

Creating Moss Hanging Baskets

Moss baskets are always beautiful, but a personalized one that you've made yourself is even better. This list of tips and tricks will help you create your own personal masterpiece.

PLANTING A MOSS-LINED WIRE BASKET

1. Choose a wire basket frame, they range in sizes from 25-35cm (8-14") across, as well as half baskets for hanging against walls. Remember the larger the basket, the more soil and the less often you'll need to water.
2. Lay moss into the bottom 1/3 to 1/2 of the basket. Then cut a circle of plastic & lay it over the moss to act as a water reservoir. Even better, attach a plastic tray to the bottom of the wire basket (on the outside) before you begin.
3. Use a quality soil mix like GARDENWORKS Hanging Basket Mix to fill your basket. This contains water retaining polymers which swell up with water and hold moisture in the basket longer so it doesn't dry out quickly in the hot summer.
4. Add a handful of slow-release fertilizer, such as Smartcote 14-14-14 to your potting soil and fill in your soil to the bottom of the wire basket, to about 10cm (4") deep.
5. In order to prepare your plants properly, water them thoroughly. The planting process can be hard on the roots of the plants, and it is better if they are moist throughout.
6. Gently pull wires apart. Pull back the moss and poke the roots of the bedding plant through the hole. Place the moss around the roots and bend the wires back the way they were.
7. As you work your way up the basket, add more moss lining and soil. At the top there is room to place plants with larger root balls, such as tuberous begonias, geraniums and other large annuals for instant colour.
8. After planting, water the basket well with a solution of transplant fertilizer 5-15-5 (the high middle number is to help with transplant shock). Keep the basket under cover until the beginning of May, so the plants will have time to recover and develop new roots.

STANDARD RECIPE FOR A MIXED PLASTIC OR WOODEN HANGING BASKET

- Use an upright geranium in the centre of the basket
- Plant two ivy geraniums in opposite corners.
- Plant two trailing fuchsias in the two remaining corners
- In the four spaces left along the sides use trailing lobelia or other "basket stuffers" described in the accompanying list

GENERAL TIPS FOR HANGING BASKETS

The key to success with any hanging basket or other container is care after planting. Do not allow your container to dry out. During hot weather, it may be necessary to water in the morning and in the evening. Because of this frequent watering, nutrients will be quickly leached out of the soil. Therefore, fertilize often with GARDENWORKS 15-30-15, diluted half strength every second week is ideal.

SELECTING YOUR BASKET STUFFERS

When choosing your plants, consider light requirements and where your hanging basket will be displayed. The design principles of thrillers, fillers, and spiller still applies, as well as using complimentary textures and colours.

Popular hanging basket classics include bacopa, daisies, calibrachoa, geranium, heliotrope, fuchsia, lobelia, petunia, sweet alyssum, sweet potato vine, and verbena.

GARDENWORKS