



Planting Containers for a Deck or Balcony

What do you want your deck plants to do?

- Do you want to grow veggies, herbs, flowers? Do you want to attract butterflies and hummingbirds? Would you like single plant or group?
- Perhaps you want a screen for privacy from neighbours.
- Do you have children? Older ones can help, even very small ones can do something. You might be cultivating a Master Gardener of the future! Be sure to check that the plants are not poisonous.
- Do you want your containers to look good for passers-by, or are they just for you?
- Lots of time or not so much?

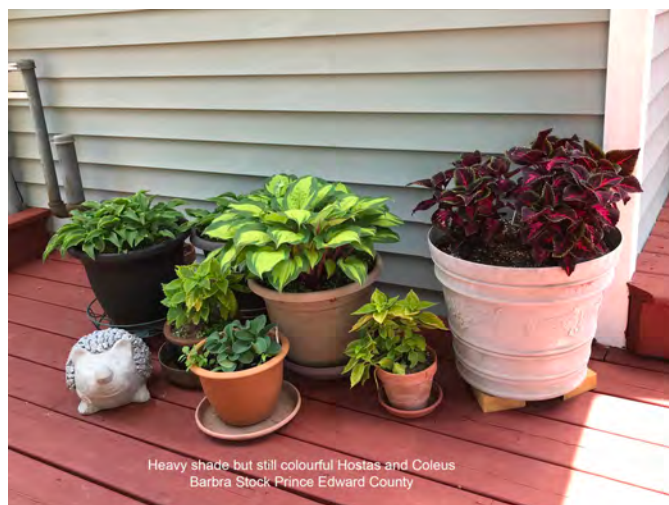
All of the above are considerations for the containers and plants you choose.

Choose the best container for the site

- This should be, if possible, a container that has a reservoir of water. There is a huge selection/variety of styles/sizes colours.
- Having a reservoir means that there is always water available to plants, this is particularly important so your deck isn't constantly getting wet from plant watering. It also means you don't have to water so often.
- Or just choose something from your cupboard, old teapot, dish, vase, saucepan anything that holds a plant or two or more. Make sure it has drainage holes.
- Make your own, lots of suggestions on internet.

Choose most appropriate plant for site

- Is your deck in full sun, full shade, early/late sun, is it windy?
- Look at leaves: shape of plant now and throughout summer.
- Do you want flowers or colour? Height or movement. Scented.
- When do you use your deck? Only evenings or all day.
- Have you dark/light siding or glass?



Heavy shade but still colourful Hostas and Coleus
Barbra Stock Prince Edward County

Consider perennials as well as annuals, native plants and grasses or mix

Here's a small selection of my favourites:

Good plants for shade

Coleus - there is a wide variety of coloured leaves, remove spent flowers for best results.
Hostas - hardy perennial can be planted in garden in fall or heeled in to have again for next year.
Sweet potato vine. Lime green leaves look good in shade



Good plants for full sun, there's always lots of these

Succulents and Sedums- wide variety of shapes and colour. They need less water and some have flowers.

Petunias, the Wave variety doesn't need dead heading and is less straggly but has fewer colours.

Scaevola - fan shaped flowers that cascade, likes heat

Nasturtiums. Still lots of time to plant these seeds in late May. Lots of varieties I like Alaska bushy, variegated leaves lots of colours. Whole plant is edible, leaves a little peppery, flowers can be filled with cream cheese, seeds taste like capers when pickled, great for children to grow because seeds germinate quickly, about 10 days.

Lavender- full sun leaves and flowers are scented. Use for lavender sachets in Autumn to scent clothes all year and discourage moths.

Scented or citrus plants geraniums discourage mosquitoes.



Grasses. Wide selection of colours, heights

If you sit on your deck primarily in the evening only, then consider using silver or white plants

Trees- slow growing dwarf varieties evergreen.

Put out your indoor plants for the summer.

Here are some that don't mind being moved.

Clivia - lovely dark green strappy leaves. Orange flowers, makes excellent plant indoors for winter in poor light. Shade outdoors.

Spider plants - variety of different colour leaves, shade/sun

Tradescantia purple heart. Dark purple leaves, small pink flowers, branching, leaves become darker purple in bright sunshine.

Hibiscus and fig plants often lose leaves when moved but will recover.



Potting medium

Choose the best medium for your chosen plants: most do best with high quality mix, succulents need more grit to allow for good drainage.

Watering

Always make sure that when watering the water is soaking the growing medium, plant roots can take up a lot of space in containers. Water until you see it run out the bottom.

Fertilizer, synthetic

Slow release 14-14-14 is a good all round one, needs one application. If you use other fertilizers, apply them every two weeks for continuous blooms.

Just a reminder: NPK: **Nitrogen**, for leaves and green plants **Phosphate**, for all round health of plant. **Potassium** for flowers. The numbers add up to the percentage of fertilizer the rest are fillers. So lower numbers mean less quantity not quality.

Most important it's your deck, choose what you like, what you will enjoy. A plastic bag with a packet of nasturtium seeds can give as much pleasure as the most expensive container and plants. Just grow something. Ask the garden centre /store about the plants and their suitability for your site and how to care for them.

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If you have a question, contact us: pecmastergardeners@gmail.com
Visit our website: <https://pecmastergardeners.ca/>