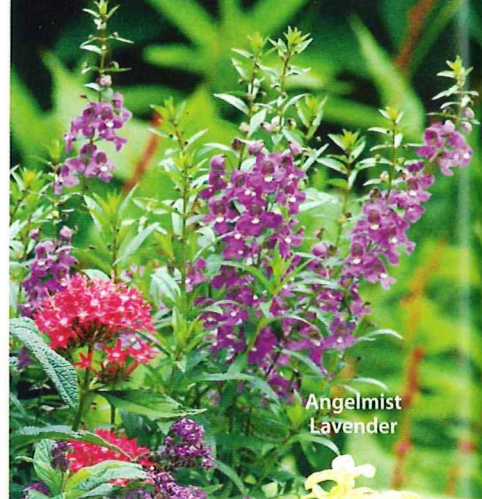


Flowers

EYE-CATCHING BLOOMS Whether they're big, bold spikes of color or soft, fluffy filler around other plants, flowers are definite container stars. Just look at the color on these pages — who wouldn't want some of that? When it comes to containers, there's a flowering plant that will fit any spot in your recipe. Maybe they add vertical interest, or maybe they're on vines that spill gracefully down the sides of containers. Many can do double duty, depending on their companions. Either way, they add a bright punch that you'll enjoy.

Flowers fall into two categories — those that look lovely all summer, maybe even into fall, and those that only show off for a few weeks, but they're so stunning, you wouldn't want to miss them. We'll show you some of both, in a range of colors that'll fit any container project!



Angelmist Lavender

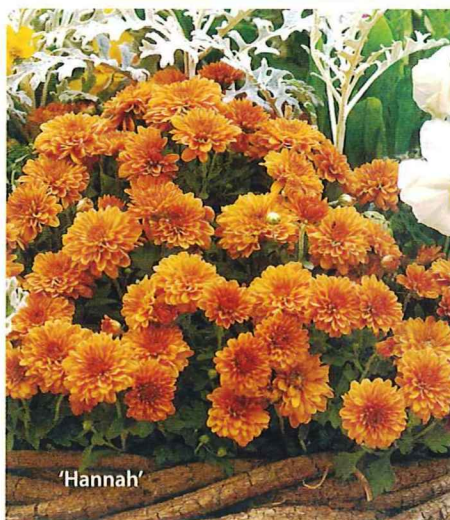
Angelonia *Angelonia angustifolia*

STAR QUALITIES In a small container, the upright spikes of summer-blooming angelonia could be a focal point. But in a larger combo, it's a good supporting player, too, because it grows 12 to 18 in. tall. Look for shades of pink, white and blue, like Angelmist® Lavender.

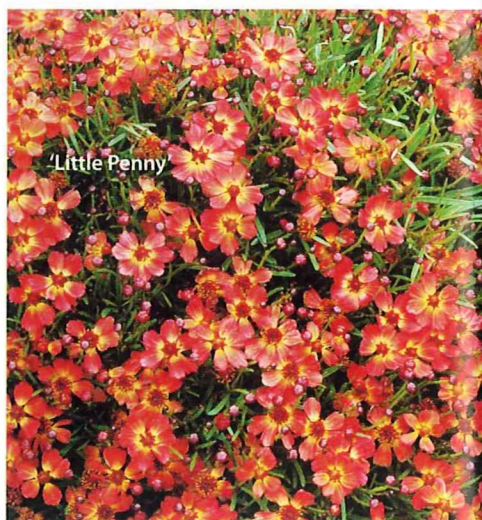
HOW TO GROW IT Grow this annual in full sun. It often needs more fertilizer than other annuals, so every other week feed it with a water soluble 15-30-15 or it may stop blooming. Remove spent flower stems to help promote more blooms, too.



'Fresh Look Yellow'



'Hannah'



'Little Penny'

Celosia *Celosia* spp.

STAR QUALITIES This long-lasting annual blooms in mid- to late summer in yellow, like 'Fresh Look Yellow', as well as orange and red. Pick up small plants in spring and crowd them close in a container for the best look. You'll find heights from 6 in. to 2 ft.

