



The Trailblazer goes for all things out of the ordinary. All Proven Winner varieties featured here: Superbells Plum (Calibrachoa), Graceful Grasses King Tut (Cyperus) Diamond Frost (Euphorbia) and Daredevil Orchid (Pelargonium).

One-pot wonders

Who needs a garden **when you can get beautiful results** with a container and the right combination of flowers and vegetables

Text by MENDEE MORGAN

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Container gardening is a problem solver for some and a showcase for others. Anyone from the most seasoned gardener to the novice can be drawn in to this simple gardening pursuit for a variety of reasons.

Lightweight pots that look just like their heavy clay counterparts have made this segment of gardening even more accessible in recent years. Whether you pick a project that offers the greatest chance of success or you would rather blaze a new trail, there are plenty of options. However, the endless number of plant choices and possible combinations at the garden center can also be overwhelming.

When stores start putting out their beautiful spring and summer blooms, it can be tempting to buy on impulse and end up with an odd lot of plants. Having a style in mind before shopping day will ensure that plant and container purchases add up to a gorgeous container display.

First, take an inventory of supplies on hand. Will containers from last year suit your needs or is this the year to splurge on new pots? Is there any potting soil on hand? How many plants will fit in each container? Next decide your container gardening style and make a written or mental list of plant variety and quantity needed to fill each pot.

A visit to www.provenwinners.com can also help. Their Container Recipe tab will provide plant combinations by season, sunlight exposure, pot style, size and color scheme. Be advised, it may be necessary to visit several places to



Photo by Spencer Neitzke

Ripe berries peek from the dark green foliage of a strawberry plant while the white blooms of the Cosmos flower stand attention above.

gather all of the items to create these “container recipes.”

For the more creative designs, your best bet will be a well-stocked garden center such as Krieger’s or Bluhm’s Greenhouse in Charles City. A nursery known for more unusual plants and containers such as Blackmore Gardens may also be a good resource.

DEFINE YOUR STYLE

Most anyone can appreciate the beauty of a flower, but when a color combination or plant variety pulls at your heartstrings you are on your way to defining your style. Whether drawn to pastel blooms, colorful pots or rare plants, gardening is a form of self-expression. A little research can help you define your style.



Photo courtesy of www.provenwinners.com

The Show Stopper is an excellent matchmaker where plants are concerned. All Proven Winners shown here: Northern Lights Deschampsia (Tufted Hairgrass), “Maple Sugar” Hibiscus, Carex (Leather Leaf Sedge) “Tuscan Sun” Heliopsis (Perennial Sunflower) Broadway Lights, Leucanthemum (Shasta Daisy) Coco Loco Solenostemon (Coleus)
A combination of a Daredevil Salmon Geranium with Superbells Dreamsicle peeking from below put a new color twist on The Summer Classic (below).



Photo courtesy of www.provenwinners.com

THE SUMMER CLASSIC

Big pots brimming with white, pink or red geranium were standard for our mothers and grandmothers. We're encouraged to walk down memory lane when we see them. From time to time the combinations or variety change-switching to ivy geranium, adding spiky plants for height or contrasting petunias are all tried and true ways to show off the long lasting summer blooms. If this suits your style make the most of it by planting in abundance. If you were first in line at the Friends of the Library Geranium Sale or have almost caused an accident while looking at the geranium that line the windows of Zilge's Appliance Center then you are a Summer Classic.

THE SHOWPIECE

The gardener with a Show Stopping style knows what basics work from year to year but isn't afraid to change it up just a little. This gardener is great at turning a pot of plants into the focal point of the front porch or patio. The Show Stopper might be a little perfectionistic — but who can argue with such beautiful results?

Garden centers always have several show stopping containers on display for customers to copy or purchase. When you find yourself recalculating your plant budget you've most likely stumbled upon one.

Photo courtesy of www.provenwinners.com



THE TRAILBLAZER

This container style is for the gardener who always seeks out the newest trend. No two years are the same for this creative and original person. Native grasses in tall square pots or miniature trees above flowers that spill over the container appeal to this gutsy gardener with style.

If trailblazing suits your style, shop early and plan to order online for the more unusual plants such as black bamboo, the latest form and color of Echinacea or any plant that has just been introduced to the public. An internet search on "new plants for 2010" or "rare plants for containers" could entertain the Trailblazer for hours. If this is your style, brace yourself- Trailblazers pay a premium to enjoy the best first.

THE HEALTHY SURPRISE

This gardener likes to grow fruits and vegetables with a little flair. Sneaking the healthy stuff in with the flowers keeps things interesting. Crop combinations are important (cool crops like peas and lettuce go together) and fertilizers specifically made for fruits or vegetables are in order. Your garden center can provide advice on which plants prefer acid or alkaline soils.

This gardener would rather train an edible vine around a decorative trellis and pick vegetables all summer than deadhead spent blooms.



Gold and red instantly transport you to tropical climates in this Proven Winners Show Stopper, which includes Superbells Red (Calibrachoa), Goldflake (Mecardonia), Amora (Solenostemon). This Proven Winners Trailblazer (left) gains great impact from the soaring height of Burgundy Giant. Also included are Ceratostigma (Leadwort), Velvet Lime (Solenostemon), Faded Jeans (Euphorbia), Midas Touch (Hedera), Ophiopogon (Black Mondo Grass), Burgundy Giant (Pennisetum).

Photo courtesy of www.provenwinners.com