

WILSHIRE GARDEN MARKET

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CELEBRATING 19 YEARS

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PLANT MARVELOUS SPRING CONTAINERS

At this time of year many homeowners want to fill their front porch and patio pots with a burst of annual color, the more the better. It is a springtime tradition and it does make us feel good about our homes. Before we jump into the same routine, let's do some digging (sorry) into the latest trends, perhaps finding more marvelous ideas from some planting gurus and see what we find. It can't hurt and it could be a porch changer.

Garden experts advise that when buying large pots



(the new small pot diameter is 18"), buy the best you can afford. For entries of traditional homes, classic cast stone shapes and styles look best. Containers are tools for design; large containers work anywhere.

Try to use plants that are less water dependent. Don't focus just on flowers, you can add interest by varying the texture; color and texture are equal attributes in plants. Try evergreens that can thrive in sun or shade, heat or cold. You can even treat a planted pot as a small scale landscape.

This year, the trend is to use subtle color ranges—all white or a variety of types of plants in all one color. You attain saturation and impact (curb appeal) by maximizing one color. Repeat a color in containers and beds.

Glazed terra cotta containers are versatile, durable, and available in colors from summer white to graphite, buttercream to jade to french blue. You can



make captivating arrangements using glazed terra cotta planters and flowers in the same color way.

Try creative and tasty combinations using herbs and vegetables in pots on your patio; match a celadon pot to the underside of a cabbage leaf. Use plants that flower at night; it is amazing how white flowers are very visible at night, extending your enjoyment.

Lastly, PLANT SMART! We used Smart Pots *inside* our containers last summer, fall, and winter. Because they are made from geotextile fabric plants are much healthier. They slipped inside our pots and could be easily removed when the host pot was sold. Lighter weight than a pot, those planted with tender tropicals were stored inside all winter, ready to be set out again this spring. Made in Oklahoma City, they are the *Smart Pots!* Get them here; try them, you'll like them!

WE LIKE THESE FOR SPRING

It is officially spring. These square outdoor pillows with luscious flora and fauna images give great spring pizzazz to any area. Springtime wreaths can be used in so many ways in so many places. Bunny and bird statues are the epitome of spring for the garden. They add another dimension hiding among lush garden plantings.



April Cornell linens are the most beautiful we have found. Romantic tablecloths, napkins and frame-worthy tea towels are as gorgeous as paintings. They are art in fabric. The newest tablecloth with hummingbirds flitting around colorful branches and wildflowers is restful with aqua and lively

with red; it is wonderful.

The tiny Dogwood cottage is even smaller than our other cottages; it can go in even tinier places. This would look darling in a pot with some tiny groundcovers, thyme, little grape hyacinths, and tiny accessories. Watch out for fairies!



The right tool for the right job; good tools make gardening more enjoyable, thus healthy gardens.

We have read these words for years and they are true.

Researching the best tools we discovered testimonials by Popular Mechanics with a rating of their top 5 time saving tools, ranking the Hori Hori knife (above left) number ONE.



Number 2 was the Korean Weeder (large curved blade upper right). Real Simple suggests the Burgon & Ball trowel (which we usually have in stock), also the Hori-Hori knife, and Felco pruners #2 and #6.

In addition, we recommend a few more tools that we would not be without: pot plants quickly and easily using the *soil scoop*. The *trake* is an ergonomic two-in-one tool. Red handled *Joyce Chen scissors* are the deadheader's dream; the *hand rake* is the best for cleaning in small spaces without damaging plants. The tub trug is the perfect carrier for all the above tools and the most inexpensive, lightweight, pleasant way to collect and dispose of garden debris.

And now for the most important garden accents: the containers. This new color *Eau de Nil*, is as fresh as new spring growth; this color will work nicely with any color combination. Eau de nil pots are available



in three shapes with graduated sizes, low bowls, the above egg cup, and a slightly more upright style.

HUMMINGBIRDS RETURNING!



Nothing beats the hummingbird for tiny cuteness. The good news is they are on their way back! The



first Ruby throat hummingbird sightings have occurred in TX, LA, and FL. It is likely that scouts are in our area and the others will be following in the next few weeks, exhausted and hungry, so be sure to get your feeders up. Males return to the breeding grounds first; females follow a few days to a couple of weeks later.

Hummingbirds eat flower nectar, sap, and small insects—they love mosquitoes. They often consume 1 ½ - 3x's their body weight a day. Their metabolism is 100 times that of an elephant! To get enough nectar, they have to visit several hundred flowers every day. Cold temperatures or failure to find flowers can mean death.

There are few flowers in bloom in our area at this time of year, so the hummers need our sugar water. The recipe is 1 part white cane sugar to 4 parts water. No need to boil water; the microorganisms come from the hummingbirds' beaks, not the water. The mixture can be kept for 2 weeks in the refrigerator; change the feeder liquid every 2-3 days. Feeders like the *Droplets* above can make the hummingbirds' homecoming a pleasant one!

APRIL TO DO LIST

- Clean up plants and flower beds.
- No crape murder pruning, or tree "topping", please.
- Plant hardy, drought tolerant perennials, especially those that have fragrance, variegated foliage and attract and sustain hummingbirds and butterflies.
- Mulch soil with compost or other organic material to moderate soil temperature and save water. Spread under flowers, shrubs, etc. being careful NOT to let mulch touch stems and trunks.
- After all chance of frost is gone, plant or bring out tropical plants such as mandevilla, bougainvillea, and dragon wing begonias.
- Fertilize everything except spring-flowering shrubs.
- If necessary, prune spring-flowering shrubs and trees after blooming period is over.
- Hang hummingbird feeders NOW!

EXTERIOR DECORATING

Are you in need of inspiration and direction for your entryway or patio? Wilshire Garden Market provides an exterior decorating and small space design consultation service. By appointment, for a nominal fee, we will make a consultation visit and follow-up report to make your garden retreat more charming, cohesive, and useful.

Call the store at 405-879-1121 to set up an appointment.



Let us help you create your outdoor living room!

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SPRINGTIME!!

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