



Spring HOME & GARDEN

The News Reporter

Welcome Home.

The News Reporter is pleased to bring you Spring Home and Garden 2024. Whether you are looking to spruce up your yard, add value to your home with remodeling and window replacement or find timely maintenance tips, there is something here for everyone.



Spring HOME & GARDEN GUIDE

**Page
3**

What to do (and not do) to give your dogwoods and landscape a strong start

**Page
4-5**

June 1 tour will feature five Whiteville gardens

**Page
6**

4 Trends to take muted interiors from drab to dreamy

**Page
7**

What to know about landscape lighting

**Page
10-11**

From 954: A garden that grows play and imagination

**Page
12**

8 Garden tools for beginners

**Page
13**

How to pick plants that will thrive in your climate

**Page
14**

3 Unexpected paint projects that work in any room

**Page
15**

Color tips to make your home exterior pop

What to do (and not do) to give your dogwoods and landscape a strong start

By **BRUCE MCLEAN**

Extension agent – horticulture
Columbus County Center,
N.C. Cooperative Extension

Ahhh... spring is finally upon us. Cool nights, warm days... everything is starting to green up. Nature is waking from its long nap.

Things are quickly coming into bloom — blueberries, maples and azaleas — and soon so will dogwoods. Speaking of dogwoods... I can remember growing up and seeing the edges of the woods brighten up with beautiful patches of white. I always thought this was an amazing sight, especially after the long periods of dull gray that the winter brought.

These white patches were our native dogwood, *Cornus florida*. Nowadays you really don't see this sight very much, and when you do, it's not dogwoods; it's the invasive Callery pear (but that's a topic for another day).

Our dogwoods (or what's left of them) are in serious trouble.

Years of highly variable weather (drought and excessively wet periods) have weakened them and made them much more susceptible to disease and insect pests. The wet years have caused significant root loss due to soilborne diseases, and droughty years have caused substantial weakening of trees, loss of major branching and even losses of entire trees. Weakening of the trees has brought in a whole host of leaf diseases, largely various leaf spot diseases.

Along with diseases, insects are becoming much more apparent. Our worst insect affecting dogwoods is the Ambrosia beetle. Now is the perfect time to get out and scout your trees before the leaves start emerging. Minor damage may consist of only a small hole made into the bark. Major damage can be large patches of bark missing and the accompanying branches (above the missing bark) dead.

You can remove deadwood now. If damage is minor, monitor and apply timely sprays when you see signs of recent insect activity. Products like permethrin and bifenthrin are good choices for control. For disease control, fungicides with myclobutanil, propiconazole or copper are good selections. With either kind of product, be sure to follow label instructions and minimize contact with beneficial insects and desirable plants.

Proper fertilization, proper irrigation and proper siting (if you're planting a new tree)



Contributed photo

Bruce McLean

will go a long way towards your dogwood's health and longevity.

Here are some other timely tidbits...

- Lawn fertilization should begin in late May. It may be tempting to go ahead and fertilize now, but don't do it. Fertilizing too soon can damage your lawn and weaken it in the long term.

- Hold off on herbicide application until mid- to late April. Spraying for weeds now (during green-up) can cause significant damage to your lawn.

- If you have dormant pruning to do, you still have a little time, but get it done quickly.

- Spring fertilization of landscape plants can be done now. A general rule of thumb for maintaining your

mature landscape plantings is 2 lbs. of actual nitrogen per 1,000 square feet. In terms of fertilizer, 2 lbs of actual nitrogen equals 20 lbs. of 10-10-10 per 1,000 square feet of landscape bed. But obtaining a soil analysis and fertilizing according to the lab's report is best.

- Pecan fertilization can be done now.

Apply 1 lb. of 10-10-10 pecan fertilizer per inch of tree trunk diameter. Repeat in May.

- Get outside and enjoy the weather!



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Staff file photo by Justin Smith

Our dogwoods (or what's left of them) are in serious trouble, says Extension Agent Bruce McLean.

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June 1 tour will feature five Whiteville gardens

BY DIANA MATTHEWS
dianamatthews@nrcolumbus.com

Tickets will soon be available for Whiteville Garden Club's spring tour of five private gardens.

