



FACEBOOK LIVE SEMINAR

Contain your Enthusiasm: Pots, Planters, & More

Planters are an essential tool for not only holding all kinds of outdoor and indoor plants, but also to add style and personality to your home and garden. Planters are a gardening need all year-round and can provide different benefits to your plants depending on the type of planter. Mike Westphal, the Garden Guru, gives his inside scoop on the types of planters we carry.

THE BASICS

Terracotta – Defined by being lightweight, functional, and easy to use, terracotta is the perfect pot for almost any planting job. This container is made from an unglazed, orange clay that is very porous. Porous containers are great for getting air through to the plants roots as well having water pass through the pot with ease. If you are a heavy waterer, terracotta is great for keeping your plants moist but not wet. If you are a light waterer, pay attention to watering, as terra cotta takes in the moisture from the soil, drying it out quicker. Terracotta is also relatively cost effective and comes in lots of different shapes and styles.

When air and water pass through terracotta during harsh winters, the water can freeze inside the clay and as it expands, which can crack your pots. If you plan on putting your pots away for the season, start by discarding the soil. After excess soil is discarded, wash the pot out, set it in the sun for a day, and store in a dry place for the winter. If you have perennials, shrubs or even trees planted in your terracotta pots, do your best to get the pot off the ground. You can set it up on bricks, a plant stand, or terracotta feet to avoid cracking.

Getting crafty with terracotta is also a great passtime. Paint on your pots, decorate them with moss or even try white-washing them with water, white paint, and a rag to create an aged look. Keep in mind, painting your terracotta makes it less porous.

Pro Tip: If your terracotta pots do break, don't throw the pieces away! Place in plastic or ceramic pots to weigh them down and improve drainage.

Plastic – Unlike terracotta, plastic is not porous and, therefore, holds in more moisture. For this reason, plastic pots are a great option for people who don't water as much. However, plastic also doesn't allow air to pass through the pot, so make sure you use a good potting mix that helps the water drain from your plants. Plastic is also extremely lightweight and if you are moving your plants often, this is a great attribute.

Pro Tip: Try to not put tall plants in plastic pots. But if you need to, use something heavy at the bottom of the pot to help, like rocks or broken peices of ceramic to keep it upright.

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Types of Plastic Pots:

- Nursery pots - these are the plastic pots that growers use to start plants in. They are great for temporary uses like moving plants, giving away plants, or growing seeds. They are also very cost effective. These pots also usually come in a black color which helps absorb heat. This makes plants' roots grow faster. However, the black color can also dry a plant out quicker because of this heat.
- Terracotta plastic pot - We carry these at McDonald Garden Center year-round locations and offer more of a decorative look to plastic.
- Plastic hanging baskets & hanging basket drip pans are great for indoors and outdoors.

Glazed Outdoor Planters – Glazed planters are clay pots that have been fired twice with a ceramic glaze coating around the outside the pot. Note that this coating makes the clay not porous and holds more moisture in the soil. These planters are very durable and some even have saucers attached. If your goal is to personalize your planters and match your decor, these are a great option. Pair and group odd numbers of pots and different colors for visual interest. Glazed ceramic is both heavier and winter-hardy making it porch and patio friendly.

Pro Tip: Always empty out your pot saucers indoors. You can use a turkey baster for heavy pots that you can't lift to get water out of the saucer. Saucers are designed to protect things, not keep your plants watered.

MORE VARIETY

Coco Liners: Biodegradable and eco-friendly, coco liners are great for hanging baskets and window boxes. Coco liners are porous and lightweight. Which makes it perfect to pair with cast-iron hanging basket for an extra pop on your porch. You can get multiple years out of the coco liner, and once it becomes too decomposed to use in your hanging baskets, it is also a great soil amendment.

- Sphagnum moss is also a great liner for hanging baskets and soil amendments.

Concrete Planters: Last a long time, very heavy, and will get stronger with age. We also carry concrete planters with wooden feet at our year-round locations.

Wood Planters: There are all types of wooden planters. You can either purchase them or make your own. When building your wooden planters, try not to use pressure-treated wood and be careful when using old palettes because chemicals may still be on the wood. If you find an old shipping palette to use, leave outside for 4-6 months to age and clean off after that period of time. Wine barrels are also great for planting and doesn't need to be cleaned as harshly because they are made to hold edible product. Make sure while you aren't using your barrel, keep it full of water or soil so the barrel will not fall apart.

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Metal Planters: Lightweight, durable, but can rust. Generally use more as a slip-in pot. Do not plant directly into a metal container to avoid rusting.

Baskets: Very popular for houseplants, use baskets for slip ins instead of planting directly into the basket. Many baskets come with plastic liners, which can collect water like a tray.

Orchid Pots: Orchid pots have holes because orchids are used to growing on trees in the wild, with their roots preferring ample air flow. You can add a liner if you just like the pot, but when watering, place in the sink.

Self-Watering: African violets enjoy having a self-watering pot. They are usually glazed ceramic with a slip-in, unglazed, pot that takes the moisture into the soil.

Lechuza Pots™: Lechuza pots are a brand that we carry at our McDonald Garden Center year-round locations. They come with a reservoir and a meter to check the amount of water in the reservoir. This works as a self-watering system. They are great for indoor plants and are high-quality pots that last a long time.

Earth Box Planter: Earth Boxes are a plastic planter brand that we carry at our McDonald Garden Center year-round locations. The Garden Kit comes with fertilizer, lime, and calcium. All you need is soil and plants to start planting. There is reservoir at the bottom of this container which acts as a self-watering system. This keeps nutrients in the soil. Earth Box planters also come in window boxes & railing planters.

Bonsai Pots: Bonsai pots are shallow, ceramic pots that often come with saucers and two large drainage holes at the bottom of the pot. Since you are typically wiring your bonsai to the pot, the two drainage holes provide a space to pull the wire through.

DESIGNING CONTAINERS

Pairing flowers and foliage with interesting textures and colors is a great way to get creative with planters. Pair different sizes of the same container to create your own porch collection.

Pro Tip: Try to work in odd numbers when decorating to give asymmetrical balance to your space.

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