



Growing Flowers in Pots

Container gardens are an easy way to add a splash of color to your home landscaping. Pots are portable, decorative, and simple to maintain. They are a good way for novice gardeners to experiment with flowers or for experienced gardeners to accent existing flowerbeds. Follow these steps to create your own flower container garden and make your community a more colorful place.

Choose your container

In general, a bigger container is preferred. Greater soil volume supports better plant growth. Plus, it does not have to be watered as often and there is less chance of the wind tipping it over. There are many container materials to choose from including clay, ceramic, plastic, fiberglass, and wood. Colorful glazed ceramic pots serve a dual purpose, adding color from both container and flowers. You can also make containers out of everyday objects such as old watering cans. Be sure pots have drainage holes and think about portability. Will you be able to move or store it for the winter if needed?

Fertilize

Fill your container with a soilless potting mix made of materials such as peat, vermiculite, and perlite. Unless it comes with fertilizer already mixed in, add nutrients to the medium before planting. Because of limited growing space and frequent watering, container gardens should be fertilized frequently and in small amounts. Organic options include blood meal and bone meal for supplemental nitrogen and phosphorus. As the season goes on you can liquid feed with substances such as fish emulsion or compost tea.

If you choose inorganic fertilizer, add a slow-release granular product with a nitrogen-phosphorus-potassium ratio of 3:1:2. One example might have a formulation of 18-6-12. Reapply halfway through the growing season. You may also choose a water-soluble fertilizer with a similar chemical makeup and apply frequently using a hose or watering can.

In general, fertilizers containing 8 to 20 percent nitrogen produce the most blooms. Avoid phosphorus-rich fertilizers. High levels of this nutrient are not needed, and runoff can contribute to water pollution. Annual flowers bloom on new growth. If there is no new growth, there are no new flowers, so fertilize frequently.

Decide what to plant

For maximum color and bloom, choose plants from the Prairie Star list. These are K-State research

recommended varieties of annuals that have demonstrated good growth and bloom in Kansas conditions with minimal care. For the complete list, visit www.prairiestarflowers.com or ask your local K-State Research and Extension agent for a copy.

Annuals provide more visual impact than perennials, which bloom for a relatively short period of time. For maximum color, plant seasonally with early spring plants such as pansies, followed by heat-tolerant Prairie Star annuals. In the fall, accent colorful blooming plants such as chrysanthemums or kale with pumpkins, gourds, or cornstalks. If your container tolerates freezing, fill it with greenery and decorations for winter.

Apply design principles

For visual effect, follow basic design principles when filling your container. Choose plants that satisfy three requirements: a tall focal point, filler material, and cascading leaves or blooms.

Decide on a color scheme. A harmonious design uses plants in varying shades of one color or similar colors. Or choose a bold contrasting color scheme with plants opposite on the color wheel, such as purple and yellow. Sample planting diagrams are included on page 2, but experiment to find other pleasing combinations.

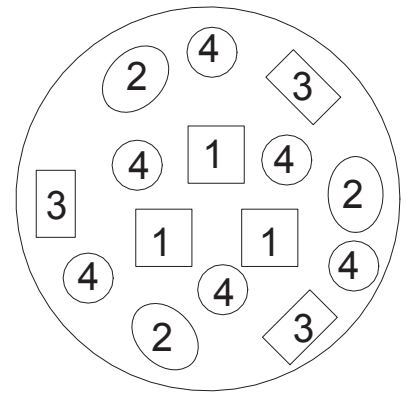
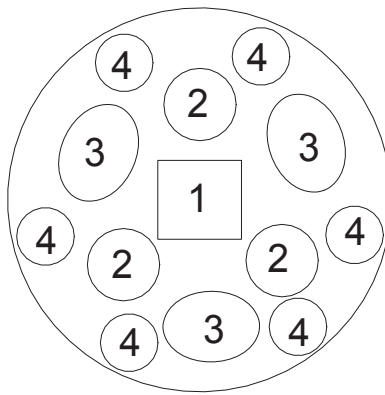
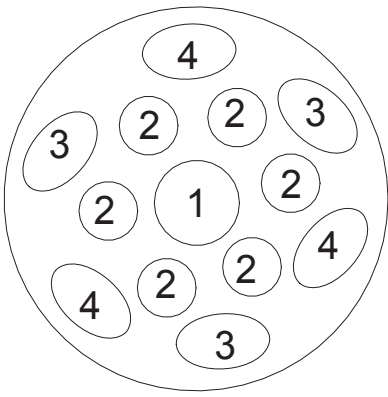
Choose your location

Many Prairie Star annuals need full sun, which means more frequent watering. Wind dries out containers faster. It might be worthwhile to set up a simple drip irrigation system from your outdoor spigot. Place emitters in your flower containers and set the system on a timer to ensure that plants get adequate water.

Monitor

Inspect containers occasionally for potential pests and diseases. Consult other K-State Research and Extension publications for recommendations on dealing with any problems that arise.

