

# In The Garden

## Container Gardens Offer Simplicity, Variety And Year-Long Beauty

(NAPSA)—Container gardening is growing in popularity, and the newest designs take advantage of exciting new varieties of plants, especially flowering shrubs. Container gardens don't require a lot of time, space or know-how to be beautiful. Gardeners also appreciate the ease of container gardening compared to the hard work of creating a traditional landscape bed. There's no need to remove sod or dig out old tree roots; just buy a container, potting soil and plants and you're in business. By choosing one of the new, compact varieties of flowering shrubs you can still enjoy your favorite landscape plants—in a container!

Some gardeners are unsure of what to plant and are more confident when provided with a "recipe." Most garden centers are happy to help, and there are many online resources available. One of the best is Proven Winners' colorful Web site, [www.provenwinners.com/smn](http://www.provenwinners.com/smn). It offers online recipes for planting a beautiful container garden and also offers gardeners a free Idea Book of container designs.

While traditional container gardens have been limited to annual flowers, Proven Winners' new designs add a modern twist by incorporating shrubs, too. Flowering shrubs add height and structure to containers. Many newer varieties offer colorful foliage in addition to flowers and look great all season.

Flowering shrubs and evergreens are a great choice for gardeners who love to travel; durable shrubs do not need to be watered as frequently as annuals. Many will last up to a week without watering. Finally, flowering shrubs are a real value for homeowners. After you've enjoyed shrubs in container gardens all



**New foliage, such as the My Monet weigela (left) and the Cityline series of hydrangeas, are well suited for container gardens.**

season, plant them in your permanent landscape in the fall. But don't feel like you have to; part of the fun of container gardens is the ability to start fresh each spring. If you've tired of a plant, simply toss it in the compost pile and try something else next spring.

To keep a container garden from looking tired, use plants of different heights. Mixing tall plants in with smaller ones is a quick, easy way to make your yard more attractive. Professional designers often use plants with strong vertical elements to anchor their container gardens. Taller, more vertical plants are especially good for formal situations like an entryway, or for narrow areas like courtyards. Fine Line buckthorn and Castle Spire holly are elegant plants that complement many flowering annuals. Place these dramatic plants on either side of your entryway for a classic look or add one to your backyard seating area. You'll see an instant impact when you add one of these tall charmers to your designs.

Colorful foliage, like the rich purple of Summer Wine ninebark or Wine & Roses weigela, is great

all summer long—on its own or planted with a bright, contrasting annual like Laguna White lobelia or Diamond Frost euphorbia. Variegated foliage is always stunning; look for the new My Monet weigela, a dwarf plant ideal for patio planters. This low-growing flowering shrub gets just 18 inches tall—perfect for decks and patios. My Monet has rosy pink flowers in spring and colorful green and white foliage all summer.

Hydrangeas are popular everywhere—as cut flowers, as landscape plants and now as container plants. Newer, compact blooms like the Cityline series are much smaller than other varieties, so they will not outgrow their decorative containers. The Citylines were selected for their colorful blooms and very strong stems—a great combination for patio planters.

By adding flowering shrubs and evergreens to your spring containers, you can discover a whole new world of easy-to-grow and easy-to-maintain plants. Shrubs offer color, shape and texture and add sophistication to any container design. Find more information at [www.colorchoiceplants.com](http://www.colorchoiceplants.com).