

in the garden by Stephen and Kristin Pategas



STEPHEN & KRISTIN PATEGAS

Container Plants – Select Them For Color

Container gardening is one of the easiest ways to garden. However, selecting plants that work well in a container is a challenge. It's all about plant selection based on the plant's growth habits, preferences for moisture and light and their aesthetic qualities.

Plants that grow to a large size need a large container or need to be removed from the container as they mature. In some cases dwarfing of the plant may occur but watering needs increase since the soil that retains moisture is replaced by an ever increasing mass of roots.

A container of a collection of plants requires ones with similar needs. Plants that need it dry will suffer if their neighbors like to be moist and vice versa. Sun-loving and shade-loving plants need to have different containers, otherwise some will be sun scorched (pass the sun block please!) or spindly as they reach for the light.

Selecting plants to fit your aesthetic needs means paying attention to the look of the container as well as scoping out the



Fan flower takes sun to part shade



Solar Sunrise coleus loves the sun



Ornamental kale with cascading Silver Falls dichondra

surroundings. If there is color you want to accent such as a red door, look for plants with foliage or blooms that match the color or provide a contrast. The red blooms of salvia, impatiens, geranium, celosia, begonia, cyclamen, or snapdragon or the contrast of green foliage from ferns or a Xanadu philodendron would all fit the bill.

Perhaps the container itself should have an accenting plant. Glazed containers come in a wide variety of dynamic colors. A blue glazed pot visually pops when planted with the orange blooms of marigolds, orange bulbine, kalanchoe, moss rose, crossandra, impatiens, tuberous begonias, or soap aloe. A purple glaze looks hot with the yellow flowers of dahlberg daisy, strawflower, dill, snapdragon, golden globe lysimachia, New Gold lantana, or Arizona marigold.

If pink is your color grab some yarrow, cyclamen, petunia, mandevilla, crown of thorns, begonia, snapdragon, pentas, ornamental kale, or dianthus. Visually expand the space with cool blue flowering plants: fan flower,

browallia, ageratum, lily of the Nile, pansy, salvia, blue daze, or balloon flower. Blue is also the complementary color for orange.

The yellow walls of a house increase in intensity when they are adjacent to the purple blooms of petunia, salvia, purple angelonia, heliotrope, or verbena. Visually moderate a mix of flower colors by incorporating white blossoms found on alyssum, pentas, cyclamen, begonia, white mandevilla, snapdragon, yarrow, petunia, pansy, or white lily of the Nile.

Flowers come and go but colorful foliage has a long shelf life. For a feast of multicolored leaves, head for the incredible color combinations on the leaves of the newer sun-loving coleus. If you have a shady spot, coleus will still work with some pinching back, or plant caladium tubers which emerge during the warmer months.

Once the plants are selected and thriving the next challenge will be where to add more containers. ■

Kristin and Stephen Pategas design landscapes and garden at their home and business Hortus Oasis in Winter Park. Contact them at garden@hortus oasis.com or visit www.hortus oasis.com and www.pategaionplants.com.

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