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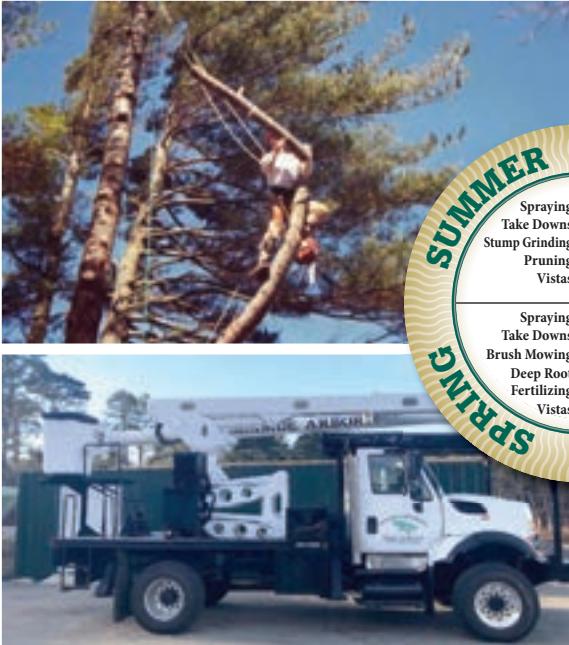
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Things Sometimes Change Quickly Around Here

Crocuses budding through the dull frost-bitten ground remind us that the trials of winter will eventually lead to the promises of spring. On Cape Cod, spring comes to us in mercurial fits dragging us through the new year's moody adolescence before maturing into steady-summer. Winter on occasion will rear its head in the form of a late season snow storm. Many of us remember the April Fools blizzard, but the gradual trend toward warmth and new growth does occur, and if we just stick with it, take care and keep moving, summer's brighter days will soon grace us.

With the good and green world's renewal, the time comes for us to shake off the malaise of the cold months and time to repaint our houses' trim, spruce up the front lawn and finally plant that raised garden bed. It's time to get out of doors and bask in that salt wind, even if the weather doesn't quite cooperate. It's time to face the growing year with a fresh perspective.

John H. Hough

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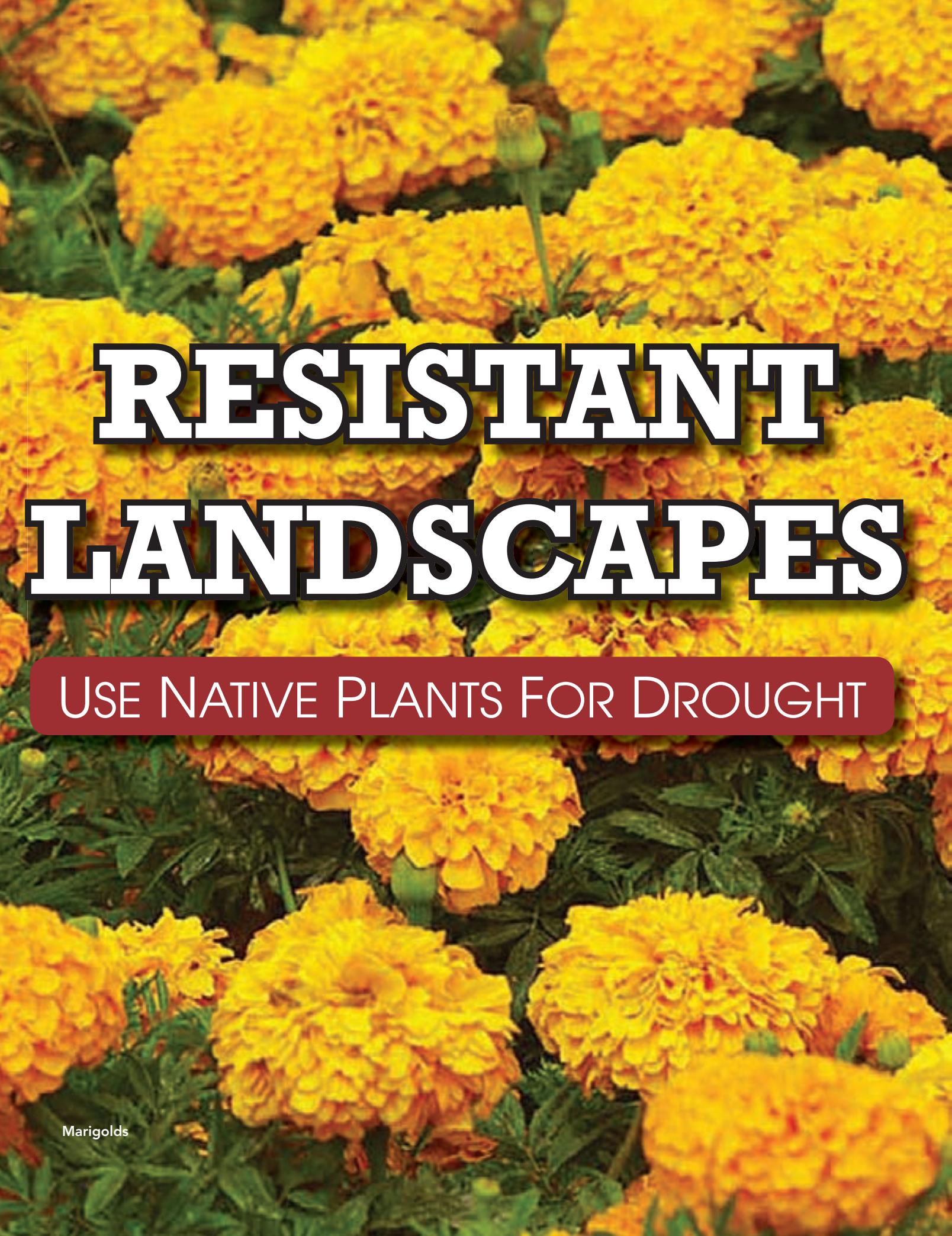
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Cherry Trees abloom along
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RESISTANT LANDSCAPES

USE NATIVE PLANTS FOR DROUGHT

Marigolds



BY BECCA LOWRY

Marigold. Zinnia. *Gaillardia* blanket flower. Crepe myrtle and Lilac. These are all flowers and trees that are drought resistant and I can't wait to tell you more with you about why you should choose these plants for your garden.

There are a number of reasons why it makes sense for you to choose drought-resistant or drought-tolerant plants for your garden.

According to the site Gardening Know How:

“Drought-tolerant plants survive long periods of drought by storing water internally or by developing extensive root systems that sink deep into the soil. Many drought-tolerant plants have additional protection through a waxy coating that reduces evaporation or hairs on the leaf surface that reflect some of the light, insulating the plant.”

So drought-resistant plants are super hardy. Since the coronavirus has taken off, it has been a difficult time for everyone. The last thing someone who loves to garden needs is to see



Pink Crepe Myrtle

their beautiful flowers falling apart so drought-resistant plants might just be the perfect choice for them at this time.

There are many different types of flowers and plants you can choose from that tolerate drought. Among them are cacti and succulents and, as Gardening Know How writes, a popular perennials is sedum, also known as stonecrop —

not only drought resistant but also a lovely choice for a rock garden. Adding to the rock garden idea, Lamb's ears can make for a great addition and they spread very easily. Because of its velvet-like texture, Lamb's ear is very drought resistant. Other types of flowers that you might be interested in are—my personal favorite, lavender, which can come in many different varieties, so have fun with that—dianthus, also called

“pinks,” ageratum, marigold, aster, daylily, penstemon, zinnia and yucca, a popular indoor and outdoor plant.

That was just the flowers that are drought resistant.

There are also a number of shrubs and trees that could make for a great addition. According to Gardening

Zinnia



Lilac



Lamb's Ear



Know How, the shrub spirea can be used as an ornamental accent in your rock garden or as a low border along a walk. Another shrub, which can be found in many varieties, is viburnum. Spirea and viburnum are also both very easy to care for. More drought-resistant trees you might like for your garden are Crepe myrtle, locust, lilac and dogwood.

Let's discuss a few more reasons why drought resistant plants might make for an excellent choice for your garden- and your wallet.

According to the site BrightView, three

reasons why you should choice drought-resistant plants are that they use less water, they are lower maintenance and they make for more beauty. We already discussed why some drought-resistant or drought-tolerant plants need less water. One of the reasons why they need lower maintenance is because these plants have adapted to their environment; you can spend less time fertilizing, pruning, and caring for them in general. Furthermore, according to BrightView, these plants tend to be more disease-free and pest-resistant so you can

spend less time on fertilization.

I once worked at Mahoney's Garden Center in Falmouth and I saw how easily some plants could be destroyed by pests so speaking as someone who loves to garden, I find that very helpful to know.

Lastly, they add beauty to your garden. According to BrightView, a well-designed, drought-tolerant landscape can look attractive all year long. To add a spark of color to your garden, choose such plants as lantana, verbena, and agastache, which will add beauty without requiring a lot of water. ■



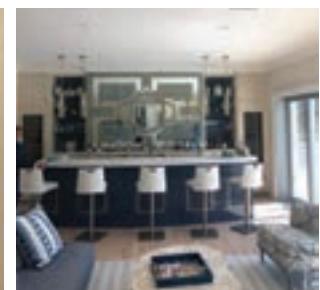
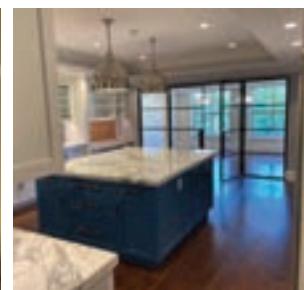
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Pasta Primavera

BY GAIL BLAKELY

You may be surprised to learn that *pasta primavera* did not originate in Italy. In this country, back in the 1970s, there were two distinct types of Italian pasta and sauce categories: southern and northern, one being red, the other white. That was until Sirio Maccioni, chef at New York City's famed restaurant, *Le Cirque*, put a new dish on his menu in 1975.

Primavera translates to spring—literally “first green.” Thus it calls for early spring vegetables: asparagus, broccoli, English peas and snap peas, perhaps fava beans. The original recipe, based on “fancy restaurant food,” was a bit complicated. It called for blanching

each vegetable separately, then tossing them with a little garlic, some butter and olive oil and cream. Partially cooked fresh pasta was added, and mixed until it just finished cooking in the sauce, then served with a sprinkling of freshly grated Parmigiana Reggiano

cheese.

