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# Containers for Sun and Shade

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*We are focusing on Plant Selection and Combinations, but I thought this information may be helpful as you plant and care for your container gardens this season.*

## **A FEW BASIC TIPS AND TRICKS**

### **THE CONTAINER**

- Pot with drainage holes
- Material influences soil moisture and temperature
  - Plastic and glazed pots - soil dries less quickly than terra cotta pots
- Bigger the pot, slower soil dries
- Use weatherproof container when growing outdoors year-round
- Double pot when:
  - Using decorative containers without drainage holes
  - Overwintering containers in the garden
  - Plastic pot in cocoa mat pot to help retain soil moisture
  - Budget wise - hide grower pot with plants in decorative containers
  - Set pot with drainage holes inside container without drainage holes
    - Add pebbles to bottom of the decorative pot to elevate the pot with drainage holes above any water that collects in the bottom
- Moving the pot
  - Strong friends - until they catch on and disappear
  - Wheeled plant caddy
  - Pot Lifter
- False bottoms
  - Ups-a-Daisy, Better than Rocks
  - DIY - use landscape fabric over crushed cans, bottles...
- Upcycled Containers

### **DESIGN TIPS**

- Container is focus, plants are secondary
- Plants are the focus and pots are less noticeable
- Pots and plants command equal attention

### **SELECT A QUALITY PLANTING MIX**

- Retains moisture, yet drains
- Most contain a combination of some or all of these:
  - Peat moss
  - Compost
  - Coir
  - Rice hulls
  - Vermiculite
  - Perlite
  - Bark

### **FERTILIZATION**

- Slow-release at planting and once midsummer, if needed
- Or, soluble mixed and applied at watering

### **WATERING**

- Check daily and water thoroughly when top few inches start to dry
- Mulch
- Self-watering pots
- Papyrus, Canna, Elephant Ears in pot without drainage
- Plant Nannies and Aqua Cones
- **Wool Pellets** - sustainable and organic, reduce watering by 20%
- Collect rainwater in rain barrels (use on ornamental plants) or warm up water from the shower
- Container irrigation systems with timer

**SELECT PLANTS THAT REQUIRE THE SAME GROWING CONDITIONS TO REDUCE MAINTENANCE AND INCREASE SUCCESS**

## **Utility-friendly Tree Planting Tips from We Energies**

Trees growing too close to power lines can cause sparks, fires, power outages and shock hazards. To avoid these problems, plant trees that won't interfere with power lines when fully grown. Small ornamental trees or shrubs that will not exceed 15 feet in height such as serviceberry, dogwood and low-growing evergreens are best to plant around power lines. Trees such as maple, basswood, burr oak, white pine or spruce grow more than 40 feet high and should be planted more than 50 feet from any overhead power lines.

And don't forget to call 811 at least three days before planting to check the location of underground services.

Learn more utility-friendly planting tips at [we-energies.com](http://we-energies.com).



I have provided links to more information for some of the key or very unusual plants. You can find out more about most of these plants on my website, [melindamyers.com/plants](http://melindamyers.com/plants)

## A FEW COMBINATIONS FOR INSPIRATION START AND END THE YEAR WITH SOME COOL WEATHER PLANTS

- Spring flowering bulbs, greens, pansies
- **Spring flowering bulbs** - Fritillaria, Daffodils, Grape Hyacinths
- Daffodils, Ranunculus, Nemesis
- Pansies, Diascia
- Hanging basket - Pansies, Diascia
- Hanging basket - Sorbet Pink Wing Viola, Raspberry Stream Alyssum
- Dusty Miller, Sweet William, Pansies, Alyssum
- **Pericallis Senetti**, Ornamental Cabbage, Pansies, Angelina Sedum
- Diascia, Stock, Bacopa, Nemesis, Petunia, Burgundy Glow Ajuga
- Stock, Daffodil foliage, Pansies, Alyssum, Lobelia, Variegated Ivy
- Anemone, Ranunculus, Pansies, Alyssum, Ivy
- Anemone, Ranunculus, Snapdragon, Pansies, Alyssum, Linaria, English Ivy
- Willow twigs, Stock, Pansies
- Willow twigs, Columbine, Yellow Stock, Pansies, Ivy
- Willow twigs, Columbine, Pink Stock, Ornamental Cabbage, Ivy
- Willow twigs, Yellow Stock, Ornamental Cabbage, Ivy

