



10 TOP PERFORMERS FOR HANGING BASKETS

Why hang around the garden alone this summer? Use hanging baskets to dress up a deck, a gazebo, a front porch and even the yard itself. Containers at eye level or above can add a splash of color under trees, greet visitors at the front door or create a focal point in the garden. Apartment dwellers, too, can benefit from these types of pots by creating an instant garden on an otherwise bare balcony.

The main ingredients in hanging baskets are trailers, plants whose stems cascade over the top and sides of the container. Trailers can be flowering annuals like petunias, or foliage plants like ivy. To add height, mounded plants such as heliotrope, marigolds, or begonias can be placed in the center of the pot.



Petunias are classic choices in hanging baskets.

Besides looking for plants with trailing habits, consider those that tolerate some drought. Because these containers are more exposed to drying winds than those sitting on a deck, they dry out quicker and require more watering. Frequent watering, though needed, leaches nutrients from the soil so add a slow release fertilizer at potting time or feed with a granular or liquid fertilizer every two weeks. As with most flowering plants, removing faded blossoms promotes more blooms.

Achieving gorgeous hanging baskets can be as simple as choosing one plant variety, such as red ivy geraniums, to create an elegant accent point. Or, a basket full of six different flowering annuals with a touch of ivy may create the right mood near a simple front entrance. When shopping for plants, experiment with different colors and textures and seek the help of a knowledgeable staff person if needed.

The most common and economical hanging basket container is plastic. For gardeners choosing a finished basket, this may be the easiest route. For others who want to plant their own creations, consider the vinyl-coated wire baskets that can be lined with sheet moss, cocoa liners or sphagnum. These are very pretty, come in a range of sizes and hold up well year after year if stored indoors over winter. Flea market shoppers may discover other types of containers such as old wire egg baskets that can be fashioned into a hanging pot.

Since container gardening has become so popular, there are virtually hundreds of plants to choose from. Here is a list of 10 great trailers that perform well in hanging baskets. Use them alone or with a few other favorites.

- Licorice plant Silver, chartreuse or variegated woolly foliage; great texture;
- *Helichrysm* use alone or combined with other annuals; sun or partial shade
- Sweet potato Burgundy or sulfur-yellow cascading heart-shaped leaves;
- vine wonderful contrast to flowering annuals; full sun or light
- *Ipomoea* shade
- *batatas*
- Ivy Green or variegated leaves add a simple, elegant look to *Hedera helix* any container; partial to full shade
- Ivy geraniums Clusters of single or double flowers and glossy leaves on *Pelargonium* trailing stems; tolerates more shade than bedding
- *peltatum* geraniums
- Fan flower Pale blue, fan-shaped flowers; blooms profusely and
- *Scaevola* requires no deadheading; nice combined with ivy geraniums, verbena and silver or lime helichrysm; sun to light shade
- Lantana Flower clusters in yellows, pinks, reds and bicolors; holds up
- *Lantana camara* well in heat and flowers late into fall; full sun to light shade; attracts butterflies
- Verbena Small flower clusters in pink, purple, red or white with finely divided foliage; heat tolerant; delicate contrast to broad- leafed ivy geraniums or sweet potato vine; full sun
- Petunia 'Wave' petunias reach 3 to 5 feet and cover baskets; Calibrachoa 'Million Bells' (cousin to petunia) and *Petunia integrifolia* are small-flowered and prolific and do not need to be deadheaded; full sun to light shade

Calibrachoa, commonly called Million Bells, is readily available in many colors.



- Torenia 'Summer Wave' is a newer variety with deep blue,
- snapdragon-like flowers; blends well with all colors; very full habit; sun to partial shade
- Bacopa Masses of pure white flowers cover trailing stems; stands on *Sutera cordata* its own in baskets or adds a delicate touch to mixed plantings; full sun to light shade