Craig Claiborne's recipe in “The New New York Times Cookbook,” published in 1979, is indeed rather intimidating. It includes the vegetables mentioned above, but adds zucchini, green beans, mushrooms and diced tomatoes,

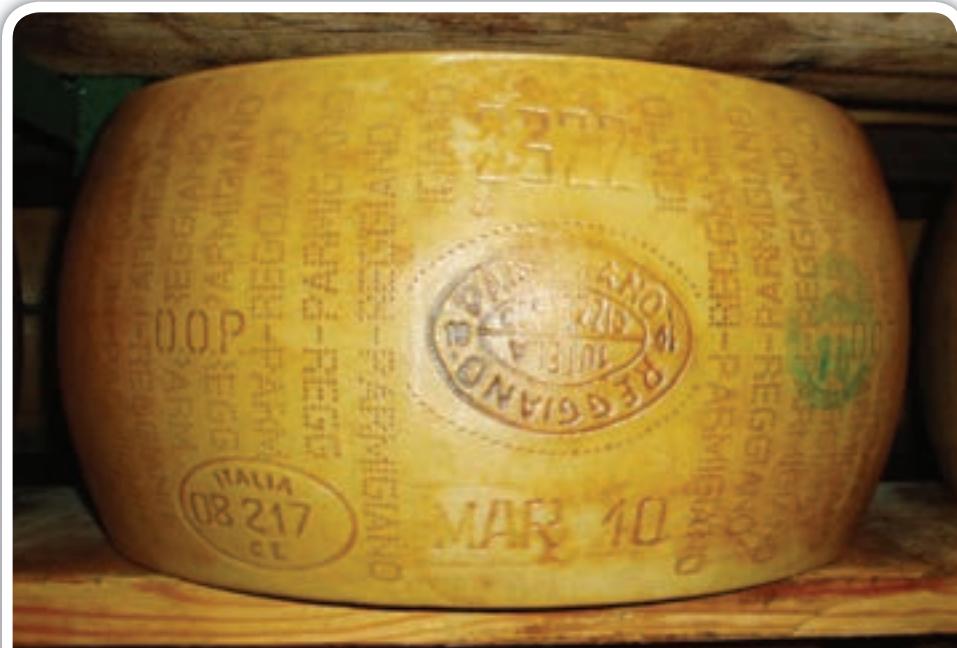
along with chopped fresh basil and parsley. Clearly stated in step 4 are the instructions to cook each vegetable separately, sauté the mushrooms in another pan, sauté the tomatoes with garlic in yet another, then cook the pasta. Finally, you melt the butter in a “utensil large enough to hold the drained spaghetti and vegetables,” add chicken broth, cream and grated cheese, then the pasta, finally the tomatoes, more cream if needed, and stir in some pine nuts.

Mr. Claiborne described the dish quite eloquently: “This inspired blend of pasta and crisp tender vegetables such as zucchini, mushrooms, broccoli, and green beans, is a creation of Italian origin that flourishes in one of New York’s most popular luxury restaurants, Le Cirque. Although the dish is called spaghetti primavera—spaghetti with a springtime air—it is served all year long at Le Cirque and can be reproduced easily in the home.”

Let’s assess the equipment needed: one large pot of boiling water for cooking the vegetables ‘til tender-crunchy (“al dente”), a large bowl of ice water to stop the cooking, a colander to drain them, towels to dry the vegetables, a skillet for the tomatoes and the mushrooms, another for the garlic and sauce, perhaps another large pot for the pasta (you don’t want to cook it in the vegetable water as it will give it a slightly “off” color), and of course, a chef’s knife and a cutting board for prepping the garlic and the vegetables. And a grater for the cheese, and spaghetti bowls for serving.

That’s a lot of effort—and time—for a home cook. In subsequent years, the recipe was tweaked by such esteemed food writers such as Molly O’Neill, who published it in 1992 in her “New York Cookbook.” Her version is a little more streamlined, yet still very tasty. Her instructions are as follows:

“Trim a small bunch of broccoli into florets, quarter two small zucchini and cut into one-inch pieces, peel and trim four asparagus spears and cut into thirds, cut one and a half cups of green beans into one-inch pieces. Set aside one half cup of fresh or thawed frozen peas. Cook the first four vegetables in boiling, salted water until crisp-tender, about four minutes. Add the peas. Cook one minute more. Drain the vegetables in a colander. Then refresh them in cold



A quality Parmigiano-Reggiano cheese can elevate a good meal to a great one.

water. Drain again and set aside. (In a skillet) sauté two cups of thin-sliced mushrooms in a tablespoon of olive oil, along with a teaspoon of finely minced fresh red or green chili pepper—or use one half teaspoon of dried red-pepper flakes. Sauté for about two minutes. Add three more tablespoons of olive oil, a teaspoon of minced garlic, three cups of seeded, diced ripe tomatoes (with juices reserved) and cook rapidly for about four minutes. Add one quarter cup of chopped parsley and six fresh basil leaves, chopped. Stir and set aside. Cook one pound of spaghetti or spaghettini until just al dente. In a large, non-reactive pot, melt a half-stick of butter; add one half cup of heavy cream and two thirds cup of grated parmesan cheese. Stir constantly until heated through and blended. Add the spaghetti and toss to blend. Add half of the vegetables and the reserved tomato juice. Toss and stir for five minutes over low heat. If sauce seems dry, add extra cream, but the sauce should not be soupy. Adjust seasonings. Add two thirds cup of toasted pine nuts and give one final toss. Spoon some of the tomato-mushrooms mixture over the top and serve.”

Over time, this dish has become part of our cultural lexicon. It is now a staple menu item across the spectrum of restaurants, such as fine dining establishments, which pride themselves on their handmade artisan

pasta and seasonal spring vegetables—including “mini” versions of some of the cooler weather crops. Over the past half a century, the chain restaurants recognized its popularity, and started to serve it year-round alongside bottomless baskets of breadsticks.

If you want a dish that really epitomizes “spring,” I suggest the following recipe, which is a more modern version, from Melissa Clark, who also writes for The New York Times. In place of heavy cream, she substitutes crème fraîche, adds a shot of lemon juice and grated zest and suggests using some of the pasta cooking water to make everything “nice and creamy.” I like her addition of broccolini instead of the larger heads of broccoli, and of fava beans, only available here in the spring.

The Pasta Primavera You’ve Always Wanted: Lighter, Greener, Springier

(adapted from Melissa Clark)

- 12 oz fava beans in their pods, or 4 oz shucked fava beans
- 12 oz English peas in their pods, or 4 oz shucked peas
- Kosher salt
- 8 oz asparagus, woody ends removed, stalks cut on a sharp bias into 1-inch pieces
- 6 oz snap peas, strings removed, cut on a sharp bias into one half-inch slices
- 8 oz broccolini, woody ends



removed, cut on a sharp bias into 1-inch pieces

4 TBSP unsalted butter

2 TBSP extra-virgin olive oil, plus more for serving

2 whole cloves garlic, lightly smashed with the side of a knife

3 oz pine nuts

1 lb fresh egg pasta, such as fettuccine, penne, or gemelli

6 oz crème fraîche

2 tsp finely grated zest and 1 tsp fresh juice from 1 lemon

½ cup each: packed leaves of fresh parsley and fresh basil

Freshly grated Parmigiano-Reggiano, to taste

Freshly ground black pepper

Mince the parsley and basil leaves and set aside; if using fava beans and peas in their pods, shuck beans and peas from pods, keeping beans and peas separate (discard pods). Bring a large pot of salted water to a boil and prepare an ice bath. Working with one vegetable at a time, blanch

fava, peas, asparagus, snap peas, and broccolini in boiling water for 1 minute each, transfer to ice bath to cool, then transfer to a paper towel-lined tray and pat dry. Remove and discard skin from each individual fava bean; set vegetables aside. Empty pot, refill it with fresh water, season generously with salt, and return to a boil.

Meanwhile, in a 3- to 4-quart saucepan or a 12-inch skillet, heat butter, olive oil, garlic, and pine nuts over low heat until gently sizzling. Cook, swirling pan constantly, until pine nuts just start to brown and the garlic aroma is very strong--do not let butter brown; remove it from heat occasionally if it starts to sizzle too rapidly. Discard garlic cloves and add blanched vegetables to pan and toss to combine; remove from heat.

When water is boiling, add pasta and cook until just shy of al dente, about 1 minute total for most fresh

pasta; drain the pasta, reserving 1 cup cooking liquid. Transfer pasta to pan with vegetables and add crème fraîche, lemon zest, lemon juice, basil, and parsley. Set over high heat and cook, stirring and tossing constantly and adjusting the consistency as necessary with a few splashes of the starchy pasta water, until liquid reduces to a creamy sauce. The sauce should coat the pasta and leave a creamy trail on the bottom of the pan when you drag a wooden spoon through it.

Off heat, stir in a generous shaving of fresh Parmigiano-Reggiano and season to taste with salt and pepper. Serve immediately, drizzling with olive oil and sprinkling with freshly ground black pepper and grated Parmigiano-Reggiano at the table.

Lastly, I offer a more streamlined dish, the one that appears in the accompanying photographs. Not quite spring as I write, yet this is comforting, and mildly celebratory, nonetheless. Remember that this is a dish with a history of less than half a century. Can you think of anything else you'd rather eat on a warm(ish) spring evening?

Simplified Classic Pasta Primavera

(adapted from simplyrecipes.com)

½ lb angel hair pasta or spaghetti
1 small bunch broccolini, cut into 1-inch pieces

1 small zucchini, diced

4 asparagus spears

½ cup English peas, fresh or frozen

½ cup snow peas

3 minced garlic cloves

3 Roma or other paste tomatoes, seeded and diced

12 basil leaves, chopped

4 TBSP butter

¼ cup chicken broth (use vegetable broth for vegetarian option)

½ cup each: heavy cream and freshly grated parmesan cheese

Get a large pot of water boiling and salt it well; fill a large bowl with ice water. Boil the broccolini for 1 minute, then add the asparagus and boil another minute. Add the snow peas and boil for 30 more seconds. Remove all the vegetables and plunge them into the ice water; once they're cool,

drain in a colander. (If you want, you can save the water in the pot and boil your pasta in the same pot you boiled the vegetables in, or you can start over and boil new water.) In a large sauté pan, heat the butter over medium-high heat; when the butter is hot, add the garlic and zucchini and sauté 1 minute. Add the diced tomatoes and sauté another 2 minutes, stirring often; pour in the chicken or vegetable broth and turn the heat to high to bring it to a boil. Add the cream and toss in all the vegetables you boiled, plus the peas; stir to combine, turn the heat down, until the cream-chicken broth mixture is just simmering, not boiling. Add parmesan and stir to combine; if the sauce seems too thick – it should be pretty thick, but not gloppy—add some more chicken broth, cream or water. Boil the angel hair pasta—it will only need 1-2 minutes to cook. With tongs, transfer cooked pasta to sauce and vegetables and stir to combine; add the basil now, and taste for salt, adding a pinch if needed and grinding black pepper over the pasta. Serve immediately in heated pasta bowls. ■

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DECORATING WITH PLANTS

Have Fun Arranging Them Around Your Home



As newlyweds, our first apartment was lovely but sparse. So, right after we moved in, my mom sent us two plants, one for each window—an asparagus fern that we named Andre and a big-leaved philodendron selloum, Oscar. Forty-three years and six moves later, both plants are still thriving. Perhaps getting a name adds to a plant's longevity.