- Forsythia & Pussy Willow twigs, Pansies, Variegated Ivy
- Edible Spring Container - Swiss Chard, Lettuce, Pansies
- Containers for Sun Lining Deck and Stairs
- Full Sun Plants in Raised Bed - Ping Pong **Globe Amaranth**, Lantana, *Tradescantia pallida*
- **Heat & Drought Tolerant** Plants an excellent choice for sunny containers. **Zinnia**, **Celosia** and **Lantana** (invasive in a few states) are a few to consider.
- Crested Celosia and Corkscrew Rush
- Fresh Look Red Celosia and Zinnia not yet in bloom
- Fresh Look Yellow Celosia with Sedum
- Dragon's Breath Celosia, **Zinnia**, Golden Moneywort
- Wheat Celosia, Verbena, Salvia, Kale
- Profusion Red-Yellow Bicolor Zinnia in wooden crate
- Collection of Containers featuring Baby Tut Papyrus, Sun Coleus, Double Orange Zinnia, Dusty Miller, Yellow Bells (*Tecoma*)
- Vermillionaire® **Cuphea** in repurposed rusty metal cheese mold
- Elegant Feather Eupatorium, Croton, Pink Cuphea, Calibrachoa, Sweet Caroline Sweet Potato Vine
- Elephant Ears, Lantana, Purple Shamrock
- Baby Tut Papyrus, Lantana
- Helianthus, Cuphea, Petunia, **Lantana**
- Sun Coleus, Gartenmeister Fuchsia, Lantana
- Tree Form Lantana, Orange Osteospermum, Yellow Melampodium
- **GoldDust® Mecardonia** in old bird feeder

## Landscaping Around We Energies Utilities

Plants and other landscaping features can interfere with utility equipment and cause safety risks. Remember to:

**Maintain equipment visibility:** Use techniques that camouflage rather than hide utility equipment. Hearty grasses and/or flowers are preferred. They provide aesthetic improvements and grow back quickly should equipment access be necessary.

**Ensure easy access:** When fencing is used, choose a split-rail type, which can be easily dismantled when equipment access is needed. Be sure fences are located more than 3 feet from transformer sides and no permanent fence post is located in front of transformer door.

**Keep proper clearance:** When woody shrubs or bushes are used, place them more than 3 feet from transformer sides and more than 10 feet from its door. Keep future growth in mind for the size of shrubs or bushes.

Learn more utility-friendly planting tips at [we-energies.com](http://we-energies.com).

- Banana, **Dakota Gold Helenium**, Salmon Vinca (heat and drought tolerant)
- **Soiree® Double Mix Vincas** in hanging basket
- **Soiree® Flamenco Señorita Pink Vinca**
- **Sun Parasol® Sunbeam Mandevilla** and **Soiree® Blueberry Kiss Kawaii Vinca**
- Cardoon, Diamond Frost Euphorbia, Purple **Fan Flower** (*Scaevola*)
- Pretoria Canna, Black & Blue Salvia (***Salvia guaranitica***), Moss Rose
- Rockin'® Fuchsia Salvia, Gaura, Petunia
- Pink Mandevilla, Salvia, Begonia (possibly Dragon Wing)
- Salvia, Cuphea, Bidens
- Blue Salvia (***Salvia farinacea***), Red Sun Coleus, Bee Happy Orange Bidens, Yellow Calibrachoa
- Canna, Begonia, Salvia, Fan Flower (container set above water feature)
- ColorGrass® Juncus Javelin, Mystic Spires Salvia, Ballerina White Gaura, SilverDust Dusty Miller, Glitz Euphorbia, Silver Falls Dichondra
- Red Salvia, Red Calibrachoa, White Alyssum
- Purple Salvia, Purple Alyssum, Petunias, Verbena
- Purple Ruellia, Ping Pong Gomphrena, ColorGrass® Juncus Javelin, Blue Chill Salvia
- Guardian Angel™ Berry Sparkler Angelonia, MiniFamous® Uno Pink Radiance & Evo Double Blue Calibrachoa, Firehouse Light Pink Improved Verbena, Creeping Rosemary, Lucky Star® White Pentas
- Cannova® Casa Bronze Peach Canna, Guardian Angel™ Blue Angelonia, Coral Candy Sun Coleus,

