



## Outdoor living trends

# HOME, LAWN & GARDEN

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Are backyard chickens right for you?



- Mulch is Your Tree's Best Friend
- Gardening for Four Season Interest
- Attracting Pollinators to the Garden
- Incorporating Edibles into Your Landscape
- Are Backyard Chickens Right for You
- Swarm Season has Arrived
- Restore Rusty Tools
- Hummingbirds During Spring Migration
- Right Tree in the Right Place
- Tackle Those Carpet Stains
- TLC For Your Roof

- Items to Improve Outdoor Living Spaces
- How to Improve Outdoor Living Spaces
- Workspace wonders
- Wild Roe's Greenhouse
- Outdoor Improvements that Boost Home Value
- Natural Lawn Care in a Nutshell
- Prevent Mosquitoes from Spoiling Your Summer Fun



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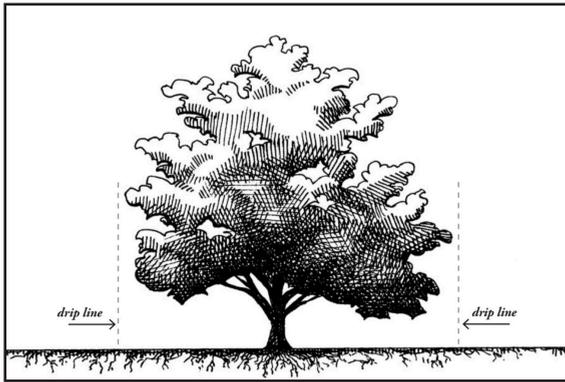
# Mulch is Your Tree's Best Friend



A properly mulched tree will have a 2- to 4-inch layer of mulch in a doughnut-shaped ring. The ring should extend out to the tree's drip line, if possible.

Missouri Department of Conservation

Mulching is one of the most valuable things a homeowner can do for a tree's health. Mulch is any material placed on the soil to conserve moisture and improve growing conditions. Common materials include wood chips, bark, pine needles and compost. However, if mulch is applied too deeply or the wrong material is used, it actually can harm trees and other plants. Take a few minutes to read this flyer, and you'll be well on your way to improving your tree's health and appearance.



A tree's roots extend well beyond the drip line of the crown. Mulch out to the tree's drip line if possible.

### PROPER MULCHING

- Check soil drainage in the area to be mulched. Determine if there are trees or plants that may be affected by the type of mulch. Most organic mulches work well in most landscape situations. Some plants may benefit from mulches such as pine needles or bark that acidify the soil.
- Apply a 2- to 4-inch layer of mulch over well-drained soils. Use a thinner layer on poorly drained soils. The wider the mulch ring, the greater the benefit. Mulch out to the tree's drip line, if possible.
- Do not pile mulch against the tree trunk. Pull mulch back several inches from the trunk so the base of the trunk and root crown are exposed. The mulch-ring shape should resemble a "doughnut," not a "volcano."
- If mulch is already present, check the depth. Do not add more if a sufficient layer is already in place. Rake old mulch to break up



A mulch "volcano sets the stage for insect and disease problems, root rot, and tree decline.

- matted layers and improve its appearance.
- Organic mulches are preferred to inorganic materials. Organic mulches should be well-aerated and composted. Avoid sour-smelling mulch.

### IF A LITTLE IS GOOD, THEN ...

- Over-mulching your tree or piling mulch against the trunk can create the following problems:
  - Promote excessive soil moisture and root rots
  - Cause inner bark tissue to die
  - Lead to insect and disease problems

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## Mulch is Your Tree's Best Friend Con't.

- Create habitat for rodents that chew the bark and girdle the stem
- Lead to anaerobic conditions that produce alcohols and organic acids toxic to young plants
- Cause imbalances in soil pH
- Become a matted barrier that prevents the penetration of water and air

- Inorganic mulches include decorative stone, lava rock, pulverized tires and geotextile fabrics. Inorganic mulches are useful in xeriscaping and for soil protection in high traffic areas but are not recommended for mulching around trees. Heat reflected from inorganic mulches may be high enough to kill thin-barked trees.

### TYPES OF MULCH

- Organic mulches include wood chips, pine needles, shredded bark, nut shells, compost mixes and leaves. Organic mulches decompose at different rates, depending on the material, and periodically must be replenished.
- Composted wood chips make good mulch, especially when the leaves, bark and wood are included in the composition. Fresh wood chips also may be used around established trees and shrubs. Avoid using un-composted wood chips that have been piled without exposure to oxygen. Sawdust, grass clippings and straw are not recommended.

### BENEFITS OF MULCHING

- Helps maintain soil moisture—evaporation and the need for watering are reduced
- Protects the trunk and surface roots from mowers and string trimmers
- Helps controls weeds and grass
- Insulates the soil surface, keeping it warmer in winter and cooler in summer
- Improves soil structure, aeration and drainage
- Increases soil fertility as organic matter decomposes
- Makes lawn maintenance easier
- Creates well-cared-for appearance

## Gardening for Four Season Interest

Ann Johnston, Certified Master Gardener

My goal has always been to create an entire landscape filled with gardens. Everything within the sidewalks being garden space is my goal. Gardens that can be enjoyed all year round. I love to garden and when we first bought our home it was a patch of weeds, four hackberry trees, two soft maple trees, five huge lilac bushes, a wedding bouquet Spirea, and a long row of surprise lilies between the lilac bushes. One hackberry had to be taken out right away and we lost one of the maple trees in an ice storm the following year. We ended up spending several thousands of dollars to save the big lovely trees we had left. Due to the massive amounts of tree work, I was limited to creating flower beds from the generosity of friends willing to split perennial plants and bulbs or share flower seeds that they had collected. I saved for purchases and found what I could on sale.

It has only been in the last couple years that I have gotten to the place where I am able to intentionally choose trees,

shrubs, perennials and annuals, or container plantings for my garden landscape based on thoughts for creating four season interest. So how can I help you decide where to start with four season interest in your yard? Well, where do you spend the most time in your yard? Is it the deck where you BBQ on weekends and where you watch the kids play? Or is it the front porch where you sit in the evening on the porch swing? Pick the area of your landscape where you are already drawn and start there.

A four-season landscape or year-round garden interest begins with choosing plants well suited for your zone. A combination of perennials, annuals, trees, shrubs and container plantings should be selected so that something is always going on of interest. This sounds simple enough but having spent over fifteen years putting together gardens that are still primarily late spring and early summer show offs proves that even experienced gardeners can struggle to capture all four seasons.

