

And off we go....the recent stretch of cold weather doesn't seem to have slowed Northwest gardeners down much. Our season is in full swing, with flat after flat of green and blooming starts leaving our nursery bound for local garden shops near you. This week, we've been sending out a lot of ready-to-plant nasturtium starts in jumbos and tons of 3 inch tender perennials and trailing accents intended for "stuffing" into a hanging basket.

### TASTY EDIBLE NASTURTIUMS

Have a party in the garden this summer – and feed them nasturtiums!



Nasturtiums are one of the easiest, most versatile, and most impressive-looking edible flowers you can grow. The buds, flowers, leaves, and young seed pods are all edible, with a versatile peppery flavor. Add whole blossoms to salads or use as a garnish (add just before serving to warm dishes so they won't wilt). Chop the jewel-toned petals into butter with herbs and shallots (delicious on pasta, meat, and sandwiches), or use them to make flavored vinegars, mayonnaise, or mustard. You can even stuff the blooms with shrimp or egg salad.

Nasturtium leaves also add a little variety to a salad or other dish: standouts are the cream-and-green marbled 'Alaska' varieties, the deep blue-green of 'Empress of India,' and the burgundy-rimmed chartreuse of 'Tip Top Mahogany.' You can see these and our other varieties in our [Nasturtium Brochure](#). We also have color [photocard signs](#) of 24 nasturtium varieties available to download and print.

'Princess of India' is a special new dwarf variety from our friend who is a breeder in India.

Nasturtiums like cool, bright weather, so these lengthening spring days are an ideal time to transplant them. The main thing to know when picking a site for nasties is that they don't like fertile ground. They will bloom more heavily and be less susceptible to black aphids in poor soil. On the other hand, you can plant them in better soil to deliberately draw aphids away from other nearby garden plants (your bell peppers, for example!). They are best in mixed plantings anyway – nasties like company but don't want to be coddled!



### BASKET STUFFERS

Another good April project is designing and starting your own Victorian-style hanging baskets. Our greenhouses right now are full of trailing and mounding annuals chosen for their heavy blooming or ornamental accent foliage and grown in 3 inch pots so you can transplant them into hanging baskets or other containers.

A few tips for planting a basket or container:

- \* Wake up the roots: gently pull them apart before replanting so they know they have room to grow
- \* Water deeply after planting: watch for water to come out the bottom of the pot
- \* Plant sprawling or trailing varieties around the edges for the fullest basket
- \* Use paper pulp rather than plastic baskets, which dry out in the wind and heat up in the sun
- \* We like to use a time-release Osmocote fertilizer (1 tablespoon per basket) and soil gels in summer to hold moisture in the soil

Exciting new varieties this year include Bacopa 'Abunda Colossal' in 'White' and 'Lavender,' with huge nickel-sized blooms!



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