

Buyer's guide Hanging baskets

Make great baskets!

Geoff Hodge looks up to the latest selection on the market

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Gardening Journalist

SOME of the greatest sights in summer are created with burgeoning hanging baskets providing colourful height in the garden. Having judged the Gardener of the Year competition for several years, I can confirm that GN readers are among some of the best basketeers in the country!

The opposite is also true - a badly planted and maintained basket looks awful! For a great display, not only is the planting and aftercare important, but you need a good, easy-to-use hanging basket in the first place.

In theory, the basket is just a container and you shouldn't be able to see it if it has been planted properly. In practice, not everyone plants well and so sometimes an ornamental basket that looks good in its own right is an advantage.

The traditional hanging basket is a simple wire-framed affair, lined with moss or other material. But many people struggle with these - trying to shove the roots of a well-grown plant through the small mesh can prove impossible.

Suppliers

- Babylon Garden Products**
01604 821867
www.babylon.co.uk
- Botanico**
01905 791984
www.botanicogarden.co.uk
- Gardman**
01406 372237
www.gardman.co.uk
- Garland Products**
01384 278256
www.garlandproducts.com
- Sankey Garden Products**
0115 927 7335
www.sankeygrowyourown.co.uk
- Suttons**
0844 922 0606/2899
www.suttons.co.uk
- The Stewart Company**
0208 603 5700
www.stewartcompany.co.uk
- Thompson & Morgan**
0844 248 5383
www.thompson-morgan.com

CONTACT DETAILS

In our Watering Cans tried and tested (GN March 13), the contact details for our Best Buy, Convenience Cans NuCan, should have read tel: 07711 979388; www.conveniencecans.com

PLASTIC



Eeze Hanging Basket

Made from interwoven polypropylene, this hanging basket offers a low cost, practical alternative to more expensive baskets. The stitched seams allow excess moisture to drain freely away to prevent overwatering. The basket has pre-cut holes, so no pre-preparation is needed - they're all ready to plant up. Comes with demonstration DVD.

- **Chains** Three; dog clips for easy removing/attaching
- **Size** 37.5cm (15in)
- **Price guide** Two £7.99 or £3.99 with any basket plants; six £14.98 or £7.49 with any basket plants
- **Supplier** Thompson & Morgan

Corinthian Hanging Basket

This self-watering basket has an integral 1.5-litre (just over 2½ pints) water reservoir. It comes with capillary matting for the base of the basket, the tongue of which draws up water from the reservoir ensuring that sufficient water is available where it matters, around the roots. A water filler tube allows you to water direct into the reservoir if needed. The rim of the basket has pre-formed holes making attaching/removing the chains easy and ensuring they are in the right place to keep the basket totally level when hanging. Available in green or terracotta colours.

- **Chains** Three; easily removed/attached
- **Size** 31.5cm (12½in)
- **Price guide** £5.99
- **Supplier** Stewart



Easy-Fill Hanging Basket

I'd given up on hanging baskets because the traditional mesh design was so difficult to use and plant up. Then three years ago I discovered these baskets and everything changed. In fact, I call them the 'Ultimate Hanging Basket'. The flat bottom makes planting up easy and has a 0.5-litre (¾ pint) water-holding capacity, the mesh side panels are removed to make planting - even large plants - easy without damaging the roots and the mesh allows the roots to breathe.

The rim of the basket has pre-formed holes - making attaching/removing the chains easy and ensuring they are in the right place to keep the basket totally level when hanging.

- **Chains** Four; easily removed/attached
- **Sizes** 30cm (12in); 35cm (14in)
- **Price guide** Two 30cm (12in) £9.95; two 35cm (14in) £14.95
- **Supplier** Suttons



Aqua Lock Hanging Basket

The benefit of this basket is you can water your plants from above and below, thanks to the twist-lock detachable water reservoir. When watering from above, excess water is also retained in the reservoir. The small basket has a 0.6-litre (1 pint) reservoir and the large a 1.4-litre (just under 2½ pints) reservoir. Water is distributed to the compost from a capillary matting wick. The rim of the basket has pre-formed holes making attaching/removing the chains easy and ensuring they are in the right place to keep the basket level when hanging.

