

Special Plants for Large Containers

Containers are so versatile - often we design with a combination of plants, however, to add special interest for an overall display, consider including some large plants or special plants and grow them in a single pot or garden planter.

Create a distinct break between your patio or terrace and turn this into an outdoor room. This can be accomplished by incorporating large garden containers filled with just a single spectacular plant and then infilling with border plantings. More than just providing a view, the design is provided from the inside out.

A number of shrub-sized plants, including most perennials, are effective when displayed along or surrounded by mixed containers. This is especially true when trying to eliminate the expansiveness of a fence - mix those specimen large planters with your garden border to create interest instead of boredom along the fence line.

Like all good container plants, the best choices feature those plants that have long blooming periods or foliage that remains attractive throughout the summer. Here are some good ideas. Consider Angel's trumpets (*Brugmansia* spp.) and Lantana (*Lantana camara*), just to name a couple. One of the best uses for ornamental grasses is the large special container planting, purple fountain grass (*Pennisetum setaceum* "Rubrum") with its wonderful burgundy leaves and even consider using pampas grass (*Cortaderia selloana*). Another great plants are the dwarf grasses such as "Pumila". These grasses are considered annuals in a lot of growing regions and can be taken indoors over the Winter.

Your large container pots also look great planted with a single, good sized clump of low growing plants. Consider variegated society garlic (*Tulbaghia violacea* "Variegata" and variegated leaved geraniums (*Pelargonium* spp.). Both are very effective displayed in a single garden planter or container. Sedge grass is also one of those easy plants to have in your containers and can be combined with trailers to give a more finished look. Although the low growing plants are not as spectacular, they do offer a contrast and are nice accents when included with your large container planters.

For shady conditions, there are a number of plants that look wonderful. Consider caladiums (*Caladium* spp.) or begonias, both tuberous and Sutherland begonias are great options. Other shade plants of course include the Coleus - they now have cultivars that are suitable for sun conditions too. Plectranthus is a great plant and excellent for partial shade.

Theme areas can be created using your specimen plants and other annuals. Group one of your shrub-like specimen planters with a large group of pots containing annuals or perennials for an interesting look. Ground cover plants are certainly effective when used around plants such as angel's trumpet as the leaves fall off the base as they grow. Don't forget to add a low growing layer of trailing plants to add a splash of color into the container. Superbells (*Calibrachoa*) go so well and one of our favorites, of course bacopas (*Bacopa* spp.) and licorice plant (*Helichrysum petiolare*) are lovely too.

One of the most stunning combinations is using the braided hibiscus as the specimen plants and surrounding them with trailing variegated ivy and pink geraniums for that extra splash of color to soften the arrangement and balance the arrangement.

About the Author

Marion Stewart is an avid gardener. She loves sitting on her deck surrounded by so many varied flower-packed and herb planted containers. In her continued research she has found some spectacular fine quality resin planters and garden containers and now offers them in numerous colors, sizes and styles. [Find your best planter at the GardenPlanterStore.com](http://www.gardenplanterstore.com)