- SolarScape® XL Salmon Glow Impatiens, Cabaret® Midnight Kiss Calibrachoa, Pink Brilliance Fan Flower
- Purple & White Bicolor Angelonia, Yellow and Red Zinnias, Red Calibrachoa, Goldilocks Rocks® Bidens, White Alyssum
- Purple & White Bicolor Angelonia; Orange, Yellow & Pink Zinnias; Double Purple Calibrachoa, Goldilocks Rocks® Bidens, Licorice Vine
- Red Sun Coleus, Rudbeckia, Ornamental Cabbage
- Collection of Container Gardens - Henna Sun Coleus, Red Vinca, Sedges, Ornamental Peppers, more...
- Maui Gold Elephant Ears, Guardian Angel™ Blue Angelonia, Cabaret® Red Calibrachoa, Volcanica™ Limewire Coleus, Enchantia™ White Cuphea, Goldilocks Lysimachia (Moneywort)
- Canna, Sun Coleus, Profusion Zinnia, Portulaca, Petunia
- Elephant Ears, Sun Coleus, Petunia, Salvia, Portulaca
- Papyrus, Canna, Cleome, Coleus, Sweet Potato Vine
- **Single HS Date Dahlia**
- Sunshine Dahlia, Sun Coleus, Bicolor Bidens
- Mahogany Splendor Hibiscus, Purple Elephant Ears, Variegated Peach **Abutilon**, *Laurentia (Isotoma)*, Golden Moneywort
- Baby Tut Papyrus, Orange Abutilon, Pink Calibrachoa
- Truffalo™ Pink Globe Amaranth, Pink Pentas
- Ping Pong Globe Amaranth, Fireworks Fountain Grass, Parsley
- Pink Globe Amaranth, Pink **Polka Dot** (*Hypoestes*) in colander
- Orange Gomphrena (Globe Amaranth), Marigold, Coleus



## About Melinda

Nationally known gardening expert, TV/radio host, author & columnist Melinda Myers has over 30 years of horticulture experience and has written over 20 gardening books, including Can't Miss Small Space Gardening, the recently revised Midwest Gardener's Handbook, and Jackson and Perkins' Beautiful Roses Made Easy. She hosts the nationally-syndicated "Melinda's Garden Moment" program airing on radio stations throughout the U.S. Melinda also hosts the internationally distributed Great Courses "How to Grow Anything" DVD/Instant Video series, including the latest Food Gardening for Everyone DVD set. She is a columnist and contributing editor for Birds & Blooms magazine, and writes a nationally-distributed gardening column. She appears regularly as a guest expert on national and local television and radio shows.

Visit Melinda's website,  
**[melindamyers.com](http://melindamyers.com)**

- Bandana® Cherry Lantana, Chrysalis™ Blue Butterfly Bush, Safari® Dusk™ Jamesbrittenia, Orange Celosia, Truffala™ Pink Gomphrena, Prairie Fire Grass, SuperCal® Premium Sunset Orange Petchoa (cross between Petunia & Calibrachoa)

- **Persian Shield** (*Strobilanthes*), Fireworks Fountain Grass, Imperial Star Artichoke, Pink Supertunia

- Purple Passion Elephant Ears, Strobilanthes, Dusty Miller, Alternanthera

- 2 Pots

- Left: Pink Pentas, Strobilanthes, Silver Curry

- Right: **Gryphon Begonia**, Asparagus Fern

- Gryphon Begonia, Marguerite Sweet Potato Vine, Alternanthera

- Bossa Nova White Begonia

- Señorita Rosalita® Cleome, Black Pearl Ornamental Pepper, Orange Cuphea, Orange Calibrachoa