The June 1 event will include art demonstrations, educational sessions and live music. Tour proceeds support the club's community beautification projects and scholarships.

"We delight in offering various garden styles — everything from cottage gardens to formal estate style to a working farm," WGC President Brenda Jolly said. The tour is meant not only to impress visitors but to inspire them. "We like to have a lot of variety so we can showcase what people can do with their yards," she said.

The tour, which marks National Garden Week, has grown in popularity year by year, and in 2023 tour booklets sold out days ahead of time. This year Jolly said

WGC is printing 350 of the descriptive booklets, which serve as admission tickets at the gardens.

Tour stops

The personal home gardens on the tour belong to Brenda and Emory Worley, Ann and Gary Benton, Brad and Anna Johnson, and Sue Donayre; all are in the vicinity of Spivey Road or High Woods. The Scott Farm is on James B. White Hwy. North.

Lower Cape Fear LifeCare's Angel House is also a suggested stop on the tour. Located at 206 Warrior Trail, the pollinator garden is a project of Whiteville Garden Club.

Visitors will tour a walled Mediterranean-style courtyard garden with statuary and a vine-covered arbor. They can see vegetable and cutting flower gardens and sheep grazing in pastures. The tour will also take participants into suburban yards with peaceful pathways inviting them to linger alongside flowerbeds and water features.

The tour is June 1 from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Saturday, June 1, rain or shine, Jolly said.



Contributed photo

Tour-goers could see Maymay the dog and a flock of grazing sheep at the Scott Family Farm during the 2024 Whiteville Garden Club tour.



Contributed photo

An artist paints a picture at a stop on Whiteville Garden Club's 2023 tour. The 2024 tour will feature five adult and four teenage artists.

►► SEE TOUR 5



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TOUR

Continued from Page 4

Educational focus

This is the club's fourth time highlighting National Garden Week with a tour. There will be "so much to see and do at each location," Jolly said, with "artists, artisans and authors" demonstrating their work and interacting with the public.

Five adult artists and four teenage artists will be carrying out projects in the gardens. Instrumentalists will be playing music at some sites.

At one stop, visitors will observe live demonstrations of basket weaving and wood turning. They'll be able to speak with renowned gardening and horticulture author Brie Arthur and pick up autographed copies of her bestselling books.

Plans are underway for educational "do-it-yourself" demonstrations. Penny McPherson of McPherson Greenhouses will teach a session on container gardening. Kenley McPherson, a high school student and owner of Faithful Blooms, will share tips for arranging cut flowers.

"We're very excited about including so many youth," Jolly said. The club provides scholarships to local horticulture and art students.

Tour booklets will include demonstration times and locations of onsite artists, artisans and authors.

How to get tickets

Club members will begin selling tour booklets, which serve as admission tickets, beginning in mid-March. Booklets will also be available at Country Nursery, 315 Vinson Blvd. (N.C. 130) in Whiteville, Jolly said.

Jolly said visitors should feel free to



Contributed photo

World travelers Sue and Luis Donayre created a garden of mature flowering shrubs with a vine-shaded arbor, statuary and benches, offering a restful place to reflect on the beauty of nature.

tour the gardens at their leisure and in any order that suits their schedule. She urges participants to "Bring along extra cash" for books or other items they may want to purchase.

Tour-goers will want to wear comfortable walking shoes and shady hats.



Contributed photo

Walkways on the Brenda and Emory Worley property lead visitors to fruit trees, a goldfish pond, seating areas and a "hen den."

Contributed photo

At right, band students from Whiteville High School play during last year's garden tour. Musicians are scheduled to perform again this year, and tour-goers can also see demonstrations of flower arranging and container gardening.



Contributed photo

Visitors can expect to see early June flowers opening during the Whiteville Garden Club fundraising tour.



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Ann and Gary Benton's yard features a series of pollinator-friendly "micro-gardens" named in honor of people and places the owners love.



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4 Trends to take muted interiors from drab to dreamy

While neutral tones continue to be popular this year among home DIYers, bold and colorful surroundings also are trending right now.

From adding dramatic style to the kitchen to giving an unexpected space a splash of color, these ideas—inspired by the 2024 FrogTape Design Trends, as identified by celebrity interior designer Taniya Nayak—will make areas around your home pop in 2024.

