

Massachusetts Master Gardener Association

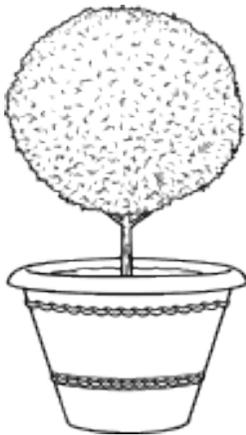
FACT SHEET



Have Gardening Questions? The **Master Gardener Help Line Hours** are 10 a.m. – 2 p.m. on Fridays (all year) as well as Wednesdays (March-November) and Mondays (April-October).
Phone: 617-933-4929 Email: mghelpline@masshort.org.

Four Season Container Gardening

Topiary is the ideal subject for a central plant in a four season container garden. It can be trimmed into a variety of shapes, is slow growing, and keeps its shape throughout the seasons. However, for your four season container, any tall shaped conifer will do well.



To begin, choose a container that will span the seasons. Terra cotta and ceramics may crack during the winter from the expansion of moisture inside the pot. Try one of the newer composite planters, cast iron or other frost-free container.

Once you have your container and have chosen your central plant, you must choose some companion plants. These are the jewelry to make your pot sparkle.

In **SPRING**, keep it simple. Johnny Jump-Ups, pansies, bulbs like grape hyacinths and daffodils tell everyone spring is here. For Easter, add decorative eggs in hopes that only the bunny with candy will visit.

In the **SUMMER**, keep it simple with a circle of miniature roses. Consider using ivy or Creeping Jenny to soften the edges of the container.

If you're looking for a different look, try succulents. They come in all shapes and sizes and many will trail over the edge of your container.

Like red? Nothing says Happy 4th like red geraniums. They herald the summer holidays and add a big punch of color to your container.

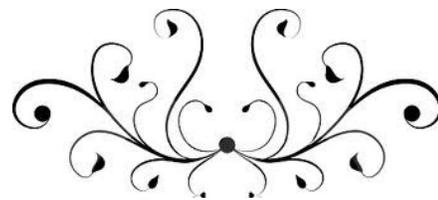
When **FALL** approaches, your options abound. Traditional mums add beautiful color, while smaller varieties of kale add terrific texture. Tuck in some mini gourds and pumpkins for a harvest look.

WINTER is when the real fun begins. Like the Williamsburg look? Add bunches of fruit and vegetables around your central plant. For a luxe version, spray them gold.

Prefer a more natural look? "Shop" your garden for pieces of holly, boxwood, rhododendron, as well as twigs of colorful dogwoods and winterberry.

Don't forget the ornaments. For a festive look, try groupings of shatterproof ornaments tucked in around the base of your central plant. Children love to decorate for the holidays, and containers bring everything down to a height that is perfect for small children who want to help.

Whatever the season, your container will brighten up your home and provide a welcoming sight to your visitors.



The Massachusetts Master Gardener Association is a non-profit organization whose mission is to share knowledge and experience with the public through outreach programs in education, horticulture and gardening; to provide the Master Gardener Training Program to interested members of the public; and to provide graduates of the Master Gardener Training Program with educational and practical opportunities to extend their knowledge and interests in gardening and related topics. <http://www.massmastergardeners.org/>