HOW TO GROW IT Full sun is best, but the colors last better with some afternoon shade. Keep the soil on the dry side, as celosia doesn't like to be wet. Once the flowers fade, snip them off. Side branches will develop and send up new shorter and smaller flowers.

Chrysanthemum *Chrysanthemum* hybrids

STAR QUALITIES For a fall container, it's easiest to pick up blooming mums like 'Hannah' and pop them in. These perennials reach 1 to 3 ft. tall, so you can get that long-lasting color for the front or the back of a seasonal container.

HOW TO GROW IT For the longest bloom time, choose plants with flower buds that are just starting to show color. At this stage you can use them in either sun or shade containers, but to make the flowers last the very longest, keep the soil moist.

Coreopsis *Coreopsis* spp. and hybrids

STAR QUALITIES You may be familiar with yellow coreopsis, but you'll also find shades of red, pink and orange. Many newer cultivars of this perennial, such as 'Little Penny', aren't cold-hardy, so they're perfect container plants. Coreopsis can grow from 6 in. to 8 ft. tall.

HOW TO GROW IT Choose a spot in full sun. Dark flower colors may fade a little, but there'll be more blooms. Keep the soil moist, but not wet. And deadhead individual blooms or shear off all the stems if the plant starts to look tired — they'll keep coming back!

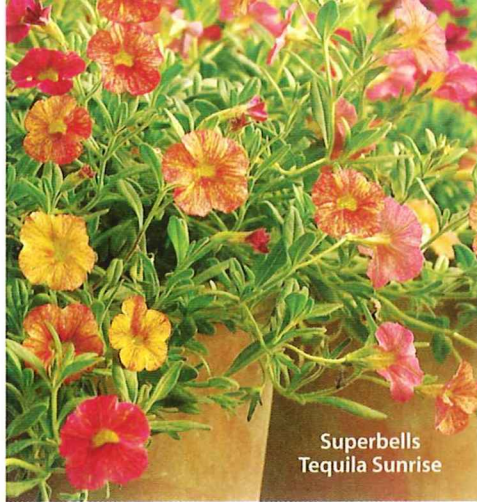


'Sprite'

Astilbe *Astilbe* spp. and hybrids

STAR QUALITIES Fluffy flowers and fernlike foliage make this 1- to 4-ft.-tall plant popular in late spring and summer. Short cultivars like 'Sprite' are great at the edge of a large container. Taller varieties show off better in the middle or back.

HOW TO GROW IT Since this is a perennial that blooms once, you'll want to have it in place before that. For the most impact, choose the largest plant that will fit in your combo. And keep it moist, as astilbes will go dormant if the soil gets too dry.

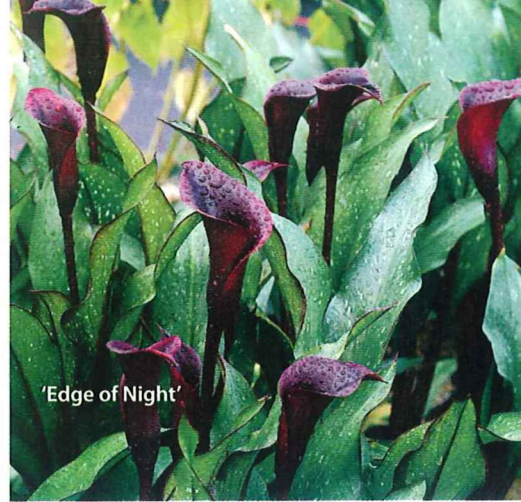


Superbells
Tequila Sunrise

Calibrachoa *Calibrachoa* hybrids

STAR QUALITIES Calibrachoa, like Superbells® Tequila Sunrise, looks like a small petunia. And once it starts blooming in early summer, it doesn't stop. Available in almost every shade of the rainbow, this annual is great in hanging baskets or draping over the edge of a container.

HOW TO GROW IT Pick up starts in spring and give them a spot in full sun. And don't be afraid to snip a few stems back a couple of inches to make the plant bushier. But don't overdo it: Calibrachoa doesn't like to be cut back severely.



