

# YOUR GARDEN

## How To Create Classy Container Gardens With Roses

(NAPSA)—According to the National Gardening Association, 91 million households participated in some form of do-it-yourself lawn and gardening activity in 2005, spending an average of \$387. Over the past decade, an increasing percentage of this total has gone towards container gardening.

Containers offer a versatile form of gardening that fits into any lifestyle and yard size. City dwellers can use them to brighten up lifeless balconies, roof decks or front stoops, while those with more space can decorate high-traffic spaces and incorporate them into lawn and garden areas for added drama and flair. Because of the multitude of options on the market, container gardens are an easy way to add a splash of color to any outdoor space, big or small.

Roses are among the most spectacular and rewarding choices for a container because of their combination of color, fragrance and season-long blooms. Also, with advances in hybridizing, roses are easier to grow than ever before. Look for the All-America Rose Selections (AARS) rose logo as a “seal of approval,” which indicates that the rose excelled in the most difficult plant trial in the world: two years of testing in 23 gardens across the country, representing all climate zones. By performing well against 15 criteria including fragrance, ease of maintenance and disease resistance, AARS roses are proven to be the very best.

Tom Carruth, director of research at Weeks Roses and hybridizer of eight AARS Winners in the past nine years, provides



### **Season-long blooms make roses an ideal choice for container gardening.**

the following tips for building the perfect container rose garden:

- Pick the right pot. Size is the most important consideration. Make sure the pot is not too small and, when in doubt, go for the larger size to allow the roots to grow without constraint over time. Make sure all pots have at least one drainage hole to prevent root rot. Do not use saucers beneath the pot; instead, use pot “feet” to lift the pot off any surface and guarantee good drainage.

- Get the good dirt. Roses prefer a well-drained soil. The commercial soil mixes do well but can dry out quickly. Consider adding some soil from your garden to help stabilize the mix and extend the moisture retention. Plants grown in pots require more water, organic matter and fertilizer than plants in the ground.

- Select the right spot. Remember, roses like full sun and good air circulation. Since pots have the advantage of mobility, you can move the pot around to find just the right location.

- Think vertical. Place a rose bush in the center of the container and surround with “filler”

and “spiller” plants at the base. The rose plant draws the eye upwards and adds height to the space, while the fillers and spillers cover the base and accentuate the container.

- Group plants strategically. Choose plants with the same sunlight and watering requirements as roses. Shallow-rooted fillers do best as they will not compete with the deeper rose roots. Try annuals such as sweet alyssum or lobelia, or consider smaller creeping herbs such as thyme or ornamental oregano.

- Don’t forget the foliage. Mix colorful plants with those in various shades of green to create a more intensified, three-dimensional effect. Smaller, variegated ivy hybrids look great and will spill out over sides of the container as they grow.

- Consider “pot-scaping.” Choose pots of different sizes and shapes that are made from similar material or those that are similar in color to create a complementary and leveled look. Pot feet can also be used to create levels with pots of the same size.

For the best results, experts prefer to start with AARS award-winning roses, including this year’s best new roses—Julia Child, Rainbow Sorbet, Tahitian Sunset and Wild Blue Yonder—all of which are suitable for container gardens.

These and more AARS Winners are sold in select mail-order nursery catalogs and at local nurseries and garden centers nationwide. For more tips on designing with roses and info on where to buy AARS Winners, visit [www.rose.org](http://www.rose.org).