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TIPS ON PLANTING HANGING BASKETS

The increase in popularity of hanging baskets in recent years has been nothing short of spectacular, yet some gardeners still struggle to get a good, lasting display!

Some fundamental errors, which often lead to poor results, include; -

- Using poor compost.
- Failing to incorporate slow release fertiliser such as Osmocote.
- Failing to water every day.
- Not giving enough water (really soak the basket).
- Failing to top up nutrient levels with a liquid fertiliser such as Miracle-Gro especially at the end of the summer.

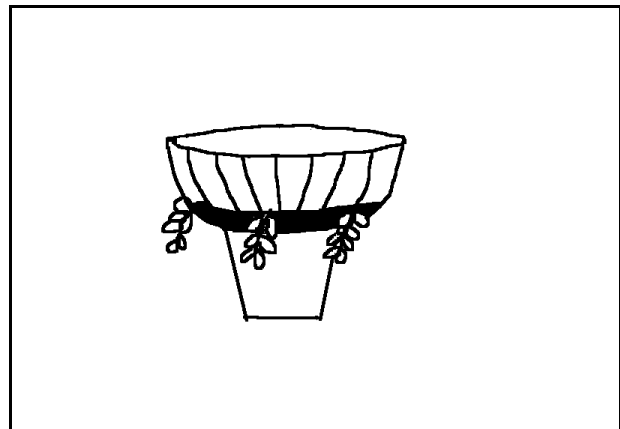
PLANTING A TYPICAL 12" WIRE BASKET

Stand the empty basket on a bucket.

Line the base with damp moss. Add about 2" of compost.

Push the roots of three trailing plants (eg. Lobelia, Ivies, Creeping Jenny) through from the outside so that their roots will be in the compost.

Pour in about 2" more of hanging basket compost.

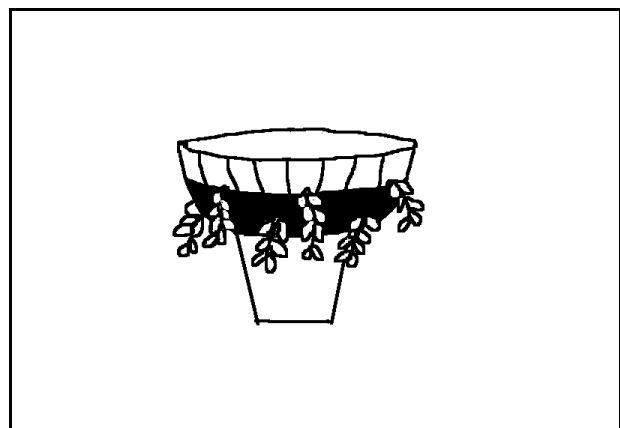


Line the basket with more moss to about halfway up the sides.

Add another 4-5 trailing plants such as Busy Lizzies, Petunias, Verbena, Diascia, Nepeta etc.

Fill to the top of the moss lining with more compost.

This is a good time to add some Osmocote slow release fertiliser!

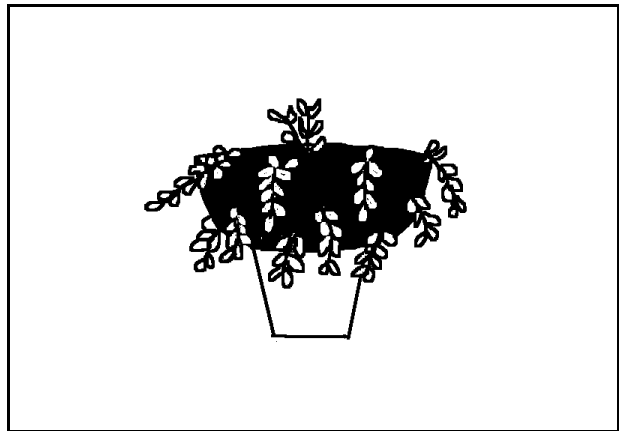


Complete the moss lining to the top of the basket.

Fill to the brim with compost.

Plant more trailing plants around the lip of the basket. Use Ivy-leaf Geraniums, trailing Fuchsias, grey leaf Helichrysum and Nepeta and superb Surfinia Petunias. You will need 4-5 plants depending on their size. Plant one upright variety in the centre such as a bushy Fuchsia, Pelargonium, Argyranthemum or Nemesia.

(For larger baskets increase plant quantities)



Finally water the basket thoroughly and keep it in a warm place with plenty of natural light such as a greenhouse or conservatory.

In rural locations in the South West it is safe to put your basket outside from the middle of May, in sheltered spots in town it can be hung outside earlier.

REGULAR FEEDING AND WATERING CANNOT BE OVER-EMPHASISED!

MORE TIPS FOR SUCCESS

COMPOST- Use only special hanging basket compost which contains moisture retaining and re-wetting agents. We use and recommend Westlands Container and Hanging Basket compost.

FEEDING- The fertiliser in your compost will feed the plants for about a month, even with slow release fertilisers such as 'Osmocote tablets, or 'Osmocote Granules' in the compost, it is a wise idea to feed occasionally with a liquid fertiliser. We recommend 'Miracle-Gro' soluble fertiliser.

REMEMBER IF YOUR PLANTS ARE GOING TO FLOWER

ALL SUMMER THEY NEED FEEDING!

DEAD HEADING- Remove flowers when they are past their best, as well as making it look tidier, this actually encourages more flowers to be produced!

WATERING- regular watering is vital. Some traditional wire baskets when full of plants may need watering every day or even twice a day! Mix some water retaining granules into the compost before planting the hanging basket. This forms a water storing gel. Some gardeners line the base of their basket (inside the moss) with a punctured plastic bag to help keep the water in.

Plastic hanging pots often incorporate a drip tray, which acts as a reservoir. Wicker baskets are lined with polythene.

Hosepipe attachments for watering baskets are worth considering and the small pulley type bracket attachments, which enable you to lower your basket for watering and dead heading, are excellent!

BRACKETS- Make sure the fixings for your basket are strong enough and firmly attached.

LINERS- what you line your basket with is a personal choice. We prefer the traditional moss as it looks natural and enables you to plant through the sides easily but there are now alternatives such as recycled wool liners in natural looking mossy colours.

PLANT SUGGESTIONS

* = LIKES SUN # = DOES WELL IN SHADE \$ = TOLERATES PARTIAL SHADE

Upright plants; -

Begonias * # \$
Marigolds *
Marguerites (Argyranthemums) *
Pelargoniums * (Geraniums)
Busy Lizzies * # \$

Trailing plants;-Ivy leaf geraniums *

Nasturtiums * \$
Verbena *
Petunias (especially Surfinia, Thumbelina and Million Bells petunias) *
Swan river daisy (Brachycombe) *
Lobelia * # \$
Convolvulus *
Fuchsias # \$
Creeping Jenny (Lysimachia) # \$
Bidens *
Diascias *
Begonias # \$
Bacopa * \$
Nemesia * \$

Foliage plants; - Helichrysum * (grey, golden or variegated)

Nepeta * # \$ (Variegated long trailer)
Lysimachia * # \$ (Golden)
Ivies * # \$ (green or variegated)

Herbs; - Parsley *

Thyme *
Sage *
Mint* # \$
Marjoram *
Chives *

Fruit and Vegetables; - Tomato Tumbler *

French Beans *
Strawberries *
Dwarf peas *

Scented plants; - Petunias (Priscilla and dark blues especially)* \$

Dwarf sweet Peas*
Pansies * # \$
Nasturtiums * \$