



GCFP District VI Newsletter



1st Quarter, 2023

Seedlings



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2022-3 District Calendar

March 22—District VI Meeting at Perkins in Richland—10:00 a.m.
April 21-23 GCFP Annual Convention, Double Tree by Hilton Monroeville

Articles, events and happenings concerning District VI may be submitted to:
Mary Lou Colussy at
lalou46@aol.com
Next Seedlings by
May 1, 2023

A special thank you to
Nerita Brant, Seedlings
Proofreader

Director's Corner

Deb Stumpf, District VI Director

As all of your clubs are planning your meetings, events, outings and fundraisers for the coming year, I would like you to remember that every garden club member “brings something to the table.”

Garden clubs of the past were sort of “white glove” luncheon groups made up mostly of stay-at-home mothers raising their children. They came together through a common interest in gardening and floral design. Don't get me wrong--they did wonderful work!

What I am trying to say here is that today's club has an entirely different make-up. We still attract stay at home moms raising their children, but we are also made up of many retired professional women. Our generation went on to further our educations at college or professional schools then we worked while raising our families. We came together out of the same desire to further advance our knowledge of gardening or floral design, but we brought a myriad of skills with us.

This is what I mean by “everyone brings some to the table. I say to club presidents: learn the skills of your members and make good use of them!

Maybe they know computers, maybe they have planned and organized large events, maybe they were in food service or perhaps they did publicity or public relations. Any skill someone learned can be useful to a club in some way and including them can only make them feel more welcome and useful.

So, as you are moving forward with your new club year, I wish everyone the best of garden club wishes for the year ahead.

Deb Stumpf
 District VI Director

“Always Growing Together”

Trash to Treasure--2023

2023 Trash to Treasure Contest to be held at the State Convention in April. If any of the clubs would like to do a trash to treasure project, please let me know. Judging for District VI will be at our spring board meeting on **March 22, 2023**. Your club president may bring the design for judging. The winner will go on to the state convention contest.

Trash to Treasure Theme/Rules

“THYME to GARDEN in Pittsburgh!”

- A Sculpture for your Garden -

Pittsburgh was home to immigrant families who found work and wealth in its many earth-related industries. Therefore, this contest is for a standalone functional metal sculpture for the garden (e.g., not limited to iron, steel and aluminum). Specifications:

1. Dimensions: must be exhibited on a base, no larger than 14” Wide or 14” deep. Height is minimum of 20”.
2. Weight: No more than 15 lbs.
3. Materials: Any type of metal(s) that is/are recycled, reused or repurposed. May use dried plant materials (NO fresh).
4. Each entry must include a 3 x 5 card:
 Front: Title and a list of the materials used
 Back: District, Garden Club,
 Designer(s)name and mailing address.
5. Entry may be work of more than one person.

ONLY ONE ENTRY FROM EACH DISTRICT

Selection method is determined by the district.

District entries selected for Convention competition must be submitted

on Friday, April 21 from 11-5 PM at the Monroeville Doubletree Hotel. Judging is at 5:15 PM.

Entries are not to be judged under the same standards as a flower show

Trash to Treasure Chair: Pat Drennen

SCALE OF POINTS FOR JUDGING

Conformance	20 pts
(Fits within stated dimensions, on a base, weighs less than 15 lbs.)	
Artistic Concept.....	50 pts
(Creative reuse of recycled materials)	
Expression	20 pts
(Interpretation of theme)	
Execution	10 pts
(Workmanship)	
TOTAL.	100 pts

Schools Being Held by NGC in CAR-SGC Area

Environmental School Jan. 10 -18, 2023 – Washington, DC – Zoom – Course 3 (Tuesday and Wednesday evenings only)

Flower Show School: February 27 – March 2, 2023 – Roanoke, VA – In-person - Course 4
 April 13 - 16, 2023 – Plymouth Meeting, PA – In-person - Course 3

April 15 – 20, 2023 – East Brunswick, NJ – 4/15 Zoom – 4/19-20 – In person – Course 4

Flower Show Symposium: None scheduled in CAR

Gardening School: April 12 -13, 2023 – Baltimore, MD – In-person – Course 2

Landscape Design School: March 30 – 31, 2023 – Louisville, Ohio - Zoom – Course 1
 May 22 – 23, 2023 – Alexandria, VA (NCA) – In person – Course 2

CLUB ACTIVITIES

Bedford County GC Makes the News

Bedford Garden Club



Members of the Bedford County Garden Club recently completed their traditional decorating of the Bedford County Courthouse for the Christmas season. Taking part were: Lu Ann Risser, Micki McCahan, Pat Decker, Jan Walent, Kay Kring and Brenda Massie.

