



## **THE ROSEDALE PLANTSMAN'S GUIDE TO PLANTING MOSS-LINED, WIRE BASKETS AND PLANTERS**

Moss-lined, wire baskets and planters make particularly attractive and functional containers for annual flowers, herbs and perennials. This guide describes the easy steps to follow in preparing and planting these containers.

### **1. LINING THE BASKET**

Wire baskets and planters are lined with a layer of sheet moss, which keeps the soil in the containers. Sheet moss is available in our Nursery Center. Prepare the moss for use by separating the layers apart and then gently moistening the quantity of moss needed with cool water. Next, line the inside of the container with the moss layers by shaping and pressing them against the wires. Overlap separate sheets of moss to avoid gaps in the basket lining.

### **2. POTTING SOIL**

Fill the basket about 1/2 full with pre-moistened potting soil. (The soil mix should not be too heavy or it would hold too much water and cause damping off or other fungus diseases. The soil mix also should not be very light, since light mixes dry out quickly, and water will evaporate from all sides of a moss-lined basket). Using your hands, make a depression in center of the container for planting, and press the soil up against the edges of the entire container, so as to make a "nest" for planting.

### **3. PLANTING**

To create a full, lush container, it is best to set plants to grow out of the upper 1/3 of the container's sides, as well as from the top. Plant the upper third of the sides first, by making small cuts in the moss and soil layers with a knife. Push the roots of the plants through the outside of the container, into the soil layer and unfilled "nest". Space plants for the side pockets about 3-6" apart (depending upon growth rate) in staggered rows. Cover their roots with additional soil. Set plants in the top of the container using a fairly close spacing to achieve a full effect. (Remember: baskets with annual flowers usually are kept for only one season, so the plants can and should be spaced closely to achieve a lush "spilly" effect). The top plants should be set so that the soil level is slightly crowned in the center (to aid drainage) and the edges are about 3-6" below the rim of the basket (to facilitate watering)

## 4. SELECTING PLANTS

### A. Sun or Shade

Decide first whether the basket will be kept outdoors or indoors, and in full shade, part shade, or sun. Many plants are suitable for growing in baskets, particularly those with trailing or compact and bushy habits. Suitable, shade-tolerant plants include: most Begonia varieties, Impatiens, Pansies, Browallia, Fushias, Ivies, Ferns and numerous others. Plants that thrive in full sun include: all Geranium varieties (esp. trailing Ivy and mini-cascade types), Petunias, Nasturtiums, Dahlberg Daisies, Brachycome, Vinca most compact herbs, dwarf or creeping "rock garden" perennials, compact Cherry Tomatoes, and many others.

### B. Scale of Plants and Containers

For best results, select plants that have a texture, flower size and growth rate appropriate to the size of the container. Plants with fast growth rates and large leaves or flowers generally look best in medium or large size containers, while fine-textured plants are appropriate for smaller containers. Smaller-textured or trailing plants are also effective when used as companions or underplanting for taller or larger plants.

### C. Colors/Mixed Plantings

Bright colors look best in sun, while subtle or light colors can be very effective in shade. If you wish to plant more than one variety in a container, use contrasting leaf and flower sizes and textures. Attractive mixed plantings generally use one of three approaches to color: different complementary flower colors (e.g., soft blue, white, clear pink); subtle shading with different hues of the same color range (e.g., soft pink, clear pink, rose); or varieties (sometimes having bi-colored flowers) that share the same petal color, but have contrasting flower shapes and or sizes. Another, equally effective approach, is to use bold contrasts of foliage color and texture alone or with flowers to create interest.

## 5. WATERING/CARE

Moss-lined planters need frequent, careful watering, since soil moisture is lost through evaporation from the sides, as well as through the container top and plant foliage. Since these containers do not have a solid liner, they will leak for 10-30 minutes after watering. To avoid unwanted spills, you can set outdoor baskets on the ground or terrace until the leaking has stopped. Indoor baskets should be placed over a plant tray or sink to avoid spills.

We hope you enjoy your new containers. Please feel free to ask us for help with any questions - we're happy to be of assistance.