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# COLORFUL CONTAINERS

**Date:** April 26, 2020 | **Story:** Tiffany Adams | **Photography:** Rett Peek

*Chris H. Olsen shares tips to fill your planters with seasonal color you can enjoy until fall*



**“Containers are like living floral arrangements,” says landscape designer Chris H. Olsen.** “They can bring color, texture, and scent to any space.” However, you don’t want to keep planting and replanting different combinations throughout the season; it’s much more attractive to find a format that works and will thrive with a little upkeep.

Chris notes that in the South the foliage will hold its color until the first frost, meaning you can get a lot of mileage—and eye candy—out of one planting if you play your cards right. One of the biggest challenges comes in knowing when to water, especially in the heat of the summer. Chris advises checking pots daily and watering when soil feels dry. However, if you can only water every other day, then at least be consistent. “Put yourself on a schedule and stick to it,” he says.

Chris also notes the importance of fertilizing. “Miracle-Gro is my secret. I use it every four to five weeks; there’s a 500 percent difference in the lushness of these plantings,” he says, adding that a lot of plants burn out in mid-summer because they have leached all the nutrients from their soil. Read on for four more tips to container garden success.

## **MASTER THE MIX**

Don’t be afraid to mix different textures, shapes, and colors when it comes to your plantings. “We mix evergreens with tropicals; perennials with annuals,” Chris says. Just be sure they have similar light and water requirements so they will thrive together. Below, ‘Big Series’ begonias, ‘SunPatiens,’ variegated boxwood, and angelonia blend harmoniously for a cottage vibe.





*Concrete boxes give the illusion of flower beds bordering the edge of the home.*





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## GO BIG

“The fuller a pot is planted, the better. It not only looks beautiful but also shades the container from the sun, meaning it can retain water,” Chris says. Here, a ‘Phoenix Roebelinii’ palm is nestled among trailing plants that



spill over the sides. “I love this palm because it looks like a big fern,” he says. The cascading plants are all pre-potted baskets from Chris’s Jhemajang line, which he removed from their hanging baskets and repurposed here. These include ‘Supertunias’, sweet potato vine, lantana, and coleus.



## BE TOLERANT

Chris says to look for heat-tolerant varieties that will fare well in an Arkansas summer. He notes weeping cypress does well in this climate, and it adds height and texture to large-scale containers. The coordinating blue pots are filled with coleus, asparagus fern, and blue scaevola (also seen below)—another very heat-tolerant option.





## **PRUNE FREQUENTLY**

“When something doesn’t look good anymore, get rid of it,” Chris says. Having abundantly full containers and a large variety of plantings allows you to do this without creating a bald spot in your foliage. This grouping includes



an anchoring Chinese fan palm, hibiscus, orange Gerbera daisies, yellow lantana, coleus, and 'Everillo' carex grass—all of which could be removed if they lost their luster during the season.

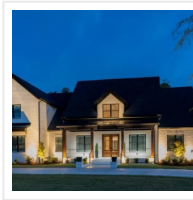


*Chris encourages groupings of containers to create a big visual impact.*





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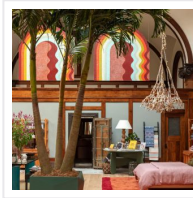


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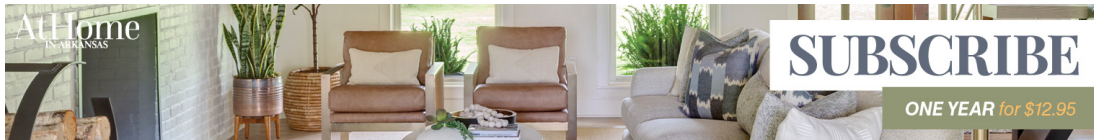
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