1. IMPATIENS, MARIGOLDS, AND PETUNIAS ARE BORING: ‘FRIEND’S DON’T LET FRIEND’S GROW ANNUALS’ (PLANT DELIGHTS NURSERY).

2. LARGE TROPICALS – ELEPHANT EARS, CANNAS, BANANAS – PROVIDE ARCHITECTURE AND COLOR AND A SENSE OF ‘NOT JERSEY’.

3. BEST BANG FOR THE BUCK COMPARED TO CELL-PACK ANNUALS

4. YOU WILL BE THE COOLEST GARDENER IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD
SOME OTHER THOUGHTS...

- LET US DEFINE ‘TROPICAL’
- MOST ARE THROW-AWAYS BUT MANY CAN BE SAVED YEAR TO YEAR
- POPULARITY MEANS GREATER AVAILABILITY AND SELECTION
- THINK OUTSIDE THE BOX...
CULTURE PART 1: CONTAINERS

- Anything that can hold potting mix and provide adequate root space – pots, boxes, old toilets. Clay, concrete, plastic, ceramic.

- Must be large enough for the plant in question, and heavy enough to prevent windthrow. Tall plants like banana and canna will blow over.

- Must have drainage hole!
CULTURE PART II: SOIL MIX

- Use professional potting mixes (these are not soil) or blend your own: peat, compost, perlite, ground bark
- Must be well-drained and well ground – means coarse and open for expansive root growth
- Do not use bagged topsoil or garden soil – too heavy
- Must be able to hold moisture yet not be saturated
RAPIDLY GROWING TROPICALS REQUIRE CONSTANT MOISTURE AND NUTRIENTS

REMEMBER THE POTTING MIX IS NOT SOIL; YOU MUST PROVIDE NUTRIENTS!

EACH PLANT HAS OWN REQUIREMENTS – LEARN THEM! EXAMPLES: COLOCASIA vs. SUCCULENTS
MY FERTILIZER OF CHOICE...
AFTER ESTABLISHMENT APPLY ENTIRE LAYER OF PELLETS ON SOIL SURFACE

WILL RELEASE AS NEEDED WITH RAIN OR IRRIGATION

WILL NOT BURN ROOTS AND WILL LAST ENTIRE SEASON
AND NOW, THE PLANTS!

- START SMALL WITH HIGH-QUALITY STOCK. COST EFFECTIVE

- PLANTS GROW FAST SO RESULTS ARE SAME BY LATE SUMMER

- DO NOT START TOO EARLY!! YES WE GET EXCITED BUT BE PATIENT…MAY IS FICKLE IN NEW JERSEY. SOIL MUST BE WARM ESPECIALLY FOR BULBS/TUBERS/RHIZOMES
MY FAVORITE LARGE AND EASY PLANTS

- Alocasia – upright elephant ears
- Canna – for bold foliage (Canna ‘Sol’ blooms all season)
- Colocasia – elephant ears. Many cultivars, species is EXCELLENT! And cheap!
- Ensete – banana relative- Awesome!
- Musa – banana
- Palms
ALOCASIA
UPRIGHT ELEPHANT EARS

- BIG, BOLD LEAVES WITH STOUT PETIOLES
- FAST AND RELIABLE
- THE BIGGER THE POT THE BIGGER THE PLANT
- BEST IS HYBRID CALLED’ PORTADORA’
ALOCASIA ‘PORTADORA’
CANNAS

- LARGE NUMBER OF CULTIVARS
- I GROW FOR ARCHITECTURE OR FOLIAGE COLOR...FLOWERS BORING AND LIMITED
- BEST NEW CANNA IS THE ‘SOL’ SERIES...WILL BLOOM ALL SUMMER INTO FALL
- GROW FROM RHIZOMES OR STARTED PLANTS
FAVORITES

