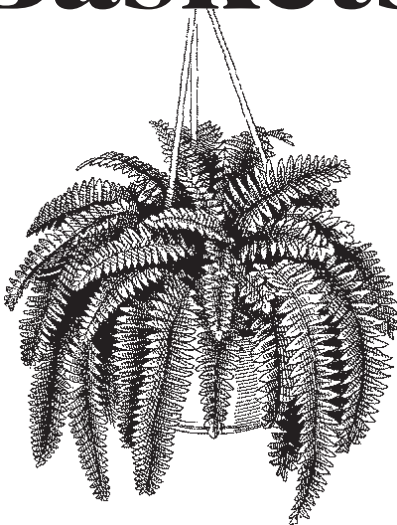


Hangin

Baskets



Hanging baskets can add a new dimension to your landscape. Often the open, vertical space of the indoor garden, carport, terrace, patio, balcony, porch or under trees goes unused. In these areas, hanging baskets help create a delightful atmosphere by giving color and interest to open spaces or bare walls. They are most useful to gardeners whose planting areas are limited. Creative gardeners will discover unusual containers and unlimited ways to use hanging baskets around the house and garden.



Many beautiful and exotic plants are suitable for cultivation in suspended baskets or planters. Plants of drooping growth habit are preferable, because their pendulous stems, falling over the sides of the container, display flowers and foliage to best advantage. Drooping plants also hide the container, making the plant, rather than the container, the outstanding feature. Upright-growing plants, other than orchids and bromeliads, are not used to best advantage when planted by themselves in baskets.

When to Start Baskets

Early spring is the best time to start hanging baskets. The warm weather of spring, summer and fall will provide a long growing period for annuals and cold-tender plants that are replanted yearly. For plants carried over from year to year, a spring planting gives the plants a full season's growth, and they are well established before winter's cold.

Types of Baskets

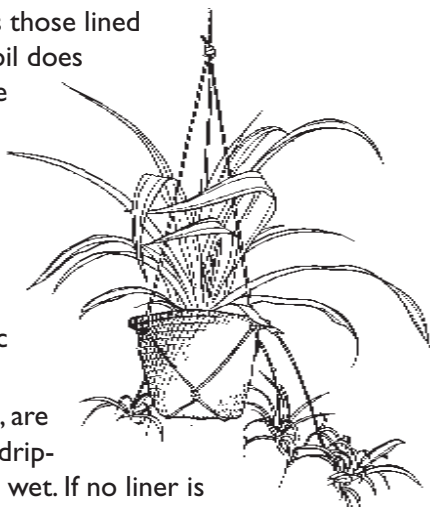
Many types of planters may be used as suspended baskets. The most popular are those made of galvanized wire. These are very light, sturdy and last for years. Plastic baskets similar in design to wire baskets are available, but they are not as sturdy as wire and may split or tear apart in time. They do have the advantage of offering a wide variety of colors. If you use colored baskets, select a color to harmonize with the decor of the area in which the basket is to be displayed. Also, consider color in choosing the plant material.

Teakwood or cypress wood baskets are used, too, particularly for orchids and bromeliads. Ceramic or terra-cotta (clay) planters, strawberry planters in particular, are most effective when planted with cacti or succulents. The kind of planter is limited only by your imagination.

Basket Linings

If you use a wire or other meshwork hanging basket, line it with some material to hold the soil in the container. Usually the basket is lined with a thick layer - up to 2 inches - of coarse sphagnum moss. Wet the sphagnum moss before pressing it to the bottom and sides of the basket. Dry sphagnum moss is difficult to keep in place and cannot be molded as easily to cling to the sides of the basket.

Some gardeners have used plastic film or aluminum foil instead of moss. When these materials are used to line the basket, punch small holes in the bottom of the lining material for drainage and aeration. Baskets lined with these two materials are not as attractive as those lined with sphagnum or other mosses, but the soil does not dry out as rapidly. If you wish to reduce the quick drying of the soil in the basket, first line the basket with moss and then place a layer of plastic or foil next to the moss before filling the basket with soil. Again, punch small holes in the lining to assure good drainage. You also may buy liners to fit the various sizes of wire or plastic hanging baskets.



Water-tight liners, which have no holes, are extremely useful in preventing water from dripping onto surfaces that should not become wet. If no liner is used, prevent water damage by attaching an aluminum or plastic pot saucer to the bottom of the wire basket to catch the excess water. This is not completely effective. The water must be discarded, and it may overflow at times. It is much easier and safer to use watertight liners in baskets when dripping is undesirable.

Filling and Planting

After the basket has been selected and lined, start filling it with soil. A good soil for most hanging baskets is composed of one part sharp sand, two parts loamy soil, one part leaf mold or peat moss and one-half part dried cow manure. Orchids and bromeliads are generally grown in osmunda fiber or various types of tree bark.

