

## Hanging Baskets

Even if you don't have a yard to garden in, you can usually find space for a hanging basket or two. They are becoming ever more popular for brightening up a front porch or back deck. First thing to think about is the container. Just about anything goes, but remember, when they are full of wet soil and plants they can get rather heavy.

### Choosing a Container

Some suggestions for containers are:

- wire baskets with moss or coco fiber
- traditional wood or wicker baskets
- terra cotta pots
- plastic pots
- metal containers



Hanging Basket of Achimenes

Even though all these containers can be used, the most durable and lightweight are plastic. Wire baskets with moss or coco fiber are easy to work with, but may need more water. Hang the baskets with chain, durable wire or sisal. Swivel hooks are helpful to rotate the plants.

### Selecting Plants for Hanging Baskets

Many types of plants can be used in baskets, such as perennial or annuals, upright or hanging, sun or shade loving. Choose healthy plants that are compatible; in terms of water and light requirements.

Plants for a sunny spot include:

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| Ivy geranium | This plant also does well in partial shade.  |
| Wave petunia | Purple wave petunias spread to three feet    |
| Portulaca    | These plants come in single and double bloom |
| Scaveola     | A new variety plant with blue flowers        |
| Verbena      | Many varieties                               |
| Helichrysum  | Trailing strawflowers or licorice plants     |

Plants for partial shade include:

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| Fuchsia | Many varieties both single and double blooming |
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Impatiens	Both single and double. New Guinea varieties are larger, but not as forgiving
Tuberous begonia	Beautiful colors, but must be protected from wind and cold
Wax begonia	Blend beautifully with creeping plants
Lobelia	Look for lobelia in colors other than blue

## Planting the Hanging Baskets

After choosing your container and purchasing plants fill your container partially with soil and add a handful of bone meal (about 2-3 oz.), along with a time-release fertilizer. Add more soil until almost level. Water thoroughly and plant your basket. Pack your plants tighter than usual, as the fullness of the basket will give it a more luxurious look. Water again after planting. It is now ready to hang.

If you are using a wire basket, it must be lined with sphagnum moss or coco fiber. Moisten well before adding soil. Then follow the directions above.

### Care and Maintenance of Hanging Baskets

It is vital that hanging baskets get enough water. They dry out quickly and sometimes need to be watered twice a day to ensure they stay moist. Watering by hand will work, but is time consuming. Most gardeners install a drip or spray system and set it up on a timer to water early in the morning. These systems are fairly inexpensive and can be purchased at your local garden center.

Like people, plants need food. Most plants do nicely being fertilized every two weeks. There are some plants that require it more often. For successful hanging baskets, know your plants and their needs.

## References

- John and Nancy Coburn, British Horticultural Society
- Harry Joe, Master Gardener, Clark County, Washington
- Helen and Bud Getchel, Growers
- Jack Cooley, Expert at Drip Systems
- Sunset Magazine