

# COLOUR CONTAINER RECIPES

WITH **Salisbury** GREENHOUSE

Setting the Mood with

## Colours

PLANTING TIPS  
FROM THE EXPERTS

FREE

PLANTING  
GUIDE

50

YEARS  
& growing



*"The more I thought about visual art and began to learn some of the design principles it used, the more I realized that container gardening used the same principles."*

**- Rob Sproule**



# Introduction

This book is about how easy it is to use plants to make living art. Using living things to create a living, breathing, changing sculpture is an elegant way to be creative in the garden. By using some simple principles of design you'll start to think more about your own designs as art, your garden as the gallery, and yourself as the artist who makes it all happen.

The design principles I'll be discussing are universal laws that you can use

to make your containers beautiful and catch the eye of everyone who visits your garden. They are easy to learn and, once you know them, you'll be able to make living, changing compositions that are unique and dynamic enough to be a true expression of your own creativity.

I want to give you the tools you need to make you confident enough to be creative and take chances with your own living art. I also want to

make you excited about container gardening. It's truly an art form with no boundaries. Whatever your space, budget, or time limitations are, you always have as many possibilities at your fingertips as your inspiration allows. I hope this book gives you enough ideas that it gets your creativity flowing, and enough confidence in designing that it makes you bold enough to create containers that are true expressions of yourself.

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## The Cast of Colours

The personality of colours is expressed in how they make us feel, reactions which are both universal and personal. Deep, sometimes subconscious gut reactions will influence many of the decisions you make about colour. Listen to these reactions when you're choosing your plants. The colours we choose for our wardrobe and our homes tend to be the ones we are the most comfortable with. Of course there's something wonderful about deliberately stepping outside of your comfort zone as well! The universality of how colours make us feel has been tested and proved over millennia.

# Yellow

In the garden, yellow contributes only beauty. When I use yellow, I throw subtlety out the window and use the brightest, most joyous and satisfying yellow I can find, the yellow of Van Gogh's sunflowers or Wordsworth's host of daffodils. My favourite way to use it is in harmonious containers, where a vibrant, primary yellow centerpiece is highlighted by more muted yellow foliage like lysimachia.

Even with all that being said, I would still suggest using yellow sparingly. It is so invigorating and reflects so much light that a garden full of yellow would become quickly overwhelming. Think of bits of yellow in the garden as the magical kernels of spontaneous joy that pop up through-out our day, whether it's our favourite song on the radio or a surprise gift from a friend. They are made more special by their rarity, and the same goes with yellow. Every garden should have some, but ration it enough that you don't fall out of love with the yellow you have.

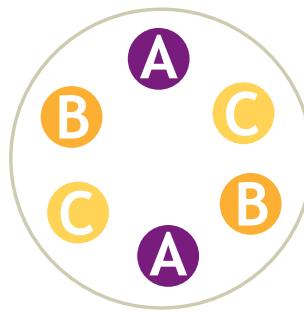
## Contrasting Colours

How close colours are on the colour wheel (ie. in the spectrum) is what creates a sense of harmony and unity or contrast and chaos between them. The tension you see when colours opposite the colour wheel are beside each other is the clashing together of two different wavelengths of light. If the colours are close enough together the contrast becomes so crisp that the colours can seem to vibrate against each other.

This is especially true with yellow and violet/purple. Yellow reflects the most light on the wheel and purple absorbs the most light; they are the two most contrasting colours on the wheel.



## Jungle Fever



- A** Superbells Trailing Blue Calibrachoa Hybrid
- B** Flambe Yellow Chrysanthemum Apiculatum
- C** Superbells Yellow Chiffon Calibrachoa Hybrid

# Red

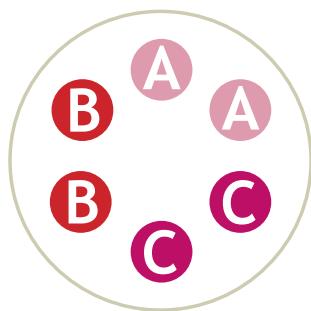
Red is the invigorating colour of boldness and passion. In the garden, it brings an instant sense of heat, sexiness, and alertness. Red awakens the senses to play and adventures. It is arguably the warmest colour and when you look at a pure, bright red flower it seems to be moving towards you. It's both intimate and alarming.

