



Spring
**Home
& Garden**
APRIL 24, 2025

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• INDEX OF ADVERTISERS •

All American Floors	7
Great Swamp Greenhouses	6
Handy Hero	5
HappiNest Antiques	3
Hearth & Home	5
Orange Carpet & Wood Gallery	4
Reuther Material Company	8

SPRING HOME
& GARDEN

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How To Pick The
Right Plants For
Your Location

(StatePoint) When planning your yard or garden, you likely focus on the what and the where. After all, a beautiful plant in a prime location enhances curb appeal and even bragging rights. You may pay less attention though to understanding how your location, or plant hardiness zone, impacts your garden's success. To help ensure your plants don't just survive, but thrive, the experts at lawn care equipment manufacturer Exmark are sharing the following insights about plant hardiness:

What is Plant Hardiness?
Plant hardiness is the secret sauce of any healthy outdoor space. Plant hardiness is the ability of a plant to survive adverse growing conditions such as drought, flooding, heat and cold. Have you ever watched with frustration as a late-season temperature dip leaves your beautiful buds with a serious case of frostbite? Plant hardiness zones were developed to help landscapers, gardeners and lawn care enthusiasts avoid this heartache. American farming contributes billions of dollars to the gross national product annually, which is one reason why the USDA has long monitored weather data. If determining when the average final frost may occur for every region in the country is worth billions, what could that same knowledge mean for your garden? Well, choosing plants with hardiness levels appropriate to specific planting zones gives you the best chance of cultivating healthy, beautiful plants.

What is My Growing Zone?
The United States is divided into 13 zones. Zones 1-6 being the coldest, and 7-13 the warmest. Zone 1 averages -60 degrees F while zone 13 never drops below 70 degrees F. A general guideline is to plant anything designated for your zone or lower, but never higher. Know what zone you live in and make a point of checking the tag on the back of the plant or seed pack before planting.

Perennials Versus Annuals
There's a reason you see palm trees in Sarasota, Florida, not Saginaw, Michigan. When it comes to perennials, it's not about when the first frost is, but how cold it gets, and whether that plant can survive and thrive through winter. Plant hardiness zones are less important however when it comes to annuals. Because these plants are only meant to last one growing season; waiting until after the average first frost date will save you from having to re-plant. Know that even if your plant survives the frost, it may never match the photo you saw advertised at the nursery.

Planting Zone Rule of Thumb
Plant hardiness zone maps are, well, all over the map. Consider the number assigned to your zip code as a starting point. You may live right at the break between one zone and the other. When in doubt, guess too low, rather than too high. In the South, the heat stress a plant not made for the conditions. Your particular geography can also affect your hardiness zone, like if you live on a hill or in a valley. For more insights, check out the USDA Plant Hardiness Zone Map, and watch "Find Your Plant Hardiness Zone," an episode of "Backyard Smart," an original series from lawn care equipment manufacturer, Exmark. To watch the video, visit Backyard Life, which is part of a unique multimedia destination with a focus on helping homeowners improve their outdoor living spaces. There you can also download additional tips and view other Exmark Original Series videos.

Understanding what plants will thrive in your climate is essential to a healthy landscape. Fortunately, free resources abound to help you plant successfully.

Editor's note: This article was contributed by StatePoint.



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Choosing plants with hardiness levels appropriate to specific planting zones gives you the best chance of cultivating healthy, beautiful plants.

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The logo for Happi Nest Antiques features the words "Happi Nest" in a large, stylized, cursive script font. Below this, the word "ANTIQUES" is written in a smaller, bold, sans-serif, all-caps font. The entire text is set against a light beige background with a subtle, repeating pattern of small, dark, stylized floral or leaf motifs. The text is framed by a thick, dark, wavy border that follows the contours of the letters.

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DOOR DESIGN TIPS TO ENHANCE YOUR HOME'S BEAUTY AND VALUE

(StatePoint) When choosing doors for your home, remember that careful selections can improve not only your home's beauty and value, but also your quality of life. Here are a few door types to consider, along with their benefits:

Elevate with exterior French doors: French doors double the design impact, and elevate the front entryway and curb appeal of any home.

Manufacturers like ProVia offer customizations on every element of French doors so you can make a truly unique statement. Start by choosing from various styles, materials and finishes. Then, consider the addition of sidelites, transoms and decorative or privacy glass. Given how many factors you have control over, it's helpful to use a design tool to configure the door of your dreams. Visit provia.com/design-center to get started. Rest assured, no matter what your end results look like, there are a few factors you won't have to worry about with ProVia doors: durability and energy efficiency. Virtually every possible combination of door style, glass, sidelite and transom is built to last a lifetime and is ENERGY STAR certified.

