

Landscape Container Gardening (plant list)

Consider the Location and Purpose of your Container...

Stenocereus thurberi (Organ Pipe)¹, *Ferocactus cylindraceus* (Compass Barrel)¹, *Carnegiea gigantea* (Saguaro)¹, *Echinocereus engelmannii* (Hedgehog)¹, *Agave parviflora*^{1,2} / assorted cacti and agaves² in filtered sunlight

Euphorbia tirucalli (Pencil Plant)^{2*} (*be careful of milky sap)

Echinopsis sp.², *Gasteria* sp.², *Agave lophantha*², *Echinocactus grusonii* (Golden Barrel)²

Adenium 'Crimson Star'² / *Adenium obesum* hybrid (Karoo-rose)²
(frost sensitive – don't let roots be cold & wet)

Stenocereus marginatus (Mexican Fencepost)¹

Euphorbia resinifera (Moroccan Mound)^{1,2*} / *Agave desmettiana* (Smooth Agave)²

Aloe vera (Aloe Vera)²

Euphorbia sp.^{2*}

Lophocereus schottii f. *monstrosa* (Totem Pole)^{1,2}

Pedilanthus macrocarpus (Slipper Plant)^{1,2*} / *Fouquieria macdougallii* (Mexican Tree Ocotillo)¹

Lavandula multifida (Fern-leaf Lavender)^{1,2}

Opuntia ficus-indica (Indian-fig Prickly-pear)^{1,2}, *Euphorbia tirucalli* 'Firensis' (Firesticks)², *Portulacaria afra* (Elephant Food)^{1,2}

Agave vilmoriniana (Octopus Agave)^{1,2}

cacti, agaves and aloes

Agave ferdinandi-regis (King Ferdinand Agave)^{1,2} / *Agave bracteosa* (Squid Agave)² / *Agave ovatifolia* (Whale's Tongue Agave)^{1,2}

Agave desmettiana 'Variegata' (Variegated Smooth Agave)²

Echinocactus grusonii (Golden Barrel)^{1,2}

Agave vilmoriniana (Octopus Agave)^{1,2}, *Cleistocactus* sp.²

*Austrocyllindropuntia subulata*²

Hesperaloe parviflora (Red-yucca)¹

Rosmarinus officinalis (Trailing Rosemary)^{1,2}

Agave bovicornuta (Cow's Horn Agave)² / *Agave americana* (Century Plant)^{1,2}

Agave vilmoriniana (Octopus Agave)^{1,2}

Euphorbia rigida (*E. biglandulosa*) (Gopher Plant)^{1,2*}

Opuntia engelmannii (Engelmann's Prickly-pear)¹ / *Agave americana* (Century Plant)^{1,2} / *Euphorbia tirucalli* (Pencil Plant)^{2*}

Euphorbia antisyphilitica (Candelilla)^{1,2*} / *Pedilanthus macrocarpus* (Slipper Plant)^{1,2*}, *Kalanchoe* sp.²

Portulacaria afra (Elephant Food)^{1,2}

Helianthus annuus (Sunflower)^{1,2}

aloes, agaves, cacti

Lavandula multifida (Fern-leaf Lavender)^{1,2}

Cleistocactus sp.²

Rosmarinus officinalis (Upright Rosemary)^{1,2}, *Thymophylla pentachaeta* (Golden Fleece)^{1,2} / *Aloe* sp.² / seasonal annuals

Hesperaloe funifera (Giant Hesperaloe)^{1,2}, *Drosanthemum floribundum* 'Rosea' (Ice Plant)^{1,2}

Deciding on the Plants...

Euphorbia lomelii (*Pedilanthus macrocarpus*) (Slipper Plant)^{1,2*}

Bougainvillea sp. (variegated Bougainvillea)^{1,2} / *Agave*

agaves and cacti

Astrophytum myriostigma (Bishop's Cap Cactus)^{1,2}

Euphorbia sp.^{2*}, *Aloe dichotoma*, *Kalanchoe beharensis*², *Agave* sp., *Aloe*

Agave bovicornuta (Cow's Horn Agave)^{1,2}

Ferocactus cylindraceus (Compass Barrel)¹, *Echinocereus* sp. (Hedgehog cactus)^{1,2}, *Mammillaria grahamii* (Fishhook Pincushion)²,
Fouquieria splendens (Ocotillo)¹

succulents / *Cissus trifoliata* (Arizona grape-ivy)²

Choosing the container...