BLAIR GARDEN CLUB Bus Trip - 3/8/2023
THE GARDEN ELECTRIC ©
Philadelphia PHS Flower Show
MARCH 4-12, 2023
PA CONVENTION CENTER

- * Leave Lowe's Altoona at 8:30 am (park along the highway side of lot)
- * Depart from Flower Show at 6:00pm; approximate return time is 10:30pm
- * No dinner stops, either way
- * If bringing food - no chocolate or orange cracker snacks.
- * Make sure drinks have sealed lid.

COST - \$100

Includes bus trip, show ticket and tip for driver.

CALL NOW TO RESERVE A SEAT
CONTACT: EMMA KOWALSKI
814-932-0375 OR 814-942-0202
MAKE CHECKS TO: BLAIR GARDEN CLUB
EMMA KOWALSKI
1722 32ND AVENUE
ALTOONA, PA 16601

CLUB ACTIVITIES

Blair GC Decorates Library

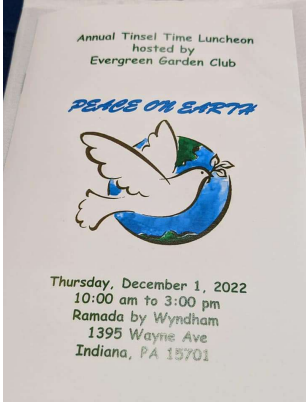
Blair Garden Elves decorated the Christmas Tree at the Altoona Library with many homemade decorations.

**Blair Garden
Club**



CLUB ACTIVITIES

Tinsel Time 2022



The centerpieces were made by members of Evergreen Garden Club (an idea by Betty Wingard) and were on each of the tables. The person that the bird was pointing toward got to be the recipient and take it home.



A few of the Evergreen Garden Club members made beautiful floral arrangements representing peace on earth.



Evergreen Garden Club



Photos by Judy Ridgway.

New 2023 Evergreen Garden Club Officers

New Evergreen Garden Club Officers were installed by GCFP District VI Director Debbie Stumpf. Betty Wingard, Secretary; Carol Miller, Treasurer; Mariann McGee, President and Debbie Stumpf. Missing is Linda Bradford, Vice President.



Welcome the Holidays 2022

The Garden Club of Johnstown presented Welcome the Holidays on Saturday, November 12th, our annual FUNdraiser. Our featured speaker, Andy Fedore, introduced us to ways of using material gathered from nature to decorate for the holidays. The 10' tree was amazing! The club dried artichokes for sale along with a silent art auction, fresh pine holiday wreath, and garden supplies.



Garden Club of Johnstown



The Garden Club of Johnstown was organized in 1930 with 154 members, the objective being “the advancement of gardening and the cultivation of an interest in civic betterment and beauty in Johnstown and vicinity.”

Additional Activities in 2023

February 13- Restoration of Ludwig House- Days after the Johnstown Flood of 1889, Clara Barton, founder of the American Red Cross arrived in Johnstown and resided in the Ludwig House while spearheading the life-saving mission. A Clara Barton House & Garden board member, will share updates on the current efforts to restore this historical landmark.

March 13- Dahlia Crazy- Ali Single and Carol Peretin, two neighbors and Penn State Master Gardeners, are obsessed with dahlias. They will share the best growing, cutting and storage methods for these Mexican beauties.

CLUB ACTIVITIES**May Mart 2023****Indiana
Garden
Club**

Indiana Garden Club's annual May Mart and Vendor Expo will be held May 19th and 20th, 2023 at the S&T Arena, White Township Sports Complex.

The club will feature its Orphan's Court plant sale and Garden Mart booth as well as the scholarship table. We hope to surpass our vendor total from last year. There will be lots of flowers and merchandise to buy!

As the winter months approach and we are stuck inside, mark your calendars and think about our delicious mushroom sandwiches and fresh strawberry pie. For more information see our website: www.indianagardenclub.org You can also find us on Facebook and Instagram.

Watch for more details in the Seedlings May edition. If you know of anyone who would be interested in being a vendor, please ask them to contact us now. The Vendor Application is on our website: www.indianagardenclub.org

Save The Date

May Mart 2023
Friday, May 19th &
Saturday, May 20th
at
S&T Bank Arena

2022 Indiana Garden Club Christmas Party

CLUB ACTIVITIES

PGC Annual Christmas Tea 2022

**Patton
Garden
Club**



On November 28th Patton Garden Club held their Annual Christmas Tea – “Winter Fun” at the Cambrian Hills Banquet Hall. Although we no longer have a “Tea,” a sumptuous dinner now replaces it. Members gathered for fun and games along with the meal. It was a great time for all that took part.

