

THE SQUISH FACTOR – designing abundant containers

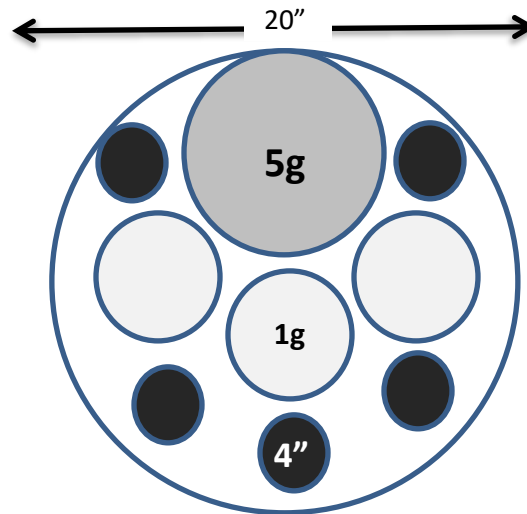
By Karen Chapman CPH

There's nothing exciting about wimpy containers. Learn why 'more is more' and how to create big, bold and bodacious designs every time with these easy steps.

Do the math

If your container is 20" diameter you're going to need more than a couple of pansies to fill it up!

- Calculate the size and quantity of plants you need
 - 5g=10" diam., 2g=7" diam. 1g=6" diam., 4"=4" diam.
- Know if your key plant will be in the center or back of the pot as this will make a difference



Up, out or down?

- Know which way your plant grows! A wide mounding plant in a 6" pot will need more elbow room than an upright 6" conifer or grass
- Use a template to help you at the nursery

Size matters

- Typically your key plant will be the largest pot size (eg 5g), the middle tier will be the next size down (eg 6') and the trailers at the edge will be the smallest (e.g. 4").

Deep massage versus a gentle tickle; Know your roots

- Woody (brown) roots of most trees and shrubs can take more manipulation than softer (white) roots of *Heuchera* and most annuals
- Do not remove more soil than necessary soil *but* the looser the roots the easier squishing will be – it's a balance

Squishing in action; The final result should be full and lush – instant gratification.

- Start with the largest plant and begin planting
- Take care to face each plant outwards and snip off a leaf or two if they're in the way
- Move, adjust cajole, and....squish!
- Think you have enough plants? Keep a few extra 4" trailers on hand just in case
- Don't fill in the outer pockets with soil until the very end

FAQ

- *Don't the plants grow over one another?* Not if you take care to note which way they grow.
- *How do they all survive the root competition?!* Top quality soil, plants and fertilizer plus use the largest pot you can.
- *What potting soil do you use?* I custom mix two usually; 80% of a loose potting soil that has NO organic matter in it e.g., ProMix, Sunshine #1 + 20% bagged compost

Want more ideas?

- This presentation is based on my award-winning online course (which includes videos and handouts) **Designing Abundant Containers**. Check out the details: <https://lejardinet.thinkific.com/courses/designing-abundant-containers>
- My **books** are all widely available and full of plant combination ideas.
- Check out my **website** and **blog** for inspiration, events, newsletters, garden tours, and free stuff! <https://lejardinetdesigns.com/>
- Sign up for my newsletter and receive my FREE download **3 Fiesta Container Recipes** (*because who doesn't love a party?*) <https://lejardinet.activehosted.com/f/7>
- **Questions?** Email me karen@lejardinetdesigns.com