Plants make a difference to our living and work spaces. Having worked in a Manhattan skyscraper, I sat in a gray-carpeted, white-walled room for 40 hours a week. Placing a lush fern on my desk made it livable. Plants contribute a palpable comfort level. That's why they're displayed in homes, malls and indoor public spaces, including that office building's cavernous lobby.

A natural setting provides a positive, calming influence. Scientific studies have proven that there are numerous benefits to keeping flora around us when indoors. Every schoolchild knows that plants take in carbon dioxide and expel oxygen. In doing so, plants purify the air and comfortably increase humidity levels, which is a big plus when folks are confined inside.

"I do believe houseplants boost a room's energy, and bring the outside in. They help to filter the air and add an intangible feeling to the space," professional designer Molly McGinness of Molly McGinness Interior Design commented via email. She became an interior designer in 1998.

"I started my firm in 2000 when I lived in Chicago," she said. Moving to the Cape in 2009, many of her projects are now second homes. "I always suggest plants to my clients, not as a focal point, but as a design element to bring life into a room," she added.

With a second home, residents are only there seasonally, so "it really depends on the client as to whether or not they are interested in taking on the responsibility of plant maintenance," she said. That might mean finding plant sitters or carting plants between residences. "However," she added, "I do think they are important to have in the house if you are willing to take care of them."

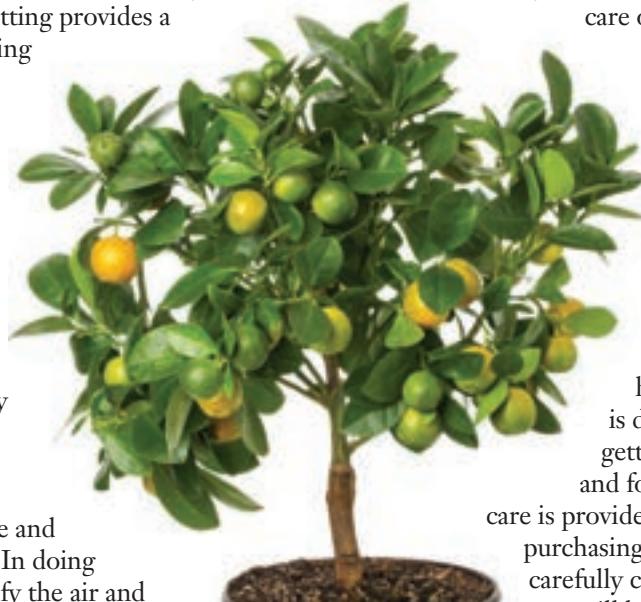
Decorating with Plants

Green thumbs are overrated. Anyone can grow healthy plants if some homework is done before getting the plant, and follow-up care is provided. Before purchasing a plant, carefully consider where you will be placing it.

Unlike a pet, it can't move to a better spot on its own and you may not realize it isn't happy until damage has been done.

Helpful points to consider are the amount of light the plant needs and the amount of light that will be available coming in from a nearby window or other light source. And does that light change significantly throughout the year? The best sources of sunlight in a home are from windows facing south, east and west. Take a day or so to watch the sun's movement through your rooms. Then, figure which plants would benefit from the stronger light and those that could make do with weaker or reflected light.

Every room can benefit from having





a plant in it. For the living areas and bedrooms, air purifiers and extra humidity really help. Several plants are efficient with this, including spider plants, weeping figs and areca palms. In the kitchen, microgreens and herbs can thrive and be handy while cooking. Bathrooms are an ideal spot for ferns, which love, love, love moisture.

Conversely, if your home is especially

dry, say from using a wood stove, succulent plants and cactus varieties will enjoy warmer temperatures and drier air.

What temperature does the plant prefer and what's the temperature in the area where it sits? Are there nearby heat vents? Don't place a plant too near an air vent that might blow too hot or cold. How much water does the plant

require? Every plant has particular water and moisture preferences. Some need frequent waterings as well as misting, while some types shouldn't be misted. There are plants that want less-frequent waterings, and still others that like to totally dry out before taking in more water.

When watering, it's worth purchasing a good indoor watering can. Smaller than the outdoor garden types, these have a slender nozzle for a more-accurate aim. Whether a plant sits on the floor, a shelf or table, place a saucer to catch draining water. Garden centers carry large under dishes made of terra cotta or plastic. Oscar now needs a 22-inch one. Also, place extra protection on any surfaces that might be harmed by misting spray.

Another thing to think about is the traffic pattern of the area. Will the plant be in the way when more people come into the room? Might young children or pets cause some destruction? Along that line, be sure that the choice of plant is not dangerous for either young people or pets. One way to shield plants from direct touch is to create terrariums. These are low-maintenance, artistic mini-ecosystems that are ideal for small areas.

Regarding space, another factor is that every plant grows in its own unique way. If you are limited for room, succulents tend to be slow growers; some seemingly stay about the same size for lengthy stretches. On the other end, passion plants and philodendrons can sprawl, quickly crowding their area. Does anyone recall Kate Hepburn's office in the movie "Desk Set?"

Whereas, if you want to fill open floor space, a large upright tree seated in an attractive, sturdy planter establishes itself in a room nicely. Good choices include the Fiddle Leaf Fig (ficus lyrata), Dragon Tree (dracaena), or Norfolk Island Pine.

Of course, if floors or tabletops are too crowded, consider suspending plants from the ceiling or in a window frame. Again, do some research before hanging a plant, as some will enjoy this treatment more than others. Those might thin out and get too leggy, wanting to grow downward, rather than up and out. The Kokedama planting technique does well when suspended, but with the moss-ball bases, they require careful watering.

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Some Decorating Trends

With people having to spend extra time in their domiciles, more have taken an interest in styling. One trend is to add plants for green pops of color. Flowering plants add colorful shades. There are plants that bear long-lasting flowers, including begonias and geraniums. Also, fruit-bearing plants such as kumquats, limes and oranges can grow happily indoors. Bearing lush leaves, they produce small, fragrant blossoms. With the proper care, such as adding fertilizer (read the instructions) and maintaining proper lighting and watering, fruit should appear. As always, check with the nursery where you purchase a citrus tree for the proper care. One helpful tip is that they like deep planters so that their roots can stretch.

Terra cotta pots are highly recommended, being porous, but more-artistic planters can be used. Repurpose antique bowls, pottery pieces, metal boxes—pretty much anything goes. Just allow for drainage by drilling some small holes. Or you can insert a flowerpot inside a more-decorative container.

Lifting plants off the floor in an



innovative way can make for inspired decorating. Pedestals or decorative columns set a dramatic appearance, provided small children and pets won't be running nearby.

You can create an impressive wall display of multiple plants, maybe with cascading foliage. For this, affix small pot hangers onto a wall in a group formation. Use lighter weight pots that have an attached

saucer to catch draining water. This is handy when kitchen counter/shelf space is limited. A variety of potted herbs can grow freely as you garner compliments with this decorator's touch. Another idea is to gently train a plant's tendrils to wrap around frames or mirrors. Also, tuck air ferns in surprising places, such as bookshelves. They readily grow unencumbered and add a burst

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of color.

As my millennial daughter mentioned, her friends like plants but don't have time for fussy upkeep. One solution is to embrace succulents. These hardy species are lovely yet require little attention. Terrariums also are easy to care for once they are established. People with limited free time should avoid high-maintenance plants such

as African violets and some orchids. Then again, there are folks who enjoy providing the extra care these require.

Bringing outdoor plants inside

One autumn, it was time for me to bring a lovely begonia inside as the weather chilled. To my chagrin,

shortly after I placed it in a bright window, I noticed spiders crawling around the area. These weren't the small wolf spiders that I usually scoop back outside. These were formidable-looking beasties. Recently, a friend recommended mixing up a solution of hydrogen peroxide, dish detergent and water, then soaking the plant for a day or so prior to carting it indoors. There are other homemade solutions to try, so you can find one that works for you.

Beyond buggy creatures, an outside plant needs to transition to the lower indoor light. So prior to shifting it inside, gradually adjust its amount of time in the sun.

In developing your own Green Thumb, find a good routine to care for your house plants. Understand which ones want a misting every day along with some water, and those that just like two drinks a week. Notice any browning of the leaf edges or drooping leaves and stalks. Also, try playing them music and talking with them from time to time. Perhaps, as with naming them, they'll thrive for decades. ■

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Heads Up

Trellises And Vertical Gardening

BY LAURA GROSS-HIGGINS



Somehow at the end of winter, those perennial optimists called gardeners start contemplating what to grow in their gardens. The COVID pandemic, in fact, has reawakened many to the joys of digging in the dirt. My husband and I have long been among those who do.

Although most gardeners think of buying seeds and compiling their seedling wish lists, there are other aspects of gardening that can be considered at this time. Gardens don't always have to spread out in a standard horizontal bed. This article deals with what can be grown on trellises, even obelisks—vertical gardening.

Trellises and obelisks can provide not only support for perennial vines such as trumpet vine, wisteria, clematis and ivy, but also create a living architectural buffer for privacy when placed near a porch or in the

Kits, plans and materials for trellises like the one seen here can be found online or at your local home improvement store. These trellises are perfect for plants like a climbing hydrangea.



yard. Some trellises even provide a welcoming doorway to a yard. For someone with a small area for gardening, you can grow up and maximize the rest of the bed. Some plants don't mind being shaded for part of the day by a taller neighbor.

Many local nurseries sell trellises. I talked to Jennifer Wilson at Mahoney's in East Falmouth recently. Now its visual merchandising manager, she was formerly its garden shop manager. Jennifer said trellises are always in style. Mahoney's sells pre-made trellises in both metal and wood. She said the more decoratively shaped ones are often of metal. Jennifer emphasized that the mounting of the trellis, particularly those near a home, is important. She said you don't want to attach it directly to your house. You attach blocks to the side and then attach the trellis to that. That way an ivy or such won't work its way under the shingles on a typical Cape-style house. She said perennials like honeysuckle and climbing hydrangea are nice on a trellis.

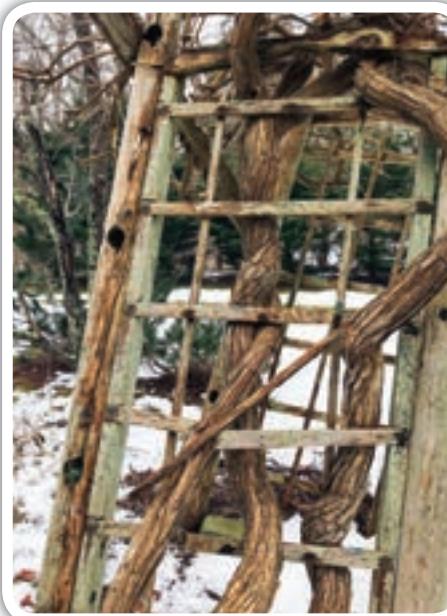
When I asked her about trellises for vegetables, she said obelisks are more common as a growing surface than trellises. And for the annual garden, she said many people don't want to spend the money on a trellis; they can buy a package of bamboo stakes for under \$10 and with them fashion a tepee of sorts or an A-frame with string hanging down.

