

Southern Living®

CONTAINER

gardening

*101
Secrets*

TO GARDEN
SUCCESS

Enjoy nonstop color
all year long!

Revised & Updated
DISPLAY UNTIL MAY 18, 2011

Adding a bicolored viola to this planter ties together the two solid-colored ones.



Pansies & Violas

Spring wouldn't be spring without these all-time favorites. Here's how to enjoy them to the max.

Picking the best annuals for spring's cool weather is a no-brainer—pansies and violas win hands down. They offer a slew of bright colors, bloom nonstop, mix well with other plants, suit a wide range of containers, laugh at frost, and are trouble free.

Though closely related and similar looking, pansies and violas are easy to distinguish. Pansies have larger blooms, from 2 to 4 inches across. Flowers may be solid in color or boast large, dark blotches called faces. Violas, often called Johnny-jump-ups, have smaller blooms, about 1½ inches across. Their flowers bear

fine, dark lines (or whiskers). While it takes more violas per square foot to match the show of pansies, violas stand up better to heat and cold and bloom over a longer period.

Grow them in either full or partial sun. You'll find that they'll last longer if given light shade in the afternoon. Moist, well-drained soil is a must—dried-out plants take a while to bounce back. Continuous blooming makes these plants hungry. To satiate their appetites, feed them every other week with liquid plant food (15-30-15) or once at planting time with Peters 23-10-16 Pansy Food. ➔

Orange pansies, violas,
and Panolas provide a
warm welcome.





Choose Colors and Pots

Selecting a great-looking container takes planning. First, choose the best one for your home. Look at the pot's future location, and consider the surroundings. The house and trim paint, brickwork, stone, existing landscape, and outdoor furniture all have roles in developing the right combination of colors and textures. The planter's tone and material should

relate to these elements.

Next, determine the color scheme for your pansies and violas. Choose just one color for a formal look or several for a casual appearance. When adding other plants, make sure their colors echo the colors of the pansies and violas. For example, foliage plants with yellow in the leaves go well with yellow flowers.



Pick a Palette

To illustrate how to pair flower and paint colors, we went to the paint store and found three popular exterior house combinations. Each example shows the house color in the middle with trim shades flanking it. (All paints are from PPG Pittsburgh Paints.) The pansy selections blend well with the color schemes.



WHY IT WORKS Yellow and blue play well together. 'Delta Pure Rose' adds depth.

'Supreme Primrose'

Trim Color 1:
Blue Blood

'Imperial Antique Shades'

HOUSE COLOR:
Patches

'Delta Pure Rose'

Trim Color 2:
Stonehenge Greige





Violas have smaller flowers than pansies but make up for it with numbers. Here, pots of violas climb the front steps to say welcome. They'll bloom for months.



Editors' Picks

Look for these favorites at home-and-garden centers.

- 1. Crystal Bowl pansy:** solid colors, compact grower, very weather tolerant
- 2. Crown pansy:** very large flowers with ruffled edges, solid colors. Blooms droop after a heavy rain.
- 3. Maxim pansy:** old-fashioned look, blotched faces, very weather tolerant
- 4. Majestic Giant pansy:** big, fragrant flowers on long stems, blotched faces. Majestic Giant II has better weather tolerance.
- Panola:** a cross between pansy and viola combining the best qualities of each, both solid and blotched flowers, free-flowering, bloom size in between those of pansy and viola, very weather tolerant
- Sorbet viola:** scads of blooms, great color combos, very weather tolerant
- Plentifall pansy:** new trailing type that spreads 18 inches and cascades from pot, very cold hardy