- Cleome, Pink Mandevilla, Pink New Guinea Impatiens

- Cleome, Petunia, Coleus

- Collection of Containers - Cleome, Hibiscus, Calibrachoa, Purple Sweet Potato Vine

- **Tall Verbena** (*Verbena bonariensis*), Elephant Ears

- **Gaura** with Purple & Pink Verbenas

- Gaura, Coleus, *Tradescantia pallida*, Wax Begonia

- Golf Ball Plant (*Craspedia*), Verbena, Petunia

- Double Purple Petunia and Golden Moneywort in birdbath

*\*Green moneywort is invasive and no longer sold in many states. The gold leaf cultivars are a bit less aggressive, but still best in containers where it can be controlled.*

- Sun Coleus with Golden Moneywort

- Black Magic Elephant Ears, Kong® Red Coleus, Goldilocks Lysimachia, Beacon® White Impatiens, Splash Select™ Pink Polk Dot, Hula™ Pink Begonia

- Petunia, Licorice Vine, Diamond Frost® Euphorbia, Toothache Plant (*Sipilantes*)

- Supertunia® Mini Vista® Pink Star and Kent Beauty Oregano

- Kent Beauty **Ornamental Oregano**

- Purple Fountain Grass, Begonia, Diamond Frost® Euphorbia, Variegated Plectranthus, Sun Coleus, Lemon Licorice Vine, Purple Heuchera

- Purple Prince Alternanthera, Santos Purple Verbena, Goldilocks Lysimachia, Sunny™ Rose Sensation Thunbergia, SolarPower™ Black Heart Sweet Potato Vine

- Heliotrope, Silver Brocade Artemisia, Yellow Calibrachoa, Silver Falls Dichondra

- Purple Inch Plant (*Tradescantia*), Silver Falls Dichondra

- Red Sensation Cordyline, Wax Begonia, Silver Falls Dichondra

- Yellow & Purple Sweet Potato Vine, Pink Petunia

- Canna, Papyrus, Begonia, Marguerite Sweet Potato Vine

- Solar Power Sweet Potato Vine, Morning Glory, Eucalyptus

- **Black Eyed Susan Vine** (*Thunbergia*)

- **Morning Glory**, Zinnia, Calibrachoa, Lobelia

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- Fantail Willow, Elephant Ears, Fountain Grass, Osteospermum, Verbena, Tradescantia
- Corkscrew Willow twigs, Coleus, Icicle Helichrysum, Diamond Frost® Euphorbia, Verbena
- **Fountain Grass**, Rudbeckia, Swiss Chard, Heuchera, Mums, Ornamental Pepper Pansy, Golden Moneywort
- Fountain Grass, Sedge, Purple Heuchera, Pink Agastache
- Variegated Euonymus, Sedge, Red Threads Alternanthera, Geranium
- Fireworks Fountain Grass, Strawflower, Dakota Gold Helenium
- Jade Princess Pennisetum, Coleus, Foxtail Fern, more...
- Three Plantings in the Same Style Pot with Three Different Thrillers (vertical focal points). Left to right: Black Magic Cordyline, Elephant Ears, Papyrus
- **Papyrus** and Pink & White Pentas
- Giant Peach Sun Parasol® Mandevilla and Blue Tiara Supertunia®
- Giant Peach Sun Parasol® Mandevilla, Petunia, Bidens
- Sun Parasol® Sunbeam Mandevilla, Double Redstone Calibrachoa
- Red Mandevilla, Asparagus Fern, **Banana**
- Elegant Feather Eupatorium, Rockin'® Pink Salvia, Pink Supertunia®
- **Tropicanna® Canna**
- Cannova® Red Canna, Sedge, Diamond Frost® Euphorbia, New Guinea Impatiens, Cuphea, White Calibrachoa, Red Threads Alternanthera
- Canna, Ascot Rainbow Euphorbia, Red Sun Coleus, Apricot Mandevilla, Wire Vine
- Yellow Canna, Red Cordyline, Ping Pong Gomphrena, Calibrachoa
- Tropicanna® Canna, Gays Delight Coleus, White **Fan Flower**
- Cannova® Red Gold Flame Canna, Fountain Grass
- Canna, Sun Coleus, Lotus Vine, Yellow Celosia, Bacopa