'Edge of Night'

Calla lily *Zantedeschia* spp. and hybrids

STAR QUALITIES Elegant flowers from spring until late summer, plus interesting foliage, make this an ideal focal point. Flower colors range from white to near black, like 'Edge of Night', on 10- to 32-in.-tall plants.

HOW TO GROW IT Most calla lilies like soil that's moist but not wet. While they all grow from a tuber, for containers it's easiest to pick up started plants at the garden center. The root system is small, so you can crowd five or six of these tender perennials into a 12-in. pot.

PHOTO: Courtesy of Terra Nova Nurseries, Inc. (calla lily)

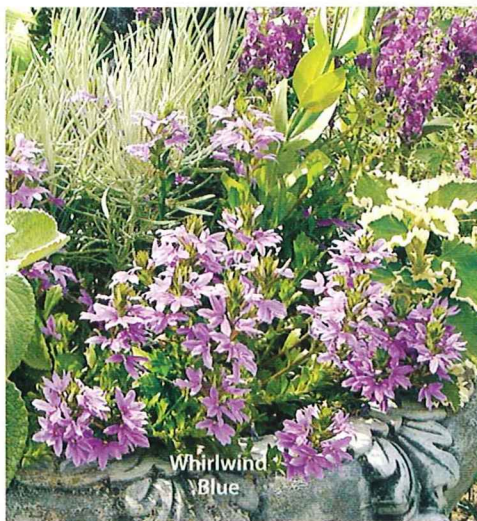


Breathless
Blush

Euphorbia *Euphorbia hypericifolia*

STAR QUALITIES If you like baby's breath as a filler in your bouquets, you'll love this annual euphorbia in your mixed containers. Diamond Frost® is the standard white. But now there is Breathless™ Blush, above, with burgundy-speckled leaves and pale pink flowers. Both grow up to 18 in. tall.

HOW TO GROW IT Euphorbia needs full sun to part shade. And wet soil can be fatal, so let it dry out between waterings. As you plant, make sure all of the companions in your container like the same conditions.



Whirlwind
Blue

Fanflower *Scaevola aemula*

STAR QUALITIES Whether you prefer white, pink or blue, like Whirlwind® Blue, this is a great annual to drape over the edge of a mixed container. The common name comes from the flower petals that are arranged like fans.

HOW TO GROW IT Drought- and heat-tolerance mean this plant will survive if you forget to water occasionally. It doesn't need to be deadheaded, either. But to keep it tidy, shorten a few stems back a few inches every now and then to make a denser plant.



'Angel
Earrings'

Fuchsia *Fuchsia* spp. and hybrids

STAR QUALITIES 'Angel Earrings', above, is a classic trailing fuchsia for hanging baskets. But you'll also find fuchsias with an upright habit, such as 'Gartenmeister Bonstedt', with its smaller red-orange flowers. And these 1- to 2-ft.-tall plants are all popular with hummingbirds.

HOW TO GROW THEM These tender perennials are slow to get going, so start with a plant that's ready to bloom. Give it a cool eastern exposure, out of hot afternoon sun. And avoid areas with strong winds, which can snap stems and knock off flower buds.

PHOTO: Deborah Gruca (fanflower);
DESIGN: Carolyn Magnani, Johnston, IA (fanflower)



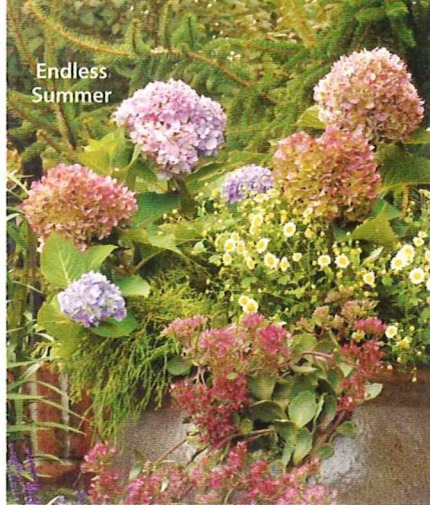
STAR PLANTS | flowers

'Cherokee Sunset'

Gloriosa daisy *Rudbeckia hirta*

STAR QUALITIES Flowers in shades of yellow and rusty red, like 'Cherokee Sunset', can warm up a chilly fall day. Many varieties are about 15 to 18 in. tall, but for a small container you'll find dwarf cultivars, such as 6- to 12-in.-tall 'Toto'.