Colorful Kitchens. Make the kitchen a focal point by painting the cabinets or panels on the island a vivid color. Calming blue will ensure a relaxed and laid-back feeling, while fuchsia will energize the design. Nayak recommends using FrogTape Delicate Surface Painter's Tape to prevent paint bleed and achieve crisp paint lines. The low-adhesion tape is designed to prevent damage on surfaces like cabinets, freshly painted walls, wallpaper and more.

Dynamic Décor. If painting projects aren't in the plan for this year, revive a living room or bedroom by adding a collection of brightly colored pillows and throws, bohemian-style macramé, wall art and a rug with geometric patterns. As long as the colors are com-

plementary to each other, the blend of styles and textures will catch the eye and make the room feel refreshed with little effort.

Nourishing Green. A simple, but effective, way to boost the mood of a space is to fill it with large blooms. Place a modern plant stand in an empty corner or between rooms as a divider, and layer in green houseplants or ones with colorful leaves on the shelves. Accentuate the greenery with pops of the same color throughout the room to create a sense of cohesion.

Elevated Exteriors. It's not just the interiors of the home that should speak to personal style, the outside should, too! Give the front door a facelift by painting it a daring color. Don't be afraid to choose one hue for the outside of the door and another for the inside. For this project, apply painter's tape before painting, so that trim around the door and doorknob is protected from paint bleed.

Whether you choose one or all of these trends, they can be tackled by DIYers with a range of skillsets to transform dull living spaces into the home of your dreams.

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What to know about landscape lighting

Home improvement trends come and go, and one trend that has become wildly popular in recent years is recognizable in yards every night. Landscape lighting has transformed how people see and enjoy their properties at night, making it one of the more sought-after upgrades among modern homeowners.

Curb appeal is often seen through the lens of how homes appear during daylight hours, but landscape lighting can make homes look better and more modern, and potentially safer, after the sun goes down. With such potential, landscape lighting is worth exploring for homeowners looking to upgrade their properties.

Are there different types of landscape lighting?

When considering landscape lighting, homeowners should know that there are various options to consider. According to the lighting experts at Lumens, spotlights project a concentrated and narrow beam of light that's usually around 45 degrees. Spotlights are often chosen to highlight specific features on a property, like a component of the landscaping. Individuals who want to cast light over wider, more general areas may consider floodlights, which Lumens notes spread light up to 120 degrees.

Inground lighting is among the more sophisticated landscape lighting options. Lumens notes that inground lighting illuminates the whole of a tree or structure, often creating a dramatic look. These circle-shaped lights also are great at illuminating walkways and driveways.

Post lights are another outdoor lighting option, and these are often used to light up long walkways and pathways so it's easier and safer to navigate dark areas at night.

Is landscape lighting a job a DIYer can handle?

Many homeowners consider a do-it-yourself approach when pondering a potential home renovation, and a landscape lighting project is likely to inspire such curiosity as well. The home experts at HGTV note that the feasibility of DIY in regard to a landscape lighting project depends on the type of lighting homeowners want to install and where they want to install it. Replacing an existing electrical fixture may be well within the skill of a seasoned DIYer, but installing a new fixture is a job best left to the professionals. Homeowners whose homes currently have no or very little landscape lighting are almost certainly better off working with a professional. Solar lighting that does not require any electrical work can be installed quickly and easily by anyone, but such op-



Contributed photo

Landscape lighting is worth exploring for homeowners looking to upgrade their properties.

tions may not provide the look homeowners are aiming for.

How much lighting is necessary?

The amount of lighting homeowners want to install is up to them. If the home currently has little or no landscape lighting, a consultation with a professional can help to determine how much lighting to install and where to install it. When discussing landscape lighting, homeowners may want to inquire about dimmers. Dimmers can increase or decrease lighting depending on the situation. For example, homeowners may want a little extra light during a party, but less when relaxing alone outside at night. Dimmers allow homeowners to adjust as necessary.

Landscape lighting is a popular home renovation trend. Homeowners considering adding landscape lighting to their property are urged to work with a skilled professional to devise and install a set-up that makes their homes more appealing at night.