cacti, agaves, other succulents

Agave 'Blue Glow' (Blue Glow Agave)^{1,2}, *Portulacaria afra* (Elephant Food)^{1,2},
Echinopsis pachanoi (San Pedro Cactus)²

Lysiloma watsonii v. *thornberi* (Desert-fern)^{1,2} / *Cycas revoluta* (Sago-palm)²

Bougainvillea sp. (variegated Bougainvillea)^{1,2} / succulents / Bougainvilleas^{1,2}

foo-foo annuals/ *Hibiscus* sp.^{1,2}, *Asparagus densiflorus* (Asparagus-fern)²

cacti, agave

grasses^{1,2} / *Pedilanthus macrocarpus* (Slipper Plant)^{1,2*}

annuals

Sansevieria spp.² (frost sensitive)

*Sansevieria cylindrica*² (frost sensitive)

Agave filifera^{1,2} / *Agave victoriae-reginae* (Queen Victoria Agave)^{1,2} /
Agave bracteosa (Squid Agave)²

Agave americana v. *medio-picta alba*^{1,2} / *Opuntia ficus-indica* (Indian-Fig
Prickly-pear)^{1,2} / *Echinocactus grusonii* (Golden Barrel)^{1,2}

Agave geminiflora (Twin-flowered Agave)^{1,2}

Carnegiea gigantea (Saguaro)¹, *Agave* sp.^{1,2}, *Mammillaria elongata*²

Tephrocactus sp. (Paper-spine Cactus)^{1,2}

Echinocactus grusonii (Golden Barrel)^{1,2}

Agave victoriae-reginae (Queen Victoria Agave)^{1,2}

Agave parryi v. *truncata* (Artichoke Agave)^{1,2}

Echinocereus dasyacanthus (Texas Rainbow Cactus)^{1,2}

series of pots

stacked pots

crested cactus

*Senecio rowleyanus*², *Alluaudia procera*²

Aloe striata hybrid (Coral Aloe hybrid)²

Preparing the Container...

pot sealant

cover hole

The Soil...

perched water table

The Planting...

protect yourself!

bare-root cacti and agaves

healthy roots

*Agave gypsophila*², *Agave bracteosa*², *Gasteria* sp.²

Caring for Your Container...

hand watering

*Kalanchoe orgyalis*² – drip irrigation tubing

Portulacaria afra (Elephant Food)^{1,2}, *Agave* sp.²

saucers with water

organic fertilizers

Stenocereus thurberi (Organ pipe)¹

Stenocereus marginatus (Mexican Fencepost)^{1,2} / *Stenocereus pruinosus*^{1,2}

Lophocereus schottii (Senita)¹

*Cleistocactus strausii*²

Opuntia santa-rita (Purple Prickly-pear)¹

Euphorbia ingens^{2*} / *Euphorbia tirucalli* 'Firesticks'^{2*} / *Euphorbia trigona*^{2*}

Euphorbia mili^{2*} / *Euphorbia mili*^{2*} with annuals

Pachypodium lamerei (Madagascar-palm)² (frost sensitive)

*Sarcostemma viminale*² / *Cissus quadrangularis*², *Sarcostemma viminale*²

Beaucarnea recurvata (Ponytail-palm)^{1,2}

Ruellia brittoniana (Purple Ruellia)^{1,2}

Lavandula stoechas (Spanish Lavender)^{1,2}

Dalea greggii (Trailing-indigo Bush)¹

Tetranneuris acaulis (Angelita-daisy)^{1,2}

Tecoma stans 'Gold Star' ('Gold Star' Yellowbells)¹

Portulacaria afra (Elephant Food)^{1,2} / *Zamioculcas zamiifolia*²

Opuntia macrocentra (Black-spined Prickly-pear)¹, *Echinocactus grusonii* (Golden Barrel)^{1,2} / *Agave victoriae-reginae* (Queen Victoria Agave)^{1,2}

Aloe vera (Aloe vera)² / *Lophocereus schottii* f. *monstrosa* (Totem Pole)^{1,2}

Agave americana (Century Plant)^{1,2}

Portulacaria afra (Elephant Food)^{1,2}

Aloe vera (Aloe vera)^{1,2}

Agave victoriae-reginae (Queen Victoria Agave)^{1,2} / *Verbena rigida*
(Sandpaper Verbena)²

Aloe 'Blue Elf' (Blue Elf Aloe)^{1,2}, *Pedilanthus macrocarpus* (Slipper Plant)^{1,2},
Portulacaria afra (Elephant Food)^{1,2} /