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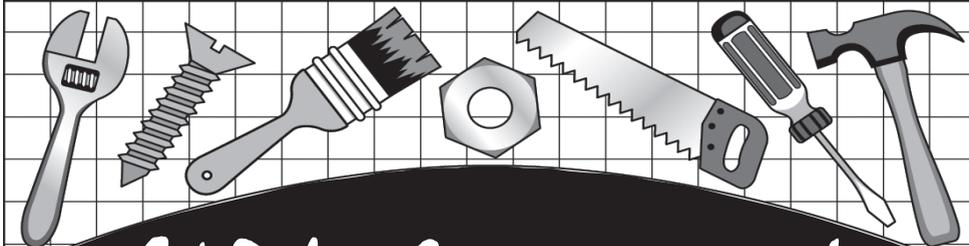
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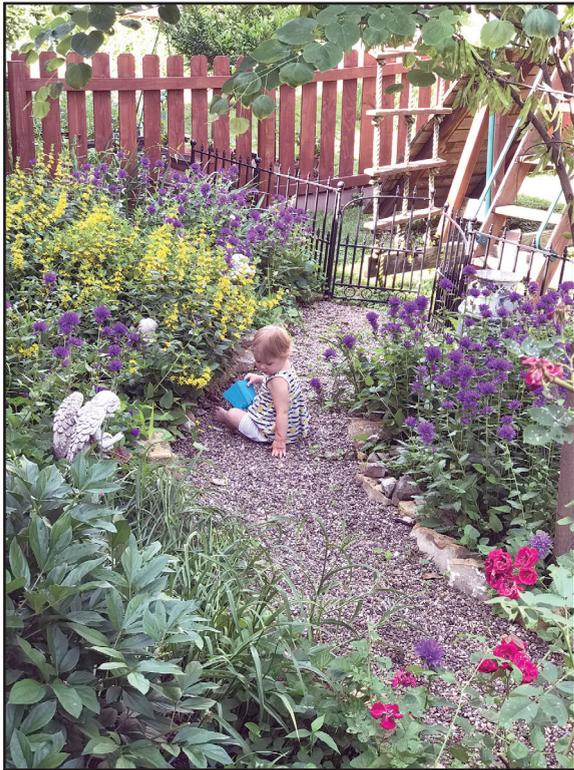
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# Attracting Pollinators to the Garden



Ann Johnston, Certified Master Gardner

According to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, pollinators are nearly as important as sunlight, soil, and water to the reproductive success of over 75 percent of the world's flowering plants. Pollinators such as bees, butterflies, bats, and hummingbirds are crucial to the production of most fruits, nuts, and berries.

To encourage pollinators to visit your garden: plant flowers of the color and

varieties that they prefer, choose plants that bloom at different times to provide nectar throughout the season, and plant in clumps rather than single plants. Eliminate the use of broad-spectrum insecticides (those targeting a large variety of insects). You will also need to provide sources of water. Shallow bird baths or bowls of water with stones for landing perches for butterflies and moths.

### PLANTS TO ATTRACT POLLINATORS

#### Bees and Butterflies:

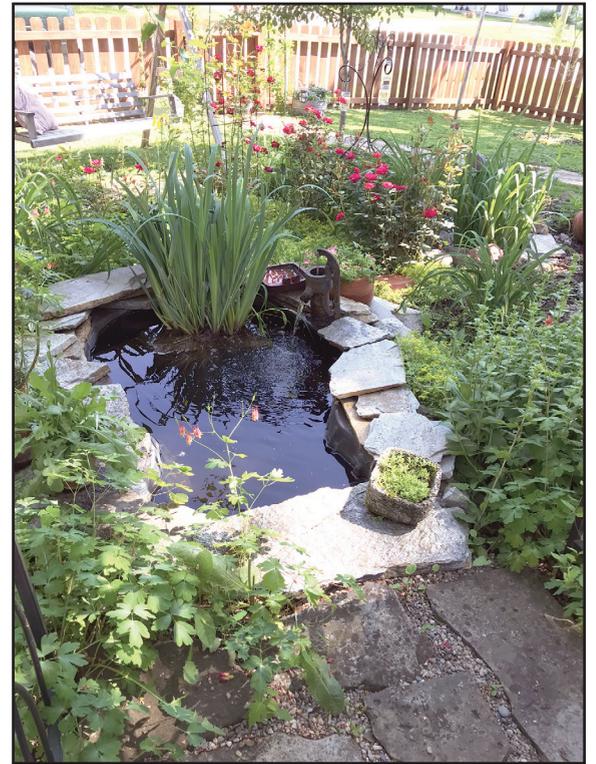
- Achillea (Yarrow)
- Agastache (Hyssop)
- Anemones
- Asclepius (Milkweed)
- Aster
- Coreopsis (Tickseeds)
- Echinacea (Coneflower)
- Gaillardia (Blanket Flower)
- Gaura
- Soldago (Goldenrod)
- Lavender
- Monarda (Bee Balm)
- Penstemon (Beardtongue)
- Perovskia (Russian Sage)
- Phlox
- Rudbeckia (Black-Eyed Susan)
- Salvia (Sage)

#### Hummingbirds:

- Agastache (Hyssop)
- Gaillardia (Blanket Flower)

- Heuchera (Coral Bells)
- Lantana
- Monarda (Bee Balm)
- Penstemon (Beardtongue)
- Phlox
- Salvia (Sage)
- Verbena

Butterflies are attracted to yellow, red, and orange flowers and like flat open flowers. Hummingbirds prefer tubular flowers and like purple, red, or fuchsia colors.



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# Incorporating Edibles into Your Landscape



Ann Johnston, Certified Master Gardner

Have you ever considered the possibility of adding edible plants to your ornamental landscape? Edibles can be grown anywhere and everywhere in your home garden. They require the same growing conditions as ornamental plants: good soil, sun, water, and fertilizer.

### JUST THINK ABOUT THE POSSIBILITIES...

Food for thought:

- Chives or determinate tomatoes, a bush variety that grows to about 3-4 feet that requires little staking for support, can be planted among the flowers
- Parsley makes a whimsical garden border
- Chokeberry bushes are an excellent living fence
- Currents, raspberry or blackberry grow beautifully on an arbor
- Instead of an ornamental Redbud or Japanese maple, consider a self-pollinating variety of cherry, dwarf apple, or pear tree.

Container edibles are such fun. Many

edible plants are well suited to grow in containers making the aesthetic possibilities nearly endless. Why not grow a few beautiful and tasty rhubarb in a large container? Or make a visual statement with a Shepherd's hook and hanging baskets full of cherry tomatoes spilling over the sides. Strawberries or peas would be spectacular as well.

How about a hanging basket of herbs off the deck - Lettuce, mint, basil, and parsley are all good possibilities.

The pathways that run throughout my own gardens are bordered with strawberries for the grandkids to pick and enjoy as they play. Last year we planted a lettuce mix

and spinach in galvanized buckets and sat them out on the Windsor blocks bordering a flower bed. The grandkids had a great time going out to cut the leaves to make a salad for lunch.

A blogger I follow planted a beautiful row of lavender along the outside of the fence that surrounds her raised vegetable garden beds. She also has arbors at the entrances with climbing roses.

Our landscapes are what we choose to make them and the idea of edibles and ornamentals growing happily together is a magical one with limitless possibilities. Why not try out some edible landscaping?

