

No gardening space – no problem

By Melinda Myers

Brighten up your patio, deck or front entrance with containers. They're an excellent way to add color, fragrance and beauty where plantable space is limited or non-existent.

Set a few containers on the front or back steps, in the corner of your deck or other location where they can be enjoyed. Try stacking and planting several containers to create a display with greater vertical interest. Check the views when looking from inside the house out as well as when enjoying the space outdoors. Strategically place containers for the greatest viewing pleasure.

Save even more space by using railing planters. You can dress up the porch or deck by filling these planters with colorful flowers and edibles. Make sure they are sturdy and easy to install. Reduce time spent installing and maintaining with easy-to-install self-watering rail planters.



Railing planters filled with colorful combinations can add sparkle to balconies, decks and porches. Photo/Gardener's Supply

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Don't limit yourself to flowers. Mix in a few edibles and bring some homegrown flavor to your outdoor entertaining. You and your guests will enjoy plucking a few mint leaves to flavor beverages, basil to top a slice of pizza or sprig of dill to top grilled fish.

Herbs not only add flavor to your meals, but texture and fragrance to container gardens. And the many new dwarf vegetable varieties are suited to containers. Their small size makes them easy to include and many have colorful fruit that is not only pretty, but delicious.

Add a few edible flowers like nasturtium and pansies. Dress up a plate of greens with edible flowers for a gourmet touch. Or freeze a few pansy flowers in ice cubes and add them to a glass of lemonade or sparkling water.

Include flowers like globe amaranth (*Gomphrena*), *Lisianthus*, and daisies that are great for cutting. You'll enjoy your garden inside and out throughout the season.

And don't forget to plant some flowers for the butterflies to enjoy. Zinnias, cosmos, and marigolds are just a few that are sure to brighten any space, while attracting butterflies to your landscape. *Salvia*, penstemon and flowering tobacco will help bring hummingbirds in close, so you'll have a better view.

So make this the year you select a container or two that best fits your space and gardening style. Fill it with a well-drained potting mix and combination of beautiful ornamental and edible plants to enjoy all season long. The additions are sure to enhance your landscape and keep your guests coming back for more.

Gardening expert, TV/radio host, author and columnist Melinda Myers has more than 30 years of horticulture experience and

has written more than 20 gardening books.