RED STRIPE

CLEOPATRA
CANNA ‘SOL’ SERIES

- SMALL PLANTS TO 4 FEET
- CONTINUE TO PRODUCE NEW SHOOTS RESULTING IN BLOOM ALL SEASON
- MANY COLORS, FANTASTIC FOR CENTER OF MIXED POTS
- SIX ($ 6 ) FOR A SEASON OF COLOR? REALLY? WIDELY AVAILABLE AT GOOD GARDEN CENTERS.
CANNA ‘SOL’ SERIES
COLOCASIA
ELEPHANT EARS, TARO

- MOST DERIVED FROM C. ESCULENTA
- MANY CULTIVARS WITH BREEDING ONGOING
- MOST TISSUE CULTURED; PURE ESCULENTA FROM TUBERS
- IMPORTANT ECONOMICALLY IN TROPICS FOR FOOD
COLOCASIA ESCULENTA
TUBER
CULTIVARS I HAVE GROWN

BLACK MAGIC       BLUE HAWAII
HAWAIIAN PUNCH  

LAOSY GIANT
ENSETE MAURELII

- BANANA RELATIVE OF GREAT COLOR AND SIZE: WILL REACH 6-7 FEET IN ONE SUMMER!

- NEEDS BIG, HEAVY POT AND FULL SUN

- NO NEED TO BUY LARGE, SMALL STARTERS WILL STILL GET HUGE!
ENSETE MAURELII
MUSA – THE BANANAS

- VERY LARGE PLANTS, NEED BIG POTS AND WEIGHT TO PREVENT TOPPING
- GROW INCREDIBLY FAST
- CAN BE OVEREWINTERED
- ONE SPECIES, WITH PROTECTION, HARDY IN NJ
BANANAS

- Can be overwintered indoors when small.
- Can be cut back and held dormant.
- Musa Basjoo is +/- hardy here; heavy mulch/leaves and protected spot.
THOSE DISCUSSED ARE ‘THROW-AWAY’ PLANTS; INEXPENSIVE AND HARD TO OVERWINTER

OTHERS ARE MORE EXPENSIVE AND WITHOUT LARGE INDOOR SPACE HARD TO KEEP YEAR TO YEAR
BOUGAINVILLEA
HIBISCUS
OLEANDER
PALMS
COMPANION PLANTS

- SMALLER PLANTS TO RING EDGE OF POTS, ENHANCE COLOR AND TEXTURE, AND ADD SOME ‘PIZZAZ’
- BEGONIAS, BROMELIADS, CALADIUM,
- FERNS, VINES, ‘HOUSE PLANTS’ LIKE POTHOS AND CROTON
- ALSO INEXPENSIVE AND WIDELY AVAILABLE
BEGONIA BOLIVIENSIS
BROMELIADS
CALADIUMS
LATE JULY
MIX IT UP!!
DON'T LIMIT YOURSELF...MANY OTHER PLANTS ADD INTEREST

- CACTI AND SUCCULENTS – VERY POPULAR RIGHT NOW AND CAN BE USED INDOORS IN WINTER

- ‘HOUSE PLANTS’ TO BRING OUTSIDE FOR SUMMER (DON’T LET THEM SUNBURN!)

- HERBS, COLORFUL PEPPERS, CORN!!

- CASTOR BEAN, DATURA, LANTANA
TROPICAL HANGING CACTUS

SELENICEREUS
ANTHONYANUS

EPIPHYLLUM HYBRID
TROPICALS ADD INTEREST, ARCHITECTURE, COLOR, AND MAKE YOU FEEL WARM!

EASY AND INEXPENSIVE

MOST ARE DISEASE AND PEST FREE, REDUCING MAITENANCE

BIG POTS REQUIRE LESS WATERING…YOU CAN TAKE THE WEEKEND OFF WITH NO WORRIES! TRY THAT WITH A HANGING BASKET OF IMPATIENS!

AND REMEMBER, YOU WILL BE THE COOLEST GARDENER IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD…
SOURCES

- BRENT AND BECKY’S BULBS
- FLORIDA HILL NURSERY
- FLORIDA CALADIUMS
- PLANT DELIGHTS
- YOUR LOCAL GARDEN CENTER