

Bloom Master Planting Instructions

General



Step One

Choose the plants you wish to use and set them aside.

(Plan ahead if you want to do your own starts from seeds, grow starts until they are approximately 4" tall before transplanting to Bloom Master – remember to review “good companion” information to make sure your plant combinations will benefit each other in your hanging garden.)

Step Two

Pre-moisten enough potting **mix** to fill container to within 1- ½’ of the top – this assures an adequate water pool

Fill the container with potting mix to bottom row of the openings

Insert your desired plants root ball first into the openings laying the root balls on the potting mix with ½” to 1” of stem inside the container. If you are using plants with a root ball larger than 2” then gently push the foliage through the opening from the inside of the container.

Add more moist potting mix, packing it as you go, up to the bottom of the next level of holes, where holes are available, and repeat the above planting instructions.

Step Three

Repeat Step Two for each row until all the openings you wish to use are planted. Add more moist potting mix to the bottom of the second row of openings and repeat step 2 patting down the potting mix and adding more if needed to reach the desired level.

Fill the container to within 1- ½’ of the top with potting mix and plant top with 5 to 10 plants depending on size. Plants in the top should be no more than 3” apart.

Step Four

Fertilize *at least* every 10 days

Saturate container when watering or fertilizing until water comes from drain holes in the bottom

Water as needed, during the summer while in full bloom, water daily.

See a planting video at <http://www.bloommaster.com/>

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1. Start with healthy transplants – While many plants will grow in the Bloom Master baskets – our experience has proven that some varieties of flowers will provide more consistent results... dazzling displays than others. Cascading style plants – (i.e. wave style petunia, ivy geranium) are preferred.
2. When planting – break up the root ball of the transplant - If the roots are in a circle at planting time – they will remain in a circle while growing and the plant won’t thrive and may die
3. Balance potting mix compaction at planting time – Use a sterile, soilless potting mix that will provide good drainage, then moderately firm the soil around the roots and in the basket as you plant; plant in layers (from bottom to top), firming soil as you go. If your soil compaction is too loose, the roots will pull away from the edge of the basket and soil will quickly erode, leaving a quick path for water to exit the basket – water won’t reach the plants on the bottom – and they will die. Soil compaction that is too firm won’t allow water and air to penetrate... again producing poor results.
4. After planting – consistent watering is very important. In a municipality or business that has more than just a few baskets, a paid / trained staff is well worth their wages; but even a homeowner with just one or two baskets, wants their display to be the envy of the neighborhood. The secret is to water every day, even if it rains. It’s easier to back away from too much water (plants will start to yellow) than to recover from drought stress.
 - a. Measure the amount of water you provide – take an empty 5 gallon bucket and using the same watering nozzle you plan on using for your Bloom Master basket – fill the bucket with water – timing (in seconds) how long it takes you to fill the bucket to the top. Do this a two or three times – then average your results, and you’ll know how long it takes for you to deliver a gallon of water to your plant.
 - b. Plants usually require 1.5 to 2 gallons of water per day. (Your actual results may vary slightly, so observe your plants and adjust your water accordingly.) Keep a record of your results (on paper) – a wise man once said – one sharp pencil is better than a thousand dull minds. Over time you’ll notice trends and build a pattern that will tell you just what you need to do for your specific location. Your results may even vary from pot to pot – depending on the location and/or plant varieties of each pot.
5. Not all watering is created equal - DO give your plants a “gentle shower” of water each day – shower above the basket - low pressure, providing adequate water (1.5 to 2 gallons.) DO NOT “hang” the watering wand from the side of the basket. DO move the wand to a different location each day. (If you receive a hard slap in the face each day, when you go to a certain location – it doesn’t take you very long to avoid that location.) Plants will react negatively to consistent doses of high pressure water and pull away, exposing bare soil, leading to possible soil erosion and potential failure of the entire basket.
6. Fertilize regularly - Use a water soluble fertilizer that is low in salt content (all fertilizer is salt based...compare brand labels to locate a low salt content.) The plant’s requirement for fertilizer will vary during the year – in early spring consider using a 20-10-20 mix at 200 ppm for six weeks then adjusting to 250 ppm, fertilizing with every watering. Plants potted in artificial growing mixes will also benefit from a fertilizer that contains micro-nutrients (this will be listed on the fertilizer label.)
7. Tools that will help – particularly where multiple Bloom Masters are being cared for.
 - a. Moisture meter - It doesn’t have to be fancy or expensive, and it’s not about the numerical value of the scale reading – this value will change with each brand of meter – What you want to track is the differential between “wet” and “thirsty” on your meter. Water your basket (as described above) then take a reading – this is your “wet” reading; come back after a day has passed and BEFORE YOU WATER, take a second reading. This

becomes your “thirsty” reading. Water (as described above) then take a reading. Compare the “thirsty” number with the new “wet” number and adjust water accordingly. As you track (and record) your results you’ll discover your ideal “wet” number and how much water your individual basket(s) need for optimum results.

b. pH meter – particularly helpful where planters are located in urban foot traffic locations. While it is difficult to adjust pH of landscaped areas, isolated blooming baskets can be subjected to external factors. One urban location had several baskets outside a movie theater – movie patrons were dumping partial cups of acidic cola-type beverages on the baskets as the patrons exited the theater, dramatically changing the pH for the small micro-climate of the blooming basket; this resulted in an undesired drop in performance of the blooming basket. After a dose of baking soda water (base to neutralize the acid) the pH of the soil was back in “normal” ranges. Credit goes to the watering crew for noticing and reporting a decline in this specific group of baskets.

8. Recovering from drought – sometimes, despite best intentions, baskets do get dry. With a high concentration of plants in a small space, rehydrating after drought stress can be difficult. The addition of a pH neutral surfactant to the water may help “make the water wetter” and aid in recovery.

9. Plant and grow “reserve” plants - customers with successful large displays of blooming baskets will plant and grow extra plants – to replace plants that may die or be damaged. If a car accident “wipes out” a fully grown planter – simply rotate a basket out of your “ready reserve” and your display will be back to 100% in “no-time.” When transporting hanging baskets, it’s best to transport them “hanging” - customers with large displays have custom fabricated a hanging rack specifically to transport the baskets in the hanging position. The basket moves from hanging on the “light pole” to hanging on the transport rack. This method may also be useful in locations where extreme weather (hurricane) plays a factor.