

SPRING START-UP AND TRENDS FOR YOUR CONTAINER GARDENING



Container Gardening is a mainstay. We've always seen the practice being carried out; from in our gardens, to community gardens, to commercial and corporate centres, to public city spaces. It allows for opportunities that can bring plant material into any space. Trends in container gardening have shifted over time with the container choices, plant choices, arrangement directives, etc. Yet it can serve as a vehicle for expression for any season.

There is a merger with condominiums living. A condominium lifestyle aligns with your needs and priorities, towards living, getting away from the work of larger maintenance commitments and time contributors in your life. These needs are met with organized efforts to keep things like roofing and windows, your eaves troughs, regular mechanical maintenance, dreaded snow removal, and yard care and lawn cutting maintenance.

The introducing of plants and flowers in outdoor spaces for condominium owners brings interest. Outdoor space ownership is generally limited to primarily built or installed elements. The space you live in is valuable. The space you can have an affect on, in a condominium, is yours to build and enjoy. To design and see through. Outdoor space elements can be your patio, balcony, deck, driveway, walkway, and sometimes yard space elements and areas around the building. Like maintaining or having the freedoms of creating your own design décor, the opportunities for your outdoor spaces, for those who enjoy the functional and decorative aspects of gardening, can be explored in a variety of ways.

WORK / PLAN

Let's begin with the annual traditional unveiling of what the winter has left behind. Like the path of a glacier and its geological level of traces, in a relatively short time the everyday forces of each winter definitely leave a mark. For us as a company, come spring, the snow and ice let way to what the snow and ice have accumulated and left behind. Essentially a big job cleaning up the winter effects lays before the landscape work. For all that needs to happen; the dirt and debris, the leaves from that didn't recognize snow was falling until too late, pruning and clearing branching and twigs that couldn't quite hold the snow weight, the spring-time perennial cutting, and items like dethatching the lawn to open it for best growth. It's a lot of work to put things back in order and get things ready to grow again.

It is also a time to start planning. Each year can bring the opportunity to re-plan, reorganize, and recreate the outdoor spaces we use

and live in. Or just tweaking what you already love. What are your intentions for the season going to bring?

The opportunities that present themselves in outdoor condominium spaces demand a level of versatility, presentation, and effectiveness. A great way to achieve these attributes can be through container gardening. From the beginner to the avid gardener, container gardening is an avenue anyone can get their hands into. Think back to grade two, when you may have had your first formal lesson into plants and gardening; you took home a bean seed planted in soil in a cup. This became your baby. You knew, because you had been taught, the importance of the sun, the soil, the nutrients, and from watering that these were the contributors to plant life, and your baby bean plant. Each moment in its development: its first break through the soil, its first leaf, the first root you saw along the side of the cup all became important moments. Now you own a condo, you have a carrier and a lifestyle you've aspired to, a deck where you've started with a bistro set on it from the local Swedish flat packaged store, and now you need to create that space. Now you can graduate from the bean lesson and explore container gardening.

CONTAINERS

Regardless of trends, design influences, your neighbours talking about the one thing they heard about that you should try; the process really begins with the combination of choosing your container and choosing your plant material. Invest in your container purchase. It can and most-likely will be left out all year long. The container becomes a source of colour, a source of texture to its context, a feature to capture, an accent to the architecture, and the architecture itself. The versatility is abounded.

Simply put a gardening container can be anything that holds a growing medium. The variety of materials their made of and choices within each material is huge. The range looks like: Pressed organics (paper, coir), Terracotta/Clay, Fibreglass, Plastic, Ceramic, Concrete, Wood, and Metals.

Natural material products have their limits for design features and may be quite fragile yet can offer good soil and root health through insulation qualities and breathability. Plastic and Fibreglass containers can hit a cost cutting edge very quickly and a variety of shapes, colours, and textures; strength and durability are not the best attributes here. Ceramic containers offer a wide variety of design options with great colour variations as well. Concrete containers can be quite dramatically heavy to hold the larger soil and planting arrangements and, with fibre reinforced, can be much lighter while maintaining



the strength. Wood and Metal containers offer great variety both with the various wood/metal species/alloys and the creativity in the manufacturing design process. Think about size, size ratios, the volume of the container, hierarchy, colour and combinations, materials and combinations, shapes and forms, and finally container placement; odds are good you're not going to move it when it's full.

PLANTS

Like the process for selecting the containers, plant selection is a process that starts with a few simple considerations to guide your decision making. In coordination with container choice and placement identifying the intent of your container gardening; space creation or division, decorative features, massing in space, or maybe your whole vegetable garden; can lead to plant material choices that bolster your intentions.