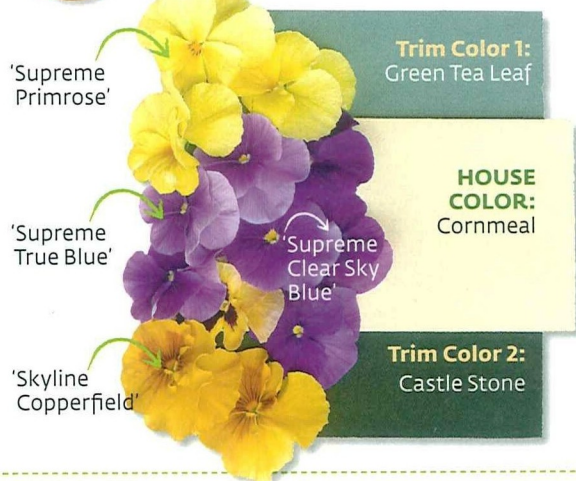
COMBO No. 2

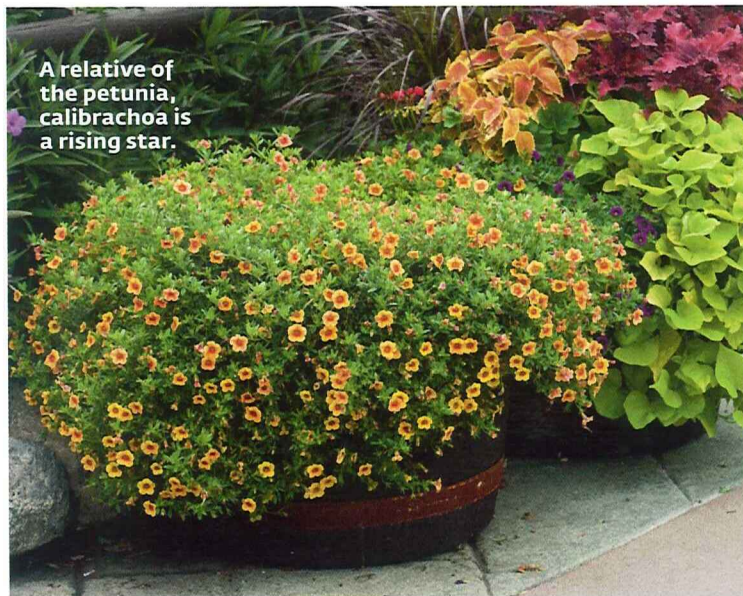
WHY IT WORKS Primary yellow works well with red. Orange combines these hues.



COMBO No. 3

WHY IT WORKS 'Skyline Copperfield' and 'Supreme Primrose' support the house color. Blue pansies highlight the trim.





Much better than the old-fashioned kinds, these blooms are perfect for pots.

Dazzling Petunias

Anyone of voting age with a mother who gardens probably remembers old-fashioned petunias. Their fragrant, ruffled blossoms in every conceivable color have long been a fixture in flowerbeds. Today, we enjoy many new trailing and mounding types. They do great in containers and stand up like troupers to Southern weather, conquering heat and humidity.

Recipe for Success

• TRY THESE

Wave petunias are famous for their performance in Southern gardens. Trailing plants spread out like a ground cover; a single plant can ramble 4 feet or more. Sporting 2- to 3-inch blossoms, they bloom all summer without being pinched back. Purple was the first color of the series, but now you can buy pink, lavender, lilac, and blue versions too.

They're great for hanging baskets and window boxes. For big containers, try Tidal Wave petunias. Plants form 16- to 22-inch mounds. Our favorite is 'Tidal Wave Silver.' Tough as nails, this plant features silvery flowers with purple throats.

Supertunias trail like the Waves, growing 6 to 10 inches tall and spreading up to 4 feet. They offer a wider range of colors, including white, magenta,

and yellow, as well as bicolored and double-flowering types.

Surfinias are true miniatures. Multitudes of small, 1½-inch flowers come in numerous eye-catching colors. At 3 to 6 inches tall, they're the lowest growing of the trailers. And though they are vigorous growers, they don't spread as wide as the others. Use them to spill over the edges of window boxes and hanging baskets.

• WHAT PETUNIAS NEED

Petunias prefer full sun with good air circulation and fertile, loose, well-drained soil. To keep them going and making more flowers, feed them every two weeks with a water-soluble fertilizer such as 15-30-15 or 20-20-20. Removal of spent flowers isn't necessary. Plants may look a bit tired by July. Trimming them back by a quarter will result in new leaves and flowers.

Don't Miss These!

A ZILLION NONSTOP BLOOMS in shades of red, yellow, rose, terra-cotta, salmon, white, or blue blanket a calibrachoa, which looks like a miniature petunia. Forming a trailing mound, it's perfect for pots and hanging baskets. Look for Million Bells, Superbells, and Starlette calibrachos.

All petunias need good drainage, which growing in a pot provides.

