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Spring

INTO THE

growing

SEASON

By **LAUREN MCDONALD**
lmcdonald@goldenisesles.news

As the cold, harsh 70-degree winter in the Golden Isles gives way to an even warmer spring, now is the time to prepare your yard for the growing season over the next few months.

Please see **GROWING, 6D**

Bobby Haven/The Brunswick News
Stacy Wills sorts through geraniums at Ace Garden Center on St. Simons Island. The warm weather is driving up business at garden centers and in landscaping businesses across the Isles.

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Growing

Continued from page 5D

"This is a great planting season, so if there's any of those areas that you're looking to improve around the house, now's the time to really start planting stuff," said Troy Anderson, a landscape designer at Coastal Greenery.

The months of March through the start of June will be the ideal time for growth, he said.

"Around here, it's pretty much year round. But we're about to enter a strong growth season, so getting stuff in the ground and letting it root in now is good, before it gets too hot," he said.

Certain fertilizers for turf and shrubs can encourage leaf and root growth, Anderson said.

"Right now, your grass is really starting to come out of dormancy and it's finally trying to push out new leaf growth," he said. "So anything to encourage leaf growth and greening it up. A good source for that would

be a nitrogen application that promotes good green color."

A quick way to improve the look of a property is to freshen up the perennials, he said.

"They typically don't have as long as a life span as some of your other shrubs, so right now you're hoping that the ones that made it through the winter are starting to grow back out," he said. "And if not, you might have to replenish your perennial beds. That's where you really get your pop and your color to stand out and make your property look good."

Another quick facelift for one's property, he said, is to put out fresh mulch and pine straw, to keep weeds out of beds and protect roots from the heat of the summer.

Spring is also a nice time to increase time limits and days of the week for irrigation.

"As these plants start to get into growing season, they need to get more and more water, and especially with the heat of the day starting to be in the high 70s, high 80s," he said. "Right now it's good to have them well watered early on, so they don't dry up."

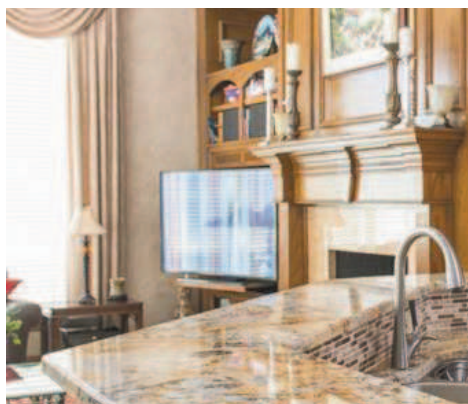
Coastal Georgia provides a unique array of types of plants that will thrive

here, he said.

"We're in that mixed zone where you can kind of blend your exotic tropical plants from Florida with some of your other colder, hearty northern plants," he said. "We're in a good zone where you've got tropical Florida, you've got Coastal Georgia and you've got the Piedmont region, with plants you can combine together and make work in a landscape."

And Coastal Greenery is available to help with every landscaper's needs this spring, Anderson said.

"We're open to meet with you about any kind of enhancement or design project that you have, anywhere from plant installs to full on designers with patio, hardscapes, pools, outdoor kitchens," he said. "Anything you can dream up in a yard, we can design for you."



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Killing BIG AND KEEPING THEM OUT

By **TAYLOR COOPER**
tcooper@goldenisles.news

In a climate like that of the Golden Isles' pests are to be expected, especially around spring time. Noticing the warning signs and taking steps to counteract the varmints can be vital to saving yourself time and money.

"The early signs are in the spring time when the flowers are blooming," said Gary Wise, Yates-Astro general manager. "It starts with flying pests, then ants start swarming and termites start swarming."

Please see **EXTERMINATE, 8D**



Exterminate

Continued from page 7D

“SPRING
pretty much triggers
everything here.”

— Gary Wise, Yates-Astro general manager

Around Easter, from mid-March to the end of March, is when pests begin showing up in full force.

“Spring pretty much triggers everything here,” Wise said.

Once the weather warms up enough that pests like ants, termites, cockroaches, mosquitos, sand gnats and spiders can move around and breed outside conformably, they’ll start hunting for warm, damp places to hide out.

Among the flying pests, mosquitos and sand gnats are by far the most common.

