

# Home Base Test Case

A cornucopia of glazed containers from Hastings Nature & Garden Center, ranging from \$46 (the brown one, far right) to \$65 (in front, with green stripes).



PHOTOGRAPH BY DAVIES AND LAWERY. STYLING BY LEE TACKETT/CREWS AGENCY

For advice on the pros and cons of all sorts of containers, take a look at *Jim Wilson's Container Gardening* (Taylor Trade Publishing, 2000). A resident of South Carolina, he also wrote the book *Bulletproof Flowers for the South* and is a former co-host of PBS' *The Victory Garden*. Here are some of his tips:



- Less expensive clay pots are normally fired at lower temperatures. That can make them softer and more fragile than pots fired at high temperatures.
- Most planter boxes and window boxes aren't large enough to hold flowers throughout the growing season—and tend to dry out quickly. They should measure at least 10 inches deep and 12 inches tall.
- Small concrete containers dry out quickly, too, so opt for large ones instead.

## Pots of Gold

Hunting for the best containers around town.

BY TRAVIS NEIGHBOR WARD

With the popularity of container gardens on the rise, stores across Atlanta have started stocking pots in all styles, materials and sizes. It's a homeowner's dream—but finding ones that best complement your plants *and* your patio décor can mean a lot of running around. To make the task easier, we searched the city for containers suitable for outdoor use in four categories: glazed clay, terra cotta, plastic and metal. Here are the ones that we feel truly stand out above the rest.

### GLAZED CONTAINERS

#### Hastings Nature & Garden Center

3920 Peachtree Road

404-869-7447

[hastingsgardencenter.com](http://hastingsgardencenter.com)

If you're after an intense pop of sleek, high-gloss color, you'll be satisfied with the selection of containers at **Hastings Nature & Garden Center**. Located less

than a mile north of Phipps Plaza on Peachtree Road, the store's outdoor "rooms" stock everything from glazed containers to birdbaths in cornflower blue, tomato red, leaf green and more. You can also find an abundance of more traditional browns, as well as 42-inch-tall, tapered pots with rippled sides that are mesmerizing as fountains. Inside, the store is crammed full of garden gifts and accessories, from birdhouses to gloves.

Between the toy train, koi ponds, popcorn machine and plant seminars, the trip is fun for the family. Prices range from \$20 to upwards of \$300.

#### Bodega Garden

790 Huff Road

404-350-0116

nomasproductions.com

For glazed pots imported directly from Mexico, **Bodega Garden** on Huff Road has a surplus. After you enter the main gate, which is located in the backyard of sister store No Mas! Productions, you can stroll over hills of open rooms full of containers in all sizes, colors and shapes. Finishes range from hand-rubbed and rustic-looking to shiny. The store also carries fun garden art like crackled glass gazing balls and mosaic lizards. The staff will make fountains from just about any of their containers (see Style Notes for details).

#### TERRA COTTA CONTAINERS

##### Gardening at Hill Street

1345 Collier Road

404-352-5001

No doubt about it: If you're looking for the real thing, **Gardening at Hill Street** is where it's at. The store imports terra cotta pots and accessories (bird baths, obelisks, statues, etc.) from all over Italy, and houses them in an enormous space adjoining its sister store, Hill Street Warehouse. Apart from size, prices vary mostly depending on whether the containers are machine-made, which use metal molds, or hand-molded, which use plaster molds, as well as what region of Italy they come from. The Italian pots are made in 30 factories across four different regions; for the *crème de la crème*, ask the staff to point you to the containers from Impruneta. Prices range from \$3 to \$10,000.

##### Forrester's Flowers

2070 Cheshire Bridge Road

404-325-0333

In Lenox Square Mall

404-239-0099

If you're looking for a twist on tradition, take a trip to **Forrester's Flowers**.