HOW TO GROW IT Wet foliage on gloriose daisy can mildew. Always water early in the day and keep the leaves dry. For instant impact, pick up plants ready to bloom at the garden center or dig a small clump of these perennials out of your border instead of waiting for small starts to take off in your container.



Endless Summer

Hydrangea *Hydrangea* spp. and hybrids

STAR QUALITIES The luscious flower heads of Endless Summer® and other hydrangeas are showstoppers in a container. And they last a long time, changing color as they age. Start with one that's ready to flower — a young plant takes too long to get going.

HOW TO GROW IT Since the flowers will be opening, you can grow this shrub in sun or shade. But keep it moist, as those large leaves dry out quickly. If you live where the container won't freeze and break, leave the hydrangea in the pot for next year. Or if it's hardy in your area, plant it permanently in your garden.

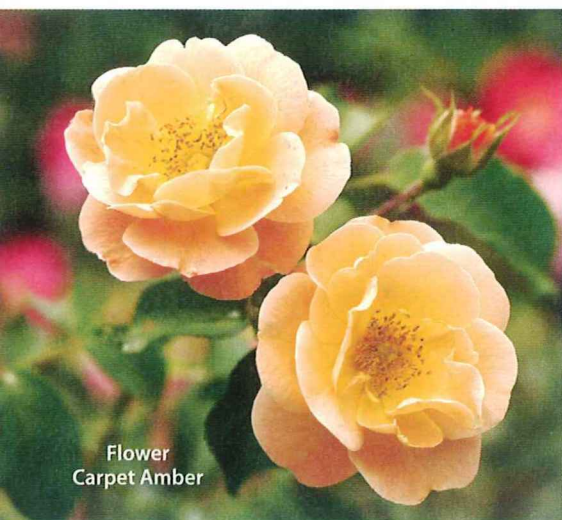


Butterfly

Marguerite daisy *Argyranthemum frutescens*

STAR QUALITIES At 1 to 3 ft. tall, Marguerite daisy fits right into the center or background of a container combo. Butterfly has pastel yellow flowers, but you'll also find this tender perennial in white and shades of pink.

HOW TO GROW IT This plant loves full sun and cool weather, so use it in early spring or fall containers. You can deadhead to tidy up the plant, but it'll bloom just fine without it. The blooms also make good cut flowers, lasting a long time in arrangements.



Flower Carpet Amber



'Butterfly Red'

Shrub rose *Rosa* hybrid

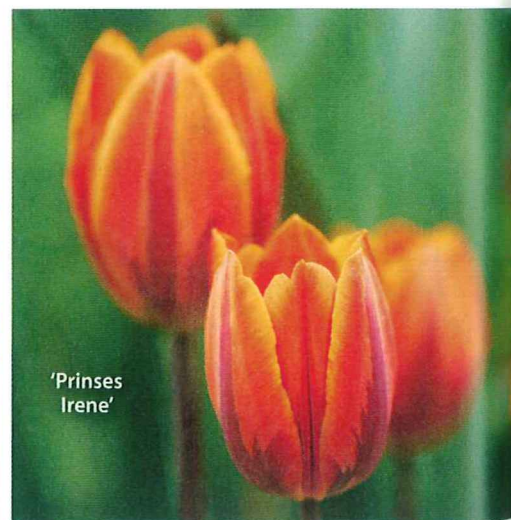
STAR QUALITIES Roses in containers? Sure, if you go with one of the newer shrub roses, such as Flower Carpet® Amber. Once they start blooming in late spring, they won't stop until late fall. Colors range from white to yellow and dark red. Some are even fragrant!

