

## CARE OF CONTAINER GARDENS & HANGING BASKETS

The most important factor to understand in successfully growing plants of any type in containers is the limitations of the container itself. The amount of soil in the container is small in relation to the amount of plant material it is supporting especially in comparison with the amount of soil that would be in a large flower bed. There are a few simple and easy ways to compensate that will produce beauty and enjoyment of your containers.

### WATER

The smaller the container, the more frequent the watering. Uneven moisture levels are not good and neither is severe drying out or infrequent watering. Containers in windy, sunny locations will dry out rapidly and. Small containers such as hanging baskets will probably require water every day, particularly if they are in full sun. If you are away for a weekend or for several days, try, if possible, to place the container out of the full sun or perhaps sit it in a tray of water 1" to 1-1/2" deep.

### FERTILIZER

Just as the limited amount of soil depletes the soil moisture, it also quickly uses any reserve nutrition. Frequent fertilizing of container planters is an absolute necessity if the container is to be a pleasing and enjoyable project. The best way to maintain good nutritional levels is by applying a mild solution of water-soluble fertilizer each time you water. We recommend 20-20-20 or 15-30-15 for this purpose. An excellent product to use is Plant Products 14-14-14 controlled release fertilizer. This may be used to provide continuous fertilizer to plants as needed. We use this product on all of our display window boxes, barrel, and hanging baskets every year.

### HOW DOES FERTILIZER WORK?

Fertilizer provides plants with the nutrients to produce food and steps up the growth process given the proper cultural conditions. Most fertilizers contain 3 elements which work in the following way to produce growth:

**NITROGEN:** Promotes good green color, increases the production of chlorophyll - the secret to a green, lush appearance.

**POTASH:** Helps stem growth, initiates buds, gives flowers good growth.

**PHOSPHORUS:** Encourages good root growth and, therefore, good overall growth.

### GENERAL MAINTENANCE

Remove spent blossoms and diseased or injured leaves at once, they are ideal areas for the incubation of disease and insects. If a plant or plants become overgrown, spindly or unsightly, prune it back with a knife, scissors or shears. Some varieties such as petunias for example, will reward you with fuller plants and more blossom when pruned once or twice a season. If one side of the container is getting too much light or shade, turn it, if possible. The small effort required to follow these instructions will bring you a great deal of pleasure and satisfaction.