Spillers:
There should be just enough room left for you to squeeze in a few spillers near the edge of the pot. The main role of a spiller is to sprawl over the side of the container, softening its edges and tumbling towards the ground. When parts of a container planting touch the earth the pot looks rooted to its place.

Well-chosen spillers continue the dialogue begun by the thriller and the filler. To deepen that conversation, look for spillers that echo or contrast with the other plants in the pot by virtue of shape, color, or texture.

Down to Earth Garden Center offers classes and workshops on many different topics throughout the year.

Sign up for Thrillers, Fillers & Spillers Workshop today!

Cost: Build your own; only pay for what you take home

Come and learn how to create porch pots that are sure to dazzle! We will go over the basics of how to design and plant annual containers with three types of plants that perform different functions but work in harmony to create luscious porch pots.
Annual Container Design

The most beautiful container planting has a simple three-ingredient recipe.

1. First and foremost is a “thriller,” a centerpiece plant with star quality, something big, bold, and beautiful.

2. Then add a few spicy “fillers,” foliage or flowering plants that will compliment but not overwhelm the main player.

3. Finally, add a savory splash of mischief, a “spiller” that just tumbles out over the edge of the pot. As long as you use each of those kinds of plants—in various proportions—and take care to balance colors and textures, you can create a pot with pizzazz!

Thrillers:
As the name implies, thrillers are the big, attention-getting star players. They are usually tall, upright plants, with outstanding qualities—such as colorful foliage, intriguing shape, or dramatic flowers—that last all season long. Many thrillers are architectural: plants with structural, eye-catching form that can serve as a sturdy backbone or rugged framework for a scrim of less substantial plants.

Thrillers work best in compositions where they are the tallest plant. They are also the starting point in a container design. Select your thriller, then build around it. At planting time, the thriller goes in the center of a pot that will be viewed from all sides and at the back of a pot that will be displayed in a corner or against a wall.

Fillers:
Billowy, more finely textured plants that surround and weave through the thriller. Fillers add mass to the overall composition and, more important, establish a dialogue with the thriller. Fillers add a textural contrast or colorful counterpoint. Since fillers are usually plants with a mounded silhouette, they also do just what the name implies: They fill up the pot while embracing the thriller. Often, they help by hiding the bare knees—the less interesting stems or stalks—of their larger neighbor.

Position fillers around the thriller. You can use a mix of plants: some with foliar interest, others with flowers. For flowery fillers, avoid perennial varieties in favor of uncommon, striking annuals or tender perennials for their much longer flowering season. Since the goal of container plants is to attract the eye, these plants add an unusual alluring flavor. If you like bountiful-looking containers, cram as many fillers in as you can.