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## Are Backyard Chickens Right for You?



Raising backyard chickens has been a growing phenomenon for several years. Many cities have passed laws legalizing backyard chickens, encouraging many to raise chickens as a rewarding hobby.

One of the biggest benefits to raising backyard chickens is that their eggs are fresher and often tastier than store-bought varieties. Hens can lay one egg per day. Multiply that egg per hen, and breakfast is

always available.

Another benefit to chickens is they produce a natural fertilizer that can be used in gardens. "The Old Farmer's Almanac" says chicken manure can be composted, aged and eventually added to the garden. In about six months, a person will accumulate about one cubic foot of manure per chicken. Egg shells and other compostable material can be added to create an even richer formula.

Chickens also can help control bugs around the yard, offers the experts at Tractor Supply Company.

Before investing in backyard chickens, people should determine if chickens will fit with their lifestyle. Costs and care are a big consideration.

Each chick will cost anywhere between \$3 to \$5 a bird. Then there's feed to consider. The most expensive item will likely be the coop. The experts at The Happy Chicken Coop, a resource for raising chickens and starting coops, says handy men and women can build homemade coops, but ready-made ones will cost a few hundred dollars. The coop will need to offer around four square feet of space per chicken (or what's recommended for the breed).

Despite being seemingly independent

birds, chickens need people to be active caregivers. They require feed and water daily. The chickens will need a caregiver while you vacation. People who are frequently away from home should reconsider chickens.

Chickens also are prone to worms, parasites and lice. They need to have rear feathers trimmed to stay clean and sanitary, and they will require an area where they can "dust" and self-groom. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention advises not to cuddle and kiss chickens like pets because they can carry salmonella. Not every coop is completely varmint-proof, and some chickens may succumb to predators. Squeamish or sentimental folks may find chickens aren't the right fit.

Chickens require commitment and care that many people can provide. It is essential to do one's homework to ensure that backyard chickens are a sound investment.



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# Swarm Season Has Arrived



Missouri State Beekeepers Association

Honey bees swarm during the spring as a natural means of reproduction. They are usually not aggressive during this time as they are just “shopping for a new home”. They will stay a short amount of time in a temporary location as the scouts look for a suitable new home for the 60% or so who have left the original nest. This swarm could be on a car bumper or at the top of a giant Oak. If you see a swarm of Honey bees, please call your local beekeeper and do not harm them as they pollinate 30% of the food we eat. The survival rate of these clusters is only about 25% so they need the help you can give them. You can find a listing of local MSBA member Beekeepers on the Missouri State Beekeepers Association website at <https://mostatebeekeepers.org/bee-swarms>. You

should also be able to reach out to your local bee keeping club or even call 911.

Quoting from the MSBA web page, here is what you need to be prepared to tell an interested swarm catcher:

Are the insects definitely honey bees?  
This is very important.

- If you're not sure and you have a cell phone with a camera;
- Try to take a photo of the swarm or be able to describe the swarm and the insects in detail for the beekeeper.
- How high up is the swarm?
- What is the swarm hanging from?
- Is the swarm easily accessible?
- How large is the swarm?
- How long has the swarm been there?

People have been known to confuse Yellow Jackets with Honey Bees. There is a big difference in the two. Yellow Jackets live in the ground and are aggressive. Honey bees live in hives or trees and are not usually aggressive. This is why it is best to locate a Beekeeper who knows the difference and has the proper equipment to deal with them. The bees are given a new home and continue to do what they do best – pollinate.

People often ask what they can do to save these beneficial and beautiful insects, and the answer is simple. Cut back on poisons, herbicides, fungicides, etc. and plant native plants. Look at “weeds” as pollinator food. If it blooms, then consider it pollinator food rather than a “weed”. Let the fence lines and road sides go wild between April and October. The profusion of color from wild flowers is much more beautiful than the boring expanse of grass.



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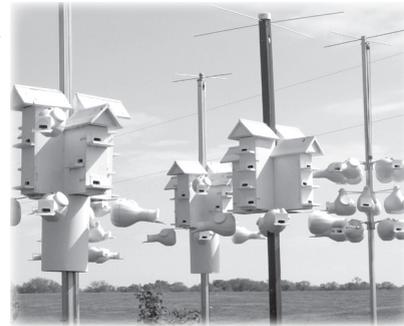
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# Restore Rusty Tools

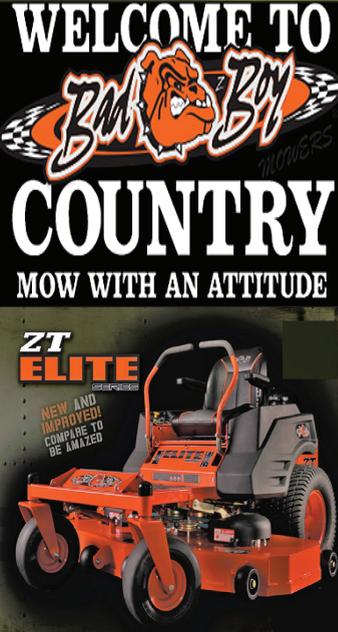
Many people may be tempted to discard rusty tools that have gone unused and sat in a garage or shed for a significant period of

time. But tools encrusted with rust do not need to be relegated to the trash bin, nor do gardeners have to toil for hours scraping and



sanding off the rust. There's a much easier way to restore rusty tools that relies on a common household ingredient: vinegar. Pour vinegar into a deep enough vessel to submerge the metal part of the tool. Soak the tool overnight. The next day, use a scouring pad to rub off the rust. If the tool is too big to fit into a can or bucket, simply wrap it with a vinegar-soaked rag and cover the whole tool with a tightly secured plastic bag. Follow the same procedure the next day. After all the rust is gone, rinse the tool in cool water and dry thoroughly. Then return it to regular usage.

# Ellis Lawn Care Products



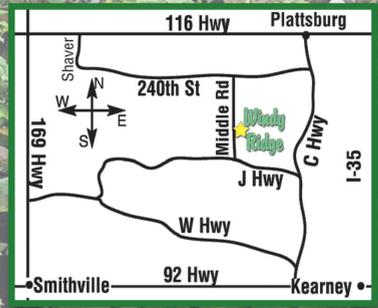
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## Hummingbirds During Spring Migration



The small-but-mighty ruby-throated hummingbird travels hundreds of miles back to the U.S. after spending the winter in the south.

Missouri Department of Conservation

The ruby-throated hummingbird, the tiniest bird to nest in the Show-Me State, is a harbinger of spring. The Missouri Department of Conservation urges the public to learn more about these long-distance fliers as they begin to arrive during their spring migration. “It’s time to put out feeders! Hummingbirds will be here soon, and their numbers will ramp up in the next few weeks,” said MDC State Ornithologist Sarah Kendrick. “They have already been spotted in northern Arkansas and Tennessee.”

