

## PREPARING YOUR CONTAINERS FOR WINTER

Do not overlook the importance of containers, statuary and garden furniture in the winter garden. One can and should be enjoying one's garden 365 days of the year.

Containers such as urns, window boxes and hanging baskets, can and should provide the garden with year-round interest. Consider greening containers for the holidays and for winter with an assortment of evergreen boughs. Decorated urns can remain visually appealing well into March or April just in time for spring planting. Windy locations cause the boughs to dry out quicker than those in protected areas.

Frost-resistant containers can be filled with porous potting soil, or sand into which the boughs can be inserted. The lower portion of the container can be filled with Styrofoam peanuts to reduce the total weight of the container. Fill your container with no more than 1/3 of the peanuts to avoid it from becoming too top heavy (especially in windy locations).

Some of our favourite evergreen boughs include B.C. cedar, hemlock, white pine, boxwood, and balsam fir. To these, accents such as eucalyptus (seeded or pods), dogwood branches, curly willow, sumac, pine cones (assorted sizes), osage oranges, holly branches, ilex berries, assorted fruits, southern magnolia leaves, rose hips, and others can be added to create a unique and lasting arrangement. Be sure to pack arrangements full. We recommend using an assortment of boughs to add interesting textures and colour variations to your containers. Ribbons and outdoor lights can be used to enhance a containers appearance.

As with all arrangements, outdoor winter containers will benefit from the occasional misting and watering. To further prolong the longevity of evergreen boughs we recommend giving the boughs a fresh cut and allowing them to sit in water for 12-24 hours prior to being put into an arrangement.

When selecting evergreen boughs be sure to look for some that arch in order to drape them over the edges of your container for a dramatic effect. B.C. cedar, incense cedar and hemlock are excellent for this.

Personalize your container. Use your imagination to add objects that pertain to you and or your family. Consider getting your children involved with making decorations or collecting cones for a container(s) they will help to make.

Refer to the Container Planting page on our Website for helpful tips and instructions on creating your own winter urns arrangements.