Special thanks to the Committee that organized the event, along with the decorations and wrapping our game prizes. Can’t wait for next year!

CLUB ACTIVITIES

The annual SGC October luncheon was once again held at the Somerset Country Club. And, once again, it was very well attended, probably in anticipation of the presentation by John Lichleiter, AIFD, Floral Design Manager at Lea's Floral Shop and an Educator for Teleflora's Western PA Unit. Of course, John did not disappoint! He is an expert floral designer who showed us some of the seasonal and professional trends and techniques to enhance our skills.



Somerset Garden Club

In addition, we had the pleasure of seeing a considerable number of entries from our members for the Amanda E. Dowie Dried Flower Memorial Award. The winner this year was Andrea Falchek, second place went to Ann Brooks, with our new member Elizabeth Miller taking third place. Well done, ladies!



We had an amazing turnout for our club's annual wreath sale. This sale helps to support so many things throughout the year, such as our student scholarships, so we are extremely grateful to everyone who purchased a wreath and to all our members who worked so hard on the project.



CLUB ACTIVITIES

October 18th program and meeting at the Loyalhanna Watershed Nimick Family Education Center featured our Annual Seed Swap with Susan Rihn and Patti Schildkamp presenting *Seed Harvesting, Processing and Saving Seeds*. After an informational PowerPoint presentation, members and guests learned how to collect and save seeds for next year. Demonstrations on seed harvesting, cleaning the chaff from the seeds and proper storage, and how to grow the seeds using the Winter Sowing method were offered to attendees. Tables were overflowing with seeds that were available for free to anyone attending the event. 23 members and 1 guest attended the event. During the meeting that followed, the nominating committee presented the following nominations: Co-President-Judy Ridgway, Vice President-Paula Heming, Treasurer-Wilma Light, Secretary-Mary Niezelski. Patti Flowers-Jacobina nominated Kate Nuernberger to be a Co-President and she accepted the nomination. The election of officers was to take place at the November meeting.



Judy Ridgway and Mary Niezelski created the Weeders and Seeders' entry for the 2022 Annual Scarecrow contest around the Ligonier Diamond. Our scarecrow's name was the Spotted Lanternfly Stomper. During the set up at the Diamond (assisted by Deb Christopher), many people stopped to talk about the Spotted Lanternfly. She was on display from **October 21 through November 7**. About 400 Penn State Extension flyers about the spotted lanternfly, located in a box next to the Stomper, were distributed during this time. No awards were won by the Weeders and Seeders, but we felt satisfied that the public learned so much about the SLF pest because of this special outreach.

The event the Weeders and Seeders Craft Committee had been preparing months for finally arrived on **November 5th** at the 2022 Ligonier Country Holiday Market! Many members (and their families) helped with the preparation of setting up the craft tables, the sales, and the clean-up. Beautiful weather drew a crowd on market day. Our goal of raising \$500 for our scholarship fund from the selling our "crafts from nature" was attained by 4:00 PM



Weeders and Seeders

Several of our members traveled to other District VI Garden Club events in November and December. Deb Christopher and Paula Heming ventured to Johnstown for the festive “Welcome the Holidays” luncheon of the Johnstown Garden Club on **November 12th.**



Five of our members, Judy Ridgway, Mary Niezelski, Patti Schildkamp, Angela McDonnell, and Patti Flowers-Jacobina, attended the popular annual Tinsel Time luncheon on **December 1st** at the Ramada by Wyndham in Indiana, hosted by the Evergreen Garden Club. We always enjoy seeing our fellow garden club members of District VI, browsing the vendor tables, and enjoying the food, music and door prizes offered at this event.

Weeders and Seeders



Our final event of 2022 was our Christmas potluck dinner held on **December 6th** at the Loyalhanna Watershed Association’s Nimick Family Education Center. Thirty-four members and their guests attended the dinner, planned by the hard-working Holiday Committee. There was a special candle craft demo by Judy Ridgway (a small portion of the cancelled November program), a table of the crafts not sold at the November 5th Holiday Market (reduced prices for our members!), a basket for donations to two of our chosen charities (Westmoreland Food Bank and the Ligonier Valley Middle School’s “Food2Go” program) and door prizes! The food and drink, contributed by all the members, along with the beautifully decorated tables and Christmas music resulted in a wonderful evening! By the conclusion of the dinner, we had tallied (together with the November 5th craft show sales) \$1,328 for the Scholarship Fund from the members’ purchase of many of the craft items. We also collected \$590 that evening to contribute to our two charities. We are awed at the generosity of our members!