Lophocereus schottii f. *monstrosa* (Totem Pole)^{1,2}, *Portulacaria afra* (Elephant Food)^{1,2}; *Aloe* 'Blue Elf' (Blue Elf Aloe)^{1,2}, *Pedilanthus macrocarpus* (Slipper Plant)^{1,2}, *Portulacaria afra* (Elephant Food)^{1,2}

*Milky sap may cause skin irritation

Light exposures recommended for plants in containers (for Phoenix area):

¹ full sun

² filtered sun, morning sun (afternoon shade), or light shade

Landscape Container Gardening in the Low Desert

LOCATION AND PURPOSE

- First decide where your container will be located, and assess the conditions of that area.
 - Will the plants receive full sun, filtered sunlight, or shade?
 - Will the plants be exposed to frost, high winds, or other extreme conditions?
 - Is the location in a high or low traffic area, and do children or pets have access to the area?
 - How will the container be viewed?
- Decide the purpose of the container.
 - Accent for a patio or entryway
 - Part of a landscape
 - A barrier or border
 - To soften or liven-up a stretch of wall
 - To lure birds or butterflies to an area
 - A seasonal color spot, or seasonal planter
 - A source of fragrance

PLANT SELECTION

- After deciding the purpose and location of your container, choose the plants accordingly.
- Look for plants with interesting form and color.
- Mix colors, textures and heights of plants, or use repetition.
- In large planters, combine plants which require similar growing conditions (soil, water, sun, etc.).

CHOOSING THE CONTAINER

Size

- The size of the container you use will depend on the size of your plant or plants. A pot a few inches wider than the current rootball is best. If the pot is excessively large, soil may remain wet too long and rot of the root system. If using more than one plant in the container, remember that they will all need space to develop.
- Shallow containers may be used for cacti and other succulents, since their root systems are typically shallow.
- Deeper, *large* containers should be used for perennials, shrubs or trees. Their root systems grow deeper, and the larger soil mass remains cooler and holds

moisture more evenly through the summer.
Smaller containers may be used for cool season annuals.

Materials

- Regarding materials, clay, plastic, ceramic, wood, or just about anything may be used. Choose what you like the look of. Each material has good qualities and bad, and by the time we reach peak summer heat, differences are negligible.
- A good size drainage hole is essential!

PREPARING THE CONTAINER

- Clay, terra cotta, or wooden pots can be coated with pot sealer to prolong their lives, or to prevent build-up of salts.
- Cover the drainage hole with a piece of newspaper, screen, or pottery to prevent the soil from washing out until the roots can hold the soil.

THE SOIL

- In general, start with a potting soil rather than “dirt” dug from a yard. There will be less potential for soil-borne diseases to develop. Avoid peat moss, which can pose problems here in the desert.
- Cacti and other succulents, especially, need a well draining soil mix.
 - Amend potting soil with a good amount of pumice (or perlite) and sand.
A basic mix could be:
 - 1 part potting soil
 - 1 part coarse sand
 - 2 parts pumice
 - There are also many good “Cactus Mix” soils available at garden centers if you’d rather not mix your own.
- Desert trees and shrubs also need a soil that drains well.
 - A little sand and pumice (or perlite) can be mixed into potting soil if it is too heavy
- Do not place a layer of gravel at the bottom of the pot. This does not promote drainage, it just decreases the space available for the roots to develop into.

THE PLANTING

- cacti and succulents:
 - thick layers of newspaper, carpet, or thick gloves can be used to protect yourself
 - loosen the rootball, gently remove the old soil from the roots
 - prune overgrown or dead roots if necessary
 - set the plants in a shaded, dry location for a few days, allowing

- the roots to callus (thus preventing rot)
- after planting, wait a few more days before watering
- perennials, trees and shrubs:
 - gently loosen the outer surface of the rootball
 - prune overgrown, circling roots if necessary
 - plant immediately and water thoroughly
- top dressing of stones (or other material) can be useful for ornamental purposes and to keep soil from splashing out of the pot

CARE

- watering
 - water *thoroughly* by hand, drip irrigation, or other means
 - cacti and other succulents typically need less frequent water than perennials, shrubs or trees
 - allow the soil to dry considerably (1" – 2" deep) between waterings
 - for more drought tolerant shrubs and trees, allow the soil to dry about an inch deep between waterings
 - for perennials or other plants that prefer more water, allow the soil to dry slightly between waterings
 - don't forget to change watering schedules as the seasons change
- fertilizing
 - synthetic or organic fertilizers may be used during the growing season of the plants
- remember that natural elements have stronger effects on plants in containers, so they can't endure as much sun, cold or drying as the same types of plants in the ground