“The biggest thing with mosquitos is inspecting the outside of the house, looking for standing water. It only takes enough water to fit into a bottle cap for mosquitos to start breeding,” Wise said.

For mosquitos, an exterminator will start by emptying out any containers holding standing water. This is something that is recommended for everyone to do. Mosquitos lay eggs quickly, and they hatch and grow quickly as well.

Sand gnats are quite different from mosquitos.

“Sand gnats are harder to kill. You can’t kill them without making contact with them,” Wise said.

Wearing bug spray with DEET in it helps with sand gnats particularly, but not much else is

very effective.

“There’s really not much we can do about sand gnats long term,” Wise said. “If we can control their population for two weeks, that’s pretty good.”

Ants and termites are beginning to really get around at this point during the year, to the point where Wise has been booking lots of appointments to deal with termites for the last few weeks.

“The termites and bedbugs are really picking up, and then around Easter ants will start showing up and getting everywhere,” Wise said.

Ants and termites are relatively simple to deal with.

“They swarm the lights, get into the light fixtures, at evening time and then they’ll start going for the cracks in the doors,” Wise said. “Moisture around the house is key. Close any gaps you have, make sure windows and attic vents are sealed. Just make sure the house is closed up tight.”

Bed bugs are much trickier. They get into people’s homes by hitchhiking on clothes, luggage, furniture and anything made of cloth or with crevices to hide in.

“Bed bugs, the more you travel, the more likely you are to have them,” Wise said.

Bed bugs are so small that most people don’t know they have them until they start getting bitten.

HOME & GARDEN

“(Once you know you’ve got them,) you’ve got to find where they are, beds, nightstand, curtains, carpet, headboard, floorboards, anywhere they can crawl into,” Wise said. “What happens at the inspection part is once they get into one thing they can get into everything, so the inspection process can take hours.”

The only way to completely get rid of them is to fumigate the entire structure, which can be very pricey. As far as preventing them, Wise’s only advice was to be very careful where you stay while traveling and closely inspect secondhand furniture and mattresses before buying them.

The same advice for dealing with ants and termites goes for cockroaches of all varieties, of which there are many in Georgia.

“Asian, American, Oriental, Smokey Brown and German. We deal with quite a large number of different species of cockroaches,” Wise said.

They like to be holed up in dark, warm and damp areas, like palm trees, oak trees, palmetto bushes and mulch, but they are more than happy to move into houses.

Spiders are a year-round problem, according to Wise. They will usually try to stay indoors all winter, and will gladly do so if allowed. The best way to deal with them is to keep them from making webs. Take down any webs you see to deprive them of their means of catching food. Once they’re gone, chemicals that keep webs from sticking can be applied to keep them away.

Some things that can be used to keep a number of bugs away are outdoor lights that shine a color instead of white lights that attract more insects, spraying repellent chemicals around houses and clearing old wood piles.


For a professional exterminator, Yates-Astro usually charges an initial fee of \$150 followed by a bi-monthly \$56 charge.

“Primarily what we’re trying to do with the bi-monthly service is to get them while they’re outside,” Wise said. “A bi-monthly service is good, quarterly is a little too long between treatments.”

Wise stressed the importance of pest control, saying consumer products generally aren’t as potent as chemicals exterminators use, and that exterminators are specially trained to deal with pests.

Other pest control options in the Golden Isles include Golden Isles Pest Control, Redfern Pest Control Services, American Pest Control, Allgood Pest Solutions, Peachtree Pest Control, Younce Terminix, A-1 Economic Exterminator, Knox Pest Control and Excel Pest Control.

“Pest control in our area is very important,” Wise said. “Killing them is important, but keeping them from getting into your house in the first place is important too.”



Asian, American, Oriental, Smokey Brown and German. We deal with quite a large number of different species of *cockroaches.*”

— Gary Wise, Yates-Astro general manager

HOME & GARDEN

DIY WORK ON OLDER STRUCTURES TAKES EXTRA KNOW-HOW

By **MELISSA KOSSLER DUTTON**
Associated Press

Dwain Livengood can save money on his home renovation project by doing the work himself. But he also knows that do-it-yourself projects in historic homes like his 100-year-old farmhouse require extra planning and research, and that mistakes can be costly.

"Self-awareness is pretty huge," says Livengood, who grew up in the house in Lancaster, Pennsylvania, and is the third generation of his family to own it. "Saving money isn't worth it if in the end it looks like an amateur did it."

