

### **Successful Summer Containers .**

Growing in containers is accessible to everyone.

It is affordable, accessible, versatile and it can be very imaginative!

The first bedding plants that are safe to plant out in the Spring are Pansies & Violas.

They come in a stunning range of colours from the palest pastels to the fiery reds and oranges.

Choose your containers carefully and match size, colour and choice to house style, design, strength and budget.

Containers come in a range of materials including

wood, plastic, stoneware, terracotta, ceramic, woven natural materials.

Ensure the containers have adequate drainage outlets.

Lack of drainage will result in water logging which can lead to fatalities & disease.

The strength of the container should be appropriate to the aspect.

If you have an exposed situation containers should be of a strong durable material and if they are hanging baskets or window boxes should be well & securely attached to the building.

In the case of hanging baskets brackets should be of sufficient strength to support the weight of the container/basket.

If you are re-planting old containers from a previous season all old compost and plant debris should be disposed of and replaced with new Shamrock/Growwise compost.

You can incorporate water holding gel and a slow release fertiliser at the planting stage.

Summer containers may be planted indoors and allowed to establish prior to their positioning outdoors.

Harden off/acclimatise well prior to putting outdoors. This is usually after 19<sup>th</sup> May.

Listen/watch/log onto weather forecasts.

Protect with fleece, low tunnels, cold frame until frosts have disappeared.

### **Choice of Plants**

**A stunning variety of plants are available .**

You can choose between plants that give stunning, colourful flowering displays from May until the first frosts.

You can grow from plants or seed.

In the case of seed you can sow plants such as Sweet Pea or Nasturtiums directly into the containers.

Sunny positions are ideal for Geraniums, Pelargoniums, Bacopa, Osteospermum, Nemesis, Sanvitalia, Marigolds, Verbena., Venidio Arctosis.

Shade –recommended: Fuchsias, Begonias, Busy Lizzies, Ivies., Hostas –great range of foliage shapes, colours and textures. Plant Hostas with liberal treatments of Gee-up at the base of the container and top-up with a good moisture retentive compost. Protect from slugs.

### **Vegetables in Containers**

Runner beans look great in a deep containers, use a wigwam or obelisk for support.

Sow indoors at mid-April –mid May, grow on until frosts are over, then harden off and plant outside. Runner beans are prolific and have very decorative flowers.

You can surround with red cabbage and edge with trailing Nasturtiums.

The Coronet Apple trees look good in containers. They were developed here in Waterford, Ireland. They are very compact, fruit early, very decorative with profuse Spring blossom.

Use a John Innes No.3 compost when potting. Feed annually in late January with sulphate of potash.

Blueberries in a selection of containers will do well in containers, use an ericaceous compost when potting.

Feed with Vitax ericaceous fertiliser.

Herbs perform well in containers, don't be too frugal with pot size as they will run out of nutrients at an early stage and become stunted.

Planting out Early

Senetti in shades of blue, magenta and cerise can be planted out after hardening – off from early to mid-April onwards. They will flower until late July/Early August.

Pansies and Violas may be planted out from late March onwards.

Protect from slugs and aphids.

Spray late afternoon with Garlic Barrier.

### **Keeping up the Display!**

Keep well watered in dry weather.

Move displays to sheltered area in windy/gale force conditions.

Feed weekly with Tomato food or the high performing "ONE"

Remove faded blooms.

### **The Right Ingredients**

30 years of unrivalled, award winning experience.

Wide array of plants, grown freshly, locally here on our own premises – good for the environment, good for the local economy.!

Wide array of composts, containers, fertilisers, brackets, pest and disease control.

John Hosford of Hosfords is a frequent writer and broadcaster on gardening.

Open 7 days including Sundays & Bank Holidays.

Events and further gardening advice on [www.hosfordsgardencentre.ie](http://www.hosfordsgardencentre.ie)

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### **Topical notes**

Sow indoors mid-April to mid-May Runner beans, Sweet

Corn, Pumpkins, Marrows, Squashes, Courgettes, Kale, Winter Cabbage, Brussel Sprouts.

Use peat pots to minimise transplanting shock and reduce waste pot and all may be planted!

Keep up with regular sowings of lettuce, leaf salads, radish, Swedes, turnips, kohlrabi and carrots.

### **Roses**

Spray frequently with Roseclear or Multirose.

Many sprays are now available in convenient pre-mixed ready to use spray guns – time saving and convenient!

**New this Year!** A whole new line-up of composts covering every gardening application from Bord na Mona. Check out the new Tomato and Salad Planters – more capacity, highly improved and recommended!

You can grow 12 strawberry plants in the new Planter.

You can grow a wide variety of herbs, and salads on the Salad and herb planter.

Just cut out a neat incision with a knife or sharp scissors where the plant is to go and water in to settle!

### Fruit

Keep recently planted fruit trees and bushes well watered in dry spells.

Watch out for gooseberry sawfly and spray with a caterpillar killer immediately on detection.

Control weeds and grass with Round-up.

John Hosford

[www.hosfordsgardencentre.ie](http://www.hosfordsgardencentre.ie)

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