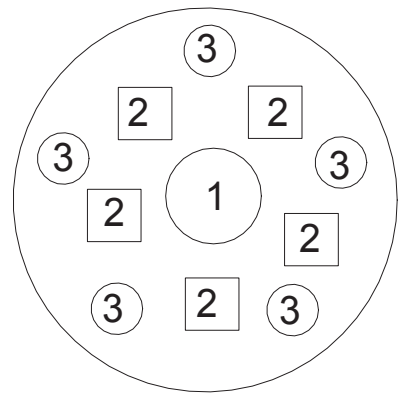
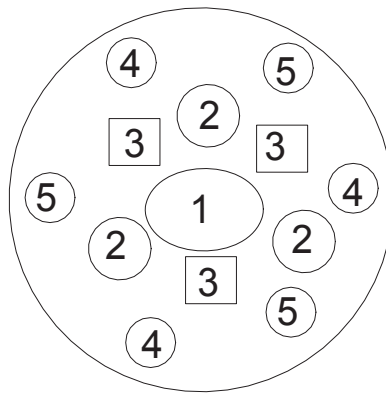
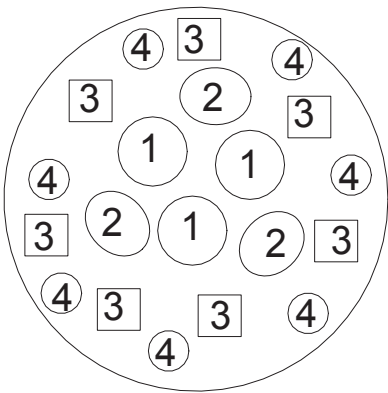
Sample Planting Diagrams for 18" Flower Containers



- 1 - Angelonia Serena (White)
- 2 - Salvia Victoria (Blue)
- 3 - Petunia Supertunia Vista Bubblegum
- 4 - Geranium Crystal Palace Gem

- 1 - Cyperus Papyrus King Tut
- 2 - Euphorbia Diamond Frost
- 3 - Geranium Caliente Rose
- 4 - Petunia Supertunia Mini Purple

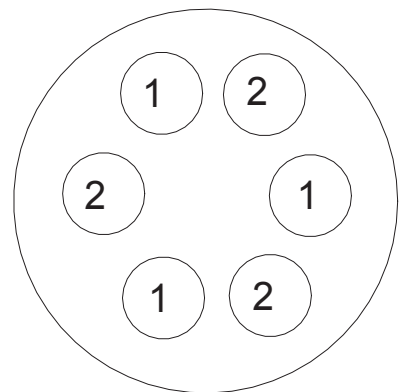
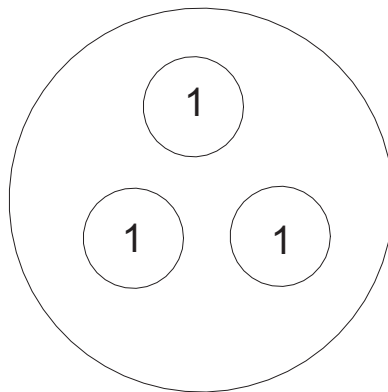
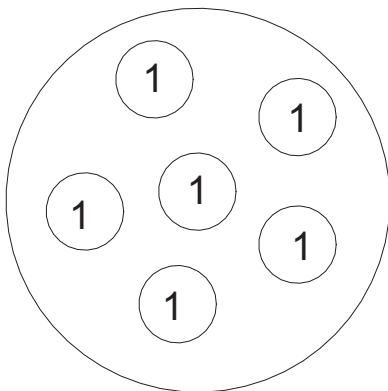
- 1 - Perilla Magilla Purple
- 2 - Sweet Potato Vine Tri Color
- 3 - Petunia Supertunia Vista Fuchsia
- 4 - Zinnia Profusion White



- 1 - Ornamental Pepper Black Pearl
- 2 - Euphorbia Diamond Frost
- 3 - Begonia Brandy (Pink, Dark Leaves)
- 4 - Petunia Cascadia Rim Violet

- 1 - Ornamental Millet Purple Majesty
- 2 - Celosia New Look Red
- 3 - Ageratum High Tide Blue
- 4 - Petunia Baby Duck Yellow
- 5 - Petunia Madness Plum Crazy

- 1 - Basil Pesto Perpetuo
- 2 - Coleus Wizard Scarlet
- 3 - Sweet Potato Vine Sweet Caroline Bronze



- 1 - Sedum Lemon Coral

- 1 - Petunia Supertunia Vista Bubblegum

- 1 - Geranium Rocky Mountain Dark Red
- 2 - Euphorbia Diamond Frost

Plants for Height		Light	Ht (in)	Wd (in)
Basil (Ocimum)	Pesto Perpetuo	sun or shade	32	18
Canna	Tropicana (Variegated Leaves Orange Bloom)	sun	70	18
Celosia	Cramer's Amazon (Red)	sun	49	26
Celosia	Flamingo Feather Purple	sun	47	27
Celosia	Hi-Z (Purple)	sun	46	25
Cleome	Senorita Rosalita	sun	32	20
Cyperus Papyrus	King Tut	sun	50	24
Ornamental Millet	Purple Majesty	sun	48	28
Perilla	Magilla (Purple/Pink)	sun	30	20

