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TROPICAL ACCENTS FOR INSPIRING CONTAINERS

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“Great containers should push boundaries with exciting, unusual plants that play well together. Smart, strategic placement elevates both simple and complex combinations.”

PRELUDE:

Some things to consider:

Soil	High fertility, good quality, average porosity.
Proportion	Match the plants to the pot.
Smart Pairing	Consider cultivation requirements before design requirements.
Longevity	Recognize your weakest links. Have a plan for replacement.

PLANTS:

Tropical and subtropical accents allow you to wow with strong, statement-making plants, thinking outside the traditional annuals box. But don't forget to soften and play with feathery, frothy, teasing textures.

Some of my favorite tropicals for containers:

Smaller to Midsized in one growing season:

<i>Alpinia zerumbet</i> 'Variegata'	<i>Cyperus alternifolius</i>
<i>Aphelandra squarrosa</i>	<i>Cyperus proflifer</i> 'Cleopatra'
<i>Begonia boliviensis</i> 'Bonfire'	<i>Euphorbia characias</i> 'Tasmanian Tiger'
<i>Begonia</i> Crown Jewel™ series	<i>Euphorbia martinii</i> 'Ascot Rainbow'
<i>Begonia</i> Jurassic™ series	<i>Euphorbia milii</i>
Bromeliads: <i>Neoregelia</i> , <i>Vriesia</i> , <i>Achmea</i> , <i>Tillandsia</i> ...	<i>Pteris cretica</i> var. <i>albolineata</i>
<i>Caladium</i> Heart to Heart® series (sun & shade)	<i>Sanchezia nobilis</i>
<i>Canna</i> Cabana <i>Canna</i> ™ series (compact)	<i>Strobilanthes dyeriana</i>
<i>Canna</i> Cannova® series (smaller from plugs)	<i>Tradescantia fluminensis</i> var. <i>aurea</i>
<i>Cissus discolor</i>	<i>Tradescantia zebrina</i>
<i>Codiaeum variegatum</i> 'Gold Fountain', 'Zanzibar'	<i>Mandevilla</i> Sun Parasol® series
<i>Coleus</i> Main Street™ series, FlameThrower™ series	<i>Manihot esculenta</i> 'Variegata'
<i>Cordyline</i> sp. 'Harlequin', 'Kiwi', 'Exotica'	<i>Muldenbeckia axillaris</i>
<i>Curcuma alismatifolia</i>	<i>Strobilanthes dyerianus</i>
<i>Curcuma longa</i> 'Snowdrift'	<i>Colocasia</i> 'Coffee Cups',
<i>Curcuma</i> Sawadee series	<i>Musa acuminata</i> 'Dwarf Cavendish' (compact)

Larger tropical accents in one growing season:

Canna 'Bengal Tiger' (or Pretoria)
Canna 'Phaison' (or Tropicanna®)
Canna 'Cleopatra'

Colocasia 'Morning Dew', 'Pharoah's Mask', 'Mayan Mask', Royal Hawaiian® series

Cyperus papyrus

Ensete ventricosum 'Maurelii'

Musa 'Siam Ruby'

Musa x paradisiaca 'Ae Ae'

Pennisetum setaceum Graceful Grasses® series 'Fireworks' 'Rubrum'

Don't forget to raid the houseplants section! Some easy choices for container recipes:

Epipremnum, *Scindapsus*, *Dracaena*, *Sansevieria*, *Clivia*, trailing *Philodendron* sp., *Alocasia*, *Syngonium*, *Hemigraphis*, *Hoya*, *Schefflera arboricola*, *Dieffenbachia*, *Aglaonema*

PLACEMENT:

Using your containers strategically – whether you've just created an incredible container recipe, or simply found the perfect pot for a specimen plant.

Enhance problem areas • **Anchor** spaces • **Integrate** container with garden

MAINTENANCE: No matter how good it started out.... if it's half-dead, it's not inspiring.

DAILY: Water and Deadhead **MONTHLY:** Feed, Prune, Replace, Consolidate

SUPPLIERS: Places to start for tropical and subtropical plant material.

Landcraft Environments landcraftenvironment.com, wholesale & retail grower in Northeast
Logee's logees.com, retail grower of rare tropical and fruiting plants in Northeast
Bullis Bromeliads bullisbrom.com, wholesale grower
Capri Farms caprifarms.com/home grower and broker
Central Florida Fern cfferns.com box shipping
Chicago Foliage Inc. chicagofoliage.com
Clesen Wholesale clessen.com wholesale grower
Coastal Nursery coastalnursery.com fed ex shipping
Excelsa Gardens excelsagardens.com retail and wholesale nursery, truck shipping
Fantasy Foliage fantasyfoliageflorida.com wholesale grower
Heart of Florida Greenhouses heartplants.com fed ex freight for smaller orders
Holt Nurseries holtnurseries.com succulents, ferns, box shipping
Midwest Tropicals myfoliage.com truck shipping
Morning Dew morningdewtropical.com larger orders, truck shipping
Rose of Sharon Nursery rossales.com box shipping



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Tropical Plants and How to Love Them: Building a relationship with heat-loving plants when you don't live in the tropics Hardcover. Cool Springs Press. April 2021. ISBN-10 0760368945

Big Dreams, Small Garden: Creating Something Extraordinary in Your Ordinary Space. Paperback. Skyhorse Publishing. March 2017 ISBN-10 1510709126