He is planning the first major renovations to the property, including a new kitchen, hardwood floor restorations and window repair.

DIY "fails" in historic homes can do more than look bad; they can seriously damage a home's structure and character, says Jody Robinson, historic preservation officer for the city of Bellevue, Kentucky. DIY has a place in historic home renovation, she says, but it needs to be well-researched.

If your home or neighborhood has a historical designation, there probably are restrictions on what you can do, particularly to exteriors. Consult with local authorities before initiating projects or hiring contractors.

"The difference with a historic home is the materials used and how they were constructed," Robinson says.

Slate roofs, wood gutters, weight-and-pulley windows, plaster walls and old building materials require special attention, experts say. Luckily, there are numerous places where owners of historic homes can find information about which projects they should

and shouldn't attempt on their own.

Cities, preservation societies, restoration enthusiasts, and even businesses that specialize in historic renovation offer workshops and classes. Window repair, plastering, basic fireplace fixes and tiling are among the most popular subjects.

Understanding your home's construction and appreciating historic renovation methods are the first step, says Benjamin Curran, department head for historic preservation at Savannah Technical College in Georgia. Through its Historic Homeowners Academy, the school teaches classes geared to the do-it-yourselfer.

When homeowners try to apply modern solutions to old homes "a remodel can easily turn into a re-muddle," Curran says. For example, using the wrong mortar can damage old bricks.

He recommends taking a class and consulting with a professional or historical preservationist.

"From there, it's a question of what is achievable. What is the breadth of your skill set? Where might you stretch yourself and learn more?" Curran says.

Jim Wigton, president of the Monrovia (California) Historic Preservation Group, says it was formed nearly 40 years ago by residents who were restoring homes and wanted to share knowledge.

"At the beginning of the organization, we invited craftspeople in to share how to do things," says Wigton, adding that group also offers a home tour and works on city-wide preservation projects.



AP
This photo provided by Savannah Technical College shows Historic Preservation students taking part in timber framing and masonry in the lab, in Savannah.

HOME & GARDEN

IMPROVEMENTS

help market homes

By **GORDON JACKSON**
gjackson@goldenisles.news

When it comes to putting a house on the market, first impressions are important.

That's why people like Angela Mussara, broker/owner of Sea Coast Realty, recommend property owners start with improvements to the home's exterior before putting a home on the market. That includes pressure cleaning the exterior or a new coat of paint, if necessary.

New shingles are often required before a house is put on the market. Cosmetic work includes a freshly mowed lawn,

landscaping, flower beds and other improvements.

"A lot of time, buyers drive by and if they don't like what they see, they don't bother going inside," she said. "To market it, you have to look at the competition."

Some work, like replacing shingles, pressure cleaning or an exterior paint job may not be for your do-it-yourselfers, said Bill Strother, owner of J.C. Strother Hardward in St. Simons Island.

Many of his customers are contractors who repaint houses, replace roofs and other improvements. One of the more popular additions are the new, low-main-

tenance fiberglass doors that don't crack or rot like wood doors, he said.

Smart vents that let flood water in and out of homes are another popular home improvement, Strother said. The vents relieve pressure from the walls of flooded homes and lower homeowners flood insurance, making them a good investment and a popular selling point.

Inside the home, Mussara said the kitchen, followed by the bathrooms, are main features inside considered by prospective home buyers.

"Make sure it's clean, not cluttered," she said

Some of the improvements, such as re-

placing a faucet or light fixture can be done by many homeowners. There are many instructional videos that can be found online for many home repairs. The improvements are an investment that enables the house to be sold quicker.

"A little bit of time and a little bit of investment can help," she said. "You need to think about things that won't pass an inspection or an appraisal."

Strother said there is no time of year when people can't do home repairs if they live in the region.

"There is no set time for repairs," he said. "They're remodeling all the time. Right now, it's wide open."

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SMALL SPACES CAN YIELD
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GARDENS

By LINDSEY ADKISON | ladkison@goldenisles.news

When it comes to having a garden, many think it is only possible with a large space. But Chris Saunders knows that simply isn't the case. The owner of Saunders Landscaping on St. Simons

Island said that gardens can be created with any amount of space — even tiny ones. And the easiest option for those — an herb garden.
“That’s something that you can do really anywhere, even

if you only have a patio,” he said.
An assortment of plants can be used. Many favorites,
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Gardens

Continued from page 14D

Saunders said, include basil, sage, parsley, paragon, cilantro, thyme, dill and chives.