Plants for Filler		Light	Ht (in)	Wd (in)
Ageratum	High Tide Blue	sun	18	18
Angelonia	Serena (White)	sun	14	15
Begonia	Various Leaf and Flower Colors	sun or shade	11	12
Celosia	New Look Red	sun	19	13
Celosia	WATCH (Hot Pink)	sun	13	15
Coleus	Brighly-Colored Foliage	sun or shade	26	24
Euphorbia	Diamond Frost (White)	sun	14	18
Gaillardia	Plume Series (All Colors)	sun	16	15
Gaillardia	Torch Series (All Colors)	sun	17	15
Geranium	Red, Pink, White, Salmon, Lavendar	sun	14	16
Geranium (Exotic)	Crystal Palace Gem (Yellow Leaves, Red Flower)	sun	14	20
Geranium Cascade / Ivy	Various Shades of Red	sun	11	20
Helenium	Dakota (Gold)	sun	12	16
Impatiens	Broad Spectrum of Colors	partial shade	16	14
Impatiens (Double Flowered)	Fiesta Series (All Colors)	partial shade	22	21
Impatiens (New Guinea)	Infinity Series (All Colors)	partial shade	14	17
Impatiens (New Guinea)	Java White Improved	partial shade	17	21
Impatiens (New Guinea)	Super Sonic Cherry Cream	shade	14	12
Lantana	Bright Colors	sun	24	36
Marigold	Bright Colors	sun	20	16
Melampodium	Bright Orange, Gold and Yellow	sun	18	22
Ornamental Pepper	Black Pearl	sun	28	16
Ornamental Pepper	Calico	sun	19	15
Ornamental Pepper	Chilly Chili (Red/Yellow)	sun	14	17
Ornamental Pepper	Explosive Ember	sun	15	16
Ornamental Pepper	Purple Flash	sun	24	18
Pentas	Northern Lights Lavender	sun	18	15
Plectranthus	Silver Shield	sun	20	19
Salvia farinacea	Blue, Silver and White	sun	25	20
Scaevola	Purple, Blue or White	sun	12	24
Sedum	Lemon Coral	sun	5	20
Snapdragon (Anthrhrinum)	Rocket Cherry	sun	28	10
Vinca (Catharanthus)	Red, Blue, White, Pink, Salmon	sun	14	17
Zinnia	Crystal White	sun	15	24
Zinnia	Profusion Orange	sun	16	22
Zinnia	Profusion Red	sun	16	22
Zinnia	Profusion White	sun	16	22
Zinnia	Short Stuff Orange	sun	11	20

Plants for Cascading		Light	Ht (in)	Wd (in)
Nierembergia	Mont Blanc (White)	sun	5	16
Petunia	Baby Duck Yellow	sun	16	45
Petunia	Dream Series (All Colors)	sun	10	28
Petunia	Jamboree (White)	sun	9	32
Petunia	Blushing Princess (White/Lavender)	sun	18	35
Petunia	Carpet Lilac	sun	16	23
Petunia	Cascadia Series (All Colors)	sun	6	39
Petunia	Easy Wave Series (All Colors)	sun	7	45
Petunia	Fantasy Crystal Red	sun	12	15
Petunia	Fantasy Mix	sun	10	18
Petunia	Hurrah Series (All Colors)	sun	17	22
Petunia	Kahuna, both colors, Violet and White	sun	27	51
Petunia	Littletonia Pink	sun	12	30
Petunia	Littletonia Rose	sun	12	30
Petunia	Madness Series (All Colors)	sun	12	32
Petunia	Marco Polo Odyssey (Lavender)	sun	11	28
Petunia	Misty Lilac Wave	sun	12	36
Petunia	Plush Purple	sun	8	36
Petunia	Plush Salmon	sun	10	36
Petunia	Primetime Lavender	sun	19	24
Petunia	Primetime Rose	sun	16	24
Petunia	Sun Ray	sun	10	36
Petunia	Shockwave Series (All Colors)	sun	14	36
Petunia	Storm Series (All Colors)	sun	17	35
Petunia	Suncatcher Series (All Colors)	sun	11	25
Petunia	Supertunia (All Colors and Varieties)	sun	12	40
Petunia	Supertunia Vista Fuchsia	sun	14	48
Petunia	Tidal Wave Series (All Colors)	sun	22	36
Portulaca	Fairytales Series (All Colors)	sun	11	23
Sedum	Lemon Coral	sun	5	20
Sweet Potato (Ipomoea)	Black, Yellow, Red, Bronze, Green-and-White Bicolor	sun	10	48
Verbena	Various Bright Colors	sun	15	24

For specific varieties of begonias, coleus, geraniums, impatiens, lantana, marigold, melampodium, salvia farinacea, scaevola, vinca (catharanthus), sweet potato, and verbena, refer to the Prairie Star list.



<http://www.prairiestarflowers.com/>

Authors

Alan Stevens, horticulturist
Robin Dremsa, horticulture research technician

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