if you have a hot sunny driveway & want to present something spectacular for the Summer - go with Succulents - you'll never look back!



- the foliage of many Succulent varieties colour up nicely when exposed to direct sunlight as shown in the pics above & below



4. Check out local Hot Houses for unusual plants that are Annuals but are not normally grown as much as Petunias & Geraniums.

I grew this last year & it was amazing - the Popcorn Plant ! It's flowers LOOK like stalks of hot-buttered popcorn & the foliage

SMELLS exactly like hot buttered popcorn! One place I love to go to is Mother Earth Nurseries near Clavet. They had this humungous POPCORN PLANT at Gardenscape recently.



5. Herbs make a wonderful tone-on-tone vision of textured foliage.
Below is a cluster of smaller pots just outside a kitchen door
- easily accessible for the chef in the house!



I hope I've piqued your interest in doing up some containers
this Spring. Do you want to get started preparing your own
pots but are unsure how to proceed? Never fear! I am attaching my
favourite method of preparing vessels for the season's plantings:



Planting Annuals in Pots

(a sure fire way to have incredible potted annual displays!)

- use as big a pot as possible (the larger it is, the less you will have to water)
- start with a clean pot (if using a second hand pot - remove any dirt & rinse with a few drops of bleach in a pail of water, then with clear water - this will ensure a clean start for plants AND soil!)
- if using a clay pot for a full sun or semi-shade location, ensure you line it with a plastic pot of corresponding size. (clay pots tend to 'wick' moisture out of the soil, particularly in the sun) Ditto for metal pots - a plastic 'pot-in-pot treatment' will be gentler for plants on those blazing hot days!
- cover the bottom of the pot with a 'drainage layer' of styrofoam packing, pieces or 'peanuts' or squished plastic bottles. (you can use rock, gravel or broken pieces of clay pots but it will increase the weight of the planter)
- fill up the container with your drainage layer so you can allow for only 12" of planting soil (this is *lots* of depth for annuals)
- prepare a soil mix of 1/3 garden soil, 1/3 peat moss & 1/3 vermiculite or perlite. Sprinkle in some *granular time release fertilizer* (according to directions on the container) Alternately, use Sunshine Potting Soil Mix #1 - a great pre-mixed soil
- place 12" of soil mix in pot, water until it seeps out the drainage holes & top up so the soil level is about 1" - 2" below the pot rim

Your container is now ready to accept annual plants. Most annuals should be spaced 4" apart to allow for full coverage in a short time. (some exceptions to this rule would be the 'Wave' Petunias or Fountain Grass - check the size - annuals will reach - when deciding spacing)

Remember to **water** - a lot of annuals are not forgiving in the moisture department & **ENJOY!**

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Visit my PINTEREST site to experience a myriad of other
container ideas & cool plants to put them in!

Simply click the following link :

[https://www.pinterest.com/
gardens4seasons/boards/](https://www.pinterest.com/gardens4seasons/boards/)





UPCOMING EVENTS

June 3, 2016 - **U of S ANNUAL PLANT SALE** - a perfect time to purchase local nursery grown fruits & shrubs at low prices.

Click on this link for location & hours - <http://www.fruit.usask.ca/extension.html>

Try something new this Sunday morning while you are enjoying the Sunshine! If you've never listened - **CKOM 650 AM**

Talk Radio has a weekly hour long segment on Gardening in SK. Tune in to hear local expert - **Rick Vanduyvendyk** from 9am - 10 am every Sunday for **GARDEN TALK!**



PLANT OF THE MONTH

FORSYTHIA

Would you just LOOK at this beauty coming into bloom around our fair city at this moment ?!

It's hard to miss the splashes of yellow amongst the drab shapes of naked deciduous plants. I took this pic standing right in front of City Hall earlier this week - this display stopped traffic - namely ME!

Forsythia is a hardy shrub that reaches about 6' - 8' high & has a spread of roughly 6'. It blooms these amazingly delicate yellow flowers *only* for 2 weeks first thing in Spring before the leaves even emerge. The fact it is a solid green leaved, hardy shrub for the remainder of the Summer seems secondary once you witness the magnificent presentation it delivers each year. It can be grown in full shade to full sun making it quite versatile particularly in a yard where you have a bit of space to play with.

Don't have room for one? Be prepared to pay a good price for Forsythia branches from a florist shop. In your own yard or in a vase - little else heralds warmer weather than this charmer.







BRILLIANCE

DESIGN

Quite the Brilliant way to re-purpose a set of old mattress
springs - use it to support your local Vine!





GARDENDESIGN in May - Let's

continue with the 'Container Theme' & learn all about

TUB GARDENS - an entire little ecosystem in a pot!



Want a bit more of an idea on how to used COLOUR in your Containers & Pots?

Well then, reply to this email with **COLOURS** in the subject line & you'll receive not one, but two Back Issues of GARDENDESIGN where I covered the use of COLOUR!



**DID YOU KNOW? - I never, Ever, EVER
share my email list - EVER! :)**

to this email with NO THANKS!

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