

Feeding

Another often overlooked area of container growing is feeding. Permanent containers require feeding every season – we recommend Trevena Cross General Slow Release Fertiliser, mixed in with suitable compost when planting, and then in subsequent years, re-application as a top dressing. Container plants in particular, rely on you to get all of the nutrients and trace elements they require for growth, so you need to make sure they get them. A liquid feed can also be used but will need to be applied weekly in the growing season.

Drainage

Getting rid of excess moisture in the winter can be as important as watering in the summer. Many pots, especially glazed ones, may only have a single hole in the base and this can often be inadequate, particularly if the hole gets blocked with compost.

It is therefore important to 'crock' your pots with either old, broken pots or with an upturned plastic flower pot placed over the hole. We have also used polystyrene in the past which we have found very successful.

On most surfaces, especially paving and concrete, it is also important to keep your pots off the ground with old bricks or purpose-made pot feet.

'Go with the soil'

While there are ways to alter the pH of your soil, we generally advise customers to 'go with the soil' of their garden when choosing what to plant.

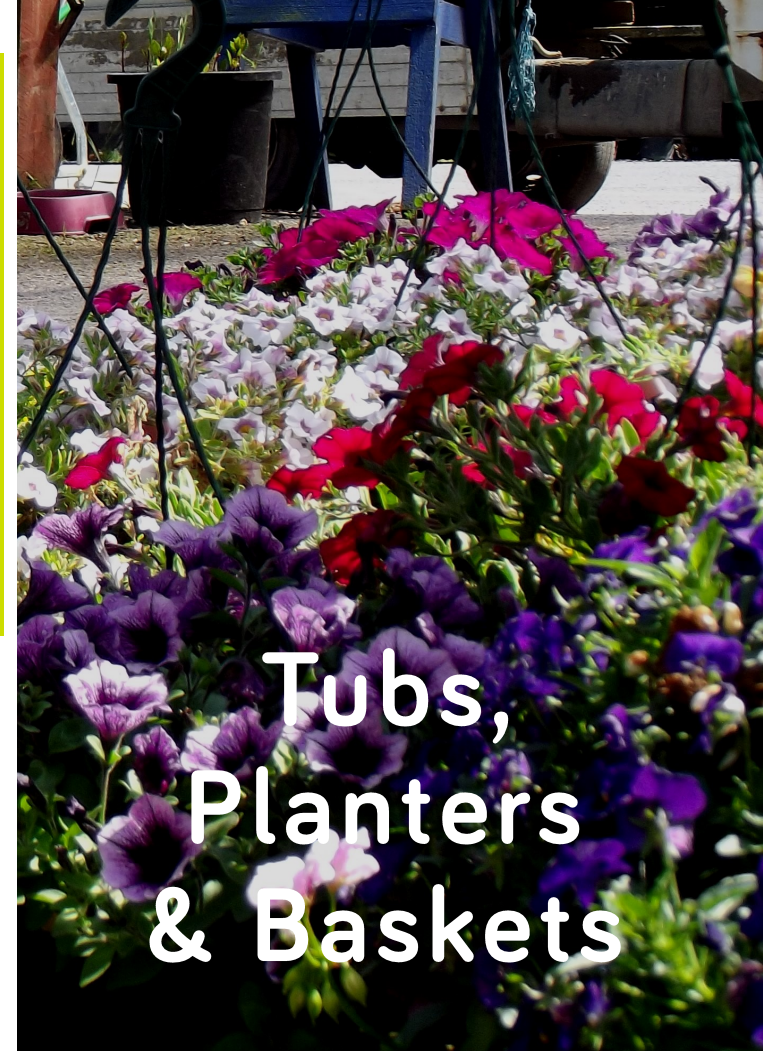
The wonderful thing about container / pot planting is that it opens up the doors to new choices, and enables you to grow 'must haves' that you otherwise could not grow!

Further Information

Please note that this information is only intended as a guide – put together from our knowledge and experience.

It should be noted, that on occasion, a plant or tree can thrive in one situation but struggle under almost identical conditions. Like us, plants are living individuals – all different and unique. They should therefore be treated as such.

One of the best bits of advice we can give you however, is to have a look at your neighbour's garden and see what they are growing. You are likely to be able to enjoy the same in your own garden.



For more information get in touch with us, and we'll do our best to help and advise you.



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Choosing a pot

There are a whole host of pots and planters available to help you create magnificent results on your patio, decking or in your courtyard area.

Personal choice will normally determine which is right for your garden – plastic, terracotta (glazed or unglazed), wooden etc – although it is worth bearing in mind that some plants will be better suited to certain pots. For example, unglazed terracotta pots will generally lose more moisture than glazed ones or plastic pots, and so may be better suited to succulents or drought tolerant plants.

If in doubt about which pot is right for your plant(s) – just ask; we'll be happy to help!

Choosing the right compost

Trees, shrubs & more permanent planting

We recommend peat free Sylvagrow with added John Innes compost (and a slow release fertilizer) for permanent planting (e.g. shrubs and trees) as it doesn't dry out like regular peat based composts, and is therefore easier to keep moist. At the same time, it doesn't get too heavy in the winter.

Patio, bedding & annual planting

For more impermanent planting of annual patio plants and bedding like geraniums and petunias in the spring and summer we recommend peat free Sylvagrow multipurpose or Bord na Mona Growise Pro 5 Compost No. 2 (and a slow release fertiliser).

Ericaceous / acid loving plants

Sylvagrow Ericaceous compost (or another good ericaceous compost) is ideal for acid loving plants like camellias, rhododendrons and azaleas.

Succulents

Requiring exceptional drainage, succulents like aloes, agaves and yuccas, should be planted in a mix of peat free Sylvagrow with added John Innes compost with between 30–50% grit or perlite. Using perlite will aid drainage in the winter, but also absorb moisture for the summer.

Watering

One of the most neglected areas of container/pot growing and therefore one of the most common causes of problems, is frequency of watering. Its importance should not be underestimated.

Plants in containers need watering daily in the growing season – even if it has been raining. Most containers with established plants in, would need a heavy downpour every few days to provide them with

sufficient water. Even in late autumn and winter we can have dry spells for several weeks, but a common mistake people make is forgetting to water their containers – perhaps because it's cold and seemingly moist in the air. The only plants that can withstand water neglect are succulents, and so we recommend if it's easier, adding some water retaining crystals like swell gel or super gel to the compost to help it retain moisture.

If you have a large collection of containers it may be worth investing in an automatic watering system, which can actually be easier to install and cheaper than you might think. It also means you don't need to rely on neighbours while you're away!