“They start with suitable pot. And they need to make sure that the pot drains well. So it needs to have a hole in the bottom. Some people put gravel or rocks in the bottom so that it is still able to drain the water but the dirt doesn’t come out,” he said.

From there, they should fill the pot with organic soil and a small amount of organic fertilizer. And Saunders cautions that a little of that goes a long way.

“You don’t need too much because the greenhouses usually fertilize the tender plants, which is what I prefer to use ... the tender plants instead of seeds,” he said. “I would also suggest that they dampen the soil a bit before they plant. That is better than watering them heavily because you could over water them and drown them.”

From there, the pot should be placed in an area that receives direct sunlight for at least six hours a day. The soil can also be covered with a thin layer of mulch, Saunders adds.

He also encourages creativity when it comes to what types of plants go into the pots. If the space is large enough, several may be grouped together.

“Don’t be afraid to put more than one variety in the pot. Grouping can protect them from the wind,” he said.

It can also bring an aesthetic element to the mix. Bringing multiple plants together in a larger container offers more variety — and literally more spice. Of course, plants may also be placed directly in the ground.

“They can put them in the ground.

Rosemary is one that many people don’t think about but it does well here and it looks great,” he said. “You can also plant mint which is great for lemonade or cocktails ... but mint is very invasive so I would suggest keeping that in a pot. If you plant it in the ground, it’s libel to take over.”

Whatever the selection, Saunders said that an herb garden — contained or otherwise — is a great option for everyone. Plus there’s the bonus of having the fresh herbs to use at will.

“As they grow and are ready to harvest for dinner, you can just snip off the pieces. And that is actually good for them ... it helps them grow,” he said.



Bobby Haven/The Brunswick News photos

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HOME & GARDEN

Suddenly in for *everyday* dining

By **LARRY HOBBS**
lhobbs@goldenisles.news

If you are waiting on the weekend to get here before sparking up the barbecue grill, dozens of good summertime dining experiences are slipping away.

So says Stephen Hart, one of the helpful hardware men at Ace Island Hardware on St. Simons Island and a longtime outdoor cook.

"Grills have become simple and quick to operate that cooking out should be a more or less spontaneous affair these days," Hart said. "From roasting Boston Butts and chicken to grilling steaks and burgers on direct heat, it's really a convenient way to prepare the evening meal. And you just can't beat the flavor."

For those who haven't noticed, grilling is no longer the domain of dads and weekend barbecue warriors. From the pushbutton convenience of gas grills to the traditional flavor of charcoal, cooking outdoors is now a mainstream approach to meal preparation. If you don't have a grill at home, the good folks at Ace and other stores in the area will be happy to set you up.

Ace even delivers, Hart said.

Island Ace Hardware has a broad selection of Weber gas and charcoal grills. And don't even get the Island Ace folks started on their selection of Big Green Eggs, the ceramic grill with even heat distribution that is considered by many to be the ultimate in high-end outdoor cooking.

But for those starting out, Hart said, you can't go wrong with the standard Weber charcoal kettle grill. Durable and dependable, the kettle grills are convenient for a variety of styles of cooking, he said.

"It's hard to beat a Weber kettle grill," Hart said. "It's easy to maintain and it's very reasonably priced."

As Hart noted, the standard idea of grilling burgers, steaks and hotdogs on direct heat is just part of the picture. Folks can roast and slow cook chicken, pork and fish with little effort.



Simply light the coals on one side of the grill, place the meat on the other and cover. In the meantime, salads, drinks and other side dishes can be prepared while the grill does all the work with the main course, he said.

Delicate foods like fish, and even vegetables, can be placed in aluminum foil before putting on the grill, he said. Wood chips, from hickory to apple, can be sprinkled on the fire to add a distinctive smoked flavor to the evening's meal.

Gas grills are even more convenient and the heat control is more precise, he said. Ace offers a variety of gas grills from Weber's Genesis line. Starting the fire is as simple as pushing a button; direct and indirect heat is controlled with the turn of a knob. There are even opportunities for smoke flavor on gas grills, with devices like steel grates that hold wood chips and are placed over the fire delivery system.

