

Choosing Plants for Your Container Garden

Here are a few guidelines:

- Decide if you want your plants to be decorative or edible, or a combination of both.
- Is your area sunny or shady? Wet or dry? How's the wind? Choose plants with the same growing needs.
- Think about time. Some plants need lots of attention.
- What plants look good in one pot, and which look better in a cluster of pots?



Even experienced gardeners have questions. Talk with staff at your local nursery, garden center, or greenhouse. Fellow gardeners are a great resource. Reach out to neighbors. Check if there's a local garden club.

Do you want seeds or transplants? Seeds are less expensive, and it's rewarding to grow a plant from a tiny seed. But transplants will give you a head start.

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When buying transplants, follow these guidelines:

- Pick the plant up and check its stem, branches, leaves, pot, and soil.
- The size of the plant and the container need to be balanced. Very large plants in small containers will have unhealthy roots.
- The most beautiful displays are simple, so choose just a few colors.

Have a thriller, a filler, and a spiller:

- A thriller is a tall plant that goes in the center. It adds height, drama, and movement.
- Fillers are medium-size, bushy, or rounded plants that fill space in the container.
- Spillers are splashy plants that spill over the sides of the container.

Add ornamental grasses for zing. You'll love the soothing sounds as they sway in the wind.

Thinking of herbs in your garden?

- Herbs add texture and color.
- Thyme, oregano, parsley, rosemary, basil, and cilantro are easy to grow and great for cooking.
- Create a fragrant herb garden on your patio, porch, or deck, or put them along pathways.

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- Before buying, rub its leaf and sniff to make sure you like the scent.
- Herbs make good plant buddies. Combine herbs, flowers, and vegetables in one container, or in nearby containers.
- Marigolds and basil in the same pot keep mosquitoes and other pests away.
- Plant basil with tomatoes for tastier tomatoes!

What other plants might be right for your garden?

- Cacti and succulents don't need much watering.
- Vines like morning glory or bougainvillea grow well on a trellis.
- Growing vegetables provides healthy food at your fingertips. Easy veggies are tomatoes, beans, lettuce, potatoes, and peppers.

Be creative and have fun with your garden.