



Top Ten Container Plants for Record Breaking Hot Summer

Lisha Utt, Frederick County Master Gardener

To say I plant a lot of containers each summer is like saying there were a lot of stink bugs this year..... a bit of an understatement. This summer though with its blistering heat and excessively dry conditions, proved to be quite the container gardening challenge.

All container plants in a 'normal' summer thrive when watered daily. But when it's this hot and so very dry container plants can fade despite one's best efforts.

I found however, that some plants did not seem to be bothered by the extreme conditions. They took the 90 degree plus days in stride. So I've made a list of my top ten "It May Be Hot But You Won't See Me Sweat" plants from the Summer of 2010. Maybe you'll want to include them in your shopping list next spring.

(The disclaimer: I did water every day, so please don't plant these next year and forget about them. They will need care.)



Angelonia angustifolia 'Angelface Pink'

Orchid-shaped pink flowers on airy panicles, blooms all season, full sun to part shade, grows 18-24", hardy to 30 degrees, attracts butterflies. Also available in White, Blue (purple) and Wedgewood Blue (purple and white).

Dusty Miller (Senecio cineraria)

An old favorite with silvery grey foliage, the perfect accent plant for your colorful flowers, full sun to part shade, frost tolerant, grows 8-10". Two great varieties 'Silver Dust' with finely lobed leaves and 'New Look' with larger leaves that resembles oak leaves.



Lantana camara 'Luscious Grape'

Dense rounded clusters of tiny light purple flowers, provides season long color, grows 10-12", full sun, attracts butterflies. Available in a wide variety of other colors.

Mandivella Vine 'Yellow'

A tropical climber with thick stems and leathery leaves and large tubular shaped electric yellow flowers, full sun, grows 4-6 feet, easy to keep indoors in a very sunny window for the winter. Also available with pink, white and red flowers.

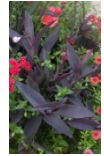


Ornamental Grass, Penesetum rubrum

Striking bronze and burgundy foliage with burgundy fronds in late summer into fall, full sun, not cold hardy, height 3-4 feet.

Tradescantia pallid 'Purpurea'

Gorgeous dark purple stems and foliage that trails and weaves amongst its' container-mates, full sun, 10-12"



Sweet Potato Vine (Ipomoea batatas) 'Pink Ice'

Vigorous trailer with pink, grey-green and white variegated leaves, makes stunning accent plants, full sun to part shade, 6-12"

Verbena 'Superbena Coral Red'

Clusters of tiny bright coral flowers, grows in a mounding, cascading habit 6-12", larger flowers than other varieties of verbena, full sun, attracts butterflies and hummingbirds, hardy to 15 degrees F. Other varieties include 'Dark Blue', 'PinkParfait', 'Burgundy' and 'Pink Shades'.

Zinnia 'Profusion Orange'

Daisy-like orange flowers, resistant to powdery mildew, easy to grow, full sun, grows 6-10", attracts butterflies. Other varieties include 'Profusion Cherry' and 'Profusion White'.



Zonal Geranium (Pelargonium) 'Sassy Dark Red'

Classic summer flowers that enjoy full sun, grows 10-12", frost tolerant. Available in many other colors.

For more information about horticulture or the Master Gardener Program in Frederick County, call the Frederick County Office, University of Maryland Extension, (301) 600-1596, or visit <http://www.frederick.umd.edu/>. Our mission is to educate Maryland residents about safe, effective and sustainable horticultural practices that build healthy gardens, landscapes and communities. Equal Opportunity Employer/Equal Access Programs.