The diet of a hummingbird consists of flower nectar, tree sap, and even small insects. Kendrick reminds Missourians who want to feed the small fliers that their sugar water does not need to be colored red. Kendrick explained they will find the feeders, which are usually red, and drink the sugar water without the coloring. To make your own sugar water, mix one part sugar with four parts water and bring to a boil until dissolved. Cool the mixture before filling the feeder and replace sugar water before it gets cloudy. Any extra sugar water can be stored in the refrigerator.

Ruby-throated hummingbirds spend the winter in Mexico and Central America and start their spring migration north as early as March. To track their migration and report your hummingbird sightings, Kendrick recommends visiting Journey North at <http://tinyurl.com/yxopqgpt> or eBird at <http://tinyurl.com/y4tnezh8>. These real-time sites show where the birds have been seen this year as they make their way back to the U.S. and Canada. “These tiny birds are truly awesome. During migration, many fly non-stop over the Gulf of Mexico from the Yucatan Peninsula to the Gulf Coast of the U.S. – and then they do it again in the fall,” Kendrick said. “They can lose up to half their body weight during this non-stop flight.”

Hummingbirds are not only mesmerizing to watch, averaging 55 wing strokes per second, but they also play an important role in the ecosystem. “Hummingbirds are important pollinators for many plants

that require a long-billed pollinator and they eat lots of insects,” Kendrick noted. “And because of their small size, hummingbirds can end up as food for predators, such as large insects, frogs, and other birds. Kendrick said growing native plants is a great way to help hummingbirds and other migratory birds. “Native plants attract the most insects, which are a vital food source for breeding birds and their nestlings. Great natives for hummingbirds are cardinal flower, jewelweed, and trumpet creeper. Visit [grownative.org](http://grownative.org) to find a retailer!”

**DID YOU KNOW:** The male ruby-throated hummingbird has a striking red throat called a gorget, but the female does not. These speedy birds often hover but can also fly upside down and backwards. They have very short legs, so they can hardly walk. To learn more about these acrobatic flyers, visit MDC’s online Field Guide at [nature.mdc.mo.gov/discover-nature/field-guide/ruby-throated-hummingbird](http://nature.mdc.mo.gov/discover-nature/field-guide/ruby-throated-hummingbird).

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# Right Tree in the Right Place

Missouri Department of Conservation

The right tree in the right place is a phrase worth remembering. Think of it like this: a Maserati may be the perfect car for cruising down a road in the Italian countryside, but having mulch in one would be inconvenient. Similarly, there is not one perfect tree for all situations. Some, such as dogwoods, stay small their whole lives; others, such as burr oaks, become large and stately. Just like picking an automobile that is right for you, it's important that you pick a tree that is right for the place you intend to plant it.

### CONSIDER THE TREE'S PURPOSE

First, decide how you would like the tree to function. Are you planting this tree as a screen from the neighbors, an accent by your front door, for shade or for greening your surroundings? Are you interested in aesthetics such as fall color and spring flowers? Do you want to provide food and shelter for birds and other wildlife?

### LOOK UP, DOWN AND ALL AROUND



Next, critique your site. Are there structures such as sidewalks, gardens or other trees to be avoided? How much space is there for a tree to grow? If you remember nothing else, LOOK UP! A common mistake is to plant a small sapling that will mature into a large, shade tree directly under a power line. This is a no-win situation for you, the tree and the utility company. Large

shade trees should be planted at least 45 feet from overhead utility wires. If your site is close to utility lines, consider planting trees that stay small or plant shrubs.

### PLANT LARGE TREES FOR BIG BENEFITS

Maximize benefits from trees. If there is adequate room, consider planting a large shade tree. The benefits from shade trees greatly outweigh those from small, ornamental trees. This is true not only for your yard, neighborhood and community, but for the planet, as well. Moreover, the branches of a big tree are up and out of the way of people and traffic. Plant large trees on the east and west sides of your home to maximize energy savings.

According to the U.S. Forest Service, a big yard tree gives us benefits of about \$55 every year of its life and lives approximately 120 years. A small tree gives us \$23 in benefits annually and can be expected to live for only 30 years. In its lifetime, a mature tree will provide about \$4,500 in value to a community; a small tree, only \$250.

Large trees remove 60 to 70 times more pollution than small trees. Neighborhoods with large, mature trees can be up to 11 degrees cooler in the summer than those without shade. One big tree in a community provides the cooling equivalent of five air conditioners running 20 hours per day and can cut cooling and heating costs by 10 percent. Big trees also increase property values by approximately \$1,000 per tree in a yard.

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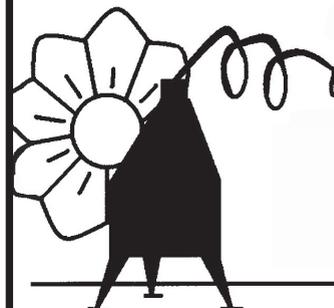
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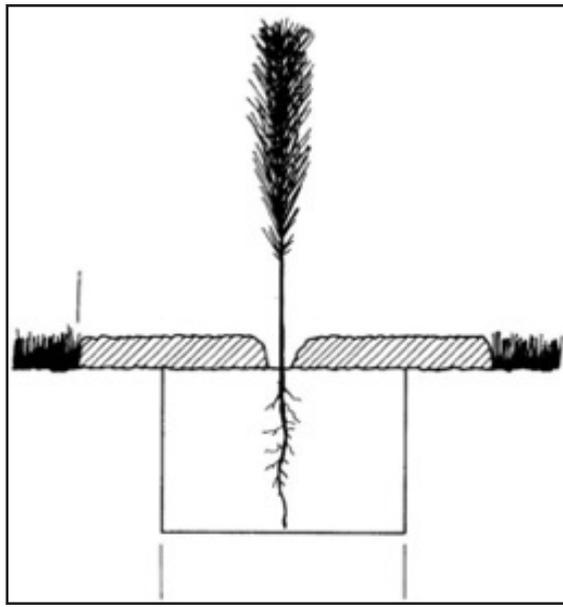
In order to plant the right tree in the right place, do your research. Consider the following checklist of important characteristics when selecting a tree: height and width at maturity, form, insect and disease susceptibility, fall color, interesting features such as bark, fragrance, flowers, evergreen or deciduous, shade preference, fruit, hardiness, reproduction method (seed or suckers), native to Missouri, soil preference, growth rate, soil moisture requirements and tolerances.

If you feel overwhelmed by the number of choices available, perhaps you'd be interested in making your selection from a short list of reliable trees. Pick up a copy of our free booklet, Missouri Urban Trees, for more details and photographs. Meanwhile, it is hard to go wrong with any of these:

- Big trees: Oak, Linden, Hard maple, Thornless honeylocust, River birch, Kentucky coffeetree, Ginkgo
- Small trees: Redbud, Dogwood, Serviceberry, Dwarf orchard (peach, apple etc.), Hornbeam, Japanese maple
- Evergreens: Spruce, Cedar, Hemlock, Pine

**PLANTING YOUR SEEDLING CORRECTLY**

The majority of a tree's feeder roots are in the upper 6 inches of soil, where they compete with grass roots for oxygen, moisture and nutrients. Feeder roots thrive on soil that is loose, moist and fertile—conditions often lacking in soils around homes. In recognition of this, you might consider a planting area, rather than just a hole.

