

DIRTY FINGERNAILS AND ALL

Let's get trendy

BY SIOUX ROGERS



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Gardens, like most aspects of life, rotate through trends and changes. Consider trends to be just that: trends. If the “trendy” stuff does not work for you, no problem. There is no right or wrong and all is good. Of all the new trends, gardening in containers is the focus here.

While container gardening certainly is not new, it is now being revisited as the latest and greatest. Personally, I have always loved container gardening, especially when I have had limited space to appease my passion. Here are some of the many valid reasons container gardening is a very popular and viable garden option:

- Some of us are getting older and appreciating the “less-is-more” philosophy. We don't need giant gardens unless we are feeding the entire tribe.
- If you are a small family, you can actually grow most of your edibles in containers.
- You can create a fabulous floral arrangement with living plants in containers.
- Plants in containers can have their water and nutrient needs taken care of much easier than long rows of plants.
- Plants in containers are much easier to protect from critters—deer, gophers, squirrels, slugs, or whatever else is chowing down. Just cover the container or move it to a protected area.
- There is almost nothing that will not grow in a container, although I'm not suggesting planting a giant redwood.

Check out the photos for examples of what you may want to plant. If you are just starting this project and plan to go full speed ahead with numerous containers, think about first placing the empty containers where you think you want them. Rearrange as much as you want while they are empty, because large, full containers are hellacious to move.

Certain plants, such as mint, comfrey, and ivy, should usually be in containers because they are horrific spreaders—via roots, not clumps. If you want a hillside of mint, toss the container and go for the hillside. It will smell marvelous.

Easy and practical suggestions

How about starting with some perennials, which come back every year? Again, there is no right or wrong with whatever you plant, with a few exceptions.

If you are placing more than one type of plant in a container, ideally they should require the same amount of water, fertilizer, and sun exposure. This will make them all very happy. Read the nursery label describing the plant's needs or ask the nursery expert. That's easy, right?

Vines, such as clematis, roses, honeysuckles, and even cucumbers, placed so they can climb are extremely happy in containers. They do not have big roots, but rather love the vertical space. Herbs like parsley, cilantro, dill, thyme, sage, oregano, and cilantro, are fabulous

and very practical in containers, especially when sitting outside your kitchen door or on a sunny window ledge.

Believe it or not, potatoes, sweet potatoes, carrots, parsnips, turnips, kohlrabi, and root vegetables in general do exceptionally well in containers. And zucchini, pumpkins, and other squashes also thrive when contained.

While old tires, stacked two high, are not exactly aesthetic, I planted squashes in them that produced an abundance of healthy and large vegetables. Lettuce also looks great and grows very easily in containers, although not necessarily in old tires. Strawberries do excellent in most containers. If you do see some bugs and slugs feasting on your delectables, they will not have a chance under your watchful eye.

Vegetables and flowers are so practical and easy to grow in containers. Frankly, flowers planted in containers are my passion—I liken them to a masterful and colorful work of art. Again, no rights or wrongs—containers with mixed colors, different shades of color, tall plants, and short flowers all work. Containers can be planted with a kaleidoscope of colors or designed with a limited color pallet such as blues, purples, pinks and whites.

All is good—it is your garden. If you mix annuals and perennials together next year, you will need only to replace the annuals.

If I can help, clarify, or suggest anything to get you started, email me. It will be my joy and pleasure.

Dirty fingernails and all,
Sioux Rogers • 541-890-9876
dirtyfingernails@fastmail.fm



Photo, top left: Ready-made salad in a basket (deborahsilver.com).

Photo, lower left: A variety of herbs thrive in containers (edencondensed.com).

Photo, lower right: Black krim tomatoes planted in old tires (i.yimg.com).



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