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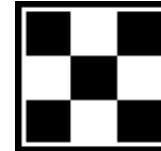
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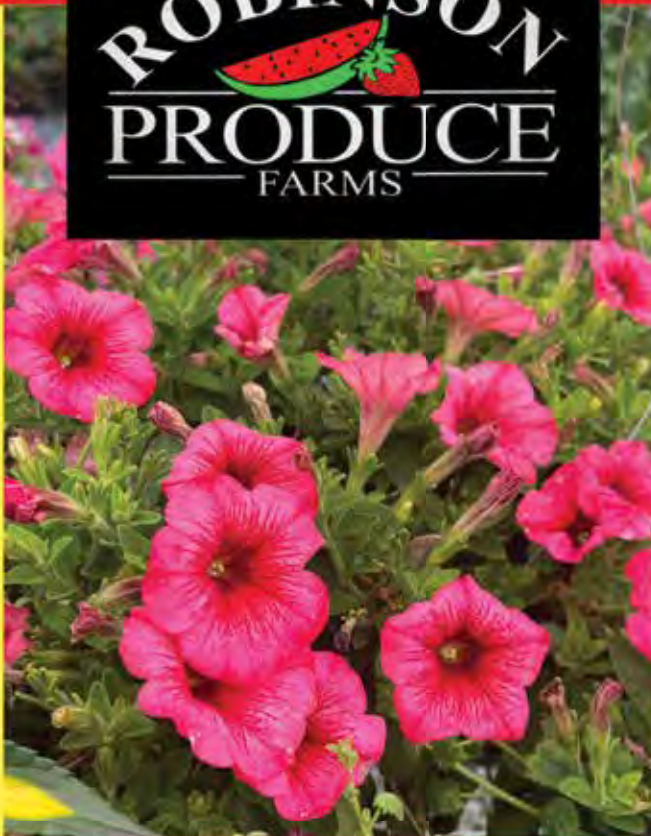


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From 954: A garden that grows play and imagination

BY STUART ROGERS

This story first appeared in the Fall & Winter 2021 edition of 954 magazine, which is published by The News Reporter.

Delighting and sparking the curiosity of young visitors is Cynthia Hansen’s inspiration for the unique backyard and children’s play area she has created at her home in the Sutton Place neighborhood of Lake Waccamaw.

Her landscape design has evolved since she and her husband, Joe Hansen, built and moved into their home. Hansen is always experimenting with new ideas, elements and materials.

Trolls and critters welcome

The loss of a large pecan tree after years of hurricane damage turned into an opportunity to create the centerpiece of her garden. With the help of her friend and neighbor Anthony Martin, Hansen designed a whimsical “troll house” built into the pecan tree stump, complete with a cedar shingle roof and English cottage-style windows and doors. At night colorful lights set on a timer shimmer through the arched windows. If you look closely, you might see a mischievous and magical troll grinning down from the attic window. The troll house has become a favorite spot for annual family photos with the grandchildren.

There are ceramic birds of every size and color, a family of rabbits, turtles, ducks, frogs, owls, butterflies and more. A bubbling birdbath with a solar

▶▶ SEE **HANSEN** 11



Staff file photos

Cynthia Hansen, a certified personal trainer who lives with her husband, Joe Hansen, at Lake Waccamaw, has installed a “troll house” and other whimsical elements in their backyard, where their four grandchildren and neighborhood children come to play and explore.

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Neighborhood friends Jovie and Ian Martin play on the swings Hansen installed under the trellis on her deck.

HANSEN

Continued from Page 10

powered water pump is a focal point that Hansen says she added to attract birds to the garden.

A place for family relaxation, too

Hansen’s backyard is filled with thoughtfully installed landscape and hardscape components that on a whole create endless opportunities for neighborhood children and the Hansens’ four grandchildren to play and explore. A mix of solar and regular landscape lighting adds a whole new dimension to the garden at night.

Each Thanksgiving, the house is also an extended family meeting place. To maximize the home’s outdoor living space, Hansen designed a large deck on several levels, creating space for a sitting area with a gas fireplace along with a grilling area adjacent to a dining area. A trellis on the deck holds two children’s swings.

When children come to visit, Hansen says, “They usually head outdoors to swing, then explore and look for new things in the garden.”