With daylight hours burning longer, there is no reason to be trapped cooking inside all summer, Hart said.

"It's too easy," he said. "Anybody can do it. A few simple steps and jingo — it's dinner time."



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HOME & GARDEN

PLANTS
brighten
YOUR
HOME

By TYLER H. JONES
tjones@goldenisles.news

Houseplants are known to bring beauty and a sense of nature into living spaces, but that may not be the only reason to make them part of the decor. Many easily cared for species can actually help filter and improve the quality of indoor air, according to a 1989 study by NASA. “Houseplants help purify the air through absorption of different chemicals that come in through carpets and all sorts of things we have in our homes,” said Dawn Hart, owner of the Ace Garden Center on St. Simons Island.

Please see HOME, 20D

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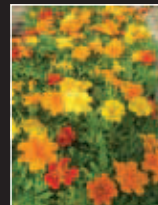


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HOME & GARDEN



Home

Continued from page 18D

Back when the study was done, as many as 30 percent of new and recently remodeled buildings had varying degrees of indoor air pollution, NASA's study notes. However, Hart said many first-time plant buyers and novice gardeners may be intimidated by taking care of their potted investments. There's no need to be, she said.

"There are several plants that are easier than others," Hart said. "Quite a lot depends on where the homeowner wants to use them. They need to bear in mind the spot that they wish to put the houseplant, and if they're unfamiliar with the options that are available, just ask."

Hart said one of the most common problems she sees with beginning houseplant owners is lack of watering.

"People will often come back (to Ace Garden Center) because their plant's leaves are yellowing," she said. "And then you find out they were watering it with half a cup of water a week, which is not going to be enough for a large plant."

Almost every homeowners' individual tastes in plant decor differ, but Hart said there are some sure-fire species that work well indoors.

"If you have tall ceilings, there's nothing that has more appeal than a towering palm," she said. "The eureka and bamboo palms do a good job of purifying air, but also provide

stature for that kind of location."

Palms require good light and plenty of water, which not every home has, Hart notes. In low-light cases, she recommends dracaenas, a genus that includes about 120 species of trees and succulent shrubs.

"There's also a plant called a 'ZZ plant,'" Hart said, adding to the list of low-light houseplants. "It's about as easy as it sounds. It's got a very low water requirement, and will essentially go in the darkest spots."

Younger people and millennials, Hart noted, tend to purchase houseplants that are different from the ones kept by their parents.

"A lot of millennials seem to like the more minimalist look," Hart said. "They tend to gravitate to the succulents, and air plants and terrariums — things of that nature."

Beverly Nash, a St. Simons Islander and

member of the Cassina Garden Club, has kept houseplants for years, and said the key is to keep and eye on them and move them if they're not getting enough sun.

"You have to pay attention and take care of them the way you're supposed to," Nash said. "If you pay attention, you can usually get them in the right spot most of the time."

She added keeping houseplants can be a stress reliever and an enjoyable hobby that brightens up the home.

"I get a lot of enjoyment from it," she said of keeping houseplants. "It can be somewhat of a challenge to keep them going, but it's a lot of pleasure, and I think that's one of the main reasons people keep them in their home."

Easy-care houseplants

- Chinese evergreen
- Spider plant
- Snake plant
- Bamboo and areca palms
- Peace lily
- Dracaena
- Fiddleleaf fig
- Aloe vera
- Pothos

Source: Dawn Hart, Ace Garden Center, St. Simons Island

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HOME & GARDEN

By **LINDSEY ADKISON**
ladkison@goldenisles.news

Elaine Griffin has designed interiors in some of the swankiest locations on the planet — including New York and Paris. But the Brunswick resident also knows there is one thing that matters even more than having a cohesive design scheme — neatness.

One can have the best of the best when it comes to decor, but if a room or a home is a cluttered mess, it really doesn't matter how fancy the scheme. Simply put: Neatness matters. It's something that Griffin herself has always known.

"Your mama was right when she said, 'A place for everything, and everything in its place.' It's still rule No. 1 of having an organized home," she said.

Of course, there are a few others to live by, she added.

"Golden rules No. 2 and 3: Put like with like; and remember that decluttering is a two-way street — when you acquire, you must also discard," she said.