HOW TO GROW THEM Roses bloom best in full sun. And they like to be kept moist and well fed. A time-release fertilizer specifically for roses, mixed into the soil, is best. It's simple, too: One application and you're set for the whole season.

Starflower *Pentas lanceolata*

STAR QUALITIES Want to attract butterflies to your garden? As soon as they find a starflower, such as 'Butterfly Red', they'll flock to it. This tender perennial also comes in shades of pink or white and can grow 2 ft. tall, so use it in the middle or back of a container.

HOW TO GROW IT Starflower needs sun and heat to get going, so don't set one out until summer arrives. It's drought-tolerant but flowers better if you keep the soil slightly moist. Deadhead the spent flowers for a tidy plant and more blooms.



'Prinses Irene'

Tulip *Tulipa* spp. and hybrids

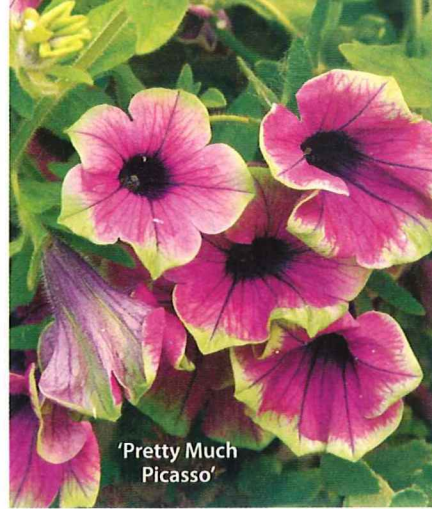
STAR QUALITIES When you see tulips, such as 'Prinses Irene', you know it's spring. You can find these plants in early spring at many garden centers all ready to bloom. For the longest lasting blooms, choose pots that have flower buds just starting to show color.

HOW TO GROW THEM Once they're in bud, tulips are fine in sun or shade. However, you'll find the stems stretch taller in shade. And to make the flowers last, give them an eastern exposure — afternoon heat will make the buds open and fade much too quickly.

PHOTO: Deborah Gruca (gloriose daisy)



Delta Tapestry



Pretty Much Picasso



Pacific Giants mix

Pansy *Viola* hybrids

STAR QUALITIES Pansies come in a rainbow of colors, some solid-colored and some with markings, like 'Delta Tapestry', above. Use any of them in early spring, late fall and winter containers. These short-lived perennials take cold weather, even frost, without dropping a petal.

HOW TO GROW THEM Pick up young plants at the garden center, and buy more than you think you need! Crowd them in the container for a full look right away. Keep the spent flowers picked off and there will always be more buds ready to open.

Petunia *Petunia* hybrids

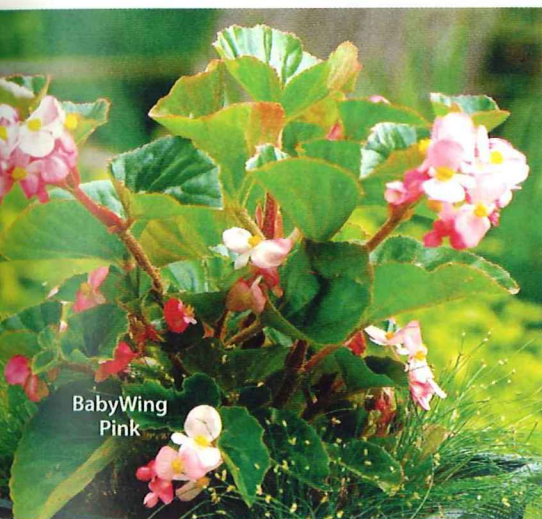
STAR QUALITIES Any petunia gives you lots of bang for your buck. All you have to do is choose your favorite color. 'Pretty Much Picasso' has a unique color combination. Some petunias cascade over the edge of the pot while others are a bit more upright, so be sure to check the tag for size and height when you're buying starts.

HOW TO GROW IT You need full sun to keep these annuals blooming and going strong. And every few weeks, snip off a few stems here and there to stimulate side branches — and more flowers.

