

Fall pots warm up porches with color

By Kathy Van Mullekom • DAILY PRESS
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When the weather cools and pumpkins color the landscape, it's time to create pretty fall containers for your outdoor spaces.

Place the pots on porches and patios, or tuck them into beds among evergreens. The pop of color and visual interest makes your landscape fresh and alive again.

Autumn containers are enjoyable and relatively carefree because temperate weather means disease and pest problems are fewer, and watering needs are less.

Use these container gardening tips and "recipes" from Joan Mazat, business manager of pot plants, poinsettias and cut flowers for Ball Horticultural Co., www.ballhort.com.

Fill them full. In the fall, a shortened day-length means plants in containers won't fill out as vigorously, so add extra plants to create a lush look.

Mix it up. Lettuce and spinach varieties like the cooler temperatures of fall. Don't be afraid to mix edibles with flowers.

Add in texture. Perennial grasses and sedum varieties (nice alternatives to mums) offer a lot of texture options and are great choices for low-maintenance containers that don't need frequent watering.

Pansies are perfect. Colors in the fall are enhanced with the cool weather. The extensive color range of pansies and violas really lets you get creative.

Perennials play well, too. Perennials like asters and goldenrod are not just for the landscape; go ahead and mix them in containers as well.