

Easy care gardening trends for the holidays

By Melinda Myers

Dress up the holidays or give gifts that continue giving throughout the year with these low maintenance gardening trends. Just add a little fun, classic beauty or style to make it even more memorable now and throughout the year.

Terrariums. These mini greenhouses continue to grow in popularity and are perfect for new or timid gardeners. Just plant a few small tropical plants, moisten the soil, close the lid and you have a self-contained growing chamber. Show off your green thumb with a modern, classic or vintage style vessel.

Use the gazebo tabletop terrarium, classic bell jar or other mini garden as a centerpiece for the dining table or buffet. Or create a miniature garden in glass to give as a hostess gift. When the party is over, it's a great memento of a fun holiday gathering.

Succulents. Growing succulents is another low maintenance garden trend that is perfect for busy gardeners during the hectic holiday season. Just place them in a sunny window and water whenever the soil is dry. It's truly as easy as that.

The small scale cacti and succulents provide a multitude of opportunities for incorporating them into your holiday celebrations. You won't need much space to enjoy the subtle colors and dramatic form of these drought tolerant plants. Just select containers that complement, but don't overpower their charm.

Consider buying a few extras for guests to take home and enjoy for years to come.

But first, use them to dress up the table by making them into place cards for your guests. Simply add a name to the decorative pot. Or display them all together in a copper plant tray, terra cotta saucer or other shallow container to use as a centerpiece throughout the evening. When the party is over, each guest can pick their own plant to take home.

Air plants. Unique and amazing air plants are all the rage and could certainly be described as the definitive easy care plant. Many are native to rain forests where they grow in the canopy of trees, gathering water and nutrients that pass by. No soil is needed for these versatile plants. Just hang them in a bright location and soak in tepid non-softened water once every week or two.

Display them in an open terrarium, shell, or another decorative container. They make great centerpieces or stunning displays.

Pothos, philodendron and ivy. These plants have long been low maintenance favorites of the indoor garden. This year, consider dressing them up for the holidays with sparkling garland, artificial flowers, berries and greens.

Or display them in unique containers, baskets or hangers. Go retro and macramé a colorful hanger for your favorite hanging basket. Or place the pot in an earthy woven basket, sleek plastic pot or classic round copper wire globe hanging basket. Add some fairy lights for a bit more sparkle on long winter nights.

Make this holiday season warm and memorable with the help of these low maintenance garden trends and plants. You, your family and friends will enjoy their beauty, charm and easy care nature throughout the new year ahead.

Melinda Myers has more than 30 years of horticulture experience and has written more than 20 gardening books, including "Small Space Gardening". Myers is a columnist and

contributing editor for Birds & Blooms magazine and was commissioned by Gardener's Supply Company for her expertise to write this article.