In the sunlight red can glow with such a radiant colour that it almost feels like it could catch on fire and it stirs the blood to look at it. When the day fades to twilight, however, and the shadows collect across the flowers, it becomes suddenly mysterious and menacing, as if hiding dark secrets. I love red but suggest you use it sparingly; it is the colour of passion, boldness, sexuality, war, and excitement. If you imagine a garden with nothing in it but shades of red, you can quickly see how its intense passion would quickly overwhelm all other colour schemes.

I suggest using red when you want to make a container really stand out. If you mix it with other analogous warm colours like yellows and oranges it will be almost glow as a centerpiece! I don't recommend using much red near your outdoor sitting area because it does stir the blood so much. It's a colour that excites rather than relaxes.



## Country Art



**A** Superbells Cherry Blossom Calibrachoa Hybrid

**B** Tukana Scarlet Star Verbena Hybrid

**C** Superbells Cherry Star Calibrachoa Hybrid

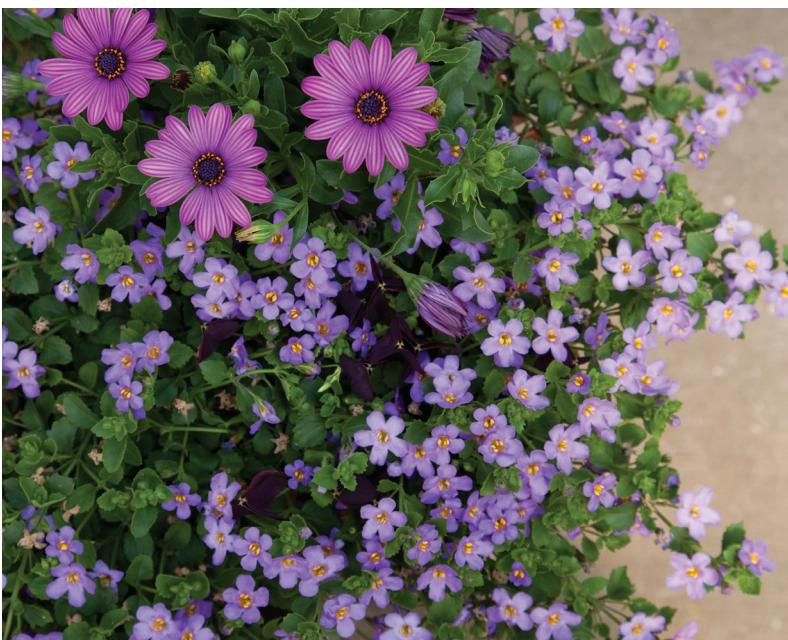
# Purple

Purple is the traditional colour of royalty. It's a colour that evokes feelings of royal poise, sacrifice, and powerful elegance. No garden should be without some purple, but how you use it is very much up to you. Depending on the value and context, it can make a regal, elegant statement or it can infuse a childlike playfulness into the garden.

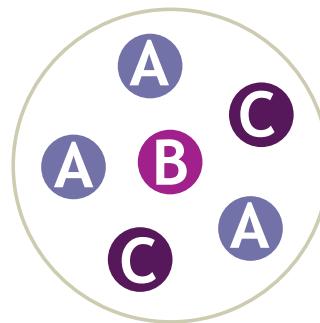
Purple is one of my favourite colours to use in the garden because it has so many moods that I can tap into as a designer. Light purple, which often crosses into lilac, is fun loving and inspires a light, playful mood. Darker purple, however, absorbs more and more light as it approaches ultra-violet and, eventually, passes out of our range of vision into a spectrum that only the bees can enjoy.

Dark purple is a mysterious colour. It pulls the eye towards it into the shadows layer between its petals. In container gardening, dark purple can range from proud and boastful to brooding and sinister, depending on what shapes and textures you use.

Light purple evokes a sense of play and I recommend using it in areas of the garden where you want people to be encouraged to explore. It fits into many colour schemes, from analogous blends with other playful purples and light blues to complementary schemes with yellows, creams, and pastels.



