

# Container Gardening Annuals and Perennials

Container gardens are great for those who want a garden, but have limited time or space. They can be moved from one spot to another, and they add color and interest wherever they are - on patios, porches, steps, and walkways.

**CONTAINER SELECTION:** Choose Containers that are sturdy and large enough to hold potting medium for the plants. The container must have holes in the bottom for drainage. Remember that dark containers absorb more heat from the sun, and porous containers wick water away from the plants. Consider whether weight is a factor, and if so, Johnson's carries many attractive, lightweight pots for your use.

**GROWING MEDIUM:** Johnson's recommends a good potting soil that is free of any disease pathogens and weed seeds. Before placing the soil into the pot, place a 2 inch layer of gravel or packing peanuts at the bottom.

**PLANT SELECTION:** There are few plants that cannot be grown in a suitable sized container. Your only concern is to choose plants that will grow best where the container will be placed. Determine how many hours of direct sunlight your plants will receive and group plants together with similar requirements, either annuals or perennials or both. Consider flower and foliage color, texture, and plant habit, and whether the container will be on the ground or on a stand. Design your garden around plants you love, as you become the artist!

**PLANTING:** Plants can be spaced closer in containers than in the garden - twice as many in the same amount of space. If the container is viewed from all sides, place the tallest plant in the center. Gently remove your plants from their pots and always place them at the same level they were growing, as buried plant stems may rot. Tamp down the soil to eliminate air pockets, especially around the edges. Water the container thoroughly, but gently, until water drains out of the bottom. A little mulch on top of the soil will help retain water.

**WATERING:** Water requirements will vary depending on the size and type of container, plant species, and weather conditions. Containers should be checked daily for water needs. If the soil down 1-2 inches feels dry, water until water drains out the bottom of the pot.

**FERTILIZING:** Regular feeding is a must. Plants grown in containers have less soil from which to draw nutrients, and regular watering drains nutrients. A good organic or water-soluble fertilizer formulated for blooming plants can be applied weekly at 1/4 the monthly rate. Slow release fertilizers can also be used.

**MAINTENANCE:** Remove dried leaves and spent blooms regularly to promote continuous bloom and keep the plants more attractive. Then sit back and enjoy your container garden!

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