

Helpful Hints for Creating Your Own Topiary and Container Gardens

Topiaries

- Pick the right plant for the right spot. Determining the sun exposure is important when deciding on what to plant in your container or for that matter in your landscape. Morning sun and afternoon shade requires a shade loving plant, whereas afternoon sun calls for a full sun plant. Juniper, boxwoods, and ligustrums thrive in sunny locations. Icy, azaleas, and cast iron prefer shade.
- The size of the container is equally important. Make sure that the plant has plenty of growing room. The size of the container needs to be at least half a size bigger than the size of the container that the plant is in. Eventually the plant may need to be transplanted to a larger container or into the landscape.
- Maintaining the topiary requires work. Trimming should be done after the sign of frost, which is usually mid-February to late February in order to avoid “frost bit” to the new growth.
- Don’t underestimate the beauty of a vine. Confederate jasmine on a wire form offers a unique year round topiary. Put a noninvasive flowering vine to add summer color, such as clematis, mandevilla, and bougainvillea.

Containers

- Entry containers must make a statement. A good rule of thumb: For two story houses draw the eye up by placing plants that have height in the container about four to four and half foot is ideal. Also, pulling containers out from next to the door adds dimension and appeal.
- Small containers on large houses dwarf the container. Make the container substantial to the size of the house.
- Be Creative, Be Different! Make your container unique and special.
- Opposites Attract! Using colors that are opposite on the color wheel make a huge statement.
- Choose one bold color. Sometimes one color makes a bigger and better statement than mixing colors. For instance, red shows up well from the road and creates excitement and energy, where as white is calming and viewed as more elegant.
- Add an evergreen. Evergreens may be more expensive, but are worth it in the long run. Putting an evergreen in the center of the container adds year round color. Just change out the annuals around the base of the evergreen.
- Make it three dimensional. If your container sits against the wall, you still need to plant all the way around the container. Planting just the exposed side makes your container look one dimensional.
- Texture is important. Use flowers that differ in leaf structure, color, and growth habits.
- Bold pots make bold statements. Do not be afraid to use cobalt blue pots or bright red containers. Color is in!

- Topiaries do not just go in urns. Change from the traditional container to something your neighbors will be jealous of. Bean pots, square pots, and round pots offer a unique, unexpected look to the traditional topiary.
- Fertilize! A slow release fertilizer keeps your annuals, perennials, and evergreens beautiful throughout the season. Fertilizing your containers monthly or bi-monthly will enhance the blooming period and the growth habits of your annuals. A recommended fertilizer is Osmocote.
- Check the moisture. Most plants require regular watering. Junipers, lantana, and verbena can take drier conditions.

Southern offers a variety of plants that make every container unique and special. We encourage your imagination. We also have a wide variety of container gardens. Bring your best pictures to display on our brag wall.