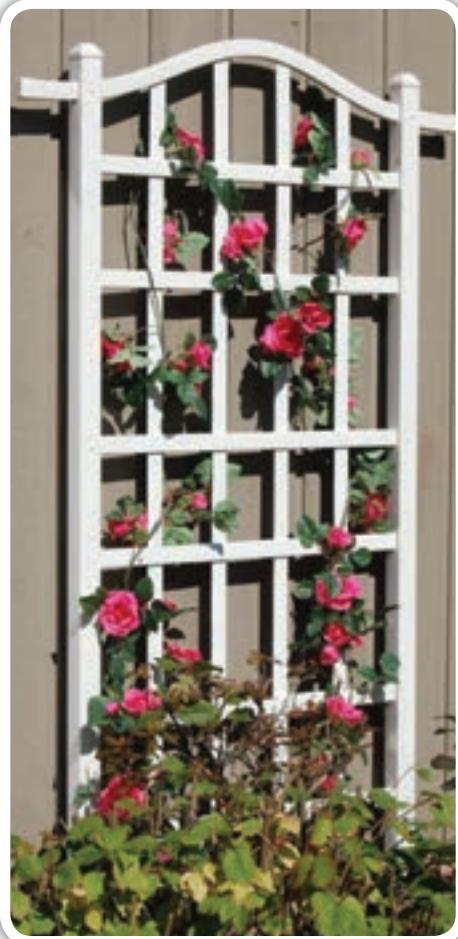
I mentioned that in my internet research on trellises, I had seen pictures of trellises made from old tools stuck in the dirt, even anything a bean vine could curl up. And yes, there were pictures of bamboo stakes, in configurations like I described in the paragraph that preceded this.

I also talked to Laura Murphy of Cataumet, who does landscape work. She told me that she used a wooden trellis with a cucumber varietal last summer and it was perfect. The trellis was about five feet high and a foot-and-a-half wide. She bought it at Spencer's Garden & Nursery in Buzzards Bay. Laura told me that people should not use metal trellises for most tender plants like beans and

LAURA GROSS-HIGGINS

This trellis used to be upright when the trumpet vine it was to support was young. Maintenance is also important with perennial trellis plants.





peas and cucumbers. The metal ones are hard and they get hot, which can damage the plants. She liked the A-frames for peas and cucumbers. I asked her what plants do well on trellises and she agreed when I mentioned clematis, morning glory (though it flowers late) and climbing roses.

I also called Scenic Roots Lawn & Garden Center in Sandwich and talked to Donna Kutil. Her tip was also to know what you planned to plant on a trellis before buying one. She wrote in an email, "When purchasing a trellis you need to know what you are planting on it. You need the proper size and support for that plant. You wouldn't put a rose that climbs 8-10 feet on a 4-foot plastic trellis (not tall enough and too flimsy)." She said that the trellises themselves need extra support, say from a wall or chimney. You may also need extra stakes and need to bury them a foot or so into the ground. She recommends cedar ones or composite materials, which are less likely to rot and also have less need for repainting or staining.

Donna said trellises can be used to grow peas, beans and cucumbers, even squash and melons. She also said the

latest rage is cucamelons (*Melothria scabra*)! I asked her just as I asked the others, what plants grow well on trellises and she recommended annuals like mandevilla, black-eyed Susan vines, hyacinth bean, moonflowers, morning glories, sweet peas and nasturtium. Perennials included clematis, honeysuckle, trumpet vine, kiwi, ivy, hydrangea vine, roses, grapes, and raspberries and blackberries.

So far, I have talked about trellises that you can buy in nurseries or those you can cobble together from bamboo stakes, even old gardening implements. For those who want a more lasting architectural accent, consider looking at what Walpole Outdoors (formerly Walpole Fences) has at its locations. There is one in East Falmouth, next to Mahoney's. Maybe this is the year you will decide to go all-out with reorganizing your landscaping. A trellis or obelisk can help to unite the other architectural accents on your property, said Justin Crompton, one of Walpole's salesmen. He has worked there for eight years. He said Walpole sells both pre-made trellises and can custom-

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make a trellis, too. They have wood products, but they also have ones made from something called Azek, which is a solid cellular polyvinyl that has a metal armature inside. Azek as a product can be painted to match a house's existing trim and it has the look and feel of wood, with minimal maintenance.

Walpole also sells garden obelisks, with the ability to customize the cap at the top. Want a birdhouse on top? Or a copper finial? Those are options.

Since Justin is not in the plant business, I didn't ask him for recommendations for what to plant with a trellis.

I do know from my own experience that maintenance is also important for trellises with perennials like trumpet vine or clematis or ivy. But especially the trumpet vine. Ours has gone through at least two homemade wooden trellises (see picture). Perhaps my next article should be on proper maintenance of woody-vined perennials. The hummingbirds love its flowers; however, it just has a mind of its own.

But isn't that part of what gardening is about? You learn something new all the time. ■



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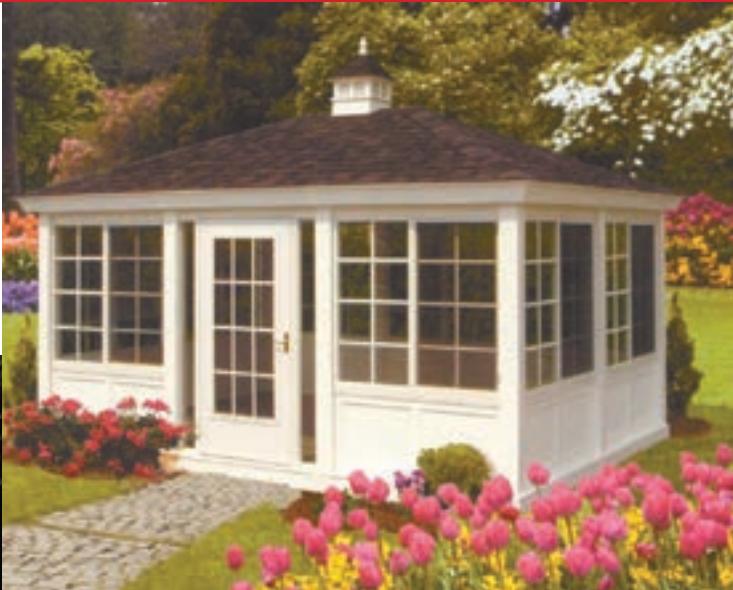
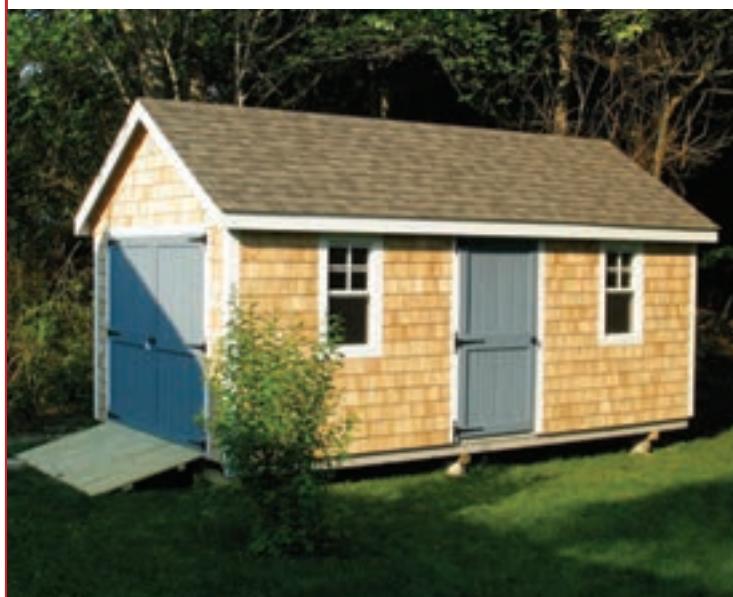
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Roses

a long and complex history, but not all roses are difficult to cultivate

BY BECCA LOWRY

Roses! There is a very rich history behind them, as well as a wide variety of the flower. The history of the rose goes back many, many years, so let's get started!

The rose might just be one of the oldest flowers around. According to the United Kingdom site, Country Garden Roses, there is fossil evidence of the rose that could be about 35 million years old. There are over 30,000 varieties of the rose across the world. But first, let's dig into more of the history behind the rose.

According to the site University of Illinois Extension, garden cultivations of roses began about 5,000 years ago in China. During the period of the Romans, roses were grown extensively in the Middle East, where they were used as confetti at celebrations, for medical purposes, and as a source of perfume. Noble Romans would also make large public rose gardens in the south of Rome. Moving on to the 15th century, the rose was used as a symbol for the factions fighting to control England. The white rose symbolized York, the red rose symbolized Lancaster, and thus was born the conflict that became known as the "War of the Roses."

Let's move on a little further toward

the current century. Roses are in a very high demand, so much so that they were used as barter for payments. Napoleon's wife, Josephine, established an extensive collection of roses at Chateau de Malmaison. This garden actually became the setting for Pierre Joseph Redoute's work as a botanical illustrator. In 1824 he completed his watercolor collection, "Les Rose," which is still considered one of the finest records of botanical illustration. What a history!

Now, let's talk about the vast variety of roses.

Going back to the Country Garden Roses site, they write that there are two basic forms of damask rose: the summer damask, which has a well-defined spring and early summer flowering season, and the autumn damask, which continues blooming sporadically into the autumn. These two roses are very important because of their fragrance, a tendency to produce double flowers, and because their flowering season extends into autumn. Another damask rose is the





Rosa Alba

Kazanlik, which was among the very first damasks (damask means 30-petalled). The large rose has a lovely perfume with loose mid-pink double blooms and it has long been grown for the production of attar of roses. Moving on, Rosa Alba is a rose of uncertain origin that may have been introduced to Britain by the Romans. This rose is thought to be the White Rose of York of War of the Roses fame and was crossed with existing gallicas and damasks to produce

hybrids with very scented flowers, the alba roses.

Let's move on to China! In the late 18th and early 19th centuries, a new material obtained from China proved to be very popular. Perpetual flowering semi-dwarf bushes were cultivated in China well before the start of the European rose breeding. R.chinensis, the parent of many of these roses, was introduced around 1752 and was followed by many hybrids in 1792. According to English horticulturist Graham Stuart Thomas, China roses were the class upon which modern roses are built. So we owe a lot of credit to China for one of the most-popular flowers around! Apparently, tradition holds that four or five "stud China" roses were brought to Europe in the late 18th and early 19th centuries, and this brought about the creation of the first classes of repeat flowering Old Garden roses and later the Modern Garden roses.

