

Gardening

Small containers make a big splash

By Blair Farris

The thought of gardening is daunting to many of us. If our thumbs aren't verdant, we might throw in the towel all together, but it is actually quite easy to start small to achieve fantastic results.



Start with great soil, pots, urns and containers. And use the three C's of Container Gardening: Container, Content (or plant material) and Color.

Start with your container – modern, classic, tall, short. Be thoughtful with design and scale. Picking a group such as terracotta pots or tin urns that are staggered in size creates spatial dynamics. Or select a few of the same size pots spaced evenly with the same plants for a measured and subtle display such as Boxwoods with Vinca trailing over the edge.

Container gardening isn't limited to pansies and begonias. Try Verbena and Angelonia mixed in with perennials to create interesting layers. Boxwoods, Hydrangeas and Hostas also do well in pots. Add a softer look with cascading Mazus, Creeping Jenny, Vinca and Phlox. Mix in herbs such as Sage, Thyme and Rosemary to keep the pots functional and fragrant.

Never underestimate the power of color to transform an outdoor space. Consider a range that either compliment or are variations of the same color theme. If you love purples, add greys – Lambs Ear and Thyme with Angelonia, Phlox and Verbena. If red is your heart's desire plant Salvia, Geranium and add a splash of yellow with Euphorbia. If you really want a show stopper, plant purples and oranges together – Angelonia and Zinnia.

And remember, avoid the tossed salad by



limiting your colors and materials. You don't have to plant anything in the container and then it becomes a focal point. But that is next month's column! ■

About Blair

For more than 16 years, Blair Farris, a Charlotte based landscape designer, has used her education and talents to create spaces for commercial and residential properties. Among her projects in Charlotte have been the Outpatient Entry at Carolinas Medical Center, the Entry to Mercy Hospital, Bank of America's Gateway Village, and Tuscan Development's Cedar Mill.

For more container tips and photographs, visit: www.blairfarrisdesigns.com/containers.



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