



Container Gardens for Florida (Florida Gardening)

Pamela Crawford

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When author Pamela Crawford first started writing her newest book, she expected it to be short, about 100 pages or so. After all, she pondered, how many different ways can you arrange plants in a pot? But, as she began her research, the book grew into a major 368-page reference book with a companion DVD movie! Obviously, there was a lot more to container gardening than she had originally thought! This project was begun to accomplish three goals. Ms. Crawford's first goal was to push the limits of container design - take it farther than she had ever seen it done in Florida. To accomplish this formidable task, she hit the road, traveling to areas where she knew container design was quite advanced. She ended up researching this project in Manhattan, the Hamptons, Long Island, Chicago, San Francisco, Los Angeles, and Vancouver. Then, she searched Florida and spent time with experts who were doing great container work, like the staff at Universal Studios in Orlando and Sanchez and Maddux, landscape architects in Palm Beach. The designs shown in this book evolved from these experiences and illustrate a variety of styles of container gardening - from sleek, sophisticated interior containers (152-159) to country garden containers (pages 36-37). She spent time searching out the best suppliers for both plants and containers and brought many of their products to Florida to test them in the tough southern climate. Ms. Crawford and her assistants, Barbara Hadsell and Miguel Olivares, had fun testing over 10,000 plants and hundreds of containers in her gardens in Lake Worth. "We let our imaginations run wild with all these design ideas, plants, and spectacular pots. We are fortunate to have enough space to allow each container arrangement to grow to its maturity. This made it possible for us to report on its performance to you," said Ms. Crawford. Her second goal was to develop a design system that is easy to understand for beginners. She shared that her first tries with gardening in containers produces a lot of problems as she learned how to design and plant containers from books. She bought book after book, and even after following their instructions over and over again, most of the projects she attempted simply failed. It was at that point Ms. Crawford bought a video that taught her more in thirty minutes than she had learned in the previous ten years. At that moment, she knew that her book on container gardening had to have an accompanying DVD movie to make the learning process easy. She encourages her readers to "watch the DVD movie (sold separately) for thirty minutes and skim chapters 1, 2, and 15 in this book (include chapter 4 if you are ready to try a hanging basket). You will be ready to design and plant container gardens like the pros in no time at all!" The third goal of this book was to create a major reference work that people would keep for many years and refer to whenever they have a question about container gardening. So, Ms. Crawford made sure the book covered many different aspects of container gardening - like window boxes, wall pots, hanging baskets, diverse containers (for sun, salt, wind, shade, low water), planting and maintaining orchids, and how to use containers in the landscape. The book also covers many technical aspects of container gardening, like watering systems, soil, and fertilizer. The DVD movie is also a reference work. It covers container design basics plus three planting demos - a bowl, a hanging basket, and the planting and care of an orchid. Since the planting demos contain a lot of information, gardeners will benefit from re-watching them from time to time. The DVD movie is packaged in a box that fits right next to the book on a bookshelf. Researching this book opened up a whole new world to the author about the fun and satisfaction of container gardening. She comments that "I am so happy to share this great hobby with all of my Florida friends."

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