"If you still own your kids' lego set(s) and they can drive themselves to school, Houston, we have a problem. I always remind clients that the Apostle Paul exhorted us to travel light. Less is always more."

Keeping those rules in mind, Griffin encourages homeowners to find ways to clear out the old while bringing in the new. She also advises homeowners to find easy ways of keeping spaces clean day by day. That is especially key when it comes to families with little ones.

"The secret to keeping an organized home with small children is to have 'tilt and dump' waystations throughout your main living spaces — oversized baskets, lidded bins, chests and decorative boxes, either free-standing or tucked in the open spaces beneath tables, that you can just throw kids' toys and playthings in when you need to tidy in a jiffy," Griffin said.

Another key element to easy cleaning is having a number of easily con-

cealed containers, which "hide" in plain sight.

"Faux built-in window seats with either open or lidded storage below and a cushion on top look great almost anywhere and hide a multitude of sins," Griffin said.

Managing the kitchen and bathrooms are key as well. For these areas, Griffin believes that hiding items "stylishly" and in plain sight, much like antique shops, can be an easy way out.

"Cutlery and silverware — ok, anything, actually — always look great in jars and canisters on kitchen countertops, for example," she said.

"Mail will overtake your kitchen table in a nanosecond if it isn't corralled every day. Sort it when you bring it in, in three labeled trays or boxes that won't take up too much space — 'to pay/urgent,' 'to read,' 'to toss' — and then go through it weekly ... with a glass of wine."

But perhaps the areas that often need the most help aren't found in plain view. Those are the dark recesses of the home closet. Griffin said these spaces can become real nightmares but she offers an easy fix — double rods.

"I'm not seeing enough double rods in Golden Isles closets. Double-hanging rods in walk-in closets are the secrets to a happy marriage," she offered. "Allow at least 40–48 inches between shelves for clearance and keep a dedicated stepstool in the closet for accessing the upper rod."

And just as the rods in closets can add and clear space, hooks and shelves can do the very same.

"When you can't expand horizontally in square footage-challenged spaces, go vertical: think floor-to-ceiling shelves or multiple hooks arranged in a geometric grid," she said.

"I especially love floating wall cubes (from Target) to corral sprays, lotions and beauty essentials in baths. The backs of cabinet and closet doors are major real estate options for organizing, too."



**Bobby Haven/
The Brunswick News**
Interior designer Elaine Griffin says that a mirrored cabinet like this one at Taylor House Interiors on St. Simons can store a multitude of items in any room in the house.

Cool Air

MEANS CLEAN DRAINS

By WES WOLFE

wwolfe@goldenisles.news

You're going to want to clean your drains. When contemplating it, it is not a bad idea for drains of all types to flow freely, but in this case, especially regarding home air conditioning. And while some folks already turned on the AC this year, it's not too late to get your system in proper working order before 80-degree highs sound like products of a cold snap.

"I don't know if you've ever experienced water coming through the ceiling and things of that nature — a lot of people have — from an air conditioner, a lot of that is due to a drain clogging," said Robert Solomon, owner of The A/C Guys on St. Simons Island. "You've got to flush them, or else it could back up and your safety pan is typically underneath it to protect it, but sometimes people don't realize they've got problems, but then the pan rusts out and the ceiling gets wet and then it's a big mess."

He also said that if there are drain problems, water could end up in the unit's safety pan, which could lead to cutting off the thermostat, which then disables the unit so it does not continue running and risk further damage.

Solomon said a common call received when days get warmer regards low freon levels. During cooler months, people

can go along without realizing refrigerant is low within the system until the need comes to run their air conditioner regularly. Also, there remains the need to keep parts clean as a part of regular maintenance.

"The outdoor condensing coil needs to be cleaned periodically, because it's exposed to the elements outside, and whenever it's running, it's pulling in dust, etc., so it gets dirty," Solomon said.

An excessively dirty coil can reduce performance and decrease the life of the unit if not dealt with properly.

And, of course, air filters need replacement.

According to the U.S. Department of Energy guidelines, "The most important maintenance task that will ensure the efficiency of your air conditioner is to routinely replace or clean its filters. Clogged, dirty filters block normal airflow and reduce a system's efficiency significantly. With normal airflow obstructed, air that bypasses the filter may carry dirt directly into the evaporator coil and impair the coil's heat-absorbing capacity. Replacing a dirty, clogged filter with a clean one can lower your air conditioner's energy consumption by 5 percent to 15 percent."

