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Moss baskets can beautify garden

During my first visit to B.C. in 1986, I fell in love with their moss hanging baskets. Since then, I have been adopting the technique to suit our hot Ontario summers.

You can make your own floral creation using a wire frame and moistened long fibre sphagnum moss. Fill the basket loosely with moss. Then plunge your hands into the centre and press the moss against the walls forming a cavity for the soil. The moss walls should be three inches thick and cover the top rim. Place a foil plate or plastic saucer in the bottom to act as a water reservoir. Or simply purchase and soak a prepared basket - the Braum company makes a fine model.

The number of plants needed equals the number of inches of basket diameter i.e. a 14-inch basket requires 14 plants. Select plants according to your sun/shade requirements and color preferences. The B.C. "style" is an all-color mix - creating a whole garden in a basket. You may use the traditional geraniums, begonias, impatiens, petunias, etc. or be daring and select from a whole range of new plants which have come here from Europe.

Fill the basket half full with a good light-weight potting mix. Plant three "clingers" (plants that will hug the basket wall) - one



Let's Get Growing

Marjorie Mason Hogue

underneath each handle. Make a hole through the moss with your fingers - then pull the root ball through the hole and spread the roots covering them with soil. Bring the moss around the neck of the plant to close up the hole - trim the plant back so that its new growth will hug the moss wall. Some good clingers are - bacopa, creeping snapdragon, Sanvitalia (creeping zinnia), felicia (Kingfisher daisy), brachycome (Swan River daisy).

Next, fill the soil cavity and position three long "trailers" - each one half-way between the handles. Plant them on their sides so they'll be sure to trail well.

Try verbena, convolvulus, lobelia, wedelia or glechoma (which is actually a variegated "creeping charlie" but very popular in B.C.) Then choose three central plants. These can be uprights for height - heliotrope, dwarf margeurites, calceolaria or tagetes marigolds or a vining plant to

grow up the wires e.g. solanum - potato vine or a very spreading plant that will grow through all the others and unify the planting - my favorite are the velvet-textured silver or gold helichrysum or bidens which has ferny foliage and golden yellow flowers.

Complete the creation with "fillers" - planted on a 45 degree angle to spill out over the edge. The choices are many - alonsoa, anagallis, helichrysum 'Golden Beauty', lysimachia 'Outback Sunset', centradenia. After planting, pinch back all the growing tips to promote bushiness and lots of bloom. Water well. Do not hang your basket immediately. Sit it in a bright location out of the wind for two weeks to allow the roots to become established. Then, attach the chains and position it where you will be able to appreciate its beauty - preferably just above eye level. Next week, I'll discuss keeping your containers beautiful for the summer.

Send your questions to: Let's Get Growing, c/o The Tribune, 88 Brock St. West, Uxbridge, ON L9P 1R4, Attn: Marjorie Mason Hogue.

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NOTICE OF MEETING LOCATION CHANGE

The location of the Open House (3:00 p.m. to 5:30 p.m.) And Public Meeting (7:15 p.m.) scheduled for May 26 regarding the Official Plan Amendment for the Stouffville Secondary Plan has been changed from the Municipal Office to:

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