Moving on further to the United States, Noisette roses were the first hybrid group to originate from the States. Originating in the early 1800s from an Old Blush and R. Moschata cross, they are strong growing bushes or climbers with clusters of small blooms in white or pastel shades of yellow or pink. Among the most-popular of Noisette climbers are Mme. Alfred Carriere, which has large, white-blushed pink double flowers and a lovely perfume. There are also tea roses or tea-scented roses that are another development of R.chinensis. These roses, which flower in shades of white, pink and yellow, are hybrids of R.gigantea and R.chinensis, a cross known as R.odorata. These roses had a lot of popularity in the 1830s but the real significance of the tea rose to modern gardeners is that it was crossed with the other styles to produce the hybrid perpetual roses, which were the direct predecessors of the most-popular modern roses, the hybrid teas.

Let's discuss the more—"different" types of roses—miniature



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roses! Miniature roses can be traced back to the small China rose, *R. Chinensis* "Minima," particularly the form "Rouletti." It was only recently that miniatures have become very popular as new colors and styles have been produced by crossing the old forms with some of the smaller floribundas. Not all of the miniatures are small bushes, though. Some may have small flowers, but many of them can reach 24 inches or more. Some are budded into tall stems to produce miniature standards and weeping standards.

Let's move on to what is easy to grow among roses. According to the site Gardening Know How, some of the easiest roses to grow are the Sally Holmes, a climbing rose that produces creamy white blooms that are blushed with pink. They average about eight to 10 feet. The Little Mischief is also easy to grow; it is a beautiful shrub rose with deep pink blooms having a white eye and fading to hot pink. This rose reaches only 24 inches and it is great not only for beginner gardeners, but also for those who have little space. The Flower Carpet Pink is a fairly low-growing groundcover rose that reaches heights of around 24 to 32 inches with bright pink blooms. The Roald Dahl, a



Roald Dahl Rose

new English rose named in honor of the author Roald Dahl, produces beautiful peach-colored blooms. It is a shrub rose reaching four feet tall. The Fairy—which sounds positively delightful—is great for a fairy garden theme. This smaller shrub rose only reaches about 24 inches and produces soft pink blooms. The Cinco de Mayo is another shrub rose that grows to around four feet with rusty reddish-orange

blooms, and the Ebb Tide is known for its ease of care; it produces blooms that are a deep plum purple, and it can reach a whopping six to nine feet tall!

I hope anyone who has a hankering to learn more about roses or who wants to grow roses that are low maintenance and easy to grow, has learned a lot from my article. And I hope that their roses come out absolutely beautiful! ■

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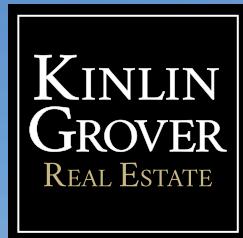
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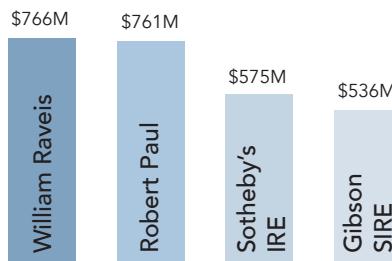
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Sales Associate
slawrence@kinlingrover.com
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Christine Gustafson

Sales Associate
cgustafson@kinlingrover.com
617-448-7656 (Cell)
508-743-0660 (Office)
1 Trowbridge Road
Bourne, MA 02532



Caron Gregory

Sales Associate
cgregory@kinlingrover.com
508-303-2928 (Cell)
508-540-8881 (Office)
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Falmouth, MA 02540



Chrissy Timberger

Sales Associate
ctimberger@kinlingrover.com
646-256-1326 (Cell)
508-540-8881 (Office)
56 Scranton Ave.
Falmouth, MA 02540



Mark Twichell

Sales Associate
mtwichell@kinlingrover.com
508-344-0510 (Cell)
508-540-8881 (Office)
56 Scranton Ave.
Falmouth, MA 02540



Heather Burke

Sales Associate
hburke@kinlingrover.com
774-922-0744 (Cell)
508-540-8881 (Office)
56 Scranton Ave.
Falmouth, MA 02540



Nancy Muccini

Sales Associate
nmuccini@kinlingrover.com
508-280-8614 (Cell)
508-833-3333 (Office)
133 Route 6A
Sandwich, MA 02563



Cindy Crawford

Sales Associate
ccrawford@kinlingrover.com
508-737-1481 (Cell)
508-477-2700 (Office)
681 Falmouth Rd. Suite B12
Mashpee, MA 02649



Jim & Regina Augat

jimandreginaaugat@kinlingrover.com
508-776-3450 (Cell)
508-274-7771 (Office)
229 Main Street
Falmouth, MA 02540



Mary Ellen Sylvia

Sales Associate
msylvia@kinlingrover.com
508-776-1386 (Cell)
508-540-8881 (Office)
56 Scranton Ave.
Falmouth, MA 02540



Bridget Moylan

Sales Associate
bmoylan@kinlingrover.com
508-776-5771 (Cell)
508-540-8881 (Office)
56 Scranton Ave.
Falmouth, MA 02540



Charles Spilsbury

Sales Associate
cspilsbury@kinlingrover.com
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508-477-2700 (Office)
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Sales Associate
jguidi@kinlingrover.com
973-534-0553 (Cell)
508-548-6611 (Office)
56 Scranton Ave
Falmouth, MA 02540



David Guilderson

Sales Associate
dguilderson@kinlingrover.com
508-776-7721 (Cell)
508-833-3333 (Office)
133 Route 6A
Sandwich, MA 02563



Lou Basoli

Sales Associate
lbasoli@kinlingrover.com
508-364-1023 (Cell)
508-743-0660 (Office)
1 Trowbridge Road
Bourne, MA 02532



Naomi Shea

Sales Associate
nshea@kinlingrover.com
508-932-6640 (Cell)
508-833-3333 (Office)
133 Route 6A
Sandwich, MA 02563



Susan Chadwick

Sales Associate
schadwick@kinlingrover.com
508-274-7771 (Office)
229 Main Street
Falmouth, MA 02540



Pat Holmes

Sales Associate
pholmes@kinlingrover.com
508-737-9495 (Cell)
508-737-9495 (Office)
681 Falmouth Road
Suite B 12
Mashpee, MA 02649



Deb Garner

Sales Associate
dgarner@kinlingrover.com
508-776-9200 (Cell)
508-833-3333 (Office)
133 Route 6A
Sandwich, MA 02563



Jamie Edwards

Rental Specialist
jedwards@kinlingrover.com
508-540-8881 (Office)
56 Scranton Ave.
Falmouth, MA 02540



Karen Rezendes

Sales Associate
krezendes@kinlingrover.com
203-885-3864 (Cell)
508-833-3333 (Office)
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Sandwich, MA 02563



Christine Richards

Sales Associate
crichards@kinlingrover.com
774-238-0786 (Cell)
508-477-2700 (Office)
681 Falmouth Rd. Suite B12
Mashpee, MA 02649



Smith-Brown Team

sbrown@kinlingrover.com
ssmith@kinlingrover.com
Susan 774-836-0931 (Cell)
Stephanie 508-326-8211 (Cell)
508-477-2700 (Office)
681 Falmouth Rd. Suite B12
Mashpee, MA 02649



Susan Keleher

Sales Associate
skeleher@kinlingrover.com
774-836-6006 (Cell)
508-548-6611 (Office)
56 Scranton Ave
Falmouth, MA 02540

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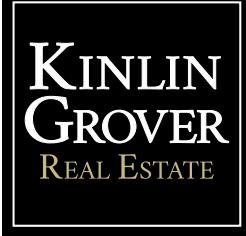
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Sales Associate
srioux@kinlingrover.com
508-776-2019 (Cell)
508-548-6611 (Office)
56 Scranton Ave
Falmouth, MA 02540



Sue Gregory

Sales Associate
sgregory@kinlingrover.com
508-360-5936 (Cell)
508-548-6611 (Office)
56 Scranton Ave
Falmouth, MA 02540



Lisa Asendorf

Sales Associate
lasendorf@kinlingrover.com
508-566-6259 (Cell)
508-540-8881 (Office)
56 Scranton Ave.
Falmouth, MA 02540



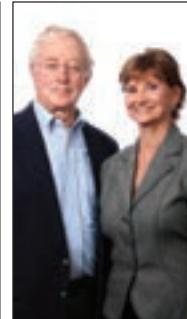
Anthony Team

AnthonyTeam
@KinlinGrover.com
518-229-0099 (Cell)
508-548-6611 (Office)
56 Scranton Ave
Falmouth, MA 02540



Amanda DeFazio

Sales Associate
adefazio@kinlingrover.com
774-392-4831 (Cell)
508-477-2700 (Office)
681 Falmouth Rd. Suite B12
Mashpee, MA 02649



The Redding Team

jredding@kinlingrover.com
mredding@kinlingrover.com
Jim 508-367-0508 (Cell)
Marge 508-572-3966 (Cell)
56 Scranton Ave
Falmouth, MA 02540



Bevery Comeau

Sales Associate
bcomeau@kinlingrover.com
508-364-0084 (Cell)
508-833-3333 (Office)
133 Route 6A
Sandwich, MA 02563



Lyn Schad

Sales Associate
lschad@kinlingrover.com
508-479-7494 (Cell)
508-548-6611 (Office)
56 Scranton Ave
Falmouth, MA 02540



Kim Bedford

Sales Associate
kbedford@kinlingrover.com
978-500-0252 (Cell)
508-548-6611 (Office)
56 Scranton Ave
Falmouth, MA 02540



Joan Walsh

Sales Associate
joanwalsh@kinlingrover.com
774-392-4024 (Cell)
508-540-9000 (Office)
229 Main Street
Falmouth, MA 02540



Maria Cobak

Sales Associate
mcobak@kinlingrover.com
774-454-7474 (Cell)
508.833.3333 (Office)
133 Route 6A
Sandwich, MA 02563



Kathy Kelly

Sales Associate
kkelly@kinlingrover.com
508-362-0537 (Cell)
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Pollinator



BY CHRISTINE LYNCH

By now we know that everything in Nature is interconnected. When one component is changed, it inevitably affects something else. At present, there are many detrimental factors depleting our butterflies and other pollinators such as bees, wasps, moths and birds. High percentages of these plant pollinators have been decimated due to habitat loss, overuse of agricultural chemicals and serious climate change.

Gardens



Great thinkers, including Rachel Carson, Charles Darwin, Albert Einstein and E.O. Wilson, have expressed concern about our life on Earth and its ecosystems. All acknowledged the importance of and the precarious circumstances facing pollinators. For decades their writings have issued strong warnings about bringing harm to these special creatures, yet their thoughts and those of so many others go unheeded. Hummingbirds and monarch butterflies follow climate cues to start their lengthy journeys from

Mexico. Hummingbirds pause along the way to sip nectar from flowers and to find tree sap oozing from holes poked by woodpeckers.

