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Wonderful Window Planters

If you are limited on garden space but would love a burst of color and fragrance around your home, a window planter may be the ideal solution.

For the best results, select a window that gets at least six hours of direct sunlight. Petunias are hardy, sun-loving plants that are perfect for window planters. Herbs and succulents also grow well in bright planters.

If your windows do not get as much sun, you can choose plants that require less sunlight. Ferns, impatiens, snapdragons and trailing vines like ivy are all good options.

Before purchasing plants, however, be sure to measure the space underneath your window. Then when shopping, you can look for plants that are expected to grow within that height.

Arrange taller plants at the back of the planter, filling in with shorter plants near the front.

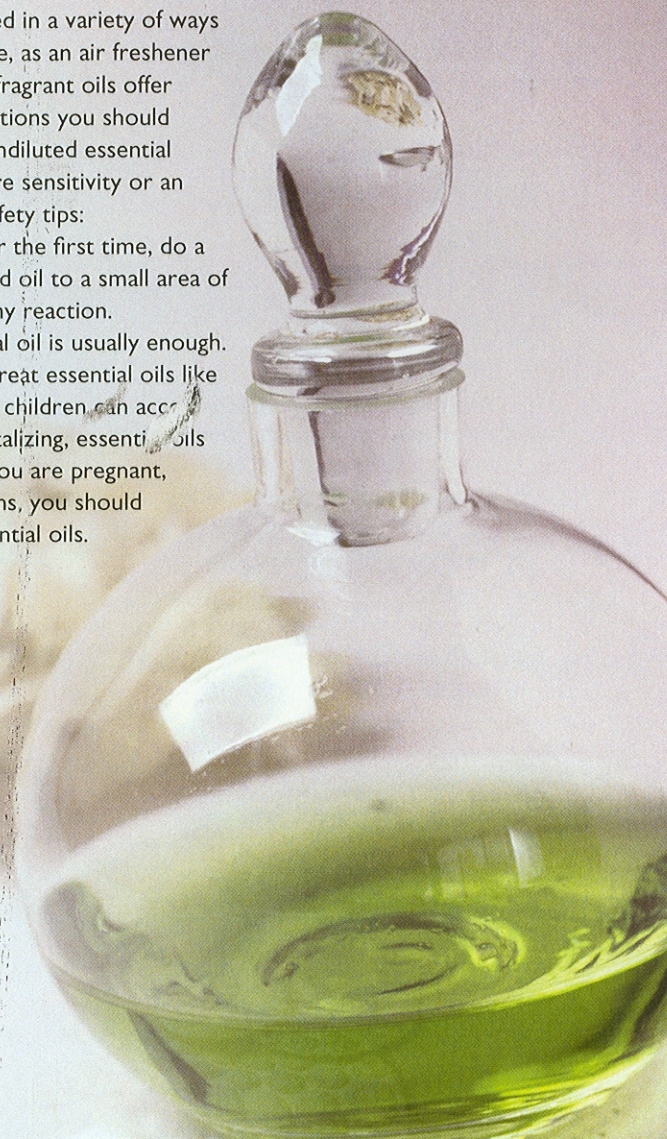
Keep watering, fertilizing and soil requirements in mind as well to ensure that all plants in the same planter will be compatible.

A blooming window planter is a wonderful way to make your home more attractive and welcoming.

living well

Aromatherapy essential oils can be used in a variety of ways – in a relaxing bath, massage, perfume, as an air freshener or in hair and skin care products. These fragrant oils offer many benefits but there are a few precautions you should keep in mind; for example, never apply undiluted essential oils to your skin. This could lead to severe sensitivity or an allergic reaction. Here are a few more safety tips:

- **Test first.** When using a new oil for the first time, do a patch test by applying a dab of diluted oil to a small area of skin. Wait 24 hours and check for any reaction.
- **Less is more.** One drop of essential oil is usually enough.
- **Keep out of reach of children.** Treat essential oils like medications and do not leave where children can access them. Although they often smell tantalizing, essential oils should never be taken internally. If you are pregnant, nursing or have other health concerns, you should consult a physician before using essential oils.



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Stop Multi-tasking and Accomplish More

Modern life is a blur of activity. Many people rush from one task to the next – or work on various tasks at once – with no end in sight. This non-stop hustle and bustle is not rewarding because it may feel as though you never accomplish anything and never have time for yourself. It can also be detrimental to a healthy body because it raises stress levels and can increase the risk of heart attack.

Research indicates that multi-tasking is a myth. Humans cannot do lots of things simultaneously; instead, we quickly switch our attention from one task to another.

Earl Miller, a professor of neuroscience at MIT, says "think about writing an e-mail and talking on the phone at the same time. You cannot focus on one while doing the other. That's because of what's called interference between the two tasks." This is especially true when the two tasks are similar. Miller continues, "they both involve communicating via speech or the written word, and so there's a lot of conflict between the two of them."

So while you may think that you're saving time by working on multiple

projects at once, you may actually be **less** productive. Jumping between tasks takes 50 percent more time than if you were to complete one task before starting another.

Constantly switching focus can also lead to a pseudo-attention deficit disorder, making it hard to concentrate on any one task. Signs that you may be multitasking too much include:

- Difficulty paying attention
- Inability to relax or sleep disorders
- A build up of clutter from the projects you have not finished
- Ignoring your own needs in order to do things for others
- Putting off little things that need to be done, like emptying the dishwasher or paying bills
- A lack of creativity

If this sounds familiar, don't worry – you can "reset" your multitasking mindset.

Schedule some downtime for yourself; turn off your cell phone, computer, television or any other source of distraction so you can meditate, take a nap or just simply unwind from the fast-paced whirlwind of modern life.

As millions of baby boomers approach retirement age, some are beginning to think about purchasing long-term care insurance. If you are considering long-term coverage for yourself or a loved one, here is some information from AARP (the American Association of Retired Persons) to help you learn more.

- Most ordinary health insurance policies and Medicare do not cover such long-term expenses as in-home assistance, meals and health monitoring.
- Long-term care insurance is expensive; an individual who is 65 years old and in good health can expect to pay between \$2,000 and \$3,000 a year for a policy. If you need long-term care, however, and do not have coverage, the cost can be astronomical. Take a look at your budget and financial goals when determining whether you need a policy.
- Before buying, shop around. Look for a policy that lets you stop paying premiums once you begin receiving benefits, has one deductible for the life of the policy, and allows you to downgrade your coverage if you cannot afford the premiums.
- If you do decide to purchase a policy, make sure that it clearly explains when you become eligible and what exactly is covered. Also ask if you can cancel the policy for any reason within 30 days of purchase and receive a refund.

Grilled Caribbean Chicken Breasts

- 4 boneless, skinless chicken breasts halves
- 1/4 cup freshly-squeezed orange juice
- 1 tsp. grated orange peel
- 1 Tbsp. olive oil
- 1 Tbsp. freshly-squeezed lime juice
- 1 tsp. grated ginger root
- 1 clove garlic, minced
- 1/4 tsp. hot pepper sauce
- 1/2 tsp. oregano
- 1/2 tsp. salt
- 1/4 tsp. pepper

In a large, shallow bowl, mix together orange juice, orange peel, olive oil, lime juice, ginger, garlic, hot pepper sauce and oregano. Add chicken, turning to coat. Cover and marinate in the refrigerator for about 3 hours or overnight.

Sprinkle chicken with salt and pepper and place on prepared grill, about 6 inches from heat. Grill, turning, for about 10 minutes or until juices run clear when chicken is pierced with a fork.

PHOTO AND RECIPE COURTESY OF THE NATIONAL BROILER COUNCIL

