

Projects in Horticultural Therapy:

Combination Planting



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Description & Purpose

Creation of a mixed planting in a glass container, creating a unique garden for all occasions.

Growing a variety of plants in special containers provides clients with an interesting collection of plants, while at the same time eliminating the need for many smaller pots with individual plants. The finished product provides interest by its multidimensional shape, size and variety of growth. The product is also an ideal gift because of the diversity of creative style which makes each container a special representation of its creator's vision.

Population

This project is applicable to most HT populations

Materials

- ❖ Clear glass container – cylindrical, spherical, square or otherwise
 - Plastic or clay pots as well as baskets and ceramic dishes to hold mediums.
- ❖ Planting soil for tropical or desert plants
- ❖ Perlite and vermiculite
- ❖ Coloured gravel or sand
- ❖ Soup spoon or small trowel
- ❖ Florist pick (seasonal accent i.e. Merry Christmas, Happy Easter, etc...)
- ❖ Driftwood

Combination planting continued

Plants

Choose plants with a variety of shapes and textures. This will create visual interest. Select plants that are compatible for light source and care. Applicable plants are listed below:

- ❖ Fittonia, also called nerve plant (red or green)
- ❖ Pilea, also called creeping Charlie
- ❖ Peperomia marble queen, miniature rippled variety is recommended
- ❖ Pteris ferns or any dwarf ferns
- ❖ Sanseveria, also called snake plant
- ❖ Dracena, also called corn plant
- ❖ African Violet
- ❖ Kalanchoe
- ❖ Small cacti and succulents are great for a desert garden!



Combination planting continued

Procedure

- Step 1: Spoon 1 inch of the perlite into the bottom of container, flatten gently by shaking container.
- Step 2: Use a small amount of coloured gravel or sand to cover the perlite and in between each layer. Gently spoon this medium around the inside edge of the container to provide a thin line of colour. Continue this procedure by using other coloured gravels or sand to give a layered effect.



- Step 3: Spoon your soil medium on top approximately 3-4 inches and gently firm into place, until one or two inches from the top of the rim.
- Step 4: Arrange plants beside the container so that you have an idea of how the finished design should look. Gently tap soil off the roots of the plants before planting. Tall plants should be planted in the center and shorter, pedulous ones to the outside.
- Step 5: Add decorative picks and ribbons to complement your planting. Driftwood pieces also add texture and natural appeal.



Care Instructions

After planting, water sparingly. Repeat when soil dries out, approximately once every two weeks (depending on dryness of environment). Exercise care as glass containers do not have drainage and over-watering will cause plants to die. This project is ideal for a table or window area.

Therapeutic Application

Procedural testing: the project can be divided into different tasks to facilitate both the assessment and development of patients' abilities. This project can be used for task analysis for simple or more complex procedural testing. Concentration, retention, method interpretation can be scored.

Instant gratification: this project provides patients with immediate success (instant gratification). Plant container can be completed in one hour or less.

Develop self-worth: a sense of self-worth is achieved in completing a project that is meaningful and can be used to beautify the hospital or home.

Innately satisfying: this is an inexpensive project. Container can be obtained from the dietary department. Small plants can be purchased at a nominal cost. Rooted cuttings may be used for this project.

Promote socialization: this activity provides an excellent vehicle for group activity and interaction.

To promote creativity and imagination: this project is an ideal outlet to stimulate individual creativity and imagination.

To promote intellectual stimulation: this horticultural project promotes intellectual stimulation through learning a new skill.

Reality Awareness: these projects can provide an awareness of the time and special seasonal events (ie. Usage of a seasonal florist pick). The use of textures and scented plant material can also enhance this objective.

Combination planting continued

References

The House Plant Expert, by Dr. D.G. Hessayon.
ISBN: 0903505355

Horticulture As Therapy, by Mitchell L. Hewson, HTM.
ISBN: 0-9698061-0-8