Scan the QR code to read more about Hansen’s gardening inspirations, favorite plants and “number one rule” of landscaping.



Hansen’s grandchildren, Hackney Attmore, Owen Brickhouse, Hattie Attmore and Austin Brickhouse, pose for their annual family photo.

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8 Garden tools for beginners

The right tool for the job is essential to working safely and efficiently. This is as true in the workplace as it is in the garden.

Novice gardeners may not know where to begin in regards to which tools they need. The following are eight items that can serve as a solid foundation for beginning gardeners.

1. Gloves: Your hands will be working hard, so it pays to protect them from calluses, blisters, splinters, insects and dirt. Look for water-resistant gloves that are also breathable.

2. Hand pruners: Hand pruners are essential for cutting branches, cleaning up shrubs, dead-heading flowers and various other tasks. Choose ergonomic, no-slip handles that will make work easier. Rust-resistant, nonstick blades are also handy.

3. Wheelbarrow: A wheelbarrow can transport gear to garden beds or tote dirt, leaves, rocks and other materials around the landscape. A good wheelbarrow is strong but light enough to maneuver when full.

4. Loppers: Long-handled loppers will fit the bill for thick branches. The long

handles provide leverage to cut through branches an inch or more in diameter.

5. Hand trowel: A hand trowel is a handy tool that lets you dig holes or unearth weeds. While shopping for a trowel, consider getting a hand-held garden fork, which can aerate soil and cut through roots.

6. Hose/watering can: Keeping gardens hydrated is part of ensuring their health. That makes a hose and a watering can

two invaluable tools to have around.

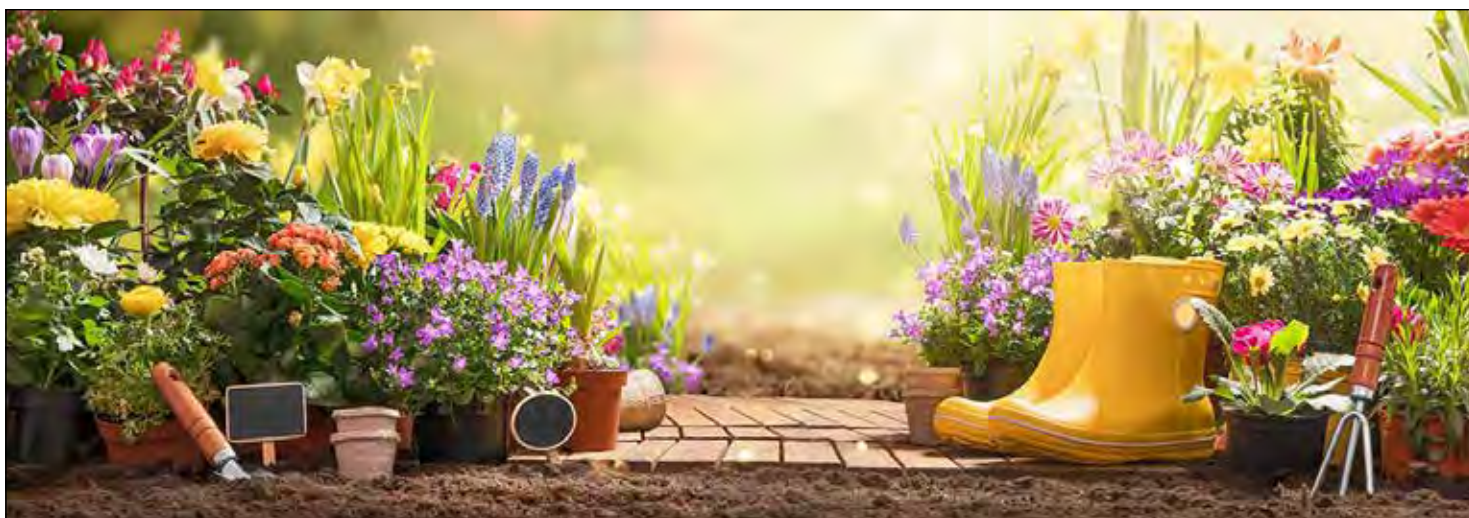
Invest in a lightweight, expandable hose if storage space is at a premium. An adjustable nozzle will enable you to customize the water flow as needed. A watering can is an easy way to tote water to hard-to-reach pots and containers.

