



Container Gardening Part 1

Description

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One of Miki's pots by her beautiful pool

Now that we are hopefully out of the woods in terms of snow and freezing temperatures it's time to start thinking about planting flowers. Container gardening is a lot like decorating your home. There are several things you need to consider:

- What are your needs? Are you trying to screen out an undesirable view?
- What type of pot do you want to use?
- What colors do you like?
- What color and style is your house?
- Consider mixing in different types of textures.
- Plant in odd numbers. Use three, five or seven types of plants per pot.
- Mix heights of plants.
- Just as you would have a focal point in your home, use the same approach in your yard. Have one large pot or group pots in arrangements to add more interest. You could even add other accessories to your grouping such as a stone sculpture.

I consulted my friend and Master Gardener, Miki who has spent many hours learning about horticulture through the [Johnson County K-State Research and Extension program](#). They only accept 30 people per year and require students to perform 40 hours of community service every year. Miki volunteers at the [Arboretum](#) which has container gardens on display from various groups until this Sunday, May 19. The tips in this post come from information she learned through the extension program.



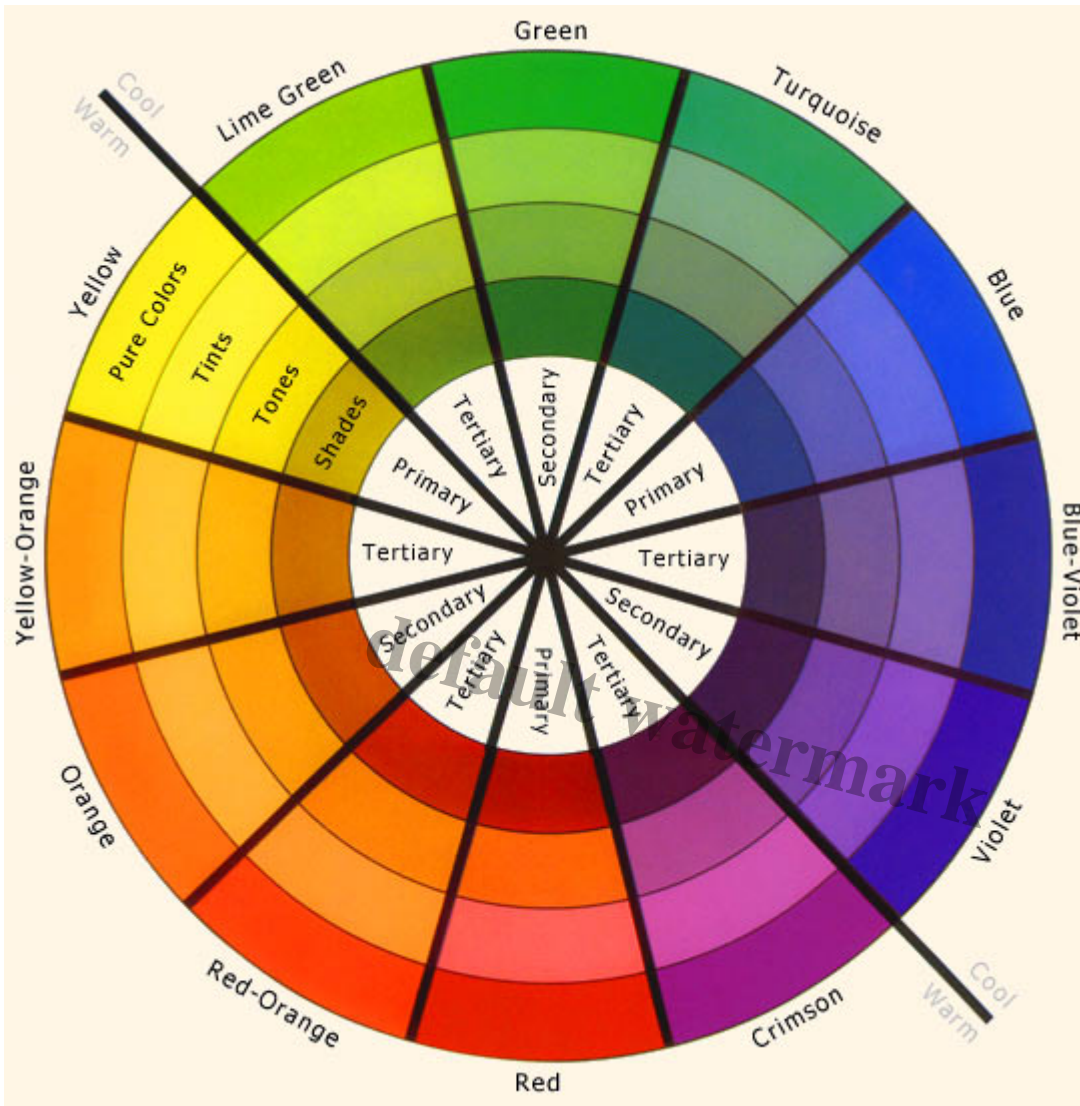
Arboretum Container Garden

According to Miki, a common mistake people make is using too small of a pot. The soil dries up quickly from the sun and wind and requires more watering. All pots need drainage holes. You can use a coffee filter or newspaper to prevent potting mix from falling out. Use a professional potting mix which can be

found at places like Lowe's™s, Home Depot or a gardening center. Also be sure to fertilize your soil 1 to 3 times per summer with Miracle Grow or some other type of fertilizer. This is a step I normally skip, but I mainly plant succulents because they require less watering. You can read about my love for succulents [here](#). When selecting a pot there are pros and cons for different styles of pots.

- **Terra-cotta pros** " classic, attractive, affordable, beautiful patina with age
cons " heavy, fragile, porous (needs extra watering), cracks in winter
- **Plastic pros** " lightweight, durable, affordable
cons " less attractive, blows over in wind
- **Ceramic pros** " attractive, many colors
cons " fragile, costly, often no drainage
- **Wood pros** " affordable, can build yourself
cons " decays, not as attractive
- **Fiberglass pros** " lightweight, mimics natural materials
cons " costly
- **Hypertufa pros** " popular look, can make yourself
cons " heavy, cracks in winter

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When you are choosing **colors of flowers** take into consideration the colors in your home. If you can see the flowers from inside your home, you may want to choose similar tones so that it flows. Generally, choose two main colors and one accent for your pot.

- **Harmonious**â€“ different shades of one color or hues next to each other on the color wheel
- **Contrasting**â€“ colors that are opposite each other on the color wheel
- **Warm**â€“ colors such as red, orange and yellow which add drama. (these are the colors I mainly use) Orange is a popular color this year.
- **Cool**â€“ colors such as blue and purple and pastels which are more relaxing
- **Silver**â€“ foliage harmonizes with all colors and tones down hot colors while enhancing cool ones
- **White** â€“ white flowers show up better at night

Miki had so much great information to share that I thought it would be best to do so in two separate posts. Tomorrow I will cover the process of selecting and planting your flowers and plants. You can read part two [here](#).



part one

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