

Cover Story

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The Container Evolution

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It really is fascinating how many different types of pots and containers are out there and all the different materials from which they're made. You can find everything from recycled materials to fiberglass, mixes of materials and even metal to offer a wide variety of styles, textures and color schemes, as well as eco-friendly options. Here, we'll dive into just a few that run the gamut to show what consumers can choose from in 2025.



Considering the Life Cycle

The folks at Crescent Garden started their foray into sustainable options with a self-watering pot, what retailers know now as the TruDrop planters. They began to investigate new materials for their containers, too, as a way to make an even more immediate impact.

"You need to think of the whole life cycle of the product," said Vice President Paula Douer. "But, also, does it make economic sense? Sustainability shouldn't be a luxury."

They've begun introducing planters partially made with UBQ materials, a climate-positive, thermoplastic composite that is created by taking landfill waste (including organics) and pelletizing it. They combine that with either virgin plastic or PLR plastic to create the new pots, which are branded Circular Positive. It took some R&D to get it right and they started with converting their popular Emma line of injection-molded pots to the new materials. Now they're converting the pots in the TruDrop Flex line, which launches this spring in the U.S. The TruDrop Flex comes in three styles and three colors, and has inserts that can be sold separately. Several more lines are slated to be converted over in the next year-and-a-half.



The pots feature tags, too, that Paula said the company worked hard on to convey the Circular Positive message, as well as the self-watering message. There are QR codes on the tags to direct consumers to more information online.

That's So Metal

Col-met has always been in the business of steel, so it's no wonder that when they came out with a line of planters, they stuck to what they do best. They recently introduced the trademarked FloraForm planters, which are made from 1/8-in. thick 304 stainless steel and designed to be durable and resistant to rust over time, making them ideal for concrete and stone patios.

"Innovation is one of our values. We are always looking for new ideas and better ways to get things done," said Jessa Collier, vice president of marketing and communication at Col-met. "This planter benefits both the

retailer selling it and the homeowner because of how it is packaged. It ships in a flat box, with the four panels, base and bolts nested inside.

"The boxes can be stacked at retail garden centers to conserve space and fit neatly in customers' trunks."

There are two styles that have the same number of parts: the 490 series with four 90-degree corners and the 845 series with eight 45-degree corners. There are two base sizes, 14-in. by 14-in. and 16-in. by 16-in., and all are available in three finishes: black texture powder coat, oxide patina powder coat and uncoated stainless steel.

Lightweight, Yet Durable

The team at Anamese is always on the hunt for new styles, as well as new materials to offer their retail customers (and end consumers). They just introduced the new Porto Lite Collection made of Ficonstone and I caught up with Ashley Goldman at the market in Atlanta in January to find out more.

It turns out this material is a mix of finely ground sand, stone and cement mixed with fiberglass, making it lighter, but still very sturdy and durable. They're also eco-friendly, as no firing is required. And they're made in Vietnam.

These pots are coated inside and waterproof, allowing them to be used indoors or outdoors. They don't have drainage holes, but one can be easily drilled into it if used outside. Ashley told me there are eight pieces in the collection and three colors: obsidian, alabaster and griegie.

"They are very organic-looking with their texture and colors, which sets it apart," she added.



Different and Unique

Michael Carr started out making a name for himself by offering different and unique options in pottery, particularly focusing on pots that withstand the elements. He's since included the standard offerings, too, to create a more than 400-page catalog of products. New to that catalog is the TerraBetta line, which definitely fits with the unique and different mantra.

While the look is classic, the material is a proprietary blend of clays that undergo a special technique to make them

smooth. But what really makes it is the baking.

“The hotter and longer it cooks, the tighter the pores get,” Michael said. “And the tighter the pores get, the less moisture gets in the piece.”

Moisture is the enemy of all pots and terracotta will flake in the elements. But it’s so beloved that Michael wanted to find a way to let gardeners have it without fuss.

“If you drop anything into a terracotta pot it works,” he said of the wide range of bloom colors. “Terracotta fits everything and it’s got its niche where a lot of people love it.”

And now people can love it down to at least -5 degrees, based on official testing he’d done. The TerraBetta collection has 22 different styles, ranging in size up to about 30-in. Retailers can see these pots and all the others offering by Michael Carr Designs at the showroom by appointment in Marietta, Georgia.

Tried & True

At Jackson Cast Stone, they offer a wide variety of options for landscape customers, and right now the most popular and sought-after are ones that can hold up.

“The highest demand we are seeing in the landscape industry is for solid, weather-proof, commercial cast stone,” said CEO Forrest Jackson. “It is heavy enough not to blow away (or for anyone to walk off with it) and creates a strong statement in its environs.”

The sister company, Jackson Pottery, also offers lightweight options, but for the landscape side, it’s the heavy duty products that tick the most boxes. There are more than 30 products in the contemporary line, as well as more traditional urns and timeless planters, depending on the property design, Forrest said. These are big planters, too, ranging in size from 18-in. up to 60-in.

“Most garden centers don’t have a lot of options for larger planters when it comes to their wholesale supplier choices,” he added. “In making the move to create distinctive, large-scale planters for the landscape industry, we are encouraging distinguished garden centers to be a strong resource for customers who demand larger solutions to beautify their outdoor spaces.” **GP**