Place plants in the basket at about the same depth in the soil as they were previously grown. Adjust the planting depth by filling in from the bottom until the plant is at the proper height. Then, fill the remaining space with soil, stopping about 2 inches from the top of the basket. This area is needed

to facilitate watering. If the basket is completely filled with soil, watering from overhead will be difficult, and most of the water will run off a full basket.

After placing the soil around the plant, thoroughly soak the basket in a tub of water and then hang it in position. Because they are exposed to air on all sides, hanging baskets dry out quickly. It is necessary to keep the soil moist. At first you may need to water every other day, but, as the plant grows and the days become warmer, it may be necessary to water daily.

Watering

The most convenient way to water is to lower the baskets to the ground and immerse them in a vessel of water. Unfortunately, this will not work when the plants cascade below the bottom of the basket; they may be broken or damaged by this watering method. About the only recourse is to hand water the individual baskets. You may need a small stepladder to do this.

Watering by this method doesn't take much time, and you can pour the water into the basket slowly, thus not washing the soil out or damaging the plants. Where baskets are hung at less than head height, you can water with a hose. Sometimes pulley systems are used to raise and lower baskets.

Regardless of the method used, be sure you wet the soil thoroughly each time. Frequent, light watering just doesn't get the job done.

Feeding and Care of Plants

Delay feeding until the plants begin to put on new growth. This will vary from two to four weeks, depending on the type of plants. For the first two feedings, space them a week apart. Subsequent fertilizations are given with every third watering. Water-soluble or liquid fertilizers are the easiest to use and give good results. Follow the directions on package or bottle for amount of fertilizer to use. During winter when temperatures are lower and watering is less frequent, feeding once or twice monthly is adequate. Most ferns and other plants that have a rest period will not need feeding in winter.

Groom plants to keep them attractive. Nip off any dead flowers, seed pods or leaves. With vining plants, pinch or prune back the shoots to encourage branching and development of more new shoots. This makes plants fuller, and they have a more pleasing appearance.

Winter Protection and Hardy Varieties

Exotic ferns, bromeliads, succulents and other cold-tender perennials grown in hanging baskets must be protected when temperatures drop below 40 degrees. A heated greenhouse, garage, enclosed porch or other indoor areas must be available to protect plants during cold spells. The hardiest plants for hanging baskets include native ferns, English ivy, common mint, cascade chrysanthemum and lantana. Plant these if you can't provide winter protection. Most hanging basket plants should be kept outside when the temperature is 45 degrees or above, but do not expose them to cool, strong winds during winter.

Insect and Disease Control

Caterpillars, mealy bugs and scale insects are the most common insects attacking plants grown in hanging baskets. To control caterpillars, use a B+ formulation, Sevin dust or spray on Orthene 75S weekly until they are controlled. It may be necessary to remove caterpillars by hand; an infestation of these pests can become quite serious before they are noticed. Scale and mealy bugs are controlled with Orthene 75S. Use 2 teaspoons to 1 gallon of water. Drench soil thoroughly.

Sucking insects such as aphids and red spiders feed on some plants, but they are easily controlled with Malathion or Orthene 75S spray; however, malathion must be sprayed three times at seven-day intervals to control these insects. Do not use malathion on ferns. One application of Orthene 75S should be effective. For a heavy mite population, use Kelthane WP at 1 teaspoon per gallon for two to three sprays at weekly intervals.

Leaf spot and other fungus diseases are not a serious problem on hanging baskets. Benomyl, Captan, Chlorothalonil or Mancozeb sprays will generally control fungus diseases attacking the plants.

Always read the label on the insecticide or fungicide you plan to use. Follow the directions on the label for amount to apply and how often to use the material. Observe all precautions given on the label for the safety of yourself and your plants.



Suggested Basket Plants

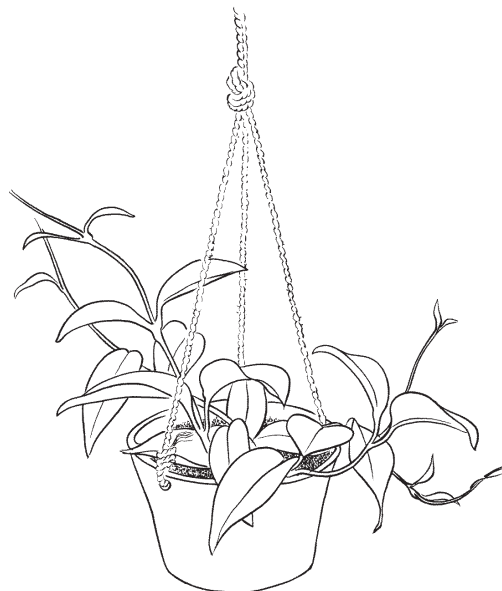
Below are some of the plants that have been successfully grown in hanging baskets.