There was no meeting at the dinner but since the November meeting was cancelled, members voted for the 2023 Weeders and Seeders Garden Club officers.

2022 CAR-SGC Conference at 7 Springs



This year's Central Atlantic Region of State Garden Clubs (CAR-SGC) conference was held at Seven Springs Mountain Resort, and had the very fitting theme of "Seven Super Blooms That Changed Our World". Participants were able to choose from a variety of interesting and educational courses over the two days of the conference, and were treated to an excellent (and very amusing) presentation during dinner on the final evening by speaker Tom Huston. Tom's theme for his presentation and for the beautiful displays that he put together (and later raffled for our lucky attendees) was "Roses and Tulips and Sunflowers—Oh, My!"

In addition to the courses being offered on-site, participants could also opt for a tour of the awe-inspiring Falling Water and/or the hauntingly sad Flight 93 memorial.

Congratulations to SGC member Nerita Brant who worked so diligently to make the conference a success, and to all our members who showed up to assist and/or attend. A special mention to Lois Shuster who extended her hospitality and hosted an event for CAR-SGC leadership in her home on Seven Springs, ably assisted by her daughter and fellow SGC member Lorraine Dupre.

2023 CAR-SGC Conference October 24-25, 2023

From Victoria Bellias, CAR-SGC 2023 Convention Chairman

The Federated Garden Clubs of New York State is pleased to announce the 2023 CAR-SGC Conference, "Seven Strong on a Fall Adventure". FGCNYS is the host state and we are excited to invite our Seven Strong Garden club members to join the fun! The CAR-SGC 2023 Annual Conference & Tri-refresher will be held at the Radisson/Doubletree Hotel in Corning, NY. The Main Conference will be held on Tuesday and Wednesday, October 24-25, 2023. We have fun and spooky activities on Monday, October 23rd and an exciting fall adventure tour planned for Thursday, October 26th. We are combining the requirements for a tri-refresher into the conference program with interesting speakers on a variety of topics. There will be a featured design presentation and a special appearance by Brenda Moore, author of the NGC Children's Book series and President-Elect of NGC. Our Fall Adventures include: • A pumpkin blowing session to make your own glass pumpkin. Corning is famous for expert glass working and you will participate in a glass studio experience.

- The Awaken the Spirits Ghost Tour is a presentation of the Corning Historic Society in the Heritage Village. After your spooky adventure, enjoy dinner in town with CAR-SGC friends.
- A Leaf Manipulation workshop will give ideas for flower shows and the design speaker will inspire your creativity.
- Our Thursday bus trip features various sites such as Taughannock Falls with terrific views and a park ranger tour/talk, Cornell University botanical gardens and a vineyard tour to learn and enjoy the area. Participants are welcome to attend all activities and trips regardless of plans to take the tri-refresher for credit. We can't wait to have you visit beautiful Corning for a fun Fall Adventure!

2022 CAR-SGC Conference at 7 Springs

Photos by Monique Ridet



In Honor of Sheila Croushore



Workshops



CAR-SGC Director, Betty Cookendorfer (l-r) presenting Certificates of Appreciation to Vice Chair, Mary Jo Gardill and Chair, Nerita Brant

District Meetings Suggestions

By GCFP 1st VP LeeAnna Ryba

BEFORE THE MEETING

The District Director is to bring copies of the Call to their District Annual Meeting to the JUNE Board Meeting at the Wyndham. We will place them on a table near the name tags for anyone wishing to attend. The District Director is to invite the GCFP President and the two VPs to their District Annual Meeting. Traditionally a handwritten invitation, and a copy of your Call. You can write the invitation and bring it to the JUNE Board meeting to be hand delivered to the GCFP Officers. Order a Past-District Director Pin in Installation years.