- **Chains** Four; easily removed/attached
- **Sizes** 33cm (13in); 41cm (16½in)
- **Price guide** £6.99; £9.99
- **Supplier** Garland Products



Fiore Hanging Basket

Solid-sided basket for top planting only. It has an integral saucer, which will hold some water, and you can water directly into its lip if preferred. Available in granite or terracotta colours.

- **Chains** Three
- **Size** 30cm (12in)
- **Price guide** £6.49
- **Supplier** Sankey

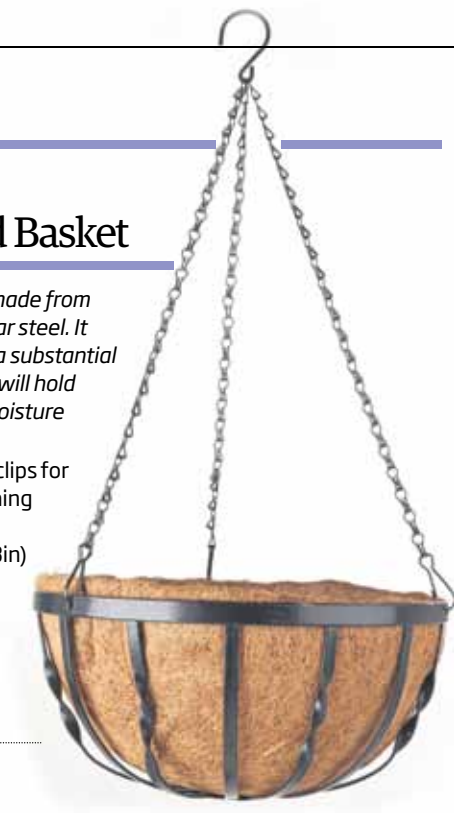


METAL

Titan Round Basket

Robust metal basket made from powder-coated, flat bar steel. It comes complete with a substantial coco fibre liner, which will hold water and maintain moisture levels in the compost.

- **Chains** Three; dog clips for easy removing/attaching
- **Sizes** 35cm (14in); 40cm (16in); 45cm (18in)
- **Price guide** £9.99; £12.99; £14.99
- **Supplier** Botanico



Versailles Hanging Basket

This is a highly decorative hanging basket, made from durable steel with a bronze effect finish. It comes complete with a substantial coco fibre liner, which will hold water and maintain moisture levels in the compost. A matching hanging basket bracket is also available to finish the look.

- **Chains** Three; fixed
- **Size** 35cm (14in)
- **Price guide** £14.99
- **Supplier** Gardman



Wall Mounted Babylon Bowl

The Babylon Bowl features a fixed bracket with a removable/interchangeable basket head. There are no chains, which means the basket won't swing around in the wind, so there's no plant damage. You need to provide a liner, such as moss, but planting through the sides is very easy and it is able to accommodate large plants.

- **Chains** No chains
- **Size** 29cm (11½in)
- **Price guide** £19
- **Supplier** Babylon Garden Products



Himalaya Blue Twist Basket

A very colourful, ornamental basket, so it doesn't matter too much if the basket shows through the planting. It is made from fern and corn leaf rope. Comes complete with polyethylene liner to keep moisture away from the basket material.

- **Chains** Three; fixed, but could be prised open with pliers
- **Sizes** 30cm (12in); 35cm (14in); 40cm (16in)
- **Price guide** £6.99; £7.99; £8.99
- **Supplier** Botanico

NATURAL MATERIALS

Lattice Rattan Hanging Basket

Natural-looking ornamental basket, which is made from rattan, threaded with lattice horsetail fern. Comes complete with polyethylene liner to keep moisture away from the basket material.

- **Chains** Three; fixed, but could be prised open with pliers
- **Size** 35cm (14in)
- **Price guide** £7.99
- **Supplier** Gardman



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We have 10 pairs of the 35cm Best Buy Easy-Fill Hanging Baskets to give away! Send your name and address to Garden News Hanging Basket Giveaway, PO Box 57, Coates, Peterborough PE7 2FE or enter online at www.greatcompetitions.co.uk Closing date is April 10. Please write 'do not contact' if you don't want to be contacted by us or by carefully selected partner organisations.