The monarchs rely on milkweed (*Asclepias*) plants, their single food source. Upon their arrival in North America, the monarchs commence laying eggs on milkweed. Milkweed leaves also are consumed ravenously by the emerging larvae. Then, after entering the chrysalis stage, they emerge as butterflies and continue traveling north for their brief lifespan.

The cycle continues, locating milkweed and reproducing twice more before returning south. Without milkweed, future monarch generations will suffer, and that's already happening. Statistics state that more than 90 percent of North American monarch butterflies have been lost. The US Fish and Wildlife Service now budgets millions of dollars to grow milkweed and other butterfly-attracting plants along monarch migration routes.

Honeybees, however, don't migrate far. Whether in an apiarist's hives or out in



nature, bees prepare for the cold months by sheltering as a colony. Relying on the honey they've stored, they remain in close proximity, completely surrounding the queen, and maintain heat by continually flexing muscles located by their thorax. Then, as spring temperatures encourage budding trees and blooming plants, the bees readily begin their continuous labors.

Working With Nature
Beekeepers vouch for the essential role that bees contribute to life on Earth. Brian Todesco is a Cape apiarist who "always thought bees were cool." It wasn't until he was an adult that he "took a leap of faith." Ordering some bees, he placed hive boxes in his yard, where the bees could feast on wildflowers growing on his property.



Bees are active from early spring and rely on nectar from the early-budding maple tree. As more flowers begin to bloom, food sources become easier to find. He mentioned that dandelions and red clover are good food sources.

Later in the year, goldenrod and Japanese knotweed are some of the season's last food sources that will bloom for the bees. Unfortunately, these beneficial plants often get eradicated by people spotting them in their yards, using toxic chemicals that harm pollinators. "Every flower varies in the strength of its nectar," Mr. Todesco said, comparing honey's taste to the different flavor notes in wine. He also pointed out that the quality of honey changes as the summer proceeds. "In the spring, the honey is clear and sweeter. Then, by the end of fall it's dark and thicker," he said. Rather than collecting the honey just twice a year, as many commercial beekeepers do, he extracts five to six smaller batches a year.

When it's time to harvest some honey, he starts by scraping the comb, then places it in a spinner. After that step it passes through a 600-micron mesh filter. "You want to keep some of the pollen in the liquid," he said. His label is Mr. T's Bees, a pure, natural raw honey—nothing else is done or added. It can be purchased at Vital Nutrition, located in Homeport in Falmouth.

Mr. Todesco documents the seasonal stages of beekeeping in weekly video segments available on YouTube. These informative clips demonstrate his skill as

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well as his ability to explain what needs to be done for a healthy beehive.

Mr. Todesco is seeing success, including mentoring people in the craft. "It's started as a hobby and now it's getting to be a part-time job," he said. Through the years, he's learned how incredible bees are. "Put hives on a farm and production skyrockets," he said.

What You Can Do To Help

As often is the case in Nature, pollinators and plants have a symbiotic relationship. One example mentioned on the Mass Audubon website (massaudubon.org) is that certain plants, such as blueberries and tomatoes, release pollen only after they sense vibrations from a bee's wings. To attract bees and other pollinators and keep them coming, sow a variety of plants so that there are blooms throughout the growing season. Native plants are best. For people without a yard, even windowboxes or porch containers can hold plants that beckon to bees, insects and butterflies. Don't feel you have to provide all the food they need, just help them get nourishment to carry them along until they need more.

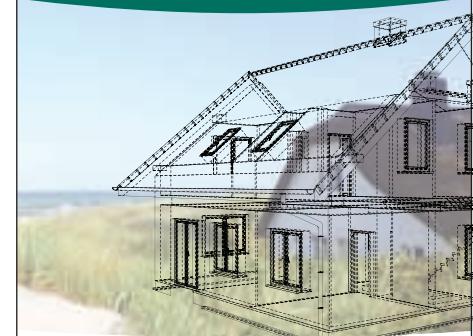
And absolutely avoid using pesticides and nonorganic fertilizers. Marcia Chapman, Soares Flower Garden Nursery manager, said, "Planting to encourage local ecosystems to thrive requires accepting some damage (munching) of foliage. No insecticides." Soares Nursery offers educational talks for the community. "We did educate lots of folks on raising monarchs for

several years," she said. The nursery also has handout material and partners with American Beauties Native Plants (abnativeplants.com) and Monarch Watch.

Soares carries several types of native milkweed varieties available through online shopping, and in store when it opens for the season on March 20, the first day of spring. She said, "Most people are happy to plant more flowers (perennials, annuals and shrubs) to support pollinators." Cape gardeners who want to attract pollinators can choose from a wealth of plants. A short list of suggestions includes: basil, bee balm, blueberries, butterfly bush, butterfly or milkweed (*Asclepias*), coneflowers (*Echinacea*), hibiscus, lavender, lilacs, lobelia, mint, morning glories, nasturtiums, petunias, phlox, rosemary, and sunflowers.

In addition to having reliable food sources, pollinators need spots for nesting, egg laying, larvae development, et cetera over their life cycles. Establishing a brush pile with leaves and twigs somewhere on your property can provide shelter for birds and insects into the cold months. For more tips, visit the Mass Audubon website and read the section called "Plant a Native Pollinator Garden." Other organizations with informative websites include monarchwatch.org, pollinator.org, thebeeconservancy.org and abnativeplants.com. Also, a selection of books about pollinators and pollinator gardens is available at Cape bookshops and libraries. ■

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NATURE'S OPTIONS

Mulch and Fertilizer for Your Garden

BY DEBORAH G. SCANLON



Pine needles, wood chips, leaves, and seaweed have been simple but valuable resources for Cape Cod gardeners for generations.

Seaweed, in fact, has had many uses over the years. Our grandparents shared stories of it being used in the past as insulation, piled high along the foundations of houses in the winter to keep out the cold. And a key ingredient to family clambakes was the rockweed that we put on the stones in the fire pit on the beach before steaming the lobsters, clams, potatoes, and corn.

An unusual application of seaweed was in the news in the 1950s, when the Bugeye ketch, Brown

Smith & Jones, sank at the Eel Pond town dock in Woods Hole. The first step in raising the boat was to plug some of the bigger leaks with seaweed and other substances to caulk the gaping seams. Six big pumps going full tilt finally raised the ship.

But perhaps the most common use over the years



Rockweed

has been in our gardens as mulch and fertilizer. Loaded with nutrients, it covers the weeds and blocks new ones, and keeps moisture in the soil.

On a Facebook Cape Cod gardening site, people praised seaweed's value, whether putting it directly into the compost or in a pile for the rain

to rinse the salt off, then placing it in the garden. But ecological concerns were also raised.

Javier Lloret, research scientist at the Marine Biological Laboratory Ecosystems Center, explained that on the Cape "eelgrass is in decline... the mats of eelgrass leaves and remains that we usually find on the local beaches are playing very

important ecological services, not only providing food and refuge for many organisms (sand fleas for example), but also by protecting our beaches against erosion. The mat of dead eelgrass leaves and rhizomes mixed with sand and gravel forms a very effective barrier against waves and storms...."





As for the difference between seaweed and seagrass, he said: "In general, seaweed is algae, while seagrass refers to vascular plants; plants with roots, leaves, and flowers.

Seagrasses are not algae. They are grasses, like the ones in our backyard, that some time ago evolved and (re) colonize shallow seas.

"Both seagrasses and algae play

important ecological roles. The scientific community has paid a lot of attention to seagrasses and their roles, in part because they have been disappearing or experiencing degradation in many parts of the world. Algal communities are also important, although they may have received less attention."

The question then is, can people use it responsibly?

Dr. Lloret said he didn't think that "a few people taking a couple of bags of this material (whether it is seagrass remains, or algae, or mixed) for their gardens can have a substantial impact on the ecosystem. I do see a problem if, somehow, some locations become 'popular,' and people start going to those same places on a regular basis to collect it."

Use it only for a small area of the garden, a friend suggests, and be careful not to collect too much, and take it from an area where there is a good supply. Leave lots more than you take away.

Terry Soares, of Soares Garden Nursery, suggested a method that uses seaweed sparingly. "For a vegetable garden, you don't need a lot of seaweed. On the empty rows between your plants, put down a layer of newspaper (black and white—no color or glossy paper) and put seaweed on top of that. It will last two years."

Requests for town regulations regarding seaweed removal were not returned before this article's publication. Gardeners should check with local agencies.

Pine needles are a great resource for acid-loving plants like azaleas and boxwood, Ms. Soares said. Another trend, she added, is to grind up your leaves with the lawn mower and use this as mulch. "Leaf mulch also protects and sustains pollinators," she said. "And ground-up leaves don't blow away."

George Chapman, for whom horticulture is both his profession and hobby, said he used seaweed in the past but always wondered about its environmental impact. He thinks of "wood chips as being the best soil additive available."

"Wood chips are usually made by chipping entire trees—twigs, stems, branches, trunks and leaves. This

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results in a material composed of various sizes that is more resistant to compaction than bark mulch. The diversity of the material supports a wide range of soil microorganisms that are the key ingredient of a healthy soil. Wood chips slow the process of water evaporation, suppress weeds, maintain a stable soil temperature and prevent soil compaction."

"Over time," Mr. Chapman said, "wood chips break down, adding nutrients and organic matter to the soil. Better that wood chips be in the gardens than in the landfill!"

He said they can be used in a vegetable garden between rows of plants for moisture retention and weed control, and they keep plants such as lettuce and spinach clean by preventing splashing mud caused by rain and irrigation. They would also work well as a mulch under tomato and pepper plants.

For Ellen Blanchard of Woods Hole, compost is the mainstay for her garden. She always has two compost piles going. One is for vegetable and



Wood Chips

kitchen scraps layered with leaves, garden trimmings, and deadheading, and the other is all the leaves from fall raking.

"We keep a two-gallon bucket for veggie scraps, coffee grounds, and egg shells under the kitchen sink. Every few days we empty the bucket



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onto our ongoing compost heap, and maybe once a week, pitchfork some leaves over it. Some folks like to keep track of the temperature inside their pile, to make sure it is 'cooking' nicely, and only turn it when the time

is just right.

"I am not so particular about that, and turn it with a pitchfork when I feel like it... maybe more often than some. I find it very satisfying... especially when I see those zillions of

happy wriggling worms breaking it down.

"In the summer, Ms. Blanchard said, "we usually start a new pile beside the decomposing one, and let the mature pile get ready for its move to the garden. Meanwhile, the huge pile of leaves on the other side of the yard is decomposing nicely. I don't turn it as often as the veggie pile, but weather, and an occasional turn with the pitchfork, seem to do the trick."