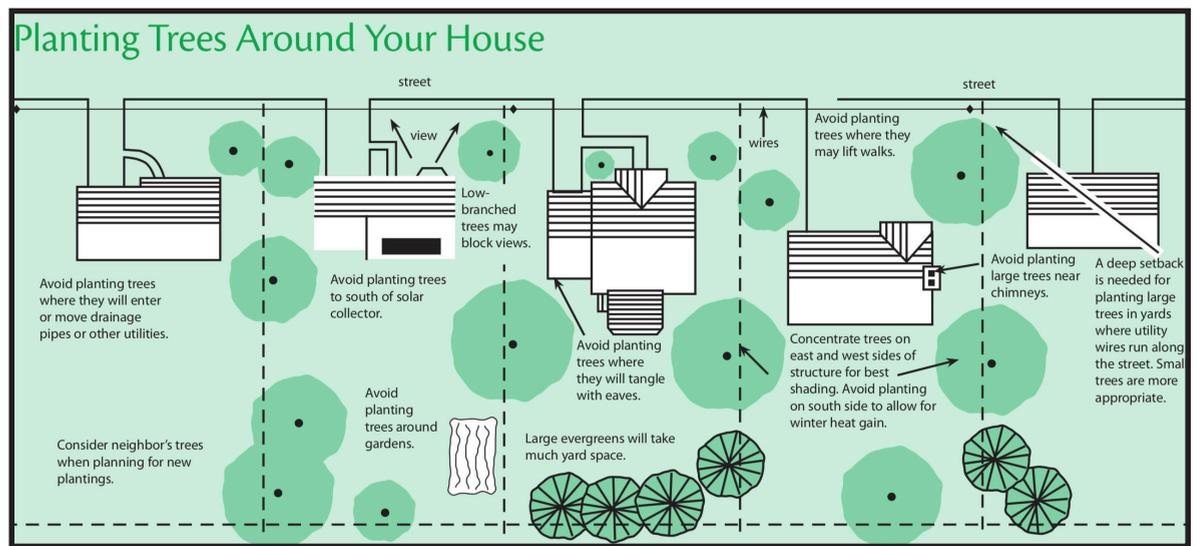


**TIPS FOR SUCCESS**

- Plant your tree as soon as possible.
- If you are not able to plant it the day you receive it, place it in the vegetable drawer of your refrigerator. DO NOT

**FREEZE!**

- Select a planting site that will give the tree room to grow and has the correct light conditions.
- Dig the initial hole as deep as the root system and about a foot wide.
- Remove the seedling from the bag and place it in the hole. Make sure the roots are spread out and are not crowded or bent.
- Crumble the soil back around the roots and pack firmly with your hands.
- Water the tree thoroughly to finish packing the soil around the roots.
- Mulch the planting area to a depth of 2 inches and to a radius of 9 to 12 inches around the tree. Organic mulches such as compost, wood chips or decorative bark may be used.
- New trees need the equivalent of 1 to 1.5 inches of rainfall per week during the first four years. Water the tree weekly during dry periods.



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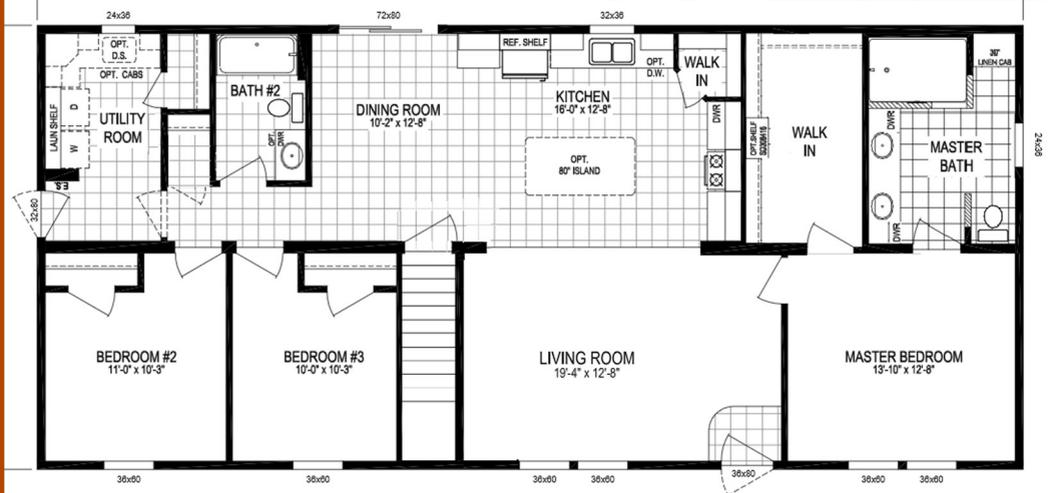
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## Tackle Those Carpet Stains

Most carpet has stain and soil protection properties on the fiber, making spot and stain removal much easier. Different fibers handle stains differently so it's always wise to consult a manufacturer's warranty and specific care instructions.

Know the basics

- Pick up anything you can with a spoon
- Blot liquids with a wet towel. Use another dry cloth to blot up moisture. That's blot, don't scrub.
- Vacuum dried messes
- If the stain doesn't clear, use a small amount of cleaner on soiled area
- Rinse your carpet with water after stain treatment

Remove common food and drink stains

- To clean most common stains such as coffee, soda pop or juice, use teaspoon of clear dishwashing liquid and one cup of warm water
- Acidic stains like tomato sauce respond well to one tablespoon of ammonia and one cup of water
- Alkaline stains like beer respond to one part vinegar and two parts water

Eliminate pet messes – Use a detergent solution followed by either the same vinegar or ammonia solution described above if necessary. Do not use steam!

Clean up oily or waxy messes – Use a dry-cleaning solvent that can break up the bond between oil or wax and your carpet's fibers.

Take on stubborn stains – Substances like blood, mustard and chocolate are particularly tough and may require several rounds of cleaning by blending ammonia and water.

Prevent dirt and grime buildup – Everyday dirt and dust that get ground into carpet fibers are common, but regular cleaning can help. It is recommended to vacuum three to four times per week, depending on the traffic in your home.

Have your carpets deep cleaned every 12 to 18 months.



## TLC for Your Roof

A roof gets more abuse from the elements and debris than any other part of a building. Debris has a tendency to hold water that will ruin your roof over time, remove all debris behind vents, pipes, pitch pans, etc. Preventative maintenance will help your roof last longer, saving you money.

