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LET YOUR GARDEN GO TO POT THIS SPRING ENDLESS IDEAS FOR PLANTS IN POTS

Have you given up on gardening because you are just too busy but still want colorful flowers, fresh veggies or sweet herbs? Well, the answer may be that gardening has gone to pot.

Gardening in a container is the hottest trend today. According to the Pennsylvania Horticulture Society, container gardening is "a very fashionable way to show off one's gardening prowess. It is now a burgeoning art form."

"Just think of a container as a miniature garden," explains Peter C. Cilio, of Campania International, manufacturers of classic garden accessories. "And it's really quite simple. It takes less maintenance and less time and yet gives lots of color and interest. I guess that's why gardening in pots is so popular."

And it's more convenient. "People are busy and don't have the space or time to plant a full-scale garden, but they can manage a 'garden in a container.' It takes less maintenance and less time for the amount of pleasure returned, and that's what gardeners want," he says.

The right container mixed with the right plants can give you the look you want. Mix herbs and flowers together, pot up shrub roses or plant vegetables in pots and put them on your deck. The ideas are endless if you let your imagination go.

"Some people like simple containers like the French Provencal. Others prefer more ornate styles like the Lion with garland urn," he explains. "The important thing is that the plants and pot don't clash."

Cilio recommends a simple planting for a fancy pot and a plain pot for more complex plantings. Tropical trees look great in large containers. Traditional English troughs can be planted as a little alpine garden with creeping phlox, dwarf evergreens and conifer. Arrangements of miniature evergreens will stay beautiful for years.

Lightweight "poly pots" are a great alternative to fine Italian terra cotta article, but are virtually indistinguishable from the best of the genuine article. Plus they are durable, environmentally friendly, sun and temperature resistant.

But classic Italian terra cotta planters are hard to beat, and the new line from Eschbach is classic design with quality details and distinctive rose-peach color. They are hand finished and cherished by the finest gardeners.

Campania planters and garden accessories are available at fine garden centers and can be viewed on the company's web site at www.campaniainternational.com.