

Thrillers, Fillers & Spillers

A Simple Recipe For Eye-Catching Container Gardens

There is no mystery in making a spectacular container planting, as long as a simple three-ingredient recipe is followed.

Thrillers: First and foremost, a centerpiece plant with star quality, something big, bold and beautiful

Fillers: Foliage or flowering plants to complement but not overwhelm the main player

Spillers: A 'splash of mischief' that just tumbles out of the pot, softening the edges, echoes or contrasts the other plants

As long as these three types of plants are used in various proportions, taking care to balance colors and textures, you can create a container with breathtaking results!

Thrillers Are The Star: As the name implies, thrillers are the big attention getters. They are usually tall, upright plants, with outstanding qualities such as: colorful foliage, intriguing shape, or dramatic flowers that last all season. Many thrillers are architectural plants with structural or eye-catching qualities that can serve as a rugged framework for the entire arrangement. Thrillers work best in a composition where they are the tallest plants. At planting time, the thriller goes in the center of a pot that will be viewed from all sides or at the back of a pot that will be displayed in a corner or against a wall.

Fillers Add Mass: Fillers are billowy, more finely-textured plants that surround and weave through the thriller. Fillers add mass to the overall composition and establish a dialogue with the thriller. Fillers serve as a textural contrast or colorful counterpoint. As the name implies, fillers fill up the pot while embracing the thriller. Use a mix of plants for the job of filler. Use some with foliage interest and others with flowers. Since the goal of the container planting is to attract the eye, these plants should add an alluring, unusual flavor to the composition.

Spillers Anchor The Pot: The main role of a spiller is to sprawl over the side of the container, softening its edges and tumbling toward the ground. When parts of a container planting touches the ground, the pot visually looks rooted or grounded to its location. Well chosen spillers continue the dialogue begun by the thriller and fillers. Choose spillers to echo or contrast with the other plants in the composition by either virtue of shape, color or texture.

Keep Scale In Mind: Planting the right combination of thrillers, fillers, and spillers creates a lush, intriguing composition rich in color, texture, and form. Be sure to consider the element of scale when selecting plants for your container. Try to group plants using fillers that are roughly between one-third and two-thirds the size of the thriller. Also aim for extreme contrasts in terms of color combination, texture, and shape. No matter what the specifics, using a thriller, filler and a spiller is a sure recipe for success.

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Thrillers

Abutilon
 Angelonia
 Cannas
 Celosia
 Dracaena
 Erysimum
 Gaura Pink Fountain
 Geraniums
 Grasses

Lantana
 Nicotiana
 Papyrus
 Pentas
 Plumbago
 Purple Fountain Grass
 Sun Coleus
 Umbrella Plant



Caladium
 Coleus
 Cordyline
 Dracaena
 Fuchsia
 Graptophyllum
 Impatiens
 New Guinea Impatiens

Fillers

Ageratum
 Alternanthera
 Angelonia
 Copperleaf
 Cosmos
 Cuphea
 Dusty Miller
 Eucalyptus
 Gazania
 Geraniums
 Gerbera Daisy
 Gomphrena
 Helichrysum Icicles

Joseph's Coat
 Magilla Perilla
 Melampodium
 Nemesia
 Nierembergia
 Osteospermum
 Pentas
 Petunia
 Plumbago
 Salvia
 Sun Coleus
 Vinca
 Zinnia

Bacopa
 Begonias
 Boston Fern
 Browallia
 Caladium
 Coleus
 Diacia
 Dragonwing Begonia
 Dusty Miller
 Heliotrope
 Hypoestes
 Impatiens
 Iresine

Nemesia
 New Guinea Impatiens
 Oxalis
 Pansy
 Rex Begonias
 Salvia
 Torenia

Spillers

Asparagus Fern
 Bacopa
 Brachycome
 Calibrachoa
 Chenile
 Diascia
 Evovulus
 Fiber Optic Grass
 Helichrysum
 Ivy Geranium
 Lantana
 Lotus
 Lysimachia
 Nirembergia

Plectranthus
 Portulaca
 Purple Heart
 Scaevola
 Solanum
 Supercascade Petunia
 Sweet Potato Vine
 Thyme, Doone Valley
 Trailing Petunia
 Trailing Vinca
 Variegated Bskt Grass
 Verbena
 Vinca Minor

Asparagus Fern
 Bolivian Jew
 Creeping Wire Vine
 Diachondra Silver Falls
 Dragonwing Begonia
 Helichrysum Licorice Vine
 Ivy Geranium
 Ivy, Variegated & Green
 Lamium Beacon Silver
 Lobelia
 Purple Heart
 Tahitian Bridal Veil
 Wave Torenia
 Vinca Vine