In the fall, when it's time to rake again, she moves the mature vegetable compost and the decomposing leaf pile into the garden to sit for the winter and await springtime. Then, she starts a new leaf pile where the old one was.

In the spring, when the snow has melted, the compost piles she had moved to the garden are ready to be spread around wherever the soil needs amending, and mulching the flowerbeds and vegetables.

"The whole thing is a very rewarding process," Ms. Blanchard said, "on this little teeny piece of the Earth where we live." ■

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GO GREEN WHEN YOU CLEAN

BY SHEILA HURST

To add some green to your spring cleaning this year, you might want to consider going all natural by making your own detergents or trying a few plant-based cleaning products.

Natural products are not only cost-effective, they're better for the environment and your health. Knowing all the ingredients means you don't have to worry about harmful chemicals in your clothes, on your skin, or in your home.

Vital Nutrition on Gifford Street in Falmouth offers an array of natural cleaning products for anything from stain removal to degreasing, as well as homeopathic remedies and vitamins. Co-owner Bob Vander Pyl has used the cleaning products at home and at work for decades.

"We're finding more and more that the things that are used for cleaning commercially are really quite toxic," he said. "If you can smell it in the air when your neighbors do their laundry, that's not a good thing. Natural products are much better for

the water supply. Plus, why clean with something that's toxic?"

Biodegradable products like Dr. Bronner's Sal Suds can be used for laundry or general household cleaning. Customers have used it to clean dishes,

windows, floors, cars, basically anything that needs it. A drop can even be mixed with a bowl of water to clean chemicals and wax from vegetables before rinsing them off. Also available at Vital Nutrition, Biokleen products combine plant-based surfactants with extracts of citrus and grapefruit seed for a natural-smelling clean.

Mr. Vander Pyl uses Dr. Bronner's Sal Suds for laundry and Castile Soap for handwashing and dishes. The castile soap is made from a blend of coconut, olive, palm, jojoba and hemp oils that are







designed to nourish the skin.

"I tend to have skin issues. I have a laceration on my right hand and two fingers dry out easily," Mr. Vander Pyl said. "That's been my primary hand soap here and at home for a while, even before COVID. We're all washing our

hands a lot now, and it's oil based so it doesn't dry your hands out."

Sugar scrubs are another oil-based option for dry hands and skin. Pamela Oldham has been making natural lemon or coconut lime sugar scrubs for the past few years. She also sells them in the

Woods Hole area as holiday gifts. Her sugar scrubs are made from olive oil, sugar and freshly squeezed juices so they smell good and leave the skin feeling soft and rejuvenated.

"I wanted something nice for my skin and I read about sugar scrubs," Ms. Oldham said. "I tried it out, and gave them away and people really liked them. Then I started selling them like crazy in Woods Hole."

Ms. Oldham uses her sugar scrubs on her face, elbows and feet, as well as on her hands. She's also been experimenting with an exfoliant that she makes from poppy seeds.

"You can feel the scrubs slough off all your dry skin and it feels good," she said. "Hand sanitizers and winter can really dry out the skin. I use the scrubs practically every day and I love them."

Sugar scrubs don't need to be refrigerated and the shelf life is at least a year. They can be kept by the kitchen or bathroom sink for easy moisturizing.

"I've tried all kinds of different things like beeswax and paraffin, and I keep going back to the sugar scrubs," Ms. Oldham said. "They're all natural and easy to make."

Natural soaps, vitamins, homeopathic remedies and herbal teas are also available at Vital Nutrition.

"The overall principle for me is protection and keeping my immune system pumped up these days," Mr. Vander Pyl said. "COVID is a virus, and if your immune system stays healthy, you can fight it off."

Because of COVID, Vital Nutrition has been offering porch pickup for about a year. Customers can visit the Vital Nutrition website to virtually browse the shelves and phone in or email an order to be picked up.

Back in the days before so many different cleaning products were commercially available, combinations of hydrogen peroxide, white vinegar and baking soda were used for household cleaning and have recently become popular again.

Super Cleaning, Inc., in Falmouth offers an organic home cleaning option. Owner Adria Pepinelli said 80 percent of her clients prefer the organic option over the use of regular household cleaners. MrsGreenCleans

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in Mashpee specializes in environmentally friendly cleaning. Owner Donna Fitz-Gerald recognized the need for an environmentally safe cleaning service while working in hospice and started the business about 13 years ago.

Before organic cleaning products were widely available, in the 1500s people in Tudor England used salt and sunlight to sanitize kitchen items. They'd also make laundry detergent by creating lye from wood ash.

These days, it's a little easier to make your own laundry detergent. According to a website called dbynatural.com, first grate a bar of natural soap with a cheese grater to create flakes, then add 14 ounces of borax and 14 ounces of washing soda. The result can be stored in an airtight glass container. Only one tablespoon is needed for small loads or two tablespoons for larger loads. Although borax is natural and safe as long as it isn't ingested, a borax-free laundry detergent can be made by dissolving baking soda and salt in hot water while adding a bit of liquid castile soap.

Homemade fabric softeners can be



created by combining white vinegar with your favorite essential oils. Essential oils like lavender, sweet orange, lemon and peppermint are antibacterial and will help to disinfect laundry. Lemon and sweet orange can

also brighten laundry and fight stains.

Whether you decide to make your own cleaning solution recipes or give natural, biodegradable products a try, this spring season could be the perfect time to go green. ■

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A New Emphasis On Outdoor Living Spaces



Bulbrite String lights

BY CHRISTOPHER KAZARIAN

'Having a space outside you can enjoy, just like you might enjoy the living room, can hugely enhance your experience with the house.'

*— Jacob Avakian,
owner of Vineyard Home*

Since last March, the relationship with the way we use our homes has undergone a seismic shift. No longer is it solely a place for getting a good night's sleep and enjoying a meal to start and end the day.

For many, home has now become a place where we work, where we eat, where we play, and where we sleep. The majority of our time is now spent at home. And while the vaccine offers hope for a return to pre-pandemic days, there is still uncertainty about what the future holds.

COVID is clearly not going anywhere, so redesigning our homes to keep us and

our guests safe is more important than ever. Perhaps no space more provides the opportunity to do exactly that than outdoor living areas.

Upgrades to lighting, electronics and heating can make these spaces ideal for outdoor entertainment, something that is sorely needed after a year filled with loss, isolation and social distancing.

"It kind of goes without saying that the restrictions that come with COVID have affected our way of life," said Jacob Avakian, owner of Vineyard Home on Falmouth's Main Street. "Right now,



where people are at home so much, especially on the Cape, if you're at home, you want to be outside....Having a space outside you can enjoy, just like you might enjoy the living room, can hugely enhance your experience with the house."

Vineyard Home has the capacity to bring almost every amenity, from lighting to audio to video, to your deck, patio, or yard.

"There are a million different directions people can go in," Mr. Avakian said. That's where the knowledge and expertise of a custom design firm such as his can come in handy.

How Will You Use Your Outdoor Space?

As to where one should start, Mr. Avakian suggested thinking about how you see yourself using the space. "Are they planning on coming out there and just cooking a burger and heading back inside or do they plan on spending a lot of time out there and maybe using it a lot in the summer and the fall?" he said.

His staff can walk through the space to visualize the best place to install a TV, speakers and lights.

With video, consumers have the option of installing either a flat-screen TV or a home theater projector. While televisions are limited in size—the biggest is around 65 inches—they offer better visibility during the day.

"If you're out sitting by the pool all day,



then an outdoor TV would be the way to go," Mr. Avakian said. "If you want to have outdoor movie nights with the family sitting outside by the fire, then a projector would be the way to go."

For homeowners looking to impress, Vineyard Home sells a Stealth Patio Theater, starting at 103 inches, that is "basically an underground TV where you press a button and it comes up from an enclosure," Mr. Avakian said. "Some come in a built-in enclosure and some you can pour a foundation in the yard and it sits in there and rises from that."

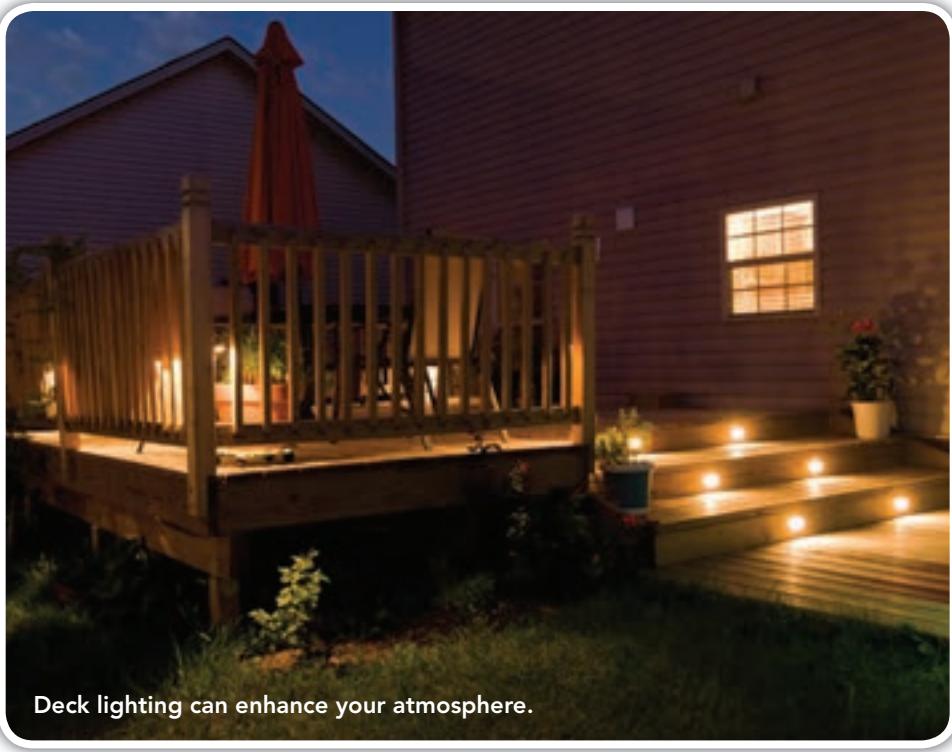
Adding to the experience is audio that can range from the simple—a pair of speakers aimed at a deck—to the more complex, such as an inground system placed strategically throughout the yard so it can be heard by the homeowner while not disturbing the neighbors.

While living near the ocean might cause some to pause before investing in outdoor audio-video equipment, Mr. Avakian assured, they have been tested to withstand the elements. "We have a number of projects on the Cape and one on Rhode Island where the homes are right along the saltwater and the equipment runs without a problem," he said. "The quality is second to none."

The Impact Of Lighting

A critical consideration for any upgrade to your outdoor living space is lighting. "It's something that is hugely overlooked these days," Mr. Avakian said. "It can really affect how you enjoy the space and people don't realize it that much."