THE DAY OF THE MEETING

The President may need a "page," ask her if this is necessary. This year Sheila carried her BOD gifts in a large Rubbermaid container. Similar situations may occur in the future. Reserve parking near the entrance for the State Officers. (Two spaces) Same reasons as above. Seat the GCFP President and VPs with your members. We like to be scattered at tables with members to get acquainted. Assign seating for the GCFP President and VPs, mark our seats with a name card and LEAD US TO OUR SEATS, when we arrive. We don't know where you want us and roam aimlessly ☹️ Have a microphone and podium. Printed Program for the day. More ideas on this later... Prayer or Invocation first, then the Pledge of Allegiance. (GOD, then COUNTRY) If there is no flag, no pledge. Introductions: 2nd VP, 1st VP, THEN have everyone stand before introduction of the GCFP President. You only stand once, when she speaks later, remain seated.

SUGGESTIONS FOR THINGS I SAW THAT WORKED

Invite non-GCFP garden clubs in your district to your meeting. They may like what they see and consider joining us. Baskets or bags on a table for each Club President. Any handouts can be distributed and easily carried back to their clubs. Draw the raffle basket winners and have the tickets in the hand of the announcer at the end of the program. One district had a copier nearby and placed a list of winning ticket numbers on each table following the speaker. Put a list of all upcoming garden club events in the program. A good will action towards the clubs.

AWARDS

Only three LAURELS per Club. Many Districts also award their own awards. One district makes beautiful, laminated book markers as their Laurel Award, instead of a certificate. The book marker has the recipient's name, on one side, GCFP District _ Laurel Award, the date, GCFP seal, District Director's name, and the Laurels Chair's name printed on the reverse side. Something the winner will have for years. Mix awarding Laurels with awarding other awards. The change of pace was nice. Director Citations were given by a few of you this year. Why not? A nice way to recognize those who are always helpful. Awards in the program booklet. One-page Awards to Clubs, and individuals from the previous GCFP Convention. Then a sealed section to be opened when District Awards are announced. OR one District had a rolled scroll on the table to be opened during the awards presentations. Perennial Bloom, Exceptional Horticulturalist, Laurels listed according to clubs. The awardees qualifications, projects, and reasons for receiving the award should be shared with all in attendance. This is a chance to tell their story in print and still keep members interest in the program.

Gorgeous Garden Container Designs, Tips, and Inspiration

By Christine Alexander

Source: <https://www.finegardening.com/>



Like a blank canvas, a new container presents limitless opportunities and options for form, color, and texture. But before letting your imagination run wild with garden container designs for over-the-top plantings and robust **spillers, fillers, and thrillers**, there are a few matters you should consider.

Location

Think about your environment and the **microclimate** of the location where the container will be placed. Will your container be in sun or shade? A wet part of the backyard or under an awning? This will help you select the correct plants for your space.

Container materials

A **beautiful pot** can guide the design, but **container material** should also be considered before you choose plants. A heavy pot may be a pain to move in and out of doors, for example, so perhaps steer clear of plants that need to be overwintered. A container can act as a **focal point**, an accent to a patio or bed, and even a **privacy screen**. What are your goals for the container?

Soil

After choosing plants, you'll want to consider a soil mix. Many **mixes are available right off the shelf**, but to get the perfect combination of nutrients for your plants, you can also create your own using one of the **recipes on the next page**.

Plant combinations

Want to use plants with different needs? You can also **mix and match plants that require different care** through some ingenuity. Learn how to combine perennials and annuals with tropical plants, herbs, edibles, succulents, and more for truly unique designs.

Care

Deadheading, fertilizing, **root pruning** (if needed), and **caring for your plants** throughout the season will ensure a great show. Don't forget to bring in those tender perennials during winter so that they can continue to grow year after year.

Cook Up Your Own Container Mix That Is Suited to Your Plants

By Daryl Beyers Fine Gardening - Issue 125



Just as creating a [healthy soil](#) environment is crucial for your in-ground plants, providing a suitable growing medium for your [container plants](#) is a key factor to success. Most gardeners do fine with bagged container mixes available at the nursery, but these one-size-fits-all options might not be the best options, especially if you are growing plants with specific soil needs.

Making your own container soil might sound like a lot of unnecessary work, but it can improve your plants' performance. And because these mixes have the optimal amount of nutrients and proper drainage, they reduce the amount of time you spend feeding and caring for your containers.

Each of the following recipes can be mixed in a [wheelbarrow](#) or [garden cart](#) and tweaked based on your needs or what is available to you. You can also save time and money by purchasing the items in bulk and making large batches to set aside for a later date or to share with your gardening friends.

Basic Blend

Simple ingredients make this adaptable mix easy and affordable for everyone

Moisten the ingredients to make mixing easier. Place a ½-inch mesh screen over a garden cart or other large container, and sift all ingredients to remove any large particles. Mix thoroughly.

