

# Key Tips for Winter Containers

1. Choose a container that is at least 5 inches larger than the original size of the plants roots at the time of planting (in other words give a 5" buffer of soil all the way around your plants or trees or shrubs in a pot planting). This will be the needed insulation for your plants to survive and thrive.
2. Use only a soil-less plant mix like Berger Brand potting mix. Add some slow release plant food like Osmocote at the time of planting and again as it is used (in about 4 months).
3. Choose plants that will survive several frosts. We are Zone 7 so plants like Cyclamen, Pansies, Santolina (evergreen perennial), Dusty Miller, Cabbage and Kale, Stock, Snapdragons (can get frozen back sometimes if cold weeks persist), English Primrose, Swiss Chard (bright Light variety is colorful and fun), Rosemary and Parsely look good and taste good mixed into your containers, Evergreen trees and shrubs are excellent sources of height and color. Don't forget English Ivy or California Ivy for something trailing.
4. When choosing your arrangement pick something for Thrill, Spill, and Fill. Thrill is your height or something unexpected. Spill is your trailing plants. Fill is your body of plants that "fill" up the space in the middle.
5. Non-plant items like interesting sticks, Pinecones, moss, gazing globes, statues, etc. really make your containers a point of interest to stop and look at. Make it something you will frequently stop and admire (put something you love in it). Light it up, who says you only want to see it in the daytime, consider putting in a permanent landscape light pointing towards it (near a doorway especially good).
6. Keep your plantings moist. This is the most important point! Plants really need good moisture to sustain themselves particularly through the drying winter winds. Make sure you are watering when the soil surface becomes dry for plants and when the top two inches is dry for trees or shrubs. Usually about every 3-4 days for plants and 5-7 days for trees and shrubs.
7. Don't forget to use a regular fertilizer in addition to your slow-release plant food. Use Flowertone by Espoma (an organic plant food), Pansy Food by fertilome, or Hollytone by Espoma (organic shrub food) for shrubs and trees. Because your plants are in containers they are readily using up all the nutrients to survive in contained quarters.



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