Protect with storm doors: Storm doors provide doors and homes with an extra layer of protection from moisture, heat, wind, rain and other elements. Everyone has different requirements though. Fortunately, storm doors can be individually

While storm doors are often thought about more in terms of their functionality, it's important to keep in mind that varying hardware options, styles and paint finishes allow you to seamlessly blend yours in with the aesthetic of your home.

ually customized to meet your practical and aesthetic needs.

Depending on where you live, factors like the thickness and construction of the storm door can make a big difference in its performance. You'll also want to investigate your glass and screen options for added fresh air circulation in your home. While storm doors are often thought about more in

terms of their functionality, it's important to keep in mind that varying hardware options, styles and paint finishes allow you to seamlessly blend yours in with the aesthetic of your home.

Bring the outside in with sliding glass patio doors: Want to bathe your home interiors with light and the beauty of your natural surroundings?

One of the most effective, low-maintenance ways to do just that is with vinyl sliding glass patio doors. Those from ProVia are tested against the most stringent industry standards for air and water infiltration, wind load resistance, ease of operation and more.

This means you'll have lower heating and cooling costs and increased comfort all while offering your household full, unparalleled views of your outdoor spaces. Customization options, such as the materials and colors of the interior frame and the type of glass you choose, can help you tailor the look and functionality of your sliding glass doors.

For more design tips, visit provia.com.

For a true return on your home improvement project, consider how a door replacement can elevate your home's style while protecting it from the elements.

Editor's note: This article was contributed by StatePoint.



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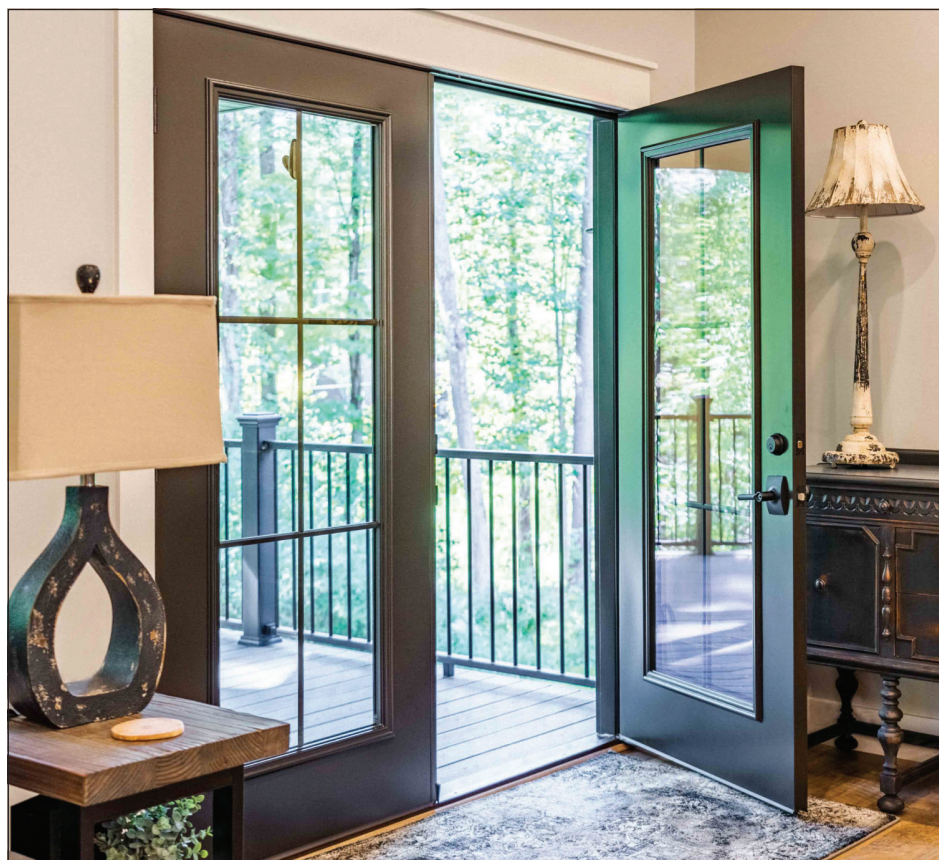
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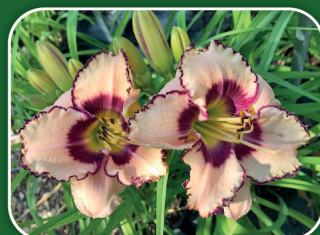