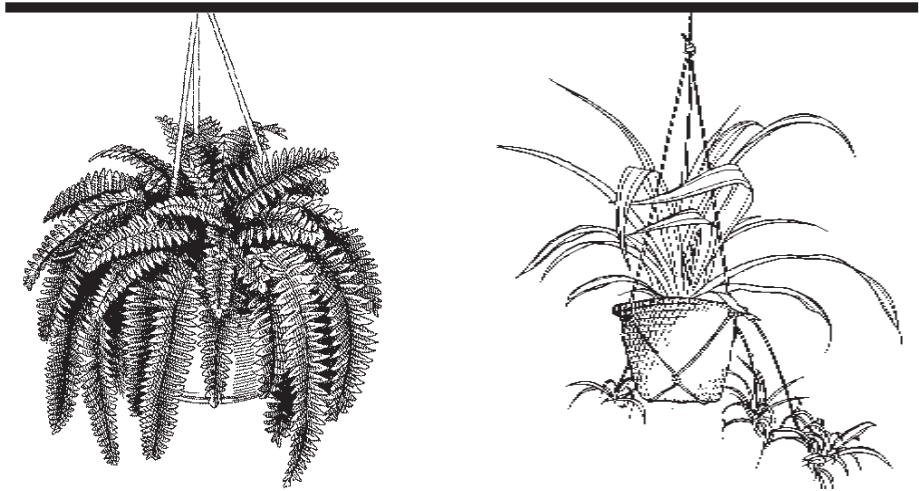
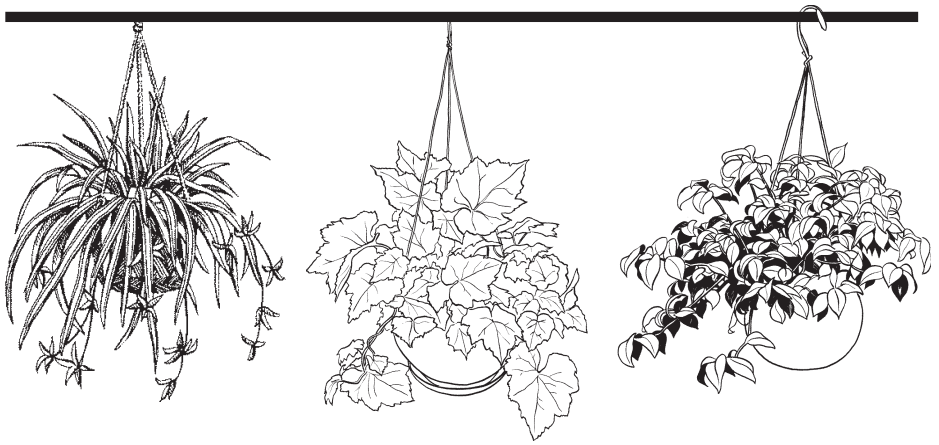
Flowering: *Abutilon megapotamicum*, *Allamanda*, *Achimenes*, *Begonias* (of drooping growth), *Browallia*, *Cascade Chrysanthemum*, *Cascade Petunia*, *Clianthus* (*C. dampieri* and *C. puniceus*), *Campanula* (*C. isophylla* and *C. primulinum*), *Flame Violets* (*Episcias*), *Fuchsias*, *Impatiens sultanii*, *Lantana* (dwarf, trailing) and *Lipstick plant* (*Trichosporum lobbianum*).

Cacti and succulents: *Burro tail* (*Sedum morganianum*), *Carrion flower* (*Stapelia nobilis*), *Ice plant* (*Mesembryanthemum crystallinum*), *Thanksgiving, Christmas and Easter Cactus* and *Wax plant* (*Hoya carnosa*).

Foliage: *Asparagus fern* (*Asparagus plumosa* and *A. sprengeri*), *Coleus*, *English and other types of ivy*, *Ferns* (native and exotic species), *Kangaroo vine* (*Plectranthus australis*), *vining Philodendron*, *Pothos*, *Smilax*, *Spider plant* (*Chlorophytum elatum*), *Rhipsalis* spp., *Tradescantia* species and *Zebrina pendula* (both *Wandering Jew*), *Vinca major* and *common mint*.

This list does not include all the possibilities of plants for growing in hanging baskets. When you plant a hanging basket, don't stop when you find common philodendron, grape-ivies or begonias. Look for other possibilities from lists of vines and trailing plants in catalogs or at local nurseries and garden centers.





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