## Purple Storm



- A** Snowstorm Blue  
*Sutera Cordata*
- B** Soprano Purple  
*Osteospermum Hybrid*
- C** Charmed Wine  
*Oxalis*

# Pink

Pink is a gentle colour, the colour of poise and femininity, but it can also be vivacious and full of life, usually as you add more to the mix.

Pink is a popular colour in container design thanks to the sense of innocence and optimism it brings. It's very versatile in its role. If you put it near your outdoor living space it will bring a sense of youthful cheer to the space, whereas if it's in the garden it will promote a sense of play and childlike wonder. It is one of the best colours for intriguing a viewer, making her an explorer who wants to examine the garden closer in order to discover more hidden gems.

Pink is often seen in the spring. When spring pink perennials bloom it's a sure sign that winter has passed and the optimism of a new, green season can begin.

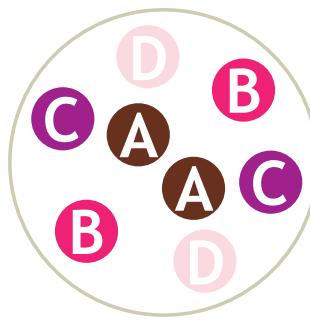
## Harmonious Colours

If you want your container to have harmonious colour scheme that expresses a sense of relaxation and unity, then choose colours that are analogous to each other. In an analogous colour scheme the colours are on one side of the colour wheel and there are no colors that are directly opposite each other.

The colours harmonize with each other because they reflect about the same amount of light back to the eye so there is very little tension between them. When you are planning an analogous design, it's a good idea to make sure that one of the colours is a very pure, preferably primary colour. The hue will act as an anchor for the other analogous colours.



## Mountain of Pink



- A** Purple Fountain Grass
- B** Petunia 'Supertunia Vista Bubblegum'
- C** Petunia 'Supertunia Vista Fuchsia'
- D** Petunia 'Supertunia Vista Silverberry'

# Green

We often take green for granted. It is the anchoring colour in the garden, its potential often dismissed as background noise like music in an elevator. But there is so much more to green than the colour of your lawn. Designs with nothing but greens can easily be some of most beautiful, albeit complex, in the garden. Plants like gunneras, alocasias and musas (bananas), with their broad leaves transpiring so much that you can almost hear them, can be the greatest show-stoppers of all. When you buy a plant, whether the flower is going to be red, blue, or silver, you are buying the colour its leaves as well.

Green isn't as passive in the garden as many think. In containers with hot, bold red flowers the green will balance the intense colour like holding back a wild animal. Soft, emerald greens make us meditative and restful while dark, lush greens inspire thoughts of nurturing and growth. Of course every garden has green in it, the key is to remember that it plays as active a role as the other colours around it. It is the colour of life, the colour we see most often but also in many ways the most difficult to use in design because it is so nuanced and has so many faces.

Green is often the colour of new life and a fresh start. It's usually cool and has a refreshing impact on our eyes, especially the bright greens of nasturtium pedals and crisp lettuce. Lime green is very trendy right now because it's an invigorating, playful colour, and newer plants like lime Sweet Potato Vine and Talinum are flying off garden centre shelves.



## Mai-Tai



- A** Sweet Potato Vine
- B** 'Sweet Caroline Light Green'
- C** Superbells 'Lemon Slice'
- D** Superbells 'Cherry Star'

# Orange

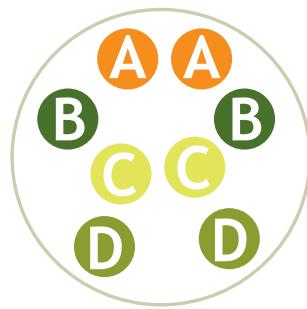
Orange is oddity among colours because although it's a secondary colour it doesn't carry a lot of symbolic or historical baggage with it, unlike its big brother red. It's a good colour to choose if you want the warmth of red without all the drama. It's a very intimate and comforting colour, and is a perfect choice for designs near your outdoor sitting area. Unlike red, orange feels very safe and relaxing.