7. Garden kneeler: Gardeners often bend and kneel while working in the soil. That puts pressure on the back and knees. A comfortable garden kneeler with memory

foam or one made from shock-absorbing material can reduce aches and pains.

8. Garden hoe: Garden hoes till soil, remove weeds and perform many other tasks. A garden hoe can be used along with a full-sized shovel, trowel and garden rake.

This list is just the tip of the garden tool iceberg. Visit a garden center and speak with a professional about other tools that can be added to the mix.



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How to pick plants that will thrive in your climate

When choosing what kind of plants to put down in your yard, 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 your plant hardiness zone and all the ramifications that come with it. 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 ability of a plant to survive adverse growing conditions such as drought, flooding, heat and cold. Ever watched with frustration as a late-season temperature dip leaves your beautiful buds with a serious case of frostbite? That's why plant hardiness zones were developed.

American farming contributes billions of dollars to the gross national product every year, 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 gardening and landscaping success.

What is my growing zone?

The United States is divided into 13 zones. Zones 1-6 are the coldest, and 7-13 the warmest. Zone 1 reaches -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 be sure to always check the tag on the back of the plant or seed pack before planting anything.

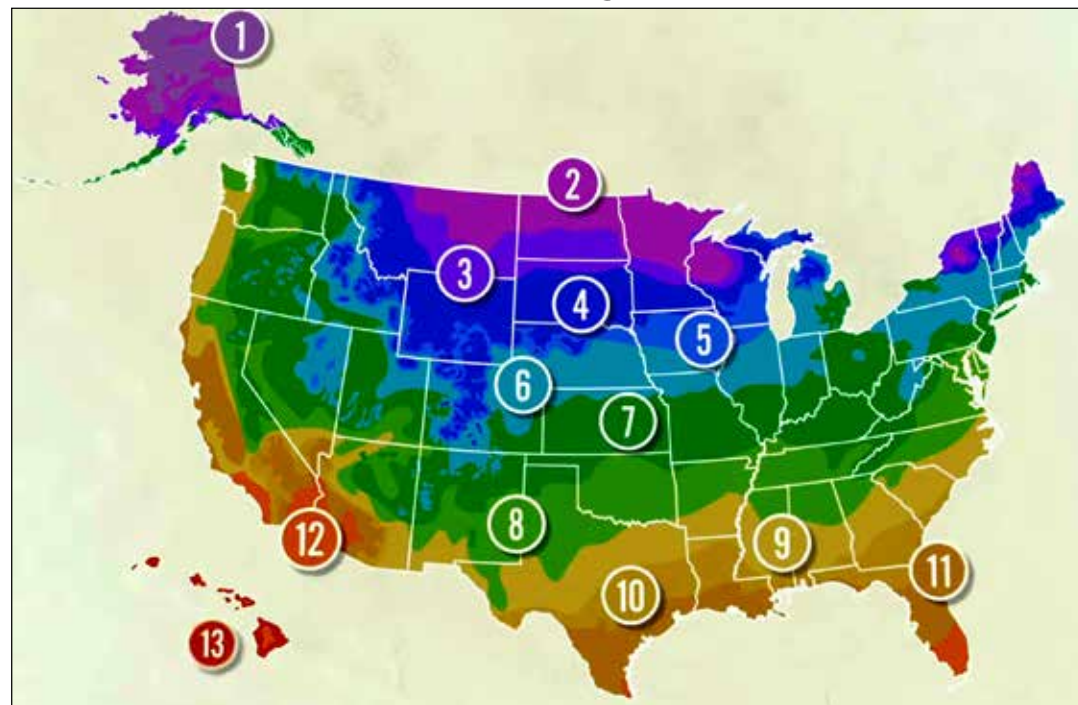
Perennials versus annuals

There's a reason you see palm trees in Miami, not Minnetonka, Minn. In the case of 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 the length of 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. Remember that it's better to guess too low than too high. In the South, the heat can put real stress on a plant not made for it. Your particular geography can also affect your hardiness zone, for example, if you live on a hill or in a valley.