"One of the beautiful things about outdoor lighting is there's different levels and layers," he continued. "You can have little step lights or niche lights that give you a sense of the space and let you know where steps are or the edge of the patio is. And then you can have all sorts of uplighting and wash lighting where you mount the lights up in a tree so it can give you a cool effect where the area feels enclosed at night. It can make a yard feel



Deck lighting can enhance your atmosphere.

more intimate or cozy.”

Reg Emino, owner of Premier Landscape Lighting in East Falmouth, recommended low voltage when it comes to outdoor lighting. “It is safe. You can touch it without getting a shock,” he

explained. “You’re using LED lights as opposed to old halogen lamps. There is a lot of savings monetarily and they are very inexpensive to run. The nice thing is it does enhance the outdoors and provides for more area at night.”

If consumers are serious about enhancing their outdoor lighting, Mr. Emino is against the solar-powered lights consumers can purchase at big box stores like Walmart or Home Depot. “If you look at solar lights, for the most part, it doesn’t give you much light for the spaces you want to light up,” he said. “They won’t light up walkways too good and people, if they do it themselves, they usually put in too many. It almost looks like a runway at an airport....And over time, solar lights slowly lose what little light they have.”

Spending a little more money on an outdoor lighting contractor can help identify locations on your property to place lights to give them the best visual effect. “I emphasize less lights, not more,” he said. “I think almost every house could use lighting for various reasons. Obviously, people are staying home more so they want to get the most out of their property and it should include outdoor lighting.”

Over the past decade, said Ben Dodds, construction manager at CMS Landscape in Pocasset, advancements in technology have made it “a ton easier for lighting. You can put a lot more lights on a run of wire because it doesn’t take near as many amps.”

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Aesthetic Considerations

A primary consideration for homeowners is whether they want the visual impact of the lights to be from their house outward or from the road looking toward their house. "Sometimes it takes a little time to get to know the customer to know what overall impact they want on their property," he said. "Oftentimes it will be uplighting the house and putting some lights up in the trees for curb appeal."

While that is the most common approach for customers, he said, they also tend to want lights along a path or walkway for safety reasons. Also popular are lights to highlight walls in the yard.

"I do think people make the mistake of sometimes putting too much lighting in," Dodds cautioned. "You don't want to flood the whole outdoor area with light."

The final option for homeowners to consider is heating, especially for the spring and fall when temperatures can fluctuate rapidly. With all that has gone on over the past year, patio heaters are particularly popular at Breakaway in Mashpee and Dennis.

"I ran out of the patio heaters in early

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Premier Landscape Lighting (outdoor lighting) – www.premierlandscapelighting.com

CMS Landscape (outdoor lighting) – www.cmslandscape.com

Breakaway (outdoor heaters and firepits) – www.barbequegrills.com

May last year," said Kevin Feloney, sales manager at Breakaway in Dennis. "The demand outdid the supply."

Breakaway features two propane-style heaters. One is similar to those found at restaurants; the other looks more like a streetlight. The company also sells an electric heater.

"The difference between the gas and electric is you always have to fill the propane cylinder with the gas heaters. It's a heavy item that can be close to 40 pounds. Also, the pilots can be difficult to start for certain brands," Mr. Feloney said. "The torch-style [gas] heaters are easier to light on a windy day. The

electric ones don't require any pilot lighting. As long as you're within 15 to 20 feet of an outlet, you just have to plug them in."

Want to add to the ambiance? Mr. Feloney suggested an outdoor firepit. Breakaway has a variety of round, rectangular, and square ones that were equally as popular as the space heaters last year.

He anticipated that popularity to continue through 2021. "I would say the demand for these is probably going to be high until people feel safer getting together in groups and going out to eat," Mr. Feloney said. ■



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How To Be Productive From Home

Tips On Designing A Virtual Workspace

BY ABIGAIL NEHRING

Many of Cape Cod's seasonal homeowners have lingered long past fair weather this year. They are choosing the Cape as their domestic setting after American companies sent their employees home on lockdown, stationing themselves at their kitchen tables with laptops and power cords to conduct business from the respite of the Cape as the kettle ponds freeze over and winter's tempests set in.

If you're using your home as a virtual workplace this spring, you may be contending with a novel array of daily challenges—and you're not alone. This February, Gallup reported that 56 percent of US employees were working remotely

at least part of the time due to the pandemic. As a concept, telework predates desktop computers and the internet, but not until these past months has it been adopted widely enough to shape a new vision of the future of American workplaces.

Americans brought their offices into their homes in 2020—and are now refashioning their lives to make it more comfortable to do so. "I think you're on mute" is an apt slogan for the year.

It's no coincidence that interior





Zoom meetings with kids on their laps or in the same room and poor lighting can push the limits of old professionalism.

designers on the Cape have noticed an uptick in the number of home office projects clients are asking them to do. Some are turning guest bedrooms into offices or looking for advice on how to fit a workstation

into a crowded home.

Laurie Anastos, the founder and principal designer of Interior Design Concepts in Mashpee, said she asks her clients to describe their personal needs and circumstances when

designing workspaces in their homes.

"I always ask what the client does for work," Ms. Anastos said. "Is this permanent or temporary? Some people thought they'd never have a home office. It could be a small space in a bedroom. I discourage them from using the kitchen because it's a high traffic area and that can easily distract you. If they have ample space, some people are starting from scratch to build attached offices on their property. COVID has brought everybody back home together."

Ms. Anastos said you need to consider the brass tacks in office design first—electrical outlets and WiFi.

"Nothing is more frustrating than setting up your furniture and then discovering you can't use the internet, or you don't know where the outlets are," she said.

Commercial office spaces often have outlets on the floor, but a power strip connected to one next to or behind your desk will also suffice.

Molly McGinness, who founded a design firm in Falmouth 21 years ago, said your ability to be productive will vary in different locations in your home.

"It's really important to have a separate space," Ms. McGinness told On Cape. "Make sure you have somewhere separate, even if it's in the basement. You want to make sure that when you're on the phone, no one comes in."

White collar workers are experiencing an eroding boundary between home life and work. Companies have used amusing strategies to reinforce the division, even introducing a "virtual commute" at the end of the day where employees wind down and reflect on the day's accomplishments in lieu of a journey through traffic or dark subway tunnels.

Ms. McGinness said that she's tried to create separation from the domestic surroundings in using several areas of her own home as a workspace over the years, first outfitting a shed in her back yard and finally converting the room over her garage into an office while raising her two children, who are now 14 and 17.

"I used to say I could work anywhere," Ms. McGinness said.

Sustaining a Tradition

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"But having a home office became important when my kids were young because I wanted to work and then meet them at the bus."

In 2021, working parents lack that alone time. With most schools on the Cape operating on hybrid or full remote learning models, parents are now conducting Zoom meetings with kids on their laps or in the same room, pushing the limits of old standards of professionalism.

"Ideally you want to work in one of your quieter rooms, maybe a room on the corner side," Ms. McGinness said. She recommended positioning yourself next to a natural light source for videoconference calls, or purchasing a ring light to place behind the camera for a studio look.

Several of Ms. Anastos's recent clients are teachers who have been leading remote learning sessions with their students from home. Even though they didn't have a huge space to convert into an office, she used lighting and color to bring calm and a sense of organization.

If you're repainting, you should look at color samples in both a

A inexpensive ring light can greatly enhance you video image quality.



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daytime and nighttime setting. Ms. Anastos likes to recommend her clients use spa blue for office wall color, or a light shade of gray like marshmallow. Objects in the room like filing cabinets and printers, as well as desk items like paper clips and staplers will introduce color and run the risk of making the space feel cluttered, she said.

Ms. Anastos shares an office in her home with her husband. Her desk is near the corner of the room, pushed out from the wall so she has an L-shaped area behind her chair

to store items and keep them out of her line of vision while working. She recommends using stackable trays or boxes from Room & Board or The Container Store to keep miscellaneous office items organized.

Celeste M. Curley, a certified feng shui master on Cape Cod, said in her practice, office furniture is usually oriented toward open floorspace in a room, the "grand hall" through which auspicious energy passes. The goal is to be able to see the door while sitting behind your desk without looking at clutter while

you work, Ms. Curley said, adding that your back should be to a wall or another supporting structure. It's best to be sitting next to a window rather than in front of it, especially if you work on a computer and will suffer from the sun's glare. She also recommended using a room divider if there's a television in the same room as your desk.

Ms. Curley's own desk is floating near the center of a room on the second floor of her home. It's perpendicular to the door on the left and is bathed in sunlight from windows to the right. On the wall behind her is a photograph of Mount Rushmore and pictures of Fuk, Luk and Sau, the three Chinese deities of luck, wealth and longevity.

"I have the support of those famous men and the mountain," Ms. Curley said. "In choosing photos to put around you, the main thing is to make sure everyone seems happy in them. I have a compilation of my family from the time my children were young to the present. You can place them around you at your desk." ■

"Yep, home improvement is what we do!" ☺

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REMODEL AND REUSE

As a kid I would love to visit old architectural salvage yards with my dad, the places where you could find complete Victorian fireplace mantles, claw-foot tubs, and stacks of interior and exterior trim pieces. Usually, these forays had a specific purpose, a specific part needed to make a repair on one of our door locks or floor grates.

And then later on in the early 2000's when New Bedford was trying to revitalize its downtown business district by giving away significant properties for \$1, with a promise and a plan to fix them up, I spent many days planning on how to make it happen. In the end, the investment was not worth the risk, but the dream never left me.

Tommy Adams of Cataumet Sawmills, a local guy turned his love of old salvage materials into a thriving business. They buy old beams from demolished factories and warehouses and turn them into flooring and interior trim. His top seller is heart pine, also known as Southern Longleaf yellow pine, old growth pine, or pitch pine. Today this species is virtually extinct, having been used to used to make timbers for bridges, factories during the industrial revolution. Now Cataumet Sawmill cuts the old beams into tongue and groove flooring, for a truly beautiful and historic product.

Today your renovation project may call for demolition, and if so there are a few things to not throw away. First are the items you can donate to places like Habitat for Humanity, and second, items for salvage and recycle.

In the first category, save any working tub, toilet or sinks. They can be reused or resold, especially if they are vintage. Old cabinets are another useful item. Whether they are reused in a new kitchen or repurposed as storage units for a basement or garage,

they definitely have value. Old appliances also have value. It's not unusual to see used refrigerators in garages as a backup, or beverage dispenser.

Old windows, the ones with ropes and cast iron weights are particularly dear these days. Tom Renshaw and Co. of Woods Hole have been restoring old windows and re-using them in period houses for many years. There was a time when he would pick them up on the side of the street for free. All of the parts of these wooden double-hung window are valuable, ranging from the iron sash weights to the wavy antique glass panels. Today these vintage widows are found at a premium.

The second category includes salvageable materials. As the cost of building products go up, folks are looking at the materials from a demolition project with interest. Today a sheet of 1/2 