



“Solutions for Your Life”

12520 Ulmerton Road
Largo, FL 33774-3602
(727) 582-2100

www.pinellascounty.org/extension



Lawn & Garden | Commercial Horticulture | Families & Consumers | Florida Yards & Neighborhoods | 4-H Youth Development | Urban Wildlife

TIPS TO GUIDE YOU THROUGH CREATING A HANGING BASKET

Compiled by Pam Brown,
Urban Horticulture Extension Agent

- Select the size of wire basket you want to use. The larger the basket the more plants you will be able to put in and the more colorful it will be. A selection of plants that you may use can be found at the end of these instructions.
- Choose a suitable liner, most commercially available liners are either coco-fiber or sphagnum moss. Line the basket with your chosen liner which at this point it should be about 1" above the top of your basket. If using moss, you may cut out a circular shape disc from a potting soil bag and place in the bottom to help with water retention (depending on basket size this disc should be big enough to come up the sides slightly).
- Fill with potting soil to about the half way mark and add slow release fertilizer. Mix together and water well.
- Now you can add the side plants if you wish. Make a small hole in the liner or moss and insert plant root first through the hole you have made, remember that the roots must be sitting in the potting soil. A lot of side plants fail due to not being inserted fully through the liner and into the soil.
- Add more potting soil to about 1" from the top, but leaving a fairly large area in the center unfilled (bring potting soil up the sides but leave a depression in the center. You can now start adding your main plants, begin at the center working your way out to rim and firming plants in. Add more potting soil to fill, but do not overfill your basket. Water in the plants and add more potting soil, if needed.
- Now any spaces along the edge that appear bare can be planted with small trailing plants if needed.
- Once your basket has settled the liner or moss will have shrunk to fit your basket, any excess on a liner can be trimmed; any excess moss can be teased down the sides.
- Hang in a greenhouse or shady place to acclimate for a few days.

TIPS TO HELP YOU GET THE MOST OUT OF YOUR BASKET THROUGH THE SEASON

- Most important of all is to keep your basket watered well and remember, as the plants grow they will require more water. Check the moisture content of your basket by checking the weight - the lighter the basket the more water it will require.
- Always remember that during very hot summer months you will need to water 2 - 3 times a day, the hotter it is the quicker the basket will dry out.
- When watering ensure you give enough water to wet the volume of potting soil in the basket all the way through and not just the surface.
- The moss or coco-fiber should be slightly damp at all times.
- Do not be fooled into thinking its raining - I do not have to water today. You Do! As the plants grow their leaves form a canopy over the soil and this keeps the rain off where it is needed the most -inside the basket. So, even if it is raining you have to water your baskets. Baskets in shady places dry out also. Don't forget to water them.
- Ensure that the bracket for your basket is adequate and securely fastened to the wall and that the bracket is the correct size for your basket. Check your bracket yearly, as like most things, it will weather and age with time.
- Regular doses of fertilizer are essential to keep the baskets alive and blooming. To promote rich, attractive growth, it's best to fertilize weekly from spring through summer, and into fall if your basket still looks good. Use a complete liquid fertilizer, diluted to one quarter of the recommended monthly amount starting two weeks after the initial planting.
- Placing the basket in a sheltered position away from exposed situations will prevent the wind from drying out your basket and damaging plants.
- Trimming is a special part of basket maintenance. By trimming old flowers every two or three weeks, your basket can stay at its peak for a long time. Certain plants, such as lantana, bougainvillea, and verbena, require little trimming. Others, such as begonias and impatiens, are usually shaped into balls of color and require a "hair cut" more often. When your basket starts to deteriorate, you can choose to dispose of the plants and replant or you can severely prune the basket back. If the plants are salvageable perennials, they will grow back. If you have seasonal plants in combination with perennials, replace them and start production again.
- Common pest problems include mealy bugs and spider mites. Fungus can also become a serious issue, especially during the warmer months and if the baskets are being over watered. Mealy bugs and spider mites can be controlled with insecticidal soaps. To avoid fungus problems, do not water late in the day and try to keep the foliage dry.

HANGING BASKET PLANT SUGGESTIONS FOR ZONES 9 AND 10

Not a complete list by any means

- Impatiens
- Ivy
- Bougainvillea
- Pansies
- Spider plant
- Lantana

- Alyssum
- Ipomea/sweet potato vine
- Fox tail (*Acalypha hispida*)
- Petunias
- Lobelia
- Persian Shield
- Coleus
- Strawberry
- Ferns
- Portulaca
- Begonias
- Ficus pumila
- Dusty miller
- Periwinkle (*Catharanthus*)
- Kalanchoe
- Osteospermum
- Thyme
- Chives
- Oregano
- Marjoram

You will need to do some research to determine which plants have the same water and light requirements. By choosing plants with similar needs your hanging basket will be more successful.

Member-Pinellas Partnership for a Drug Free Workplace

The Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences (IFAS) is an Equal Opportunity Institution authorized to provide research, educational information and other services only to individuals and institutions that function with non-discrimination with respect to race, creed, color, religion, age, disability, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, nation's origin, political opinions or affiliations. For information on obtaining other extension publications, contact your county Cooperative Extension service. U.S. Department of Agriculture, Cooperative Extension Service, University of Florida, IFAS, Florida A. & M. University Cooperative Extension Program, and Boards of County Commissioners Cooperating. Larry Arrington, Dean.

Any trade names mentioned in the publication are provided solely for informational purposes. Pinellas County Extension does not endorse or guarantee the standard of the product, nor does it wish to discriminate against any products of a similar nature.

"If you are a person with a disability who needs any accommodation in order to participate in this proceeding, you are entitled, at no cost to you, to the provision of certain assistance. Within two (2) working days of your receipt of this newsletter please contact the Office of Human Rights, 400 S. Ft. Harrison Ave., Ste. 300, Clearwater, FL. 33756. (727) 464-4062 (Voice/TDD)."

