



Home, Health & Garden Line®

Greetings!

After a winter filled with polar vortexes, storms of the century, and new records across the country for low temperatures and big snowfall, it's time for a collective sigh of relief. Spring has finally decided to grace us with its presence! Celebrate by planting a colorful assortment of annuals in a hanging basket. It'll brighten up even the shadiest spots in your backyard.

In the News...

“Exceptional” Drought Harvests Havoc

While two-thirds of the nation was blanketed by snow and wrapping up in an extra layer of wool to fend off sub-zero temps this past winter, California was suffering from an exceptional drought that continued even through the so-called rainy season. The “exceptional” isn't just a superlative to hype the story. It's actually a rating by the U.S. Drought Monitor that's reserved for dry spells so severe that they only happen every 50 years or so. Water restrictions and the threat of wildfire were daily concerns for Californians, but the rest of the country will feel the effects of the drought for some time. That's because the California agriculture industry is responsible for growing nearly half of U.S. vegetables, fruits, and nuts. <http://usat.ly/1cTpc2S>

Jerry Baker

“Flowers don't worry about how they're going to bloom. They just open up and turn toward the light and that makes them beautiful.”

–Jim Carrey

This Season's Hot Topic:

Containers to the Rescue!

An easy way to add color to your landscape is to plant your annual flowers in containers rather than directly in the ground. And to a lot of folks (yours truly included) nothing says “summer” like hanging baskets spilling over with colorful annuals. You can find great-looking baskets made of plastic, wood, rattan, and terra-cotta. But my favorite is the kind made of openwork metal and fitted with a liner that holds the soil, and also allows you to plant right through it—resulting in a fabulous floral sphere. Here's how to DIY:

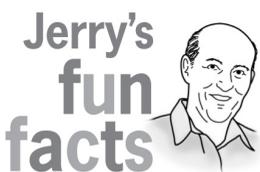
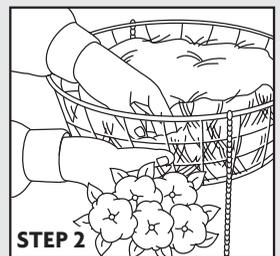
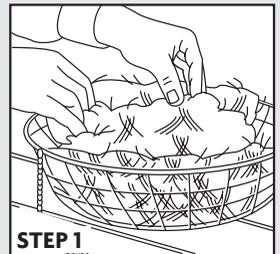
STEP 1: Press the liner into place. If you're using moss, soak it in warm water before pressing it into the basket.

STEP 2: Cut a 3-inch slit in the side for each plant. Gently insert the roots through the opening.

STEP 3: Pour in enough planting mix to reach just below the rim of the pot.

STEP 4: Set in the remaining plants.

STEP 5: Water thoroughly, and hang up the basket. Once the basket is hung, you can water it easily with a watering wand that fastens into the end of a garden hose.



Although tomatoes top the list of most-grown vegetables in American gardens, the most-eaten award goes to potatoes. Statistics show that we consume two spuds for every tomato. Or, to put it in more graphic terms, the average American gobbles up a whopping 126 pounds of taters each year!





Check out our gallery of DIY videos at www.jerrybaker.com/how-to-videos to get the most out of your hose-end sprayers, aerating lawn sandals, and more!

A Honey of a Healer

The bear on the container you buy your honey in looks pretty proud of himself. And for good reason: Honey is good for a whole host of healing! Here are five not-so-common healthy uses:



- Halt a hangover by eating a teaspoon or so of honey on a cracker or piece of toast before or after imbibing.
- Ease allergy symptoms by eating crackers with locally made honey before allergy season hits; you'll ingest small parts of the plants, grasses, and trees that may trigger symptoms, and that'll help you build up resistance and lessen the severity of your allergies when the season arrives.
- Smooth your skin by applying a thin layer of honey to your face and leaving it in place for 20 minutes. Rinse it off first with cold water, then warm.
- Calm a cough by drinking tea or juice with a teaspoon or two of honey stirred into it; it'll work like cough syrup to soothe a sore throat or mild laryngitis.
- Clear up blackheads with a paste made of egg white, dry oatmeal, and honey. Apply it to your skin and wait 10 minutes, then rinse it away with warm water and pat dry.



ANOTHER GREAT IDEA! Double-Duty Detergent Bottles

The large, sturdy, waterproof plastic bottles that hold laundry detergent sure do come in handy in the garden. For example, you can turn a thoroughly washed and dried giant-size bottle into a garden-tool caddy. Here's how: Cut a big hole on the side of the bottle opposite the handle. Then insert your trowel, pruning shears, dibble, and other small hand tools into the bottle through the hole, and use the handle to tote it around.

Water Spots on Wooden Furniture?

Oh, no! You forgot to use a coaster under your icy beverage or vase of fresh-cut flowers, and now your wooden table has a water spot. All is not lost—just try one of these quick fixes to make the spot skedaddle:

- Rub it with a bit of white non-gel toothpaste on a damp cloth.
- Mix a little table salt and olive oil, and rub the area until the stain vanishes.
- Smear it with a squirt of hand lotion, and let it sit for an hour or so.
- Spread a coating of mayonnaise over the stain and let it sit overnight.
- Sprinkle some ashes on the stain, add a few drops of vegetable oil, and rub the spot away.

After any of these treatments, wipe off the residue and polish the table as usual. And next time, don't forget to protect your table with a coaster!

That's not all, folks!

Check out www.jerrybaker.com for fantastic features like:

- ▶ Jerry's Blog with what's new in gardening, health care, and household hints.
- ▶ Critter Control solutions for battling bugs and thugs in your home and garden.
- ▶ How-to videos to guide you through the growing season.
- ▶ Jerry's favorite tips and tonics—you're just a click away from a super solution!