

DeepStream Designs

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Container Gardening: Planting Mix vs. "Dirt"

Using the appropriate planting mix is essential when growing perennials or trees and bushes in large containers where repotting these heavy items with complex root systems is going to be problematic. Getting it *right* the first time is well worth the effort.

Often clients use their "Landscaping Contractor" for this work, which may be a good solution *if* the contractor has extensive experience with container gardening; otherwise it could be a mistake.

Why? Because Landscapers are used to planting in the earth, using "dirt" or "soil" that may be too heavy for the load on a roof or balcony, may prevent proper drainage or contain clay fines that can block drains, may hold too little or too much moisture, or might not contain the correct PH and initial nutrients for the plants that you're going to use.

There is no universally correct planting mix. There are micro-climates in most geographical areas that need to be taken into consideration. This requires an intimate local knowledge of the complex relationship between all the competing factors for beneficial plant growth and maintenance. Therefore, it is essential to ensure that you have a reliable source for your planting mix.

We have posted a blog on the long-term cost benefits of using a Landscape Architect for even small commercial projects, but you still need to ensure they have container gardening experience. Another reliable source may be the nursery where you are sourcing the plants.

Whatever you do, don't assume that your Landscaper or other source has the knowledge necessary to provide the planting mix without asking about their experience with container gardening and what mix they propose to use. Vague or generic answers should be your clue that you need to investigate further before proceeding.

By all means, make certain that whoever does the planting follows DeepStream's instructions regarding planter drainage using drain pads and filter material. Many "old timers" fall back on gravel and holes in the bottom which will soon clog.

Remember that most of DeepStream's stock planter liners come with just one threaded drain hole. **This is only the minimum**, since some installations are inside and require the hole to be plugged or drain pipes attached. One hole means one point of failure with no backup. More drain holes may be required by your installation and may be drilled by DeepStream at no charge if you tell us where you want them to be installed, or you may easily do it in the field with a hole saw.