

PLANTS FOR WINDOW BOXES AND TREE PITS

By Pat Christy

WINDOW BOXES

An attractively planted window box can be a joy for the passerby as well as for the homeowner or apartment dweller. Flowers, of course, make a delightful display during the growing season but consider having some frost-tolerant vines or ground cover plants for the winter months; also think about planting some culinary herbs to use in your favorite recipes. Regular watering is a must – particularly for the plants in a south-facing window. In times of drought New Yorkers can use the “gray water” from the bathtub for the every-thirsty window-box garden.

In New York City there are certain restrictions on the use of window boxes: they should not be placed at a window leading to a fire escape; the box must be securely fastened to the window frame; the window must be no more than 50 feet above street level.



For Windows With a Sunny Exposure	For Windows with Partial Sun
Petunia (P. x hybrid)	Wax Begonia (B. semperflorens)
Dwarf Snapdragons (Antirrhinum)	Edging Lobelia (L. erinus)
Sweet Alyssum (Lobularia maritime)	Forget-Me-Not (Myosotis sylvatica)
Verbena (V. x hybrida)	Wishbone Flower (Torenia fournieri)
Gerber Daisy (Gerbera x jamesoni)	Coleus (C. Blumei)
Portulaca (P. grandiflora)	Flowering Tobacco (Nicotiana alata)
Nasturtium (Tropaeolum) majus)	Patience Plant (Impatiens wallerana)
Dwarf Marigold (Tagetes spp.)	Trailing Fuchsia (F. hybrida)
Dwarf Zinnia (Z. elegans)	Geraniums (Pelargonium spp.)
Nierembergia (N. repens rivularis)	Browallia (B. Speciosa)
Pot Marigold (Calendula officinalis)	Ageratum (A. houstonianum)
Parsley (Petroselinum hortense)	English Ivy (Hedera helix baltica)
Rosemary (Rosemarinus officinalis)	Periwinkle (Vinca minor)
Chives (Allium schoenoprasum)	Basil (Ocimum basilicum)
Sage (Salvia officinalis)	Lemon Balm (Melissa officinalis)
Oregano (Origanum vulgare)	Chervil (Anthriscus cerefolium)

Detailed instructions on the construction of window boxes can be obtained by requesting a copy of the Green Guerilla Report, Spring 1983. Call the Green Guerillas at (212)-674-8124.

TREE PITS

Planting ground covers and colorful flowers in street tree pits serves a double purpose: the appearance of the block becomes more attractive; dog owners may be deterred from allowing their pets to contaminate them.

However, we must be very selective about the type of plants used in the tree pit. No plant that could deprive the tree of nutrients should be considered. As it is, our street trees have a struggle to survive under conditions of heavy air pollution, damage from cars and trucks, and lack of adequate watering. To plant "heavy feeders" such as sunflowers or deeply rooted shrubs in the small of soil allotted to the street tree causes an additional drain on them. Also, because the tree pit will be shaded during the summer months plants that can tolerate some shade and that do not require constant moisture are preferred.

Properly cared for tree pit gardens, planted with shallow-rooted annuals, perennials ground covers, and small spring-flowering bulbs will enhance the street trees – one of the City's most valuable assets.



Annuals, Perennials and Ground Covers

- Patience Plant (*Impatiens wallerana*)
- Wax Begonian (*B. semperflorens*)
- Wishbone Flower (*Torenia fournieri*)
- Forget-Me-Not (*Myosotis sylvatica*)
- Edging Lobelia (*L. erinus*)
- Dusty Miller (*Artemisia stelleriana*)
- Plaintain Lily (*Hosta decorata*)
- English Ivy (*Hedera helix baltica*)
- Japansese Pachysandra) (*P. terminalis*)
- Periwinkle (*Vinca minor*)
- Bugleweed (*Ajuga reptans*)

Spring-Flowering Bulbs and Corms

- Snowdrops (*Galanthus nivalis*)
- Dwarf Iris (*I. Reticulata*, *I. Danfordiae*)
- Crocus spp.
- Spring Beauties (*Scilla sibirica*)
- Glory of the Snow (*Chionodoxa luciliae*)
- Winter Aconite (*Eranthis hyemalis*)
- Miniature Daffodils (*Narcissus minor*)