

Kiss My Aster

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Get in Line

Amanda Thomsen



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This month's *Green Profit* topic is all about Pots, Baskets and Window Boxes and even though I have much to say about this particular topic, I thought I'd ask my friends at The Horticult—Chantal Aida Gordon and Ryan Benoit—for their 2-cents worth since they actually wrote the book on window boxes. It's called "How to Window Box" (Clarkson Potter) and it's out later this month.

Me: Who are window boxes for?

The Horticult: Everybody. When you think of window boxes, you might think of traditional window boxes grown outside on the façade of a house under the window. In our book, "How to Window Box," we're trying to think beyond that traditional setup. We're showing how you can also grow arrangements indoors on a windowsill, on a patio, on a plant stand. Currently, we have our boxes scattered throughout the yard, so even the window can be optional!

Me: What have garden centers done right for window boxes?

The Horticult: They haven't really been doing right by window boxes (at least that we've noticed), but we hope this will change soon. We're still seeing arrangements in big, round, traditional, space-inefficient pots and not enough window boxes for purchase with simple lines that won't compete with the plants inside.

That said, the smaller plants sold at garden centers are ideal for window box gardening. And any nursery that leans into carrying a wide range of one type of plant (e.g. ferns) is going to be ideal for a gardener who wants to use a window box to geek out on a certain genus.

Me: What can garden centers do to level up?

The Horticult: They should offer options beyond the traditional ornate wrought iron boxes stuffed with coir, and beyond boxes with ornate decorative trim.

(Note from me: Oh yes, please.)

We've seen some self-watering window designs online, but not at our local garden centers. Indoor window boxes with hidden water collection trays are also hard to find. We think window box kits with pre-cut lumber and predrilled holes would allow users to quickly assemble quality window boxes at a lower cost and customize.

Me: What trends do you see coming down the line for window boxes?

The Horticult: Showy blooms have always been very popular arrangements, especially in the South, but less traditional arrangements featuring certain plant families or genera are also on the rise. In our book, we also share some fun edible arrangements, including a box with only edible blooms and a box with an herb garden—both perfect for supplementing meals and drinks at home.

Natural wood window boxes can be painted, stained or even varnished to complement your space, so your plants can truly become part of your decor.

Me: What seasons (or style, I guess) of window boxes are your favorite and why?

The Horticult: We really liked creating the “Ice Box,” which is a freeze-tolerant arrangement that helps gardeners in colder zones get through winter with some color and some green. Think pansies, small boxwoods and ornamental cabbage. Another favorite is the sansevieria, which challenged us to explore the genus beyond the common snake plant, bringing in some sculptural oddballs like *S. cylindrica*. It’s truly a beginner-level box with some of the easiest plants to grow, especially suited for low-light levels.

Me again. Are you shining the spotlight on window boxes as much as you can? I have to agree with The Horticult, as someone that designed and planted custom containers for years, something about the shape makes them more fun to plant than most anything. So get in line, 2018—I think this just might be the year of the window box. **GP**

Amanda Thomsen is a regular columnist in Green Profit magazine. You can find her funky, punky blog planted at KissMyAster.co and you can follow her on Facebook, Twitter AND Instagram @KissMyAster.