It's a fairly rare colour to see in spring and summer designs; the fall is when it really starts to shine. When the trees start to glow with yellow and bronze the orange colours in the garden seem to magically emerge. Many ingredients that showcase orange bloom later in the season, so much so that it often seems out of place in the spring or early summer.

The main drawback to using orange is that it can be hard to use in complex colour schemes. When it's paired with analogous colours it looks great, but its complementary colour is blue and they made a bit of an odd pair. It's also such an unabashedly warm colour that it tends to only work well in traditional designs, although I invite you to try to prove me wrong.



## Mediterranean Sunset



- A** Thunbergia 'Sunny'
- B** Swiss Chard 'Bright Lights'
- C** Lantana 'Luscious Lemonade'
- D** Lysimachia 'Goldilocks'

# Blue

Blue is a mysterious, complicated colour with many moods and layers. In the garden blue can be just as varied. It can inspire carefree wonder and a feeling of freedom and expansiveness, or it can treat your eye to intoxicating depths as it lingers in shadows. Light blue is refreshing and calming to look at it, and darker shades have a delicious thickness to them, and my eye tends to linger over dark blues as if it takes longer to take in the density of colour. No garden should be without some blue, as a tribute to the sky if for no other reason.

It's a cool colour, but has a vast range from the icy, subtle interplay of blues on succulents to deep blue delphiniums. I recommend keeping blues close to where you like to relax. Its ethereal sense of distance inspires quiet contemplation which is perfect for unwinding with after a long day. While warmer colours in the garden promote a sense of play, blue invites us to close our eyes and let ourselves drift away into a gorgeous big prairie sky.

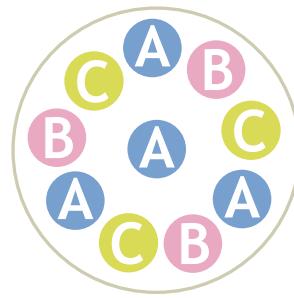


## Hues

Hues are pure colours, the bright crisp spectrums of the colour wheel. There are three primary colours, (red, yellow, and blue) from which all other colours can be mixed and created.

These colours are the elemental building blocks of the colour universe and the eye recognizes them as such. Flowers that are a pure primary colour are always one of the first things we see. Hidden deep within the wavelengths of a pure red dahlia, a bright yellow pansy or a rich blue lobelia are the secrets to unlocking every colour you've ever seen.

## Bermuda Skies



- A** Lobelia 'Laguna Sky Blue'
- B** Petunia 'Supertunia Bermuda Beach'
- C** Superbells 'Yellow Chiffon'

# White

Although not technically a colour, white is a powerful presence in the world of gardening. Its lack of pigment and its unique characteristic of reflecting every scrap of light that touches link it with a range of emotions that runs from wide-eyed innocence to mourning over a loved one. Without getting too philosophical, white is often defined by a sense of absence rather than presence.

In the garden white often isn't nearly as innocent as it first appears. In the midday sun it will glow with pure radiance but, depending on its texture, may collect dark shadows as twilight nears. Its ability to blend seamlessly into every colour scheme makes plants with white flowers, like bacopa and lobelia, ideal fillers to add depth and body to your designs.

The best thing about white is that you can use it absolutely anywhere. It will fit as well around your indoor sitting area as it will splashed into the back of the garden.

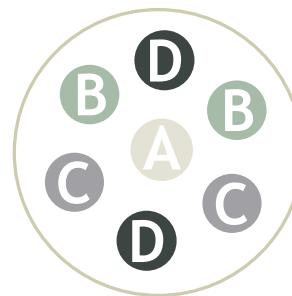
## Values

The value of a colour is its lightness and darkness, which changes the hue into countless shades. While primary red is the hue of red, the countless variations that it can assume given different light conditions is value. Value is a good thing to keep in mind when you're deciding what kind of light you want to put your container in (of course, the exposure level that the plants need should be the most important deciding factor).

White and silver flowers are sometimes called "daylight extenders", because they tend to glow after dusk after absorbing sunlight all day.



