

WILSHIRE GARDEN MARKET

March, 2005 Newsletter
Vol. 2, No. 2

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Established 1997

PLANT SPRING CONTAINERS

Gardeners are pacing and fidgeting nervously, eyes searching their gardens and those of their neighbors for shoots of green or any hint of color. In January and February, books were read and dog-eared, the garden has been tidied (it has, hasn't it?); now all they want is a handful of blooms of any kind to chase away the winter blahs. Eager to satisfy their urge to plant something colorful and reconnect with nature after long winter hibernation, what can the gardener do when the weather is unpredictable? The best means to instant spring gratification is container gardening.

There are a number of reasons to grow plants in containers at any time. Beautiful planters provide excellent curb appeal. In addition, many homeowners do not have the time to spend on a full garden; containers are a convenience in care and maintenance of their outdoor living area, ensuring a long-lasting high quality appearance. Plants thrive in containers because there is no competition for water and food, and crawling insects do not as easily find them. Having concentrated spots of color in planters reflects the image of spring or any season without a huge investment of filling the flower beds with plants that could be damaged by late freezes. In addition, if there is the threat of late freezes, it is much easier to protect the plants in several containers by watering (water acts as an insulator) or covering, as opposed to hand watering or covering an entire flowerbed.

Whether it is new planters by the entry or additional pots for the patio, invest in the best money can buy and learn to plant them with

imagination. Follow the basic rules for container planting: begin with a tall center plant that will act as the core, then add full, leafy plants of medium height around the core, and finish the composition with low, trailing plants. When selecting plants, choose the largest and most healthy available in your favorite hues, and remember foliage texture as an important overall component. Turn the pots occasionally to ensure symmetrical plant growth.



Add flair to typical cold weather plantings by introducing unexpected plant materials such as small shrubs and ground covers. For large, instantly beautiful Easter containers, plant together blooming azaleas, cyclamen, pansies, and highlight with a spring garden ornament.



This festive Easter planter contains snapdragons, pansies, alyssum, dianthus and a cheerful bunny statue.



For an easy Easter container, top an unplanted pot with Oregon green moss; decorate with bunny ornaments and eggs. Providing adequate drainage both inside and underneath the planter will ensure healthy plants. This can be

achieved by filling the bottom of the planter with several inches of potshards, gravel, styrene "popcorn", or wadded up newsprint. Elevating the planter on attractive pot feet, unseen pieces of thin tile, or wood shims will allow the water to drain from the planter and will not leave dark stains on the surface underneath.

Experiment with the positioning of planters. Make sure attractive pots are focal points visible from indoors. Placing several pots together will create a moist microclimate, helping to prevent the plants from drying out. For those gardeners without large expanses of flowerbeds, groupings of containers give the impression of abundance. With enough pots any corner can be transformed into a lush green composition. Once the basic planting rules are understood, the container gardener can exercise personal expression through selecting the plant materials that excite them.

MARCH INTO SPRING

March 20 is the first day of spring, closely followed by an early Easter on March 27. Now is the time to start preparing to entertain guests in the garden. Armed with knowledge about the ins and outs of outdoor entertaining and the newest influences in garden decor, homeowners can plan to spend March and the ensuing spring months relaxing in their perfect garden retreats.

Set the stage for entertaining with a ceiling of blue sky or green vines growing on weatherproof cedar planks. Incorporate into the setting the sound of gently moving water, layers of fabric curtains for shade, pillows and tablecloths for comfort and color, ceiling fans for moving air, and plants in pots for visual softness. A floor accented by a beautiful outdoor rug, furnished with sturdy comfortable chairs and tables and an outdoor kitchen or grill will ensure the element of hospitality for gatherings with family and friends. Find the most direct path from indoor kitchen space to the

outdoor entertainment area, and have adequate serving surfaces ready.

Increase guests' comfort level by providing comfortable outdoor pillows on benches and chairs. Colorful oilcloth tablecloths are durable, clean, and smooth to give the feeling of dining indoors yet with walls of leafy green. Small heavy tablecloth weights win the battle of Oklahoma winds, preventing the fabric from blowing up onto food or knocking over glasses. For evening entertaining, remember outdoor lighting in the garden and on the tabletops. Flickering candlelight from a chandelier or tabletop tea light holder provides a romantic ambiance.

With all of the above elements considered, guests will always remember the ambiance, good food, and delightful company.

MARCH TO DO LIST

- Take stock of garden gloves, tools, fertilizers, and pesticides. Take unwanted or out of date hazardous chemicals to the Household Hazardous Waste Disposal Center at SW 15 and Portland.
- Prune ornamental grasses including liriopse and mondo grass. Get your English trimming shears at Wilshire Garden Market.
- Clean leaves out of flowerbeds.
- Finish pruning roses and spray new leaves.
- Prune back winter damaged limbs of shrubs and dead perennial shoots.
- Apply fertilizer such as water soluble 10-20-10 or blood meal to flower beds.
- Apply fresh layer of mulch or compost.
- Feed trees and shrubs.
- Clean out ponds and fountains. Check the pumps to make sure that they are free of debris and functional.
- Lawn: apply pre-emergent for broad leaf weeds, sow fescue seed, fertilize cool season turf, and mow cool season grass.
- Clean patio furniture.

SEMINAR SERIES 2005

These seminars begin at 10:30 a.m. and are one hour in length, with time for questions at the conclusion. The fee is \$10 per person; seating is somewhat limited, so call now to reserve a space. Door prizes are given at each seminar. Please join us!

The 2005 series is as follows:

Sat., Mar.5	Linda Vater	"Kitchen Garden"
Fri., Apr. 8	Linda Vater	"Use of Color in the Landscape"
Fri., May 6	Linda Vater	"Creating Curb Appeal"
Sat., June 4	Linda Vater	"Vertical Gardening"
Fri., July 8	Linda Vater	"Shade Gardening"
Sat., Aug. 27	Linda Vater	"How to keep Your Garden Looking Good"
Fri., Sep. 16	Linda Vater	"Container Gardening"
Sat., Oct. 15	Linda Vater	"Bulbs"

EXTERIOR DECORATING

This year give yourself a garden retreat, or refresh the one you have. In response to repeated requests, Wilshire Garden Market now provides an exterior decorating consultation service. By appointment and for a nominal fee, we will make a consultation visit followed by written suggestions to make your garden retreat more charming, cohesive, and useful. We also plant pots or window boxes. Call the store for more details or to set up an appointment.



Let us help you create your outdoor living room!

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HAPPY ST. PATRICK'S DAY

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