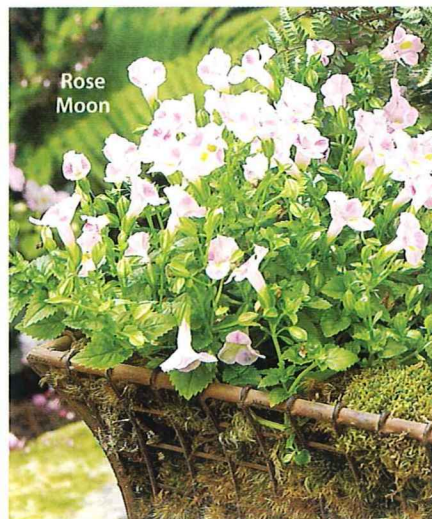
Primrose *Primula* hybrids

STAR QUALITIES Since they prefer cool, damp weather, try an early spring container with cheerful perennial primroses. You'll find 'Pacific Giant' hybrids in shades of red, orange, pink, purple and yellow. Pair these 4- to 12-in.-tall flowers with bulbs, such as tulips.

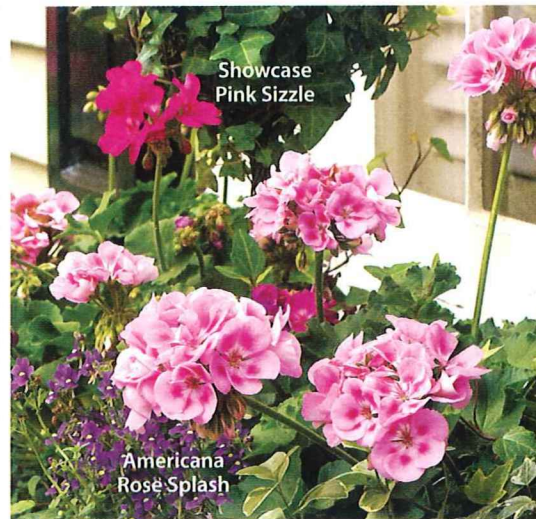
HOW TO GROW THEM If your local supermarket has a florist, odds are you'll find primroses there in late winter. As the weather heats up for summer, primroses begin to decline, so pop them out of the container and tuck in heat-loving annuals.



BabyWing Pink



Rose Moon



Showcase Pink Sizzle

Americana Rose Splash

Winged begonia *Begonia* hybrids

STAR QUALITIES Winged begonias are tough and drought-resistant. These tender perennials are known for clean foliage and prolific blooms, too. Prefer pastels? Go with the BabyWing™ series, like the pink one above. Like strong color? Try the Dragon Wing™ series. Both grow 12 to 15 in. tall.

HOW TO GROW THEM You'll find colors hold best in afternoon shade. However, keep them moist and they tolerate full sun, too. This is a self-cleaning plant, so the flowers drop off as they fade — you never need to deadhead.

Wishbone flower *Torenia* hybrids

STAR QUALITIES Wishbone flower can grow between 4 and 16 in. tall. Some fall over the edge of the pot while others are more upright, so be sure to read the tag. Rose Moon™ is a very pale pink, but you'll also find deep blue, purple, yellow and white.

HOW TO GROW IT Moist shade will keep this annual from scorching. The flowers are prolific, but don't have to be deadheaded. However, in midsummer, if the plant looks leggy, trim it back by about half and it'll come back more compact.

Zonal geranium *Pelargonium* hybrids

STAR QUALITIES Showcase™ Pink Sizzle and Americana® Rose Splash and other zonal geraniums add loads of color to a container. The name "zonal" comes from the mark on each leaf. Use these 4- to 24-in.-tall annuals in the center of medium-sized containers or around the edge of large ones.

HOW TO GROW IT Full sun gives you the most flowers. Blooms on newer cultivars are less likely to fade in hot sun. Don't overwater zonal geraniums or they're prone to disease. Deadhead to keep the flowers coming.

PHOTOS: Brent Isenberger (petunia); John Holtorf (winged begonia)