## Ascension



- A** Diamond Frost
- B** Laguna White Lobelia Erinus
- C** Supertunia Mini White Petunia Hybrid
- D** Snowstorm Giant Snowflake

# Colour Container Recipes



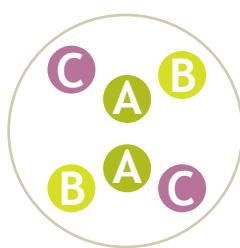
MODERN TWIST



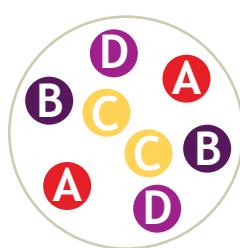
ECLECTIC SYMPHONY



CRAYON ART



- A** Euphorbia - Diamond Frost
- B** Ipomoea - Emerald Lace
- C** Supertunia - Bordeaux



- A** Ipomoea - Sweet Caroline Raven
- B** Verbena - Tukana Scarlet
- C** Osteospermum - Lemon Symphony
- D** Superbells - Plum



- A** Lemon Symphony Osteospermum Hybrid
- B** Supertunia Royal Velvet Petunia Hybrid
- C** Superbena Large Lilac Blue Verbena Hybrid
- D** Goldilocks Lysimachia

# Colour Container Recipes



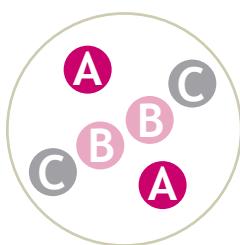
PINK EXPLOSION



PARADE



CROOKED GRIN



**A** Zonal Geranium

**B** Gaura 'Stratosphere Pink Picotee'

**C** Hibiscus 'Red Shield'



**A** Juncus 'Javelin'  
Zonal Geranium

**B** Zonal Geranium

**C** Calibrachoa  
'Superbells'  
'Dreamsicle'

**D** Lobelia 'Laguna Sky Blue'

**E** Chrysanthemum  
'Flambe'



**A** Datura 'Ballerina Purple'

**B** Curly Willow

**C** Euphorbia 'Diamond Frost'

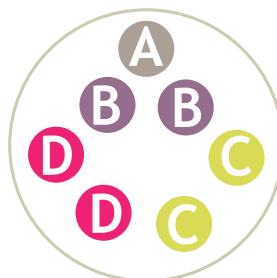
**D** Sweet Potato Vine  
'Illusion Midnight Lace'

**E** Zebrina Tradescantia

# Colour Container Recipes



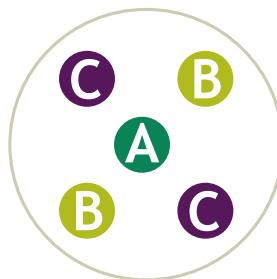
## SUMMER COCKTAIL



- A** Weigela 'Wine & Roses'
- B** Guara 'Karalee Petite Pink'
- C** Phlox 'Intensia White'
- D** Petunia 'Supertunia Vista Bubblegum'



## MODERN FROST



- A** Baby Tut (Umbrella Grass)
- B** Euphorbia - Diamond Frost
- C** Ipomoea - Illusion Midnight Lace

## Container Gardening History

In Canada, gardening for most people generally meant planting vegetables until the explosion of suburban homes after WWII. For the decades following, container design took a back-seat to the ubiquitous flower beds of Geraniums and marigolds that lined every manicured suburban street. It wasn't until big companies like ProvenWinners started introducing high-performance annuals in the mid-90s that container garden really came into its own. Now, the explosion of interest in container design is phenomenal, and for gardeners today the sky is the limit for how creative and imaginative they can be in their gardens.

