



How to make a moss lined basket: summer plants

Hanging baskets can bring a whole new dimension to gardening. With sturdy fixing, they are ideal for brightening up patios, fences, sheds and of course, create a colourful welcome at the front door.

Wire and wicker baskets are generally lined with a fabric to contain the compost and subsequent watering. Pre-formed liners are readily available along with natural sphagnum moss. This moss not only is light (which is important when considering where/how the basket is to be hung), it retains water well but does not become overly soggy which in itself can be problematic to young plant's roots.

What you will need:

- Wire basket
- Sphagnum moss
- Good quality compost
- Selection of summer bedding plants (grow from seed, buy online as plug plants or as established 'pot' plants from early April from garden centres)
- Watering can



Materials required

Step 1 Take the time to choose a varied selection of plants for your basket. An upright growing choice for the centrepiece (a thriller), several 'fillers' to stuff the middle ground between upright and cascading plants, and a selection of trailing plants to tumble down the basket sides (spillers). Plant labels give good descriptions of how they grow.

Extend the activity and use it as a sensory session:

- Consider and appreciate the varying textures, shapes, colours and fragrances of the plant flowers and leaves.
- Perhaps choose flowering colours that support a local sports team, or create a rainbow of hanging baskets—one based on each colour of the rainbow!



Step 1 Sensory selection

For this 14" diameter basket, I have chosen 1 upright thriller, 6 bushy fillers, and 6 trailing spiller plants — a mix of purple and white flowers along with variegated and green foliage.

Step 2 Choose your basket. Flat bottomed baskets are easier to work with on a tabletop. If using a round bottomed basket, wedge it into an empty pot which will help stabilise it but still have it accessible to work on all around.



Step 2 Stabilise basket

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How to make a moss lined basket: summer plants (cont.)

Step 3 'Tear' the compacted moss into pieces, packing it firmly inside the wire basket, making a bird's nest shape approx. 1/4 way up the basket's height. Ensure a thick layer of moss as this has to contain the compost and plants for the duration of summer. Fill just to the height of the moss with the compost.



Step 3



Step 4

Step 4 2 tiers of trailing plants (spillers) will create good effect, but if you would prefer fuller coverage, add a third tier. Remove the plant from its pot and gently guide the foliage through a gap in the wire, leaving the plant's root ball resting level on the layer of compost. Repeat this with another 2 plants spread evenly around the circumference of the basket.

Step 5 Take a smaller piece of moss and tuck it tightly in and around the plant's neck. Continue packing more moss around the basket to build another level of moss wall. Fill this void with compost and position plants as before, avoiding placing them directly above the tier of plants below.



Step 5



Step 6

Step 6 Leave a good 4-5cm deep gap, clear of compost, when nearing the top. Place the 'filler' plants around the edge of the basket, leaving the centre of the basket for the upright 'thrillers'. Once these plants are all positioned, infill with compost, firming the plants in well. Leave a 2cm gap of compost allowing a void within the moss container in which to water.



Step 7

Step 7 If possible, allow the plants to grow on in the basket for a couple of weeks before hanging outdoors—and avoid hanging outdoors when frost is forecast. The plants are competing for water and nutrients in a limited volume of compost. It is crucial that the basket is kept moist at ALL times and additional plant food is supplied weekly.



Step 8

Step 8 Continue to water daily and feed weekly, and 'deadheading' any flowers that start to fade/die—this will help ensure the basket will be a flurry of flowering colour until the first frosts in Autumn.

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