

gardening

# No room to grow? Try container planting

*'Moveability' is key to success*

By DICK CONKLIN  
Keys Living contributor

When we bought our first Keys home – a condo that was part seasonal rental, part weekend getaway — gardening was out of the question. A few years later, our first Keys house came with a yard full of limestone cap rock and very little topsoil.

The good news was that the previous owner had built several plant boxes in the yard, allowing eight beautiful citrus trees to flourish where they otherwise could not have survived. The bad news was that a chainsaw crew from the state's failed citrus canker eradication program came along one day and unceremoniously removed our trees.

But they didn't take our plant boxes, so we quickly replaced our orange, lime and grapefruit trees with pineapples, tomatoes, mangos and flowers.

As useful as they may be, our plant boxes are not usually considered typical garden "containers." While they do provide a place to hold soil and other nutrients, they aren't exactly



This entranceway at the home of Pat and Ron Greeley is a perfect setting for some decorative container gardening.



Photos by DICK CONKLIN

Container gardening works just about anywhere, as this Boot Key Harbor boat slip shows.

portable. That's the key.

A garden container can be anything from a small flowerpot or hanging basket to a large urn. There are clay pots, antique pots, stone pots and

pottery pots. They can be found made from metal, wood, ceramic or fiberglass.

They all share one thing in common – they can be moved. If a hurricane approaches,

plants and flowers in containers can be moved to higher ground, out of the wind. If a plant is sensitive to sunlight, its location in the yard can be adjusted between the summer and winter seasons. If your bougainvillea isn't getting enough sun, move it. If a cold front is predicted, bring sensitive plants inside.

If the mood strikes you, redesign your garden by rearranging or replacing your container plants. If space is at a premium, try hanging baskets or shelf containers or pots mounted on pedestals or posts.

Experiment with different container colors, styles, materials, sizes and soils.

By creating a kind of "microclimate" in a container, you can experiment with a variety of plants, flowers, herbs and veggies. Grow your own jalapeno peppers. Season your meals with fresh basil. Start a new coconut palm.

You can bring your garden inside – or at least into your patio or porch. Create a special centerpiece for the dining table. Anything's possible.

See **CONTAINERS** / 44



Sensitive plants like orchids can best be grown in hanging containers, with a little trial-and-error to find the perfect spot.



## Clayton (Cy) Eastlack

305-393-2341  
www.CyEastlack.com



Each Office Independently Owned and Operated



**EXQUISITE** 3 bedroom home on prestigious Sombrero Isle with elevated pool. 4-car garage & large dock w/davits. Terracing floor plan w/large master bedroom on 1st level, big kitchen & air conditioned porches. Fresh paint throughout, new hardwood floors in all bedrooms. \$1,895,000



**COMPARE CONDOS** & see why Gulfpointe II #513 is an excellent value. Concrete construction, private location, weekly rentals, dockage, excellent water views and small association. 2BD/2.5BA in excellent condition. \$729,000



**LARGE OPEN FLOOR PLAN**, 3BD/2BA on large lot with room for pool. Big kitchen, new hardwood floors in bedrooms, new metal roof and lake views from vaulted ceilings in living room. Price recently reduced. \$929,000

"2005 Sales Agent of the Year" • "YOUR PERSONAL PROFESSIONAL REALTOR"

# Some gardening tips from the experts

## CONTAINERS / From 16

Open your mind by visiting local gardens. Walk around your neighborhood for ideas. Go on a house and garden tour sponsored by your local garden club. Join a club.

And don't be shy about asking questions. You'll be surprised how easy container gardening can be.

## Locals' advice on container gardening

We asked some members of the Marathon Garden Club for their tips on container garden-

ing.

◆ Container gardens are perfect for condos, and can be arranged on tiers to provide an interesting small garden. Gardeners who have difficulty finding soil or building raised beds, as is so necessary in the Keys, can more easily fill containers. Lightweight pots are good for delicate or specimen plants that can be moved around the landscape depending on seasonal sunlight and weather changes. They can be moved to a garage or other protected area during hurricanes. Containers are also a better location for invasive plants, such as Sanseverria

(mother-in-law's tongue), that are desirable for flower arranging but would take over in the landscape.

— Jeri Michalak

◆ Containers provide a portable, controlled environment, which simplifies and improves the feeding and watering of plants. Another benefit is when you enter plants in a show. You just pick up the pots and go. They are "show ready."

— Pat Greeley

◆ I use a drip system to water my garden, including the containers. It provides a slow trickle of water to each one. Emitters are color-coded to

show how much water each plant is getting. A timer controls the time of day for watering. I've never lost a plant for lack of irrigation.

— Pat Miola

◆ I fill my containers with dirt up to two inches below the top. When I water, I fill to the top and let the water drain through into a saucer. With some plants I fill the saucer first, so the roots are trained to grow downward. I empty the saucers later so they don't become breeding places for mosquitoes.

— Germaine Main

## Recommended resources

### "Container Gardens for Florida"

◆ The gift shop at the Marathon Garden Club offers "Container Gardens for Florida" by Pamela Crawford. This South Florida-written reference is full of practical advice and easy-to-understand instructions. A companion DVD is available to show you how to design and plant containers in just one hour. Web site: [www.easycgardencolor.com](http://www.easycgardencolor.com)

### The Marathon Garden Club

◆ The Marathon Garden Club is at 5270 Overseas Highway, mile marker 50 bayside, in Marathon. It has regular meetings the third Friday of each month, October through May, at 11:30 a.m. Open to the public, free of charge, a light lunch is served followed by a brief meeting and a presentation by a guest speaker.

### Key West Garden Club

◆ Located at the historic West Martello Tower, Joe Allen Garden Center. Garden Club meetings are held in the pavilion. "Work and Learn" and horticulture sessions help members and the public to learn the basics of growing plants in the Keys. Key West Garden Club, P.O. Box 2277, Key West. Phone: 294-3210. Web: [www.keywestgardenclub.com](http://www.keywestgardenclub.com).

### Upper Keys Garden Club

◆ The Upper Keys Garden Club is at the Francis Tracy Garden Center, mile marker 94 Bayside. The club meets to hear speakers on many gardening topics. For more information, call Mary Nelson at 451-9316 or Edna Waldorf at 451-3753. They are accepting new members, and their membership chairman is Chris Childree, 853-9315.


### Layton Garden Club

◆ The Layton Garden Club was founded 39 years ago by Mary Layton, and is a member of the Florida Federation of Garden Clubs. For more information, call 664-9252 or contact Layton city offices at 664-4667.

**Lowell T. Donofrio, Licensed Real Estate Broker**

**Keys Country**  
Realty and Development, Inc.

96311 Overseas Hwy, Key Largo, O/S  
**853-7218 office**



Lowell T. Donofrio  
Broker 394-0654



Ellie Donofrio  
394-2901

View a virtual  
Tour at  
[www.erehms.com](http://www.erehms.com)  
Tour # KC Realty



Angie Meador  
522-6639




Jocelyn Tiedemann  
522-3652



Martha Carter  
522-0188




Janet Wood  
395-0241




**ACTIVE PERMIT** Plans for a 3/2 house w/pool, spa & tiki. 3 lots one of which overlooks Adams Cut. Plans are in the office. **\$950,000. #529933**



**LARGE 4 BD/3 BA ALL CBS HOME** in turn key condition. Lot is 75 x 105. Many upgrades — You must see this one! Great homeowners park w/boat ramp & beach. **\$875,000. #530990**




**MOTIVATED SELLER!**  
**MOBILE HOME ON UNIQUE WATERFRONT SITE.** Lot is 40 x 200. Located on small pond with direct access to Blackwater Sound for all your boating fun. Enough dockage for two boats. **REDUCED! \$465,000. #533614**



**CBS SMART HOME** 4 bd/3ba under construction in Plantation Key Colony, w/impact windows, metal roof, kitchen cabinets, granite counter top. Construction loan available to qualified buyer and up to \$1,000. towards closing cost. **\$550,000. #534293**




**NO DETAIL OVERLOOKED.** This beautiful 5/4.5 home has it all, concrete home w/new railings around the entire house. Pavers throughout. Pool w/hotter, 100' of dockage and not one thing to do here but move in. There are two houses in one, one side is a 3/2.5 and the other is a 2/2 (legal duplex) You can use the whole place or sell or rent one side. You really have to see this to appreciate it. **\$2,675,000 #534804**



**THIS HOME HAS 2/1 UP AND A 2/1 DOWN.** Newer roof, 50' of dockage, big yard 50x125. This is a good rental investment or live up and rent the down stairs or combine and have one large home. Lots of possibilities with this one. **\$840,000. #534926**



**ACTION AND TRANQUILITY FOUND.** This 4/4 CBS home w/ Metal Roof sits on 4 lots located on the desirable Adams Waterway All top of the line Stainless Steel Appliances, Large Master Bedroom w/Jacuzzi tub, 2 car attached garage, pool, cut in boat slip w/ davits on X.ZONE property. This is the one you can call home!! **\$1,795,000. #536251**



**CBS GROUND LEVEL 2 bd/2ba home** in Plantation Key Colony. Walking distance to schools. Beautiful homeowner's park with boat ramp and beach. Fenced in back yard. This is a must see!! **\$430,000 #538165**



**THIS 2BD 2BA HOME SITS ON 2 LOTS** (15,870 SQ FT) with an Ocean View. This home has all new windows, doors, AC, Metal Roof New Kitchen cabinets, New paint Outside and Inside. Large pool, plenty of storage for all your toys. Boat ramp across the street and Founders Park right across the Highway. Everything you need is here!!!! **\$950,000 # 539454**



**3BD 2BA HOME** on large lot in a quiet neighborhood with a Homeowners Park w/boat ramp. Has a new metal Roof, Impact windows, and freshly painted on the inside. Plenty of storage downstairs. This is a must See!! **\$549,000. 539318**



**60X110 LOT** with 6" wood fence all around. Buy the house next door MLS# 539728 (399,000.) and the lot and save 15,000. Close to community park with a pool and so much more. **\$155,000 #539729**




**3BD1BA HOME** on a 60 x 110 lot. Nice starter home and close to Community Park with a pool and much more. **\$399,000 539728**



**3BD2BA CBS ground level home** in turn key condition. Lot is 60x100. There is nothing to do but move in. County park right down the road w/boat ramp, beach and more. **\$465,000 539696**



**TWO LOTS IN ROGO WITH 22 POINTS** with plans for a ground level CBS 3BR/2BA with Office/Media room and a 2 car attached garage. Great homeowners park on the bay. Lots size is 100x110. **\$195,000. #536908**



**COMMERCIAL PROPERTY** this property is zoned SC with over 2500SF of existing structure. The possibilities are endless. You have **LOCATION, LOCATION AND LOCATION!!!** Directly on US 1 with both North and South bound access. MM 92 Bayside. For more info, Martha Carter 522-0188 or 853-0418, **\$1,200,000. #537917**