



## HANGING GARDENS: MOSS-LINED WIRE BASKET

Moss-lined wire baskets planted with flowers and/or foliage are attractive in appearance and fun to create. The moss lining holds the soil in while letting oxygen into the root ball and letting water drain out, leaching the soil of harmful salts every time you water. In addition to planting in the top of the basket, this method allows for plants to be tucked around the sides and even the bottom of the container. These freely-draining baskets are generally not practical for indoor use, but are ideal for porches, patios, or conservatories.

For this project you will need:

- A wire basket and hanger
- A bale of long-fibered sphagnum moss
- Potting medium, preferably a light weight, well-draining potting mix
- Plants that require the same growing conditions

Follow these easy steps to create a hanging garden of blooming annuals or to show off a beautiful fern or other foliage plant.

--Select a wire basket approximately 3" larger in diameter than the original plant container, or large enough to accommodate the number of small plants you wish to group together.

--Soak the long-fibered sphagnum moss for 15-20 minutes in a bucket of water.

--Starting in the center bottom of the wire basket, place layers of wet moss, overlapping as you work toward the top of the basket. Setting the basket into an empty container will stabilize it as you work. Making little "pancakes" of wet moss, and squeezing the excess moisture out makes the layering procedure easier and helps the layers to stick together.

--Mix a potting medium that is light and well-draining, and moisten well.

--Remove your plants from their containers, and gently loosen the roots, especially on the bottom.

--Place an inch or so of the medium in the bottom of the basket. For a single large plant, place the root ball in the basket, and fill in around it with more potting medium, firming as you go. For hanging gardens of mixed annuals or indoor plants, you can tuck root balls through the moss into the basket, filling in with potting medium as you work toward the top.

--Once the basket is filled with plants, put the hanger on the basket, and tuck in any loose moss until the surface is smooth and attractive.

--Hang the basket in the desired location, and water the basket to settle the soil around the root ball(s).

--Check the soil with your finger to determine when it is dry enough to water again. Either water in place, or, if necessary, take the basket to a basin and let water run freely until moss and soil are thoroughly wet. Allow the basket to drain before re-hanging.