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6 LUXURY DESIGN FEATURES TO WATCH FOR IN 2025 CUSTOM HOMES

(StatePoint) Looking ahead to 2025, luxury custom homes are pushing the boundaries of design, offering innovative elements that blend functionality with high-end aesthetics. From cutting-edge technology to timeless materials, these features are setting the standard for what's next in luxury living. Here's what to expect as you explore the homes of tomorrow.

1. Smart Glass: The Future of Privacy and Elegance

Imagine having complete control over your privacy with just the touch of a button. Smart glass, also known as switchable or privacy glass, transitions from clear to opaque instantly, eliminating the need for traditional window treatments.

Benefits you'll love:

- Instant privacy control via smartphone integration that's ideal for bathrooms, room dividers and other areas
- Flexibility between views and privacy in areas such as the primary suite
- UV protection while allowing in natural light
- Solar heat control for energy efficiency
- A sleek, minimalist aesthetic with no curtains or blinds

2. Revolutionary Virtual Linear Fireplaces: Where Art Meets Warmth

The fireplace is no longer just for warmth—it's a centerpiece. Virtual built-in linear electric fireplaces with LED technology are redefining how these features function. They combine custom design with energy efficiency, creating stunning focal points such as:

- Customizable flame colors and patterns

- No maintenance or ventilation needed
- Energy-efficient heating when desired
- Safe-to-touch technology
- Practicability for all climates, with a no-heat option

3. Architectural Water Features: A Bold Focal Point for Your Home's Entrance

Water features are a striking hallmark of luxury design, transforming an entrance into a sensory experience. Imagine a dramatic two- or three-story water wall, where the soothing sound of cascading water sets the tone for the entire home and:

- Creates a stunning first impression
- Adds tranquility and elegance with flowing water
- Enhances beauty with LED lighting
- Functions as a living work of art
- Increases home value with a sense of exclusivity

4. Hurricane-Rated Pocket Doors: Seamless Indoor-Outdoor Living

For truly seamless living, hurricane-rated sliding pocket doors are a must. These engineering marvels connect your indoor and outdoor spaces, offering:

- Expansive openings for entertaining
- Hurricane protection without compromising design
- Smooth, quiet operation
- Added real estate value

PLEASE SEE FEATURES, PAGE 7

FEATURES: Designs to watch for in this year's custom homes

FROM PAGE 6

- Energy efficiency

These doors transform how you experience indoor-outdoor living, and are a must-have in areas prone to wicked weather.

5. Statement Skylights: Bringing the Sky Indoors

Natural light and large statement skylights are the perfect way to bring the sky inside, providing:

- Energy-saving natural light
- Unique architectural interest
- Opportunities for star-gazing
- Increased perceived space

6. Gilded Perfection: Gold and Brass Accents

The kitchen is often considered the heart of the home, and adding gold and brass accents can add:

- Timeless elegance

- Warm metallic reflections

- Custom personality

“While touring luxury custom home projects of our partners set for completion in 2025, I had the opportunity to meet with industry leaders redefining the standard of living—like HLevel Architecture, Wright Jenkins Home Design, and interior design firms such as Design and Company and Leili Design Studio. Working alongside them, we’ve seen firsthand how their innovative designs are pushing the boundaries of what’s possible,” says Jennifer Kis, regional and brand marketing manager at Alair Homes.

For more 2025 luxury custom home trends, visit www.alairflorida.com. From smart glass to interior waterfalls, these features are leading the way in luxury custom homes and setting the stage for the next era of sophisticated living.

Editor's note: This article was contributed by StatePoint.



From smart glass to interior waterfalls, these features are leading the way in luxury custom homes and setting the stage for the next era of sophisticated living.

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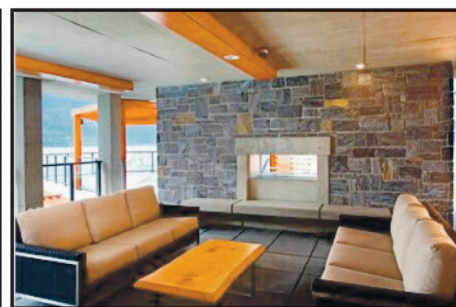
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