- Red **Canna** and Red Geranium
- Collection of Containers - Yellow & Rose Cannas, **Angel Wings** (*Senecio candicans*), Purple Angelonia, **Queenly Lime Orange Zinnia**
- Tropical Garden Pots - **Elephant Ears**, Palm, Red Cordyline, Hibiscus, Croton, Sweet Potato Vine, Petunia
- **Elephant Ears** (*Colocasia*) with Petunia
- **Elephant Ears** (*Alocasia*) with Caladium
- Banana Plants
- Banana with wind damage, Strobilanthes, Fireworks Fountain Grass - Sun Parasol® Apricot Mandevilla in foreground
- Phormium, Croton, Pothos
- Brugmansia, Sweet Potato Vine
- Palm, Coleus, Cape Fuchsia, Diamond Frost Euphorbia
- **Croton** and Mums
- Pot of Perennials - Switchgrass (*Panicum*), Heather, Hosta, Angelina Sedum
- **Collections of Small Evergreens**
- Flowering Sedum in Pot
- Sedum with Blue-green Foliage in Metal Container
- **Assorted Succulents** in Blue Containers
- **Elevate Small Succulents** to Increase Impact
  - Old Leaky Fountain
  - Stacked Pots
  - Trough on Old Chair
  - Serving Tray on Coffee Table
  - Old Briefcase of Succulents
  - **Saucers and Pots Stacked for a Centerpiece**

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- Succulent Textures & Colors in Cement Container
  - Succulent Textures & Colors in Wooden Container
  - Succulents in Repurposed Metal Item
  - Succulents in Shallow Container in the Garden
  - Hens and Chicks in Child's Wagon
  - Succulents in Old Tackle Box
  - Succulents in Old Tool Box
  - Succulents in Old Log
  - Container Combinations for Shade at Front Entrance
  - Assorted Shade Tolerant Plants by Shed
  - New Guinea Impatiens by Outdoor Swing
  - Impatiens and Ferns Dress Up Shady Sitting Area
  - Impatiens in Urn on Pedestal
  - Impatiens, New Guinea Impatiens, Coleus, White Polka Dot, Coleus
  - Philodendrons, Salmon Pink Kong® Coleus, Whopper® Red Bronze Leaf Begonia, Beacon® Violet Shades Impatiens, Goldilocks Lysimachia
  - Impatiens, Gryphon Begonia, Elephant Ears, Coleus
  - Impatiens, Variegated Licorice Vine, Rex Begonia
  - Fuchsia in Hanging Basket
  - Fuchsia, Sweet Potato Vine, Geranium
  - Gartenmeister & Santa Claus Fuchsia, Swiss Chard
  - Gartenmeister Fuchsia, Orange Marmalade Crossandra, Streptocarpella, Rex Begonia, Impatiens, Ivy
  - Fuchsia, Shade Coleus, ZZ Plant, Caladium
  - Fuchsia Tree
  - Firecracker Fuchsia
  - Assorted Shade Coleus

- Assorted Coleus with Tradescantia, Sedges and Calla Lily
- Under the Sea Coleus in Shell Planter
- Begonia, Coleus, Goldilocks Lysimachia
- Agapanthus foliage, Strobilanthes, Shade Coleus
- Begonia, Fern, Coleus
- Iresine, Shade Coleus, Torenia, Green & White Variegated and Purple Tradescantia
- Iresine, Torenia
- Rex Begonias
- Red Thread Alternanthera, Rex Begonias
- Rex Begonia, Coleus, Fuchsia, Papyrus
- Impatiens, Fern, Rex Begonia, Pansies, Vinca Vine, Diamond Frost® Euphorbia
- Gryphon Begonia, Impatiens, Asparagus Fern
- Angel Wing Begonia, Tradescantia, Gryphon Begonia, Fuchsia, Coleus, Sweet Potato Vine
- Limelight Dracaena, Begonia ghertii, Charmed Wine Oxalis
- Wax Begonias in Bag Planters
- Tuberous Begonia, Golden Moneywort
- Tuberous Begonia, Bacopa, Maidenhair Fern
- Fuchsia, Tuberous Begonia, Cuphea
- Caladiums
- Several Containers of Caladiums
- Caladium, Fuchsia
- Coleus, Burning Heart Caladium, Begonia
- Elephant Ears, Caladium, Red Cordyline, Pothos, Variegated Shell Ginger
- Caladium, Monstera, Pothos