The handfuls of garden lime, soybean meal, rock phosphate, and kelp meal (any of which can be omitted) provide extra nutrients that enable this mix to feed plants for a year or two without additional fertilization.

Recipe

- 1 part peat moss
- 1 part perlite
- 1 part compost
- 1 part good garden soil

Optional ingredients

A handful each of:

- Garden lime
- Soybean meal
- Rock phosphate
- Kelp meal

—*Lee Reich, soil scientist, New Paltz, New York*

Cook Up Your Own Container Mix That Is Suited to Your Plants

By [Daryl Beyers Fine Gardening - Issue 125](#)

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Annuals

High in nutrients, this mix pumps out the flowers without extra feeding

Because the worm castings and chicken manure provide enough nutrients to last throughout the season and the pine bark continues to increase fertility as it decomposes, this mix requires little or no extra feeding on your part.



Photo: Daryl Beyers

Recipe

- 1 part expanded slate
- 1 part composted chicken manure
- 1 part worm castings
- 1 part composted pine bark
- 1 part coarse river sand

—*Bobbie Saul, Saul Nurseries, Atlanta, Georgia*

Alpine Plants

Low fertility and a top-dressing of grit is best

Alpine plants are adapted to survive in the bare minimum of soil conditions, so many store-bought mixes high in organic matter won't work. This recipe makes a lean soil that alpine plants love, but make sure the potting soil you use has no added synthetic fertilizer.

Mulch the surface of the soil with small pebbles or grit to keep the crowns of the plants from rotting.



Photo: Daryl Beyers

Recipe

- 1 part expanded slate or shale
- 1 part bagged potting soil
- 1 part bagged playground sand

—*Lori Davis, Sunny Border Nurseries, Kensington, Connecticut*

Cook Up Your Own Container Mix That Is Suited to Your Plants

By Daryl Beyers Fine Gardening - Issue 125

Continued from previous page

Tropicals

The best blend has high fertility and the right pH

Though tropicals are a diverse group of plants, they generally prefer a loose, acidic, well-drained, fertile soil high in organic matter. Common tropical plants, like cannas and bananas, will grow in any good soil, but this mix will help them attain optimal growth.



Photo: Steven Cominsky

Recipe

Mix together:

- 2 parts composted bark
- 2 parts pure pine bark
- 1 part rice hulls
- Handful of charcoal pellets

Combine:

- 3 parts above mixture
- 1 part peat moss
- 1 part perlite
- 1 part calcined clay

—*Glenn Stokes, Stokes Tropicals, Jeanerette, Louisiana*

Cacti and Succulents

Perfect drainage makes this recipe succeed

Top-dress the container soil with small river rock, gravel, aquarium stone, or a fine-grade roofing gravel to keep the crowns of the plants from rotting.

To increase acidity just slightly—something all succulents like—add 1 tablespoon white vinegar to 5 gallons water when watering.



Photo: Daryl Beyers

Recipe

- 5 parts perlite
- 4 parts bagged potting soil
- 1 part coarse sand
- Pinch of rock dust

—*Jeff Moore, Solana Succulents, Solana Beach, California*

Cook Up Your Own Container Mix That Is Suited to Your Plants

By Daryl Beyers Fine Gardening - Issue 125
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Woody Plants and Perennials This long-lasting mixture is the perfect medium for long-term plants

If the mix clumps together and the compost you use is heavy, add more perlite to ensure good drainage. Use extra compost or bark when growing more mature plants, but don't make it too rich for young plants—it could damage their delicate roots and stems.



Photo: Steve Silk

Recipe

- 1 part peat moss
- 1 part composted bark
- 1 part compost
- 1 part sand
- 1 part perlite

—Rita Randolph, Randolph's Greenhouses, Jackson, Tennessee

Regional brands are a good bet

If you want great container soil but aren't ready to make it yourself, check out some local options. These are just a few examples, from small companies seeking to provide high-quality organic alternatives to larger, mass-produced products. Most are available at local independent garden centers. Ask for them by name, or look them up online.

South

Lady Bug Natural Brand Vortex Potting Soil, ladybugbrand.com

Mid-Atlantic

Organic Mechanics Peat-Free Potting Soil, organicmechanicsoil.com

Northeast

Coast of Maine Bar Harbor Blend Premium Potting Soil, coastofmaine.com

West

Black Gold Natural and Organic Potting Soil, blackgold.bz

Daryl Beyers is a former assistant editor and is a member of the Professional Gardeners' Guild. Photos, except where noted: Krista Hicks Benson