Storm aftermath

- Especially inspect your roof after a storm or excessive wind storms
- Use a blower to remove leaf or debris build-up
- Gutters
- Keep all gutters free of debris to avoid build-up
- Make sure all downspouts are draining properly
- Check for loose gutters and re-attach
- Prime and paint any rust spots
- Consider investing in gutter covers
- Flashing
- Poorly attached flashing can lead to blow-offs and leaks
- Remove all caulking and sealants that are weather damaged and repair or replace

Tree maintenance

- Trim back overhanging branches
- Fallen trees should be removed from your roof
- Consider removing dead trees before they damage your home

Shingles

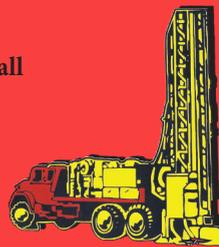
- Remove debris build up, especially algae
- Keep an eye out for loose, raised or worn shingles
- Check the mortar around chimneys and repair if necessary
- If there is one loose shingle there are likely more



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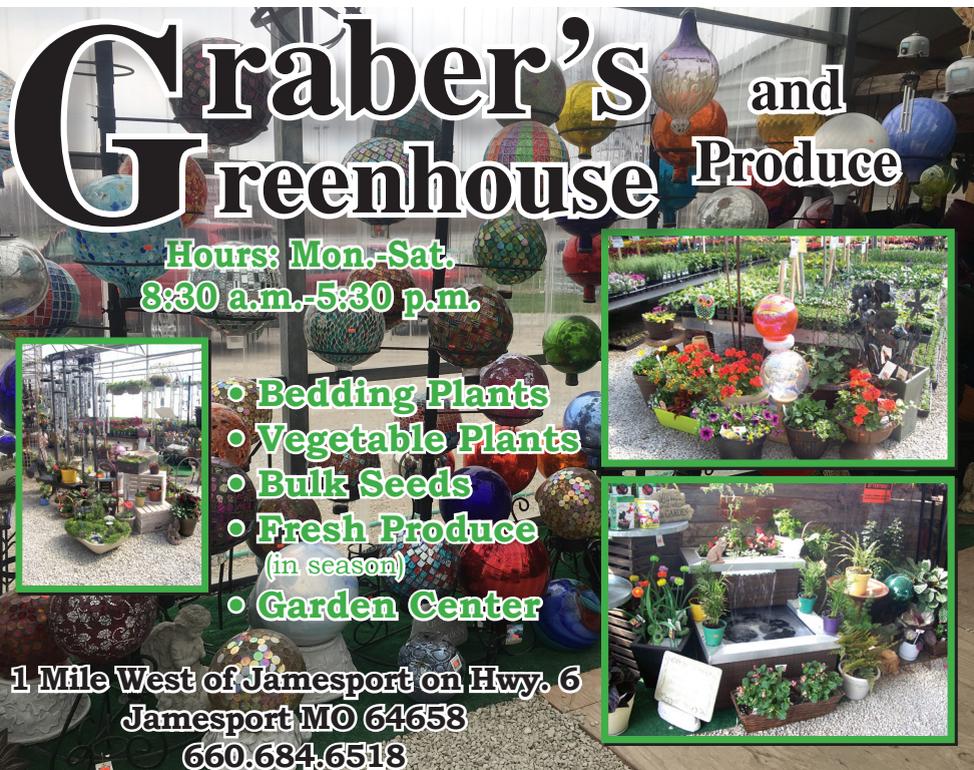
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## Items to Improve Outdoor Living Spaces

The popularity of outdoor living spaces has been growing for years. A 2014 study from the home remodeling and design platform Houzz found that 56 percent of homeowners were making updates to improve their yards for entertaining. Similarly, nearly 60 percent of architectural practices surveyed by the American Institute of Architects in 2016 said outdoor living spaces were popular features in the homes they built.

Outdoor living spaces may also be sound investments for homeowners looking to improve the resale value of their properties. According to Remodeling magazine's 2017 "Cost vs. Value" report, outdoor living spaces returned between 55 and 71 percent of homeowners' initial investments at resale.

When planning an outdoor living space, homeowners with ample backyards have much to work with. However, to make the most of the space while simultaneously hoping to get as strong a



return on their investments as possible, homeowners should look to create spaces that offer broad appeal and are not too personalized. The following are some popular outdoor living space features homeowners may want to consider.

### OUTDOOR KITCHENS

Outdoor kitchens allow homeowners to prepare more than just traditional backyard barbecue fare. A standalone charcoal grill in the backyard might get the job done, but a built-in gas grill complete with burners and surrounding granite countertop makes for

a more functional outdoor entertaining space.

### BARS

Indoor entertaining areas often include bars, so it makes sense that homeowners want to include a place to prepare and serve beverages to their guests. Homeowners with room in their budgets may want to install wet bars where they can rinse mixers, glasses and other items needed to prepare drinks for their guests.

### WARMING FEATURES

Features that can keep homeowners and their guests warm after the sun sets

include outdoor fireplaces and firepits. A 2016 survey conducted by the American Society of Landscape Architects found that fireplaces and firepits were the most popular outdoor design element in 2016. Such features can provide a focal point in the backyard while also extending the outdoor living season into autumn and even early winter.

### PORCH SPACE

Outdoor living spaces are often found in the backyard, but homeowners with bigger front yards than backyards may want to expand or open their porch spaces to create more space outside. Porch swings and rocking chairs provide a great place to relax, and porch spaces are covered, meaning homeowners can continue to enjoy time outside even when it begins to rain.

Outdoor living spaces are growing in popularity. Homeowners who want to capitalize on this trend can do so in various ways.



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## Workspace Wonders



Whether working from home or in a professional workplace setting, setting up an effective and organized workstation is easier than you think and it helps you be more productive and successful.

- **ZONE OUT**

Think about all the things you might use in your office and give each their own area or “zone.” For example, an area for supplies, short or long-term projects, files, note writing, to-do lists and things that help you stay focused such as schedules or deadlines.

- **THINK OUTSIDE THE DESK**

The traditional desk is a thing of the past. Instead, turn your office space into a cozy workspace with wall-mounted shelves, pin-up cork boards, curtains or folding screens, extra shelves, small storage containers, rolling cabinets, tool chests and plenty of storage.

- **GET RID OF THE PAPER MESS**

Paper is the main thing that can clutter someone’s work space. Whatever lands on your desk, stack it, file it, scan & store it, act on it, schedule it or toss it. Set up a filing system with pocket folders, trays or stacked bins. Put everything in an appropriate order and come up with your own system that keeps you on schedule.

- **MANAGE YOUR TIME EFFECTIVELY**

Multi-tasking is usually not productive and actually prevents you from getting things done, and done with your best effort. Instead, focus on one project at a time and limit outside distractions.

- **MULTIPURPOSE YOUR SPACE**

If you work at home, furniture can transform an office setting into a guest or media room. A wall-mounted TV or game table creates even more value to the setting. If you work in a professional office, adding furniture, file cabinets and seating space can turn even the smallest of spaces into a meeting room for multiple people.

- **PERSONALIZE YOUR SPACE**

Your office should always make you feel comfortable due to the amount of time you spend in a relatively small area. Spend some time decorating by adding things that might have nothing to do with work such as plants, jars, baskets, bins, and artwork or memorabilia.

