

Patios, decks, and terraces have become popular spots for relaxing and entertaining on warm summer days and evenings. Planters allow you to make as much use of these outdoor living areas for your plants as for your family and friends. Perch pots of annuals on the deck's railing or floor to bring it to life; if the crowd becomes heavy and you need the extra space for sitting, simply move the pots and put them back again the next day.

To enjoy patio planters even more, choose white or pastel annuals, such as ageratum Summer Snow or geranium Showgirl, because darker flowers become lost in the foliage after the sun sets.

Bricked and paved areas around swimming pools are often filled with lounge chairs, tables, and gaily colored umbrellas--but no living things. Bring beauty right to the water's edge by using tubs overflowing with the perky annual flowers of summer.