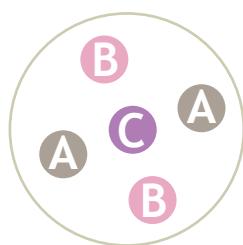
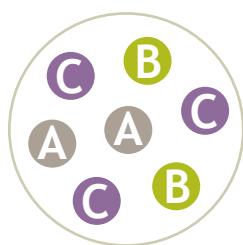
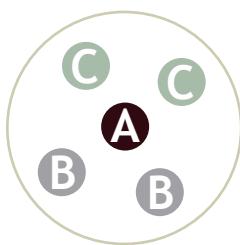
# Basket Container Recipes



ALTERNATIVE CHIC

SPLASH OF COLOUR

ICED DIAMONDS



- A** Illusion Midnight Lace Sweet Potato Vine
- B** Supertunia Mini White Petunia Hybrid
- C** Tukana White Verbena Hybrid

- A** Diamond Frost
- B** Illusion Emerald Lace Sweet Potato Vine
- C** Supertunia Bordeaux Petunia Hybrid

- A** Diamond Frost
- B** Opal Innocence Nemesia
- C** Soprano Light Purple Osteospermum Hybrid

# Basket Container Recipes



WOVEN STARLIGHT

CANDYLAND

GALAHAD



- A** Thunbergia 'Lemon Star from Ball'
- B** Osteospermum 'Soprano White'
- C** Nemesia 'Sunsatian Lemon'
- D** Petunia 'Supertunia Royal Velvet'



- A** Superbells 'Pink'
- B** Superbells 'Tequila Sunrise'
- C** Superbells 'Yellow Chiffon'



- A** Sweet Potato Vine 'Sweet Caroline Raven'
- B** Verbena Tukana Scarlet
- C** Osteospermum 'Lemon Symphony'
- D** Superbells 'Plum'

# Basket Container Recipes



PRAIRIE FIRE



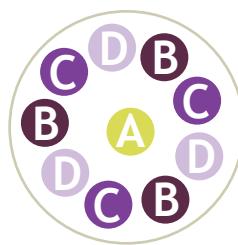
VELVET JUNGLE



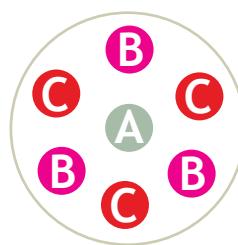
PRINCESS WANDA



- A** Petunia 'Supertunia Red'
- B** Sweet Potato Vine 'Illusion Garnet Lace'
- C** Verbena 'Superbena Peachy Keen'



- A** Sweet Potato Vine 'Sweet Caroline Light Green'
- B** Petunia 'Supertunia Bordeaux'
- C** Superbells 'Grape Punch'
- D** Superbells 'Miss Lilac'



- A** Euphoria 'Diamond Delight'
- B** Petunia 'Supertunia Vista Strawberry'
- C** Verbena 'Royal Iced Cherry'

# Planting the Designs

With your containers full of soil and your plants beside you, it's time to make some magic!



# Here are some good planting habits.

- 1.** In one growing season roots won't grow very deep, and many of the most popular annuals are tropical species with shallow root systems to begin with. When you're planting for one season, you only need 10-12" of good soil. If you have a deep container or bed, you're throwing your money away filling it with soil that roots are never going to reach. Fill it with a material that drains well, like rocks or bark chips, instead.
- 2.** Leave about an inch of space from where you fill the soil and the rim of the container. This will allow space for water to collect before it seeps in. This is especially important for soilless mediums that need to be watered more. Pour the soil in and level it but don't compress it with your hands. Doing this will collapse all the air pockets that the fibrous roots need to grow and breathe. When you water after planting it will settle the soil naturally and as much as it should settle.
- 3.** With the plants still in their pots, arrange them into their design in the container. This is the time to eye up your creation before you commit to it and make any last minute changes.
- 4.** Don't pull the plants out by the stems; it damages the roots. Tip the pot over with your hand cupping the surface of the soil and squeeze the pot gently until the root ball comes out with a gentle nudge. If the plant is root bound knead the root ball until it loosens up and you see fibrous roots sticking out of it.
- 5.** Try planting the larger pieces first and work your way down in size. Not only are smaller plants easier to fit in at the end, but it will also give you a chance to see how the shape of the design is evolving as you go.
- 6.** When all the plants are tucked in, gently work your fingers between them to make sure the soil is level all around. I always keep one tag from each plant in a discreet corner of the container so that I know exactly what worked and what didn't for next year.
- 7.** Water until there is a steady stream out the bottom drainage holes. Make sure the stream of water you use isn't too rough on the new plants; they've been stressed enough for one day!