- **CREATE A TRANSITION AREA**

Make it easy to obtain work-life balance by setting up an area in or near your office where you can get a mental break when necessary. A comfortable chair or lighting can be helpful.

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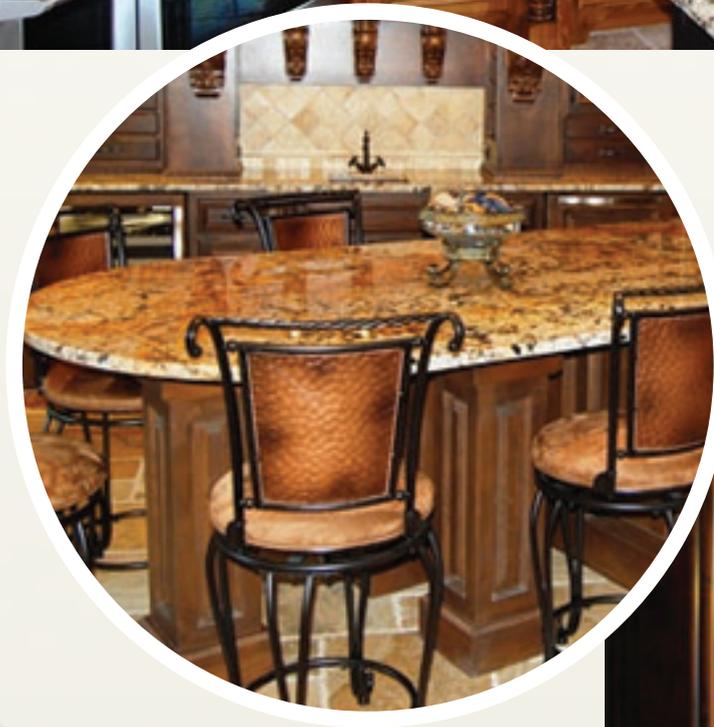
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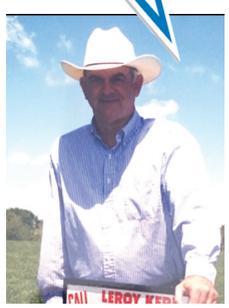
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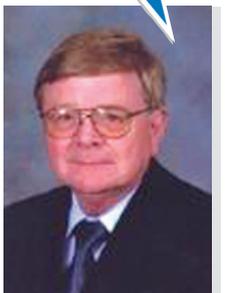
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# Wild Roe's Greenhouse

Tara Wallace

Monday, April 15 was opening day for Wild Roe's Greenhouse. The location is a little off the beaten path; but, if you enjoy rural scenery it is well worth the jaunt on US-69 and across some gravel road, following a route well marked with signs for the greenhouse. The greenhouse is owned and operated by Dana Roe. Her husband, Chuck Roe, bought the used greenhouse as a birthday present for his wife a couple years ago.



out and she tries to make sure she has extra cherry tomatoes on hand for the children to eat "it's important for children to know where their food comes from," said Dana noting, "If they grow it; they eat it".

Though she enjoys the garden vegetables and herbs, Dana has cut back on her offerings opting for the more unique plants that are not as readily available, "People like unusual, we do quite a few succulents for people, we are always trying new annuals and perennials". Since Wild Roe's is only open for six weeks of the year it makes sense to offer the unique varieties of plants that cannot be found at the larger retailers.

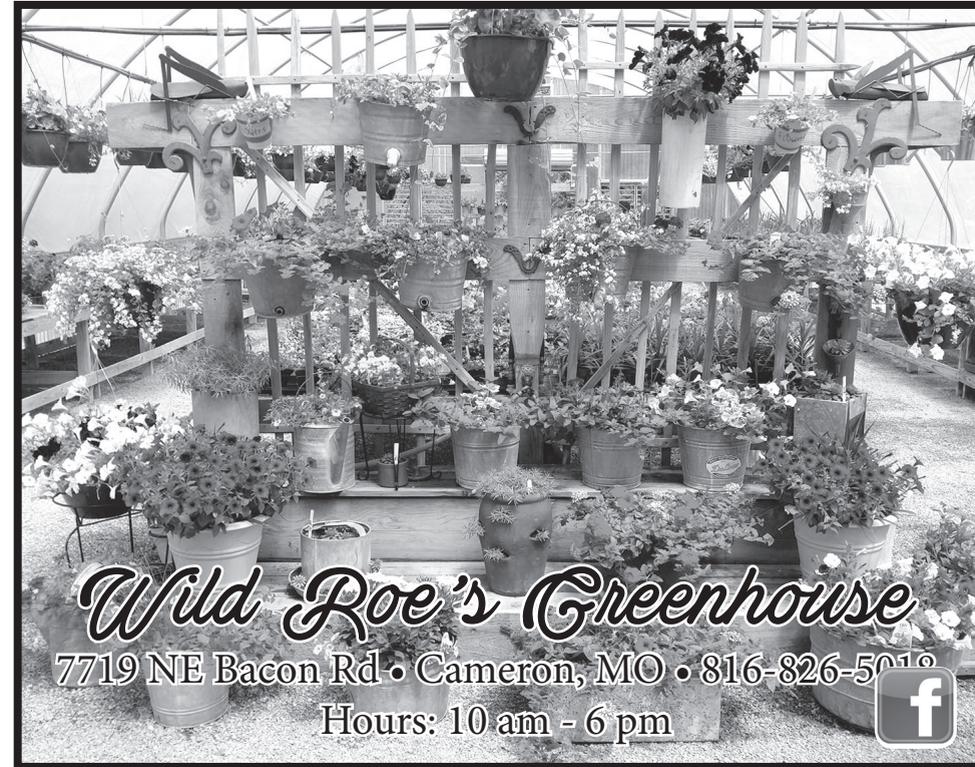
Another point of differentiation for Wild Roe's is that the plants are grown slow and with the goal being a hardy, resilient, and beautiful plant for customers to enjoy. "Plants in the box stores are grown in

hothouses," said Dana, "they are grown quickly, with lots of fertilizer and lots of heat. Plants grown quickly with lots of fertilizer and lots of heat have stunted root systems and the plants struggle after you take them home and plant them. Mine are grow slow and in cooler

temperatures so they are real hardy".

A special offering, Dana provides customers for Mother's Day, are small planters for \$5 for the kids to pick out and bring home for mom or grandma.

Before long, friends and acquaintances began asking Dana to grow specific plants for them and bringing her pots to arrange. Then she started contracting putting planters together for businesses in the Cameron area (Shatto Dairy, GiGi's Purrs and Pawz, Missouri Star Quilt Co., and more). She has had two or three pre-school groups come



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## Outdoor Improvements That Boost Home Value

Whether home improvement projects are design to improve the interior or exterior of a house, focusing on renovations that make the most financial sense can benefit homeowners in the long run. The right renovations can be assets if and when homeowners decide to sell their homes.