Hardiness zones can help you decide which plants will thrive in your climate.

For more insights, check out the USDA Plant Hardiness Zone Map.

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

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3 Unexpected paint projects that work in any room

Are you looking to spice up your space in the new year? Get some inspiration from those who've already taken the plunge.

The following design ideas were inspired by projects from FrogTape's 2023 Paintover Challenge. The friendly competition required participating DIYers to complete a room makeover, including one featured paint project, using inspiration from the brand's Design Trends. The participants completed their transformations with a limited budget, paint and painter's tape – and you can, too.

Paint appealing patterns

Pretty patterns, such as gingham, checkerboard and stripes, offer an element of surprise and whimsy to a room. These designs can go on floor tiles, or anywhere in need of color, like walls and tables.

Achieve a modern and clean look with neutral hues or add dimension and movement by using varying paint finishes. Whichever scheme you choose, be sure to tape off the pattern with a quality painter's tape, like FrogTape Delicate Surface, to keep lines sharp, even on freshly painted surfaces.

Defy tradition with bold colors

While neutral tones like gray and beige will never go out of style, mixing colors can lead to that "wow" factor. The Bohemian Bazaar design trend dares DIYers to go bold with bright hues, like bright yellow or teal. Use dramatic colors to make a statement in any space like an office, bedroom, or even somewhere truly unexpected like the pantry.

Make them marvel with a mural

Whether it's in a kids' play area, bedroom or basement, creating a mural can add a personalized touch and make a wall pop. Don't let the idea intimidate you. While a more seasoned DIYer may illustrate an image or even include words, murals can be as simple as stripes for beginners. No matter how basic or complex you decide to go, complete the look by carrying the color scheme or pattern throughout the area with furniture, décor and other accessories.

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Color tips to make your home exterior pop

Home exteriors make a first impression, setting the tone for neighbors, guests, and – if a property is on the market – prospective home buyers. So how do you boost your curb appeal and make your exterior pop? According to those in the know, a lot of it has to do with color.

“Choosing deep, bold colors for your door or siding can provide eye-catching focal points and dramatically increase curb appeal,” says Jon Lapp, vinyl siding product manager at ProVia.

To help you make selections that work best for your home and vision, ProVia is offering the following insights:

Siding

Color and texture play significant roles in the overall look and style of a home, so consider pairing your vinyl siding with other materials, such as manufactured stone, decorative shake, or board and batten. Whether you go for soft earth tones or deep hues of primary colors, color retention technologies will maintain the look through the years. To that end, here are a few qualities to look for in your siding:

- **UV protection:** Think of it as sunscreen for your house. This layer of protection helps shield your siding from the destructive effects of the sun’s UV rays.

- **Weather barrier shield:** Anti-weathering materials on the siding’s surface can help ensure long-lasting color fidelity and low-maintenance freedom for your home’s exterior.

- **Heat resistance:** Heat-resistant inorganic pigments ensure exacting deep colors, reflect heat from exterior walls and deflect solar rays to reduce solar heat build-up and unsightly weathering.

- **Anti-fade protection:** A strong molecular chain, found in super polymer vinyl siding, is engineered for superior color retention.

“At first, it might be difficult to tell the difference between a good vinyl siding panel and an outstanding one. But over time, the true strength and quality of each panel will be revealed,” says Lapp.



Contributed photo

The entry door

The entry door is an amazing place to make a color statement. However, if you buy an exterior replacement door and try to finish it yourself, achieving the flawless finish you’re hoping for is easier said than done. Then there’s the trim, and possibly sidelights and a transom that also need to be painted to match or coordinate with the door color.

From classic hues, such as rustic bronze or forest green, to trending colors like avocado or burnt orange, you can ensure a consistent, beautiful and lasting finish by having your manufacturer paint the door before it leaves the factory floor. Bonus: the color will also be under warranty. Look for a manufacturer that crafts custom doors, allowing you to choose different interior and exterior colors and other specifications tailored to your taste.

To get inspired for your home exterior project, visit provia.com. In addition to photo galleries of finished projects, the site’s home designer tools allow you to visualize how various elements will look on your home.

By selecting professional-quality exterior products, you can ensure long-lasting durability and a big boost in curb appeal.

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