

### **By Melinda Myers**

#### *Gardening Expert*

Container gardens have long been used to add a spot of color by a front entrance or to expand planting space. Try one or more of these attractive, fun and functional ways to include containers in your landscape, large or small.

Add vertical interest to any garden or garden space. Select a large attractive container filled with tall plants like papyrus and canna. Or elevate a small pot on steppers or an overturned pot for added height. Create height with smaller pots and plants by strategically stacking and planting them into a creative planting. Try setting any of these planters right in the garden to create a dramatic focal point.

Create a privacy screen or mask a bad view. Use an arbor or other support for hanging baskets and then place a few containers below for an attractive screen. Or create a garden of containers to provide seasonal interest using a variety of plants.

Use trees, shrubs, and ornamental grasses for height. Save money by purchasing smaller plants. Elevate these on overturned pots for added height and impact. Mask the mechanics by wrapping the pots in burlap.

Then add a few colorful self-watering pots in the foreground for added color and beauty. Fill these with annuals or perennials.

Bring the garden right to your back door for ease of harvest and added entertainment. A self-watering patio planter, windowbox, or rail planter reduces maintenance and makes harvesting herbs as easy as reaching out the window or back door. Plus, guests will have fun harvesting their own fresh mint for mojitos or greens for their salads.

Define outdoor living spaces within your landscape. Use containers as walls and dividers to separate entertaining and play areas from quiet reflective spaces. And consider using pots with built in casters or set them on moveable saucers to make moving these pots easier. This way you can expand and shrink individual spaces as needed simply by moving the pots.

Create your own vacation paradise. Add some wicker furniture or fill vertical gardens, an old child's wagon, metal colander or wooden and concrete planters with cacti and succulents.

All you need is a bit of space and creativity to find fun new ways to put containers to work for you in the garden this season.