

Revitalize

Tired Containers

Renew summer-weary pots by subtracting deadbeat annuals and adding cool-weather plants that thrive in fall.

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GO WITH THE FLOW

Dried-up celosia, running-rampant moneywort, and tumbleweedlike lemon thyme turned this container into a muddled mess. We calmed the chaos by clipping the thyme and replacing the celosia and moneywort with plants that mirror the thyme's cascading character. The variegated leaves of a low-growing loosestrife and ebony foliage of a sweet potato vine fashion an interplay of color and shape in the center that spreads outward to soften the pot's edges. The large-leaf plants anchor the airier profiles of the thyme and the striped maidengrass, which brings vertical interest to the rear of the pot.

PLANTS

- A} Sweet potato vine (*Ipomoea batatas* 'Blackie'), Zones 11–12.
- B} Eulaliagrass (*Miscanthus sinensis* 'Gold Bar'), Zones 6–9.
- C} *Lysimachia congestiflora* 'Walkabout Sunset', Zones 5–9.
- D} Lemon thyme (*Thymus × citriodorus*), Zones 5–9.



BEFORE

MAKE A STATEMENT

Our lemongrass flourished long after its planting buddies—*Scutellaria*, geranium, and annual herbs—conked out. Unfortunately, the burgeoning grass lost its charm with its feet and knees exposed. We replaced the slackers with silver-leaf and pink-and-white-flowering plants in keeping with the urn's formal countenance. The gooseneck spires of a low-growing *Lysimachia* harmonize with the silver-frosted coralbells and deadnettle foliage plumping out the container's center. We echoed the loosestrife's trailing habit and bright hues by placing a pinkish-white-blooming bacopa so that it flows over the other side of the container.

PLANTS

- A) Lemongrass** (*Cymbopogon citratus*), Zones 4–9.
- B) *Lysimachia*** 'Snow Candle', Zones 5–11.
- C) *Bacopa*** (*Sutera* 'Snowstorm Pink'), Zones 9–11.
- D) Coralbells** (*Dolce Mocha Mint* *Heuchera*), Zones 4–9.



BEFORE



FASHION A NEW FOUNDATION

Purple fountaingrass was the only stalwart standing amid this jumble of annuals. We cleared out lackluster stems to make way for an autumnal arrangement of flowers and foliage that accentuates the statuesque grass. Taking a cue from the grass' ruddy and golden tones, we built a base of rusty-centered strawflowers, purple-leaf coralbells, and chartreuse-leaf oxalis. Because the plants will die or go dormant in only a few months, we packed the new plants tightly together to maximize their impact and cultivate an eye-catching layer of textures. The tiny oxalis leaves provide a striking transition between strappy-leaf strawflowers and shiny ruffled coralbells. The strawflowers will continue to rise and bloom to spark interest amid the grassy blades.

PLANTS

- A) Purple fountaingrass** (*Pennisetum setaceum* 'Rubrum'), Zones 9–11.
- B) Strawflower** (Sundaze Flame *Bracteantha*), Zones 9–11.
- C) Oxalis** 'Molten Lava', Zones 9–11.
- D) Coralbells** (Dolce Licorice *Heuchera*), Zones 4–9.

BEFORE



QUICK TIPS

■ **Use a sharp or serrated knife** to surgically remove the roots of spent plants—roots will have intertwined, so take care not to damage those of remaining plants.

■ **Replenish** with fresh potting soil, filling in gaps created when removing plants.

■ **Add a balanced** organic fertilizer, such as fish emulsion, to feed new plants without burning or damaging roots and foliage.



BEFORE



OPT FOR EXOTIC

This pot's dying geraniums and spindly stemmed petunias distracted from the sculptural appeal of the New Zealand flax. We added plants that pick up on the peach and red tones of the flax's leaves and highlight its fan shape. Peach-color African daisies fill out the pot's borders and rise as complementary-hue and airy sidekicks for the

swordlike blades. Fleshy wood spurge rosettes introduce another leaf shape and texture. As fall temperatures drop, the succulent foliage will flush to deep red. We chose chartreuse coralbells as the accent plant—its scalloped leaves supply a splash of sunlight that glimmers against its darker-leaf neighbors.

PLANTS

A} New Zealand flax (*Phormium tenax* 'Bronze'), Zones 9–11.

B} Osteospermum 'Melon Symphony', Zones 10–11.

C} Coralbells (Dolce Key Lime Pie *Heuchera*), Zones 4–9.

D} Wood spurge (*Euphorbia amygdaloides* 'Efanthia'), Zones 4–11.

RETROFIT THE FOOTINGS

Once chromatic and fantastically full, this pot of verbena, African daisies, and coleus had deconstructed into a lackluster, untidy composition. We renewed the red-speckled chartreuse coleus by pinching back the stems and spotlighted its buoyant contours with lushly massed layers of color and leaf textures. Frilly-leaf coralbells pick up on the splashy markings of the coleus and draw the eye to spiky white-and-green sweet flag that flushes out the middle ground. Gold-centered red million bells nestled between and underneath the coralbells keep the large-leaf plants from weighing down the plantings; as they mature, the million bells' trailing stems of petunialike blossoms will cascade downward to visually balance the height of the coleus.

PLANTS

- A) Coleus** (*Solenostemon scutellarioides* 'Appaloosa'), Zones 10–11.
- B) Dwarf sweet flag** (*Acorus gramineus* 'Variegata'), Zones 5–11.
- C) Million bells** (*Calibrachoa* 'Cherry Pink'), Zones 9–10.
- D) Coralbells** (*Dolce Licorice Heuchera*), Zones 4–9.



BEFORE