The DOE guidelines also suggest replacing or cleaning your A/C system filter fairly regularly — every one to two months during the cooling seasons — or as needed, taking into account dustiness and pet hair.



DON'T FORGET YOUR PERMITS

By **TAYLOR COOPER**
tcooper@goldenisles.news

Spring, often considered a time of growth and renewal, is a popular time of year not only to clean up the house, but to add onto and alter it, making it fresh for a new year.

Say you want to add, expand, screen-in a porch, install a pool, lay a paved, tile or cobble walkway, or remodel a kitchen. There may be permits you have to get before you can start. Types of permits for varying improvement projects include:

ALTERATION PERMIT

- For altering existing structures without going outside the building's footprint.
- You get into the requirements for the permit when you get into altering electrical, plumbing, HVAC and interior layout.
- Kitchen renovations, raising or lowering a ceiling, combining rooms, knocking out a load-bearing wall, etc.

POOL PERMIT

- Surprise, surprise, for a pool.

BUILDING PERMIT

- For any expansion to a building or construction of an existing building.
- Sheds, workshops, mother-in-law suite, etc.

County building official Ellis Carter has some tips on what to expect when applying for a permit.

- Submitting a permit application will cost you. Another rule of thumb, according to Carter, is that the submission cost is about \$4 per thousand, so a permit for a \$100,000 house would cost \$400 dollars.

- Carter and his staff have been shooting for issuing permits no more than five days after the applications are submitted, and they have been fairly consistent in meeting that goal.

- When it comes to the level of detail a application should include, "it doesn't have to be elaborate plans. A very easy rule of thumb is if you hand it to me, and I can build it (based on the plan alone), it's certainly adequate."

- If you live in the village preservation overlay on St. Simons Island, be ready for a few extra steps: "If you alter anything beyond the footprint of what you already have you have to go before the (Islands) planning commission."

Carter also has some tips on how to go about getting the work done.

- Always investigate the potential consequences of any alteration: "You see it on these shows, 'we're going to knock this wall out and open the whole thing up.' There's go-

ing to have to be something that transfers that load from the roof to the ground."

- Develop a budget and have in your mind exactly what it that you want rather than a multitude of changes. Meet your budget.
- A lot of people will try to do this themselves, which isn't recommended. Carter recommends getting a state-licensed contractor.
- Remember to include tap fees for the Brunswick-Glynn Joint Water and Sewer Commission as well, if necessary.

And of course, not getting a permit is a violation of county ordinances, which can lead to harsh punishments.

- Violators will be take to Glynn County Magistrate Court.
- Fines up to \$1,000 can be issued, as well as days in jail.
- Carter will always ask for harsh penalties.
- Permit fees will be doubled for the perpetrator.

• However, if Carter believes the violation to be an honest mistake or misunderstanding, he and his staff are willing to work with homeowners to bring them into compliance with the law.

For more information on permits, call 912-554-7111. All permit applications must be dropped off at the intake desk on the second floor of Harold Pate Building, 1725 Reynolds St. in downtown Brunswick.



Fairy gardens

captivate imaginations of both young and old

AP
A fairy garden made by Victoria Hannley is shown in Tucson, Ariz.

HOME & GARDEN



AP
A fairy garden at the home of Michelle Peebles is shown in Broomfield, Colo

By **TRACEE M. HERBAUGH**
Associated Press

A set of little wings. Ceramic fountains. Tiny versions of ornate cottages and brick walkways fit for the English countryside. These are just some of the whimsical decorations that adorn fairy gardens.

When such miniature decorations are paired with similarly diminutive plants, these gardens — aimed at luring fairies — can captivate the imaginations of children and adults alike.

“I think it is in our DNA,” said Brenda Williams, a master gardener at Pesche’s Greenhouse, Floral and Gifts in Lake Geneva, Wisconsin.

For the last four years, Williams has been teaching classes to 4H students and through the University of Wisconsin’s continuing education program on how to create fairy gardens.

We have the itch to garden, she believes, to satisfy some lingering part of our hunter-gatherer past. “That gene is still very present in modern people who no longer need to garden,” Williams said. And designing a little fairy abode turns a garden into “a living artwork,” she said.

