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Home Container Gardening Tips

Maintaining a container garden is easy when you follow a few helpful suggestions. These tips will help your plants flourish and stay healthy and beautiful throughout the season!

From healthy soil come healthy plants. Try filling your pots with a *soilless mix*, such as Fertilome Ultimate Potting Mix. Though this mix provides no nutrients, it provides plants in containers a healthier growing medium than soil from the ground as well as necessary aeration.

After planting your container, apply a slow release fertilizer like Osmocote according to label directions. This provides food to your plants for up to four months. If, at a later time, your plants show signs of distress, such as the yellowing of leaves, try a water-soluble fertilizer like Jack's Classic Petunia FeED, which will give your plants the boost they need to continue producing beautiful blooms. By August, you will want to think about supplementing the Osmocote with a balanced water soluble fertilizer every two-three weeks. The plants root systems will take up the nutrients instantly and give them a little push to finish out the season with a bang.

Watering is a balancing act; too much or too little water and your flowers will suffer. Water containers when the soil's top layer becomes dry to the touch. Pay attention to the weather as an increase in heat requires an increase in watering. An equally important step, after a good rain, is to check containers that may have been partially blocked from receiving rainwater by tree branches or overhang to ensure they are adequately moist. Add water to your container until it runs out of the drainage hole at the bottom. This encourages roots to grow deep. Also, try to water as early in the day as possible so the foliage can dry. The longer it stays wet, the more likely it can develop foliar diseases.

Just like anything else, plants need grooming and maintenance, too. Deadheading, removing spent blooms, redirects a plant's energy into new flower production, keeping it looking happy and healthy. Stem and leaf injuries are appealing to insects and disease. Cut damaged or diseased stems back to their most healthy growing point and remove any foliage that looks damaged. Don't be afraid of trimming! You can trim up to one-third of the plant and it will continue to bloom. Remember to peek under trailing plants and remove any brown or fallen foliage.

We hope these tips will help you maintain your container garden and provide your plants with a long and healthy life!