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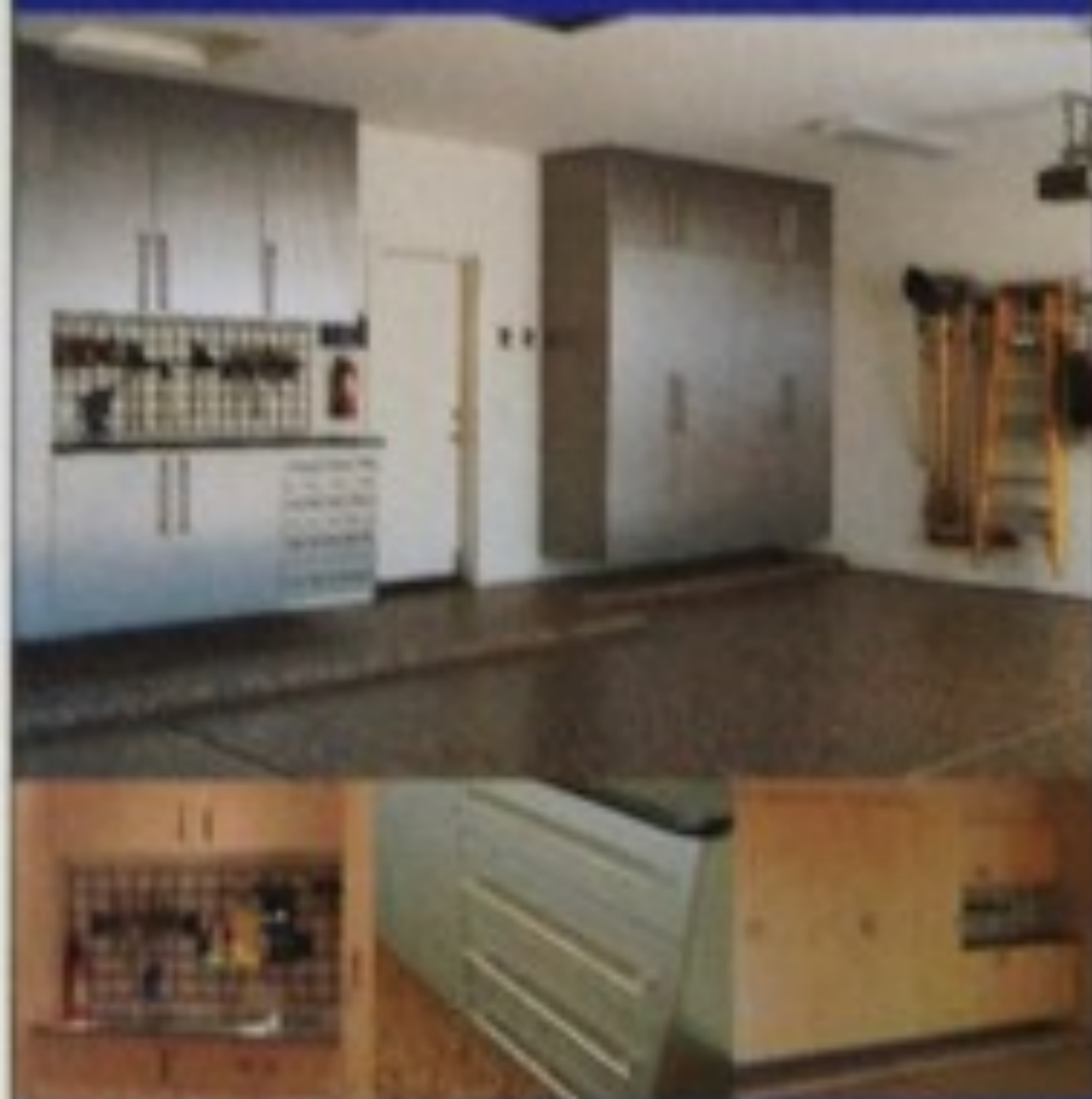


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## Home Base Test Case

Owner Joe Underwood is working on developing the store's exclusive line of rough clay containers that are dyed a black so intense it resembles the nib of a charcoal pencil. At presstime, only a few square versions were available for around \$25 to \$40, but an entire collection (plus custom sizes) is being planned. While there, you'll also enjoy perusing their selection of glazed terra cotta and concrete containers, both outside in the front yard and inside the greenhouse and cottage-like store.

### PLASTIC CONTAINERS

#### Pike Family Nursery

26 local locations, including:  
2955 Holcomb Bridge Road, Alpharetta  
770-641-1217  
2900 Johnson Ferry Road, Marietta  
770-640-6468  
2101 LaVista Road, Atlanta  
404-634-8604  
pikenursery.com

For the widest selection of plastic pots in more traditional styles, head to one of the **Pike Family Nursery's** 26 locations around Atlanta. When it comes to sheer quantity and variety in style, they beat the competition (even Home Depot) by a long shot. Pike carries containers large enough to hold a miniature tree and small enough for a single bulb. You can find anything from basic brown and green plastic, to faux aged terra cotta pots with ornate swags, to square ones that look like they're made of weathered zinc. Prices for the largest, most ornate ones tend to cost no more than \$25 to \$40.

#### Design Within Reach

295 East Paces Ferry Road  
404-841-2471  
dwr.com

For something with more contemporary appeal, **Design Within Reach's** 5,000-square-foot studio in Buckhead offers pots that you won't find elsewhere. Funky, chunky shapes and modern

colors like apple green, light blue and black are the norm. Many, such as the Ming Vases, are designed by well-known Italian designers in recyclable polyethylene. The Gratia Planter Boxes are in fiberglass with copper or nickel metal fused to the exterior, so they will patina over time. Prices range from \$300 to upwards of \$700.

### METAL CONTAINERS

#### Smith & Hawken

2395 Peachtree Road  
404-262-2787  
The Avenue at East Cobb  
770-578-8771  
smithandhawken.com

In this category, **Smith & Hawken** wins for their variety of styles. For darker finishes, the store carries boxy, zinc-coated steel containers with flared rims (\$59) and columnar Eclipse Planters in rust-proof, galvanized steel with a black zinc finish (\$119 for 33-1/2 inches tall or \$179 for 42 inches tall). In copper, we like the shiny Column Planters with custom plastic inserts (\$179 to \$199 for planter, plus \$35 to \$45 for insert) and embossed Diamond Copper Planters (\$79 to \$119). Window boxes come in 3- to 5-foot lengths and are made of welded steel that is powder-coated to resist rust. The Westbury and Soho boxes come with metal liners; prices range from \$155 to \$225.

#### Kolo Collection

1189 Howell Mill Road  
404-355-1717  
kolocollection.com

We also like the copper-zinc containers at **Kolo Collection**. The oval shape is modern looking, yet they are roomy enough to hold a dwarf tree and weigh less than 5 pounds. The largest (31x21x28 inches) costs \$120. Colors include copper, black and brushed steel, all of which will oxidize somewhat. While there, also check out the contemporary glazed pots and the Fibrecay pots from Napa Home & Garden, a local company. They have a lightweight fiberglass frame covered in gray clay, resulting in a brushed concrete, urban look. Prices range from \$75 to \$210. ■