Fairy gardens’ appeal is similar, perhaps, to that of Japanese bonsai, the ancient practice of grooming small trees inside containers. In 1893, fairy gardens surged in popularity in the United States because of the Japanese Pavilion at the Chicago World’s Fair.

No two fairy gardens are the same. Some people use creative containers, especially antiques — a wash tub, bird cages or pickle bottles.

“I tell people to imagine something in your head and try to recreate it in a pot, or whatever,” Williams said.

The gardens can be designed underwater or with silk plants if the creator is more of a “set and forget” type of plant person, Williams said.

Often, fairy gardens are a creative bridge between adults and children. Jayme Tortorelli Benko, a 37-year-old mom from Denver, saw photos of fairy gardens online and wanted to make one for her young daughter, Alora. In a large pot, Benko put a ceramic flower with a resting fairy (named Nata), some rocks and an assortment of potted plants. Creating the garden was about spending time together, Benko said, adding, “Kids love magic.”

Fairy gardens are also part of a larger DIY movement. Victoria Hannley, a 39-year-old mother of three who runs the DIY blog “Dazzle While Frazzled,” made her first fairy garden with items left over after her daughter’s birthday party and some empty soup cans from the kitchen.

“It makes me think back to the days when I had a dollhouse,” Hannley said. “You’re able to take everyday stuff you have and make something with it.”

Yet fairy gardens also can take on more solemn meanings. The 15-foot-wide fairy garden on the side of Michelle Peebles’ home commemorates her daughter Amanda, who died at age 12 from complications from a rare form of cancer. Peebles, 46, of Broomfield, Colorado, planted the garden two years ago with Amanda and her other children.

“She helped me plant some snapdragons and she used to dig for roly polies (beetles) there,” Peebles said.

There are still snapdragons in the spot, as well as a little fairy home and seashell walkway. Amanda’s digging tools are still there.

“It’s just a little peaceful place, and it’s incorporated with her little stuff,” Peebles said.



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HOME & GARDEN

DECORATING FOR SPRING:

Let your own
taste
be your
guide

By **DEBORAH BAYLISS**
dbayliss@goldenisles.news

With spring on the horizon, many people are already in spring decorating mode.

Whether it's something as involved as choosing a new paint color or as simple as pulling out the spring curtains, allow your own taste to shine, said Melissa Bagby, owner of The Market on Newcastle Street in historic downtown Brunswick.

"It's about doing what makes you happy," Bagby said, surrounded by the ample selection of home furnishings and accessories at her store.

Though design trends are always there to use as inspiration, Bagby advises the most important thing to remember when decorating is to find whatever appeals to you.

From bed linens to throw pillows, the options are endless in terms of ways to brighten up your home for spring.

"In terms of color, the trend for spring is lime green and turquoise," Bagby said, fluffing the lime green pillow placed next to the turquoise pillow on the creme-colored love seat displayed in the front of the store.

Please see **TASTE, 29D**

HOME & GARDEN**Taste**

Continued from page 28D

When choosing colors for curtains, wall-paper, slip covers and bedding, it's absolutely okay to forego floral prints. Just because it's spring, it doesn't mean one has to overdo the theme.

Try thinking outside the spring decorating box with various tones of greys and natural tones by way of stone pottery and oversized woven baskets, Bagby said.

As for fabric choices, linen is a great option. If you're in the market for a less expensive option, Bagby said, manmade fabrics are also a good choice.

"Look for fabrics that are soft-to-the-touch and the color choice that suits you," said Bagby.

To go a step further and add a bit of "umph," try draping a silky, throw across your sofa. The wide variety of styles that are available allow for a more dramatic look.

Then there are the flowers. Nothing says spring like a bouquet of freshly cut flowers.

"Fresh flowers are good, but silk botanicals are a great option," Bagby said pointing

out the wide variety she carries in the store. "You can wrap them in tissue paper and put them away and you can use them the next year. They've really come a long way. You can't tell if they're real or not."

In terms of bedding, less is more. If you find yourself at a loss for ideas, Bagby said, look through the home and garden magazines for guidance, but always allow your own taste to dominate your home decor scheme.



Bobby Haven/
The Brunswick News photos
Melissa Bagby, owner of
The Market on Newcastle
suggests adding artificial
botanicals along with
real flowers to liven
things up this spring.

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