- Calla Lily
- Elephant Ears in Terra Cotta Pot on Deck
- Elephant Ears, Caladium
- Purple Elephant Ears, Coleus
- Elephant Ears (*Xanthosoma* 'Lime Zinger')
- Canna, Elephant Ears, Coleus
- Palm, Iresine, Impatiens, Coleus, Fern
- Rubber Tree (*Ficus elastica*), Spider Plant, Caladium
- Boston Fern, Sweet Potato Vine
- Bird's Nest Fern, Boston Fern, Calibrachoa
- Hostas in Terra Cotta Pots Under Tree
- Trough of Miniature Hostas
- Mouse Ear Hosta and Lime Rickey Heuchera
- Hosta, Torenia, Impatiens
- Hosta, Japanese Forest Grass (*Hakonechloa*)
- Heuchera in Elevated Tubs
- Heuchera, Jungle Gold Impatiens
- Heuchera, Black Mondo Grass, Ivy, Selaginella
- Variegated Solomon's Seal, Caladium, Coleus
- Variegated Solomon's Seal, Diamond Frost® Euphorbia
- Rex Begonia, Purple Heuchera, Bergenia foliage, Acanthus foliage
- Hellebore with Medinilla
- Moss in Planter on Table
- Moss in Pot and Bamboo Planter
- Moss in Birdbath
- Moss in Birdbath
- Cannas and Elephant Ears Growing in Water Containers

- Reduces time spent watering
- Elevated and Stacked Pots Boost Vertical Impact

### **DON'T HARM THE TREES FOR FLOWERS**

- Pots set among perennial flowers and groundcovers
- Bury several nursery pots in soil under tree
  - Pot up flowers in a slightly smaller pot
  - Set the smaller pot in the buried pot
  - This means less digging
  - Less root disturbance, so better for the trees
  - Potting soil doesn't dry out as quickly
- Dress Up Any Space with Containers - A Collection of Containers at the End of the Driveway

### **UPCOMING LIBRARY PROGRAM ACTIVITIES**

**April Activity** - From Seed to Your Container or Garden

**May Activity** - Create a Vertical Garden From Repurposed Items

**May 7<sup>th</sup> Webinar** - Vertical Gardening

**June Activity** - Inviting Nature's Insect Managers Into the Garden

**June 4<sup>th</sup> Webinar** - Attracting Hummingbirds





## **UPCOMING APPEARANCES & WEBINARS**

*Check often as more appearances and webinars continue to be added.*

**Webinar April 10<sup>th</sup>**

*Reinvigorate Your Rain Garden*

**April 12<sup>th</sup>**

Pasquesi Home & Gardens

**April 26<sup>th</sup>**

Ebert's Greenhouse Village

**May 3<sup>rd</sup>**

*Gardening Talk @ North Lake School*

**Webinar May 7<sup>th</sup>**

*Vertical Gardening*

**May 10<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup>, 17<sup>th</sup>, 18<sup>th</sup>**

Ebert's Greenhouse Village

**Webinar May 15<sup>th</sup>**

*7 Steps to Managing Water on Your Property*

**Webinar June 4<sup>th</sup>**

*Attracting Hummingbirds*

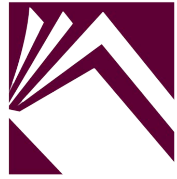
**June 8<sup>th</sup>**

Ebert's Greenhouse Village



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