

# GROWING ANNUAL CONTAINER GARDENS

## GROWING TIPS

Lack of gardening space does not have to limit your ability to grow flowers or vegetables. Growing in containers allows opportunities almost anywhere on patios, decks, porches, balconies or indoors under lights. Plants can be arranged in different ways to take advantage of colors, textures, and blooming times. Located close to the kitchen, container gardens are excellent for growing herbs. Weather can make container gardening challenging, be sure to select plants based on sun exposure tolerance, moisture needs, etc.

### Containers

Containers are available in a variety of sizes and styles. The size of the container will depend on the eventual size of the plants it will contain. The container will also affect the size of the plant and how often it will require water. Make sure the container has holes in the bottom for the excess water to drain.

### Soil Mix

A well aerated, well drained, lightweight medium is best for growing plants in containers. The growing medium must support the plants and provide water and nutrients. It is not a good idea to use plain garden soil for container plants, because it is heavy and can have insects or disease. We recommend Ferti-lome Ultimate Potting Mix for most container gardens. We have several specialty potting soils, as well!

### Plant Selection

Choose plants that are adapted to the site and that are pleasing in form and color. Vegetables that produce fruit, such as tomatoes, beans, peppers, etc; require at least six hours of full sun to be productive. Leafy and root vegetables can get by with fewer hours of direct sun. Flowers should also be selected according to the amount of sunlight they will receive.

### Maintenance

Check containers for moisture in the morning when plants are freshest. It is normal to see a little stress during the heat of the day in the summer. Soil moist is a polymer granule which can help conserve moisture in container plantings. Mix into the planting medium at planting. Containers use up nutrients in their limited soil supply and need regular feeding. A well-balanced fertilizer is adequate for most containers. Fertilizers come in several forms; granular, water soluble and slow release varieties. You can use a mild water soluble fertilizer with Superthrive added at planting. Myke for Annuals and Perennials can be placed under the plants roots if you prefer to use a granulated product. After planting containers, feed them about every two weeks. Alternate between a Rooting and Blooming formula and a balanced fertilizer such as Miracle-Gro. Always follow label instruction as too much fertilizer will cause salts to build up injuring plant's roots. Dr. Earth has a line of organic, slow release fertilizers that only needs reapplication every 2 months! Lastly, timely pinching and deadheading can promote quicker bloom times and reduce legginess. The plant's energy can go towards new blooms and shoots. Always prune any dead or damaged foliage.

