



**↑ SQUARE ROOTED**  
Do the Frank Lloyd Wright thing with Smith and Hawken's steel Oak Park window boxes (\$199-\$218, smithandhawken.com), which would make a good home for herbs or a small collection.

**← LEAF AND THE CLASP**  
Like something fitted from a Gothic greenery, this cement planter looks a hollowed-out cranium, ready for the very Medusa locks or a fern Afro. Put on a dresser near a window or on a deck, where it might spook neighbors. (\$58, ballarddesigns.com)

**→ ATOMIC URGE**  
Easter egg-like fiberglass bullets nestle in metal bases, rocketing space age style into a kitchen or living room. Based on a vintage original, these cuties come in a dozen retro hues. (\$130-\$160, hiphaven.com)

**→ COULDN'T THEM COOL**  
Used to collect maple sap in the '30s and '40s, metal buckets now stain flowers. (\$16, Great Stuff by Paul, 10 N. Carol St., Frederick, Md.; 301-631-0004; greatstuffbypaul.com)



# The Container Story

Apartment  
**3D**

One catch-22 of city living: Sometimes downtown (or close-in "burbs) convenience means the only green space condo dwellers see is the National Mall or Rock Creek Park. But you can save yourself from a plant-free pad by going to pots. "Using containers inside really creates an interior escape," says D.C. floral designer Michael Lanni of Volanni (volanni.com), a company that can fill your pad with palms or your balcony with a mini herb garden. Lanni often uses easy-care bamboo, hostas or sweet potato vines in projects for condo dwellers.

When choosing a vessel to hold a pansy or palm, "get in a creative mood," says Sue Amatangelo, author of the new "Absolutely Beautiful Containers" (\$25, Ball). "Try flea market baskets or those beautiful glazed pots from the Philippines." And keep in mind your apartment's light level. If you live in a dim English basement, go for a big-leaved peace lily that needs little light. Love ferns? Put the wispy, sun-loving babies near a window. For tips on what'll thrive in your space, ask at the garden shop, or click on the in-depth houseplant guide at plantoasis.com. And if you kill off your new, carbon footprint-reducing pal after a few months, don't feel too guilty. "If you expect a houseplant to last a couple of years, it's not going to happen," says Amatangelo. "Just enjoy it for as long as it lasts." —JENNIFER HANSEN (EXPRESS)