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DURANGO NURSERY & SUPPLY

271 Kay Cee Lane, Durango CO

www.durangonursery.com

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Perennial Container Gardening

Basics

Container gardening is a great way to add interest to a front porch, deck, or small yard. There are many types of containers, from small pots to large containers capable of homing trees. Annuals are the choice plants for containers, as they provide dense, season-long color. If you do not wish to replant every year, perennials can make great additions to containers with a little bit of planning.

Water

Plants in containers require more water than in-ground plants of the same variety. Containers should have drainage holes so the water can escape and prevent rotting of the roots. You must water in the winter once a month to avoid root desiccation, especially for evergreens.

Container

Select a container large enough to accommodate multiple years of root growth. The bigger the container, the more insulated the roots are from summer heat, evaporation, and winter freezes.

Ceramic and terra cotta pots kept outside during winter are susceptible to freeze-thaw action which may cause cracking. Consider fiber, plastic, or metal containers to avoid cracking. Placing containers in an unheated garage can also prolong their life.

Soil

Select a high-quality, complete potting soil. Be sure to fertilize; frequent watering leaches nutrients out of the soil.

Plants

Choose perennials for at least a zone colder than the zone you are planting in to account for colder temperatures surrounding containers during the winter. Compact, mounding, clumping, and slow growing plants are better suited for containers than spreading plants.

Consider transplanting container plants into the ground after 3 years to increase their lifespan. Most perennial plants will not live to their full potential when limited by a container if not properly cared for. Root pruning is required to keep plants alive for many years in a container, similar to bonsai care. Additionally, plants in containers, especially large varieties, will not grow to full potential and may only get up to half their projected size.

Winter Care

To safely overwinter, clump containers together and mulch heavily at base of plant and around containers to insulate plant and roots, or move containers to an unheated garage until the following growing season.



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Perennial Trees and Shrubs for Container Gardens

The following is a list of plants that are great choices for container gardens.

* = Especially suited for containers

Type of Plants	Latin Name	Common Name	Zone
Evergreen	* <i>Buxus spp.</i>	Boxwood	5
	* <i>Juniperus virginiana</i>	Skyrocket Juniper	3
	<i>Thuja occidentalis</i>	Arborvitae spp.	3
	* <i>Picea abies</i> 'Little Gem'	Little Gem Norway Spruce	3
	* <i>Picea glauca</i> 'conica'	Dwarf Alberta Spruce	3
	<i>Picea glauca</i> 'North Star'	Compact White Spruce	3
	<i>Picea pungens</i> 'globosa'	Dwarf Blue Globe Spruce	3
	<i>Picea pungens</i> 'fastigiata'	Columnar Blue Spruce	2
	<i>Picea pungens</i> 'Pendula'	Weeping Blue Spruce	3
	<i>Pinus mugo</i>	Mugo Pine var.	3
	* <i>Pinus strobus</i> 'Blue Shag'	Blue Shag White Pine	3
	<i>Pinus sylvestris</i> 'Hillside Creeper'	Hillside Creeper Scotch Pine	3
Deciduous	<i>Acer grandidentatum</i>	Bigtooth Maple	4
	* <i>Acer palmatum, japonica, or x pseudo.</i>	Japanese maple spp.	5
	<i>Acer tataricum</i> 'GarAnn'	Hot Wings Maple	3
	<i>Berberis thunbergii</i>	Barberry var.	4
	* <i>Caryopteris x clandonensis</i>	Blue Mist Spirea	5
	<i>Chamaebatiara millefolium</i>	Fernbush	4
	<i>Cotinus coggygria</i>	Smokebush	4
	<i>Crataegus ambigua</i>	Russian Hawthorn	4
	<i>Crataegus viridis</i>	Winter King Hawthorn	4
	* <i>Cytisus purgans</i>	Spanish Gold Broom	5
	<i>Hibiscus syriacus</i>	Rose of Sharon Hardy Hibiscus	5
	<i>Jamesia americana</i>	Waxflower	4
	<i>Malus</i> 'Prairiefire'	Prairie Fire Crabapple	4
	<i>Malus sargentii</i>	Sargent Tina Crabapple	4
	<i>Prunus cerasus</i> 'Montmorency'	Montmorency Cherry (Edible)	4
	<i>Syringa reticulata</i>	Japanese Lilac Tree	3
	<i>Quercus gambelii</i>	Gambel Oak	4
	<i>Vaccinium spp.</i>	Blueberries (Edible)	3-4
<i>Viburnum opulus</i> 'compactum'	Compact European Cranberry Bush	3	