First is choosing the plant type. Annuals and flowers are some obvious choices for colour, fragrance, and instant gratification; look for a balance or a blend of bloom times for varied or continued interest. Perennials can offer a variety of grass, flowering and leafy plants that will be there if your intent is to keep the plant for several seasons. Many shrubs are available in compact or dwarf varieties that may suit your needs. Shrub choice can also lead to other interests in leaf and bark variations. If you go so far, in terms of size, small trees can bring a real staple to your container gardening. Then there are the eatable plants, where your intent is to garden for food, and this can be done at any intended production level.

Secondly is your plant layout. There are a few simple thoughts and arrangements that can work in the plan. Start with placement and growing conditions like sun and shade locations, and soil volume. Growing conditions will generate the range of plants choices you can make your selections from. Colour is a good place to start; you can look at mono, colour wheel combinations like complimentary or analogous. The common theory of planting "Thrillers, fillers and spillers" guides many feature plant choices; a thriller feature plant centred, fill plant choice(s) to compliment or build up the thriller, and spill plants that grow beyond the containers edge.

Many other plant characteristics need to come into consideration and use. Height, form, spread, foliage, fragrance, colour, texture all plays important roles in choosing the plant material for your container. If you want a feature; look to the container itself, choose a plant(s) with a lot of character in foliage, colour, flower, or form, build that feature within contradictory or complimentary layout. A container can play a feature role with its colour, texture and materials planted with a mono- culture/colour arrangement. Thinking about people and movement can lend to fragrance choices or texture choices that engage the senses, and, being in a container, physically closer.

Continuously reference your initial intent/plan/design, there will be choices and discoveries along the way that challenge or shift your initial idea.

TRENDS

Sleek, Modern Minimalist

Simple or interesting geometric shapes, sleek lines, and matte colours. For a container choice, this would tend to be a lightweight product that atones to simple placement and maintenance. Plant choice can lead complimentary additions of dramatic flowering plants or mono texturing foliage. Take these pots inside too.

Rustic and Rusty Repurposed

"Up-purpose" it the term for an antique aesthetic. It doesn't really limit the repurposed items itself, from the farm, from the yard, from

the household; yet the overall affect of colors and finishes that look aged and antiques. Look to your plant choice of texture complements or explore themed planting to highlight these features.

Eatable

Improve the functionality of your space. Plant vegetables for your table. Plant the berries for your treats. Plant the herbs to use every day. Theme your garden as oriental, Mediterranean, or pizza. Plant what you like to eat. Look for complimentary plantings for their foliage, flowers, or fruits.

Native / Low Maintenance

Blend in local/native plants, shrubs, annuals, and perennials into the garden. This may lead to bird and butterfly gardening ideas. It may be a recombination of beautiful native plant choices that thrill, fill and spill from a container garden that can deliver all of the same expected intentions with native plants.

Feature Pieces Incorporated / Unexpected Elements

Bring further decorative aspects to the container planting arrangements with unexpected elements. Branches, leaves, dried seed heads, or fruits. Maybe seasonal character is brought in through these methods. But don't limit making the garden yours. Up-purpose materials in the container. Make or find your own decorative, non-plant, element to add character to the setting.

Mixed/Blended Concepts

Blended concepts really add to the note of diversity growth in the landscape. Mix your planting. Grow your herbs in a flower bed or in with the native grasses. Make a berry shrub the thriller piece in a row of containers that fill with lettuces and spill with petunias and Dichondra. A small home-made birdhouse nestled in wildflowers and grasses in a large antique kettle pot painted blue. A dwarf silver willow shrub surrounded by orange flowering annuals. This really lets creativity speak.

Let your garden be your garden. If your happy with the results that you work hard for to put together, then be happy with it, whatever it is. There is not a layer of specific plant choices here. Your choices are yours to assemble and create. Do ensure your giving your garden solid ground to grow in. You want your 'bean plant' to grow and be healthy. There is space to grow in and make a condominium you own inside and out. Container Gardening has always been available for any season for expression. 🍀

ALLAN ROSNES



KARMA  **PROPERTY MANAGEMENT LTD.**

With over 38 years combined experience, you can be assured that Karma Properties will manage your investment with the highest standards in the industry. Our attentive service, thorough knowledge of building construction, maintenance and repair, sets us apart from our competitors.

We work with real estate investors, developers, landlords and condominium board of directors, all of whom require a well-crafted customized management plan.

LET US HELP YOU WITH YOURS!

204 415 5712 KARMAPROPERTIES.CA **PROUDLY MANITOBBAN!**