Design Principles

There are several design principles to take into consideration when planning your container gardens.

Focus

The point or area where the eye is drawn first. Place the focus below the tallest point to achieve balance. Develop focus by using large, coarse, or bright colored plant material in that area. All plant material should radiate out from the focus.

Balance

A feeling of stability. Symmetrical balance is equal, almost identical elements on each side of a central axis, with the highest point over the center. Asymmetrical balance is when the two sides of the central axis are not mirror images but have the same visual weight.

Form

Vary the form of the plant material you choose; use tall linear species to add height; mounded species to add mass; and low growing, cascading species to fill in, add depth, and soften the edges of the container.

Texture

Add coarse, medium, and fine textured plants together. Three to five species will achieve an assortment of forms and textures. Use variation and gradation of form and texture.

Rhythm

Repeat color at regular intervals around the outside of a round container or along the length of a long rectangular container. Repeat color in several containers to "tie" them together. Graceful lines of plant leaves add flow and rhythm.

Proportion

Use larger and/or more plants in larger containers, and less and/or smaller plants in small containers. Rule of thumb is the height of the tallest plant should not exceed 1X-2X the height of the container excluding pedestals and "air-fairy" sprigs. Best to use odd numbers:one, three, five or seven plants or plugs of each cultivar.

http://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/floriculture/container-garden/lesson/colorwheel.html

Color Theory

There are several ways to use color to add interest and appeal to your container gardens. Two of these are, using color echoing and different color harmonies.

"Color echoing" is using repetition of a color from one cultivar to another. For example, using a white flower to echo the white in a green and white variegated foliage. Repetition of any design element adds rhythm to the design and leads your customer's eye around and around the design not letting them take their eyes off of it!

Color Harmonies		
Color Scheme	**Definition**	**Effect / Use**
Monochromatic	Lightness or darkness or strength of the color may vary, but only one color is used	Quiet and soothing
Analogous	Colors closely related to one another (next to each other) on the color wheel	More dramatic than monochromatic
Complementary	Colors opposite one another on the color wheel	Demands attention
Neutral	Black, gray, and white	Add depth to the composition; make other colors look brighter and deeper; divide colors that clash or are too strong; tone down complementary color schemes in daylight; and glow in the dark
Polychrome	Mixture of many colors	This works most of the time because flowers naturally blend together