

Pots of fire

Rejuvenate your summer pots and give your patio a boost with **Kevin Smith's** crocosmia container recipes. Photos by Paul Debois

There's every chance that your summer containers are looking past their best right now. Blooms diminish, pests attack and the weather often takes its toll, leaving you with a rosey display by August. But don't panic. Use crocosmia, and other plants that look their best at the moment, to pep up your pots and keep flowers coming from now into the autumn. You'll have no trouble buying suitable plants from your garden centre right now and these pots were planted up in no time.

If you can't find the exact varieties we've chosen for these two container recipes, don't worry. Just follow how we've used shape, texture and colour and buy plants with this in mind. Your pots will be up to scratch before you know it!

Orange burst

Crocosmias are tall plants, so it's important to choose other lofty partners to complement them. The feathery deschampsia is perfect for added interest at the 'top' of the planting, while libertia and celosia fill in the lower storeys. All the plants, apart from the celosia, are perennial so, when the show is over, they can be planted out in the garden to bloom again next year.

- WE USED**
- 2 x *Crocosmia* 'Irish Dawn'
 - 1 x *Deschampsia cespitosa* 'Goldtau'
 - 1 x *Libertia ixioides* 'Goldfinger'
 - 3 x orange *Celosia caracas*
 - 45cm terracotta pot
 - Multi-purpose compost
 - Slow-release fertiliser



- 1** Put a layer of broken polystyrene or crocks in the base of the pot. This will help with drainage and reduce the volume of compost you will need.
- 2** Add compost to the pot until it is two-thirds full. Push your fingers into the compost as you go to get rid of air pockets. Gently knocking the pot on the ground will also help.
- 3** Sprinkle slow-release fertiliser into the compost following the instructions on the packet. This will help you to keep

- the display looking good for as long as possible.
- 4** You can start planting by positioning your tallest specimens towards the back of the display. Then gently tease out the plants' roots, taking care not to break up the rootball.
- 5** Add the shorter plants at the front of the display and backfill with more compost, firming as you go to hold plants upright. Move the container to its final position and water it well. Deadhead as blooms fade to keep the display looking fresh.



Use striking libertia for evergreen foliage in fiery displays

Water your pots regularly to keep them full of life in the final months of summer



Seeing red

Fancy turning up the heat a little? Follow our step-by-step planting guide with this alternative combination of plants and bring some extra fire and drama to your container. *Crocosmia* 'Lucifer' is one of the most striking varieties available, bearing vivid scarlet blooms for dramatic impact.

- WE USED**
- 2 x *Crocosmia* 'Lucifer'
 - 2 x *Lobelia cardinalis* 'Queen Victoria'
 - 2 x *Cosmos atrosanguineus*

Crocosmia 'Lucifer' is a must-have plant for red-hot schemes



Combine leaf colour and texture for maximum impact

OTHER CROCOSMIAS TO TRY

- 'Emberglow' For a hit of rich, dark red
- 'Emily McKenzie' For orange impact
- 'Coleton Fishacre' For lemon flowers
- 'Solfatare' For beautiful bronze foliage