Container Gardens....
for Performance and Profit

Bam!

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Beautiful!
Artistic!
Memorable!
Placement
Where SHALL I put my container garden?

Considerations:
• Direct traffic
• Break up hardscapes
• Plant where beds don’t work
• Cover up something ugly
• Identify building entries
• View from interior spaces
• Dress up drab areas
• Add color in small spaces
• Improve safety/security
Placement (take 2)

Considerations:
- Where is the water source?
- Who is my audience?
- Will it obstruct any walkways?
- Will it need to be moved...ever?
Selection
Choices. Choices!

Things to consider:
• How big?
• How many?
• What materials?
• How expensive?
• Simple or ornate?
• Color or neutral?
• Feet or saucers?
• Pots or baskets?
Q: How big?

A: Get the biggest pot you can afford…or carry!
Q: How many?

A: Groupings are great....
A: ... unless they get out of control. Way, WAY out of control.
Q: How much?

A: Whatever it takes to fulfill the design vision.

Sometimes, all you need at a $4.5 million house is a $25 pot from a box store.

Seriously.
Irrigation
To automate...or not

Honesty time!
• Is an automated irrigation system possible?
• Is someone REALLY going to hand-water, from May until October?
• How do you feel about cactus?
Drainage...

Things to consider:
- Will water runoff cause a safety concern?
- Can the area under and around the pot be cleaned?
- Will there be natural rainfall that can fill the pot if it’s blocked?
- What is the watering commitment?
- What is the water REMOVAL commitment?
Fill ‘er up!

Your shopping list:
- Filter fabric
- Filler materials
- More filter fabric
- Potting soil
- Moisture manager pellets (or do you?)
- Watering gap
- Plants! (NOT Volcanoes!)

Q: Potting soil is EXPENSIVE. Can I cut down on the expense?

A: Layers are the key!
Q: Moisture control…
to use or not to use?

A: Can you follow instructions?
(Yes, I just answered your question with a question!)
Yes! Yes! YES!

the PLANTS!!!!!

Think about it:

- Water commitment
- Pot height
- Permanent vs. Seasonal
- Sun vs. Shade
- Home Gardener vs. Commercial Service
Nightmare Scenario, Take 1

THE IVY WAD

- Takes up color space
- Outlived its usefulness
- Roots are out of hand
- Spider mites are ready to PAR-TAAAAAY!!!!

BUT....

It’s ALIVE. And the client can’t let it go.

My solution? The word “oops” may be involved.
Nightmare Scenario, Take 2

THE MOSS BASKET

• Sooooo hard to make a replacement one look nice
• Sooooo hard to keep moist
• Sooooo hard to convince the birds to make theirs nests of something else.

BUT....

It’s SO ATTRACTIVE. And, again, the client can’t let it go.

My solution? Educate and capitulate. Make sure the moss is nice and moist before trying to work with it. In the end, it does look really nice.
Nightmare Scenario, Take 3

The Pot that Makes Me Cynical

• “Let’s keep the centerpiece, the ogon, the ivy, and the creeping thyme.”
• OK. Yes, that leaves me with space to shear off the roots of one caladium and a dragonwing for summer, shove them into a tiny hole, and hope that the other stuff keeps looking great.”

BUT….

Again, it’s ALIVE. And the client can’t let it go. And they paid for it. And they want a discount because the pot is mostly planted.

My solution?
1. Charge more.
2. Treat every pot as an annual and make that known up front.
The Price is Right!

Because PROFIT is why I’m here:
- Square footage pricing is goofy
- I repeat: GOOFY!!!
  (And it isn’t profitable)
- Consider your costs
  - Plant materials
  - Labor
  - Access
  - Consider your costs
- Make money!
Geometry:
Who knew that it would actually be useful?

area = \pi \cdot r^2
area = 3.14 \times 1 \text{ (ft)} \times 1
area = 3.14 \text{ sq ft}

If you charge $5/sq ft, is this a good way to bill for pots?

For this pot, you get $15.70 if you charge by the square foot.
Profit: We’ve got this!

1 Centerpiece $8.00
3 Caladiums $4.50
3 Dragonwing Begonias $3.75
3 Angelonia $3.75
3 Lantana $3.00
6 Petunias/Edging Plants $5.10

TOTAL PLANT COST $28.10
Bam!

Right Pot
Right Irrigation
Right Set-Up

BAM!
Right Plants

Bam!
BAM!

Right Price
BAM!
Beautiful!
Artistic!
Memorable!