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the garden. Ladybugs and Praying Mantises, for example, eat garden pests such as aphids. If you have "bad bugs" first try blasting them off of your plants with a sharp stream of water.

Most of all, says Hayes, it's important to let nature run its course. "Try waiting it out for a couple of days," she says. "Always do what's the least invasive. Ladybugs eat all kinds of bugs, but if you spray, you might kill them too."

Do you have a spot in your yard that's getting

too much water? Instead of wrecking your yard trying to dig a way for water to drain (good luck with that on Charleston's sea-level topography), try planting water-loving plants to soak it up. Some plants, especially native plants, love a wet environment. Try planting Shasta daisy, Phlox, Buttonbush, or Ferns to soak it up.

Heed Hayes' advice so you can spend less time working in the garden and more time enjoying it.

DO

- Start a compost bin or pile
- Try to use natural remedies for pest management
- Plant waterphillic plants in drainagely-challenged areas

DON'T

- put glossy paper or meat products in your compost bin
- put too much brown material (dead leaves) in your compost bin. You need a lot of green material too.
- use heavy pesticides if you can avoid it



TRACEE LUND NEXT TO A NEWLY PLANTED WINDOW BOX AT THE CORNER OF MEETING STREET AND TRADD

Unboxed

TRACEE LUND EXPLAINS THE OVER-THE-TOP WINDOW BOX

By Warren Cobb
Community Editor

Tracee Lund is all about giving the customer what they want. And what every customer (and many part-time gardeners) want is instant gratification. We joined her on a downtown job to see how to make our window boxes grow above and beyond.

Like our other featured horticulturists, Lund

came to the art of gardening as a second career. A native of Charleston, she spent the first few years after college as a public school teacher. She apprenticed for a landscaper for about a year before deciding on horticulture as a career. After graduating from Trident Tech with a degree in Horticulture, she helped start two businesses from her Carolina Terrace home. Potted Pleasures specializes in container gardens, while Holy City Horticulture works in garden **continued on pg. 20**

**DON'T BE AFRAID
TO STUFF IT IN****UNBOXED** CONTINUED FROM PAGE 19

installation and maintenance.

Window boxes are hugely popular in Charleston. They help show outwardly the joy of life taking place inside the homes of our fair city. And as with most of what makes the city's aesthetics beautiful, window boxes take careful planning and a little hard work.

Lund says the key to a great looking window box is to get a box that's exactly as wide as the windowsill. Next, you need to fill that box with good, pristine soil, bagged or otherwise.

One of the most important things to remember is to know where you're planting. The difference between sun and shade plants is quite significant. "Shade plants will die if planted in the sun. Sun plants will not bloom in the shade," Lind says.

With those items in order, it's time to get planting. Lund uses the tried-and-true method of composition known as "the thriller, the filler, and the spiller. Start with the centerpiece. It's called "the thriller" because it will be the focal point of the box. Like floral arrangements, the thriller will be the plant that will grow to have the most height, and is also often the most colorful. For the box Lund was planting that day, she used a taller plant in the back, with a colorful plant in the front. Depending on the size of your box, those might be the same plant.

The spillers are usually a type of ivy that will

cascade over the sides of the box. These would be planted on either side of the centerpiece. Filler is other greenery or flowers planted between the thrillers and spillers that complement the arrangement. Tip: you can buy hanging baskets like begonias cheaper than individual plants. Baskets usually have three or four clumps of flowers that break apart easily.

Lund likes to make it tight. "Work in the space you have," she says. "I like to plant rootball to rootball."

After all of the flora is in the soil, it's time to water. Lund says to be careful not to over water. "Flowering plants like to be slightly under watered. The stress makes them want to bloom," she says. "Over watering causes a host of problems like fungus and rot."

Lund says the most important things are to enjoy yourself while creating your gardens and enjoy watching them grow. If your creation gets away from you, don't fret. "Under watered plants tend to bounce back," she says. "If it looks dead, first try watering it."

DO

Start with good soil
Stuff it in

Use the "thriller, spiller, filler"
method of window box design

DON'T

Under plant. Fill that space with flora
Over water

Worry. If it dies, replant and try again.