UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA Agriculture and Natural Resources UC Master Gardener Program

Plants for Imagination Gardens

Almost all these tiny plants do best in indirect light and in moderate temperatures, so indoors in the summer and winter. They may outgrow a small container, but can be divided or pinched back to stay in scale. Do keep their feet damp but not wet, except the air plants, which prefer only misting or a weekly rinse. Most of these plants will live 3-4 years, the exception is the gloxinia which last only one season but may regrow after dying back. Most will need to be divided after a while, so you can use the cuttings for new plantings, or change out the look in your garden for variety.

Succulents

Echeveria minima, echeveria elegans – white, or echeveria elora – pink Small aloes – some stay quite tiny Kalanchoe, stays small for months, can be pinched back

Mosses

Pillow, mood, java, and feather moss are smaller varieties Scotch moss Sagina Subulata Aurea, has tiny white flowers

Ferns

Button ferns or *asplenium* (spleenwort ferns) Maidenhair is slow growing but will outgrow a small container *Nephrolepis exaltata* 'Fluffy Ruffles'

Air plants

Tillandsia spp. - silver or gray-leaved varieties tolerate drier conditions than green varieties, and some are colorful-such as *Tillandsia maxima* with red leaves

Small shade-plants

Hostas Oregano, and Cuban oregano -*Plectranthus amboinicusis*

Small leaf varieties of mint Miniature ivy

Tiny flowers

Sinningia pusilla (and other miniature gloxinias) grow just 3 inches tall. Will die back before they regrow and bloom again.

Ageratum has small species that top out at 6-8 inches, with blue fluffy flowers

Most of these will do well in shallow soil, 3-8 inches deep. It should be well-drained, in a saucer, so you can water frequently in warm weather but not allow the roots to be water logged.

Use indoor potting soil, or a succulent potting mix if you will be planting echeveria and aloes.

Do not use "planting mix", "garden soil", or "top soil" as your primary soil component. These are too heavy or otherwise unsuited as a container medium. You can mix these with vermiculite or other soil amendments, but it is easier just to buy the potting mix. Do not use gravel in the bottom- it aggravates drainage issues.

Consistent, sufficient watering is important for containers because they can dry out quickly. Check containers daily. Stick your finger into the top inch of soil. If it feels damp there is no immediate need for water. If it feels dry, water until some runs out the bottom of the container. Note: If a container dries out completely and the soil becomes hydrophobic, water may run through the container without actually moistening the soil. You may need to soak the entire pot.