So how does one get started? First and foremost, speak to a local real estate agent who is knowledgeable about trends in the community. While a swimming pool may be something coveted in one area, it may impede sales in another. It also helps to study generalized trends and data from various



home improvement industry analysts to guide upcoming projects.

The following outdoor projects are just a few renovations that tend to add value.

- **Fire pit:** A fire pit is a great place to gather most months of the year. Bob Vila and CBS news report that a fire pit realizes a 78 percent return on investment, or ROI.

- **Outdoor kitchen:** Many buyers are looking to utilize their yards as an extension of interior living areas. Cooking, dining and even watching TV outdoors is increasingly popular. Outdoor living areas can be custom designed and built. In addition, prefabricated modular units that require a much smaller commitment of time and money are available.

- **Patio:** Homeowners who do not already have a patio will find that adding

one can increase a home's value. Patios help a home look neat, add useable space and may help a home to sell quickly. The experts at Space Wise, a division of Extra Space Storage, say that refinishing, repairing and building a new patio offers strong ROI.

- **Deck:** Deck can be as valuable as patios. A deck is another outdoor space that can be used for entertaining, dining and more. Remodeling magazine's 2018 "Cost vs. Value" report indicates that an \$11,000 deck can add about \$9,000 in resale value to the home, recouping around 82 percent of the project's costs.

- **Door update:** Improve curb appeal with a new, high-end front door and garage doors. If that's too expensive, a good cleaning and new coat of paint can make an old door look brand new. These easy fixes can improve a home's look instantly.

- **New landscaping:** The National Association of Realtors says an outdoor makeover that includes well-thought out landscaping can net 105 percent ROI. Installing a walkway, adding stone planters, mulching, and planting shrubs are ideas to consider.

Many different outdoor projects can add value to a home.

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# Natural Lawn Care in a Nutshell

Original authors: Brad S. Fresenburg, Travis Teuton and Don Day, University of Missouri Extension; and Jeff Zimmerschied, The Lawn Company, Columbia, Mo.

Natural lawn care does not provide instant results. Think long-term (several years) instead of short-term care.

Natural lawn care is not just about using natural products or organic fertilizers. It becomes an annual process and not just a list of individual lawn care events. Over time, we are building and promoting a balanced soil of organic matter and a healthy population of soil microorganisms while following good cultural practices to promote healthy plants.

Natural lawn care, like any lawn care program, is not perfect. It may take a little extra effort to pull a weed from time to time or to use a synthetic herbicide to spot treat broadleaf weeds. This may be a small price to pay for the satisfaction of knowing that your lawn is being maintained naturally, responsibly and in an environmentally sound manner.

“Keeping It Simple” is the best approach to natural lawn care. It does not require a large product inventory to maintain



a lawn. Following best management practices while incorporating a few key lawn care products is all it takes.

Measuring your lawn and testing the soil are the first pieces of information you need to know about any lawn. Then simply follow good cultural practices — mowing, fertilizing, watering and overseeding. Applying minerals once in the spring or fall with three applications of organic fertilizers (some containing corn gluten) will provide a good natural lawn. Other beneficial products can be added based on a soil test or as dictated by your lawn.

Protecting surface and groundwater quality is a serious environmental issue. Following a natural lawn care program is one way that homeowners, lawn care operators and professional turfgrass

managers can protect the groundwater and improve their environmental stewardship.

More information online  
 Natural Organic Lawn Care for Ohio. Jane C. Martin, Alyn Eickholt, and Joanne Dole. Extension Fact Sheet HYG-4031-04. 2 001. Ohio State University. <http://ohioline.osu.edu/hyg-fact/4000/4031.html>

Nonchemical Alternatives for the Home Lawn. David D. Minner, Beth Mankowski, Donald R. Lewis, and Mark Gleason. Horticulture Guide PM1680. 1996. Iowa State University. <http://extension.iastate.edu/Publications/PM1680.pdf>

“Environmentally Friendly Lawn Care.” City of Columbia, Missouri. [http://gocolumbiamo.com/PublicWorks/StormWater/cswp\\_lawncare.php](http://gocolumbiamo.com/PublicWorks/StormWater/cswp_lawncare.php)

“Show-Me Yards & Neighborhoods.” City of Springfield, Missouri. <http://www.springfieldmo.gov/cee/smy.html>

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## Prevent Mosquitoes From Spoiling Your Summer Fun

Summer is a beloved time of year that's often dominated by time spent outdoors soaking up summer sun. But all that extra time outdoors can make people vulnerable to mosquitoes. According to the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health, mosquitoes are more than just hungry, unwanted backyard guests. In fact, mosquito-borne diseases, including the Zika virus, the West Nile virus and dengue, pose significant threats. While not all mosquitoes carry disease, even those that don't can still bite humans, leaving them to deal with discomfort and itchiness. Taking measures to control mosquitoes outside your home can reduce your risk of being bitten by mosquitoes.

- Remove places where mosquitoes like to lay their eggs. Mosquitoes like to lay their eggs in standing water. Once a week during summer and other times of the year when mosquitoes might be buzzing around, walk around your property to remove standing water. Bird baths, flower pots, kids' toys, pools, old tires, and trash containers are some of the more common places where water can collect and present perfect places for mosquitoes to lay eggs. Turn these over to empty any standing water you find. Remove empty flower pots and old tires from the property, and make sure water storage containers are tightly covered at all times.

- Address areas where mosquitoes like to rest. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention notes that mosquitoes like to rest in dark, humid areas. This includes car ports, garages and beneath patio furniture. Outdoor insecticides can prevent mosquitoes from resting in such areas. When inside a home, mosquitoes may be resting under a sink, in closets, beneath the furniture or in a laundry room. Indoor insect sprays and indoor insect foggers work quickly and can be highly effective, but reapplication might be necessary, as they won't prevent more mosquitoes from entering the home at a later time.

- Check your window screens. Mosquitoes might prefer the outside, but that doesn't mean they won't enter a home looking for meals if given the opportunity. Inspect window screens to look for holes that may provide mosquitoes with access to your home's interior, replacing any damaged screens immediately. When leaving or entering a home, make a concerted effort to close doors as quickly as possible.

## Did you know?

Oxygen is essential for the roots of grass to breathe and grow strong enough to support healthy lawns. But according to the Center for Agriculture, Food and the Environment at the University of Massachusetts Amherst, compacted soil can produce a decrease in oxygen content that can make it hard for roots to thrive. Soil compaction can result from a number of activities, including walking on grass or driving or parking vehicles on grass. When soil is compacted, it breaks into small particles that reduce the amount of pore space in the soil. That makes it hard for water, oxygen and nutrients to get through, threatening the strength of the roots and putting the grass in jeopardy. Aerating a lawn can help homeowners foster strong root growth and healthy grass. When to aerate may be contingent upon local climate, so homeowners who suspect the soil in their yards is compact should consult with a local landscaping professional to determine the best time to aerate their lawns.

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