

HANGING BASKETS



4 Steps to Planting a Professional Hanging Basket

YOU WILL NEED: Hanging basket and liner, compost, water-retentive granules, selection of plants (e.g. trailers, climbers and upright bedding plants), slow-release fertiliser.

Step 1: Prepare the Compost & Liner

Never use garden soil which is too heavy, badly drained and lacking in nutrients. Always use new compost; many plants are packed into a small area and they need the best conditions available. Add water-retentive granules to the compost. These swell up into a glutinous mass, acting as a water reservoir. Incorporate slow-release fertiliser to reduce the need for extra feeding later. An open wire basket needs a liner to prevent compost falling through. Traditionally, sphagnum moss was used, though many substitutes are available and work just as well, such as ones made of coconut fibre.



Step 2: Insert Trailing Plants

Stand the basket on a large plant pot and fill to about 1/3 with compost. Make holes 50mm (2in) apart at this level, and pass the roots of trailing plants through so they lie on top of the compost with the plants hanging outward. Add more compost and trailers, staggered between those below until you are a few inches from the top. Cascading plants can be added around the top, every 50mm - 75mm (2in - 3in). Gently flatten and spread the root ball so more plants can be added. Firm compost around the plants.



Step 3: Plant the Top

Add upright plants; place them carefully in the gaps in the centre and add a few climbers to grow up the chains. Leave a gap at the top for watering, or push a plastic funnel into the centre to use as a watering point. This will soon be covered by plant growth.



Step 4: Hanging the basket

Water thoroughly, using a fine rose so as not to disturb the compost. Baskets dry out very quickly so water at least daily. If the plants have not been outside, gradually acclimatise plants to outside conditions. Fit the chain in place and suspend the basket on the supporting bracket. Take time to rotate the basket so that its best side faces out. Six weeks after planting, start a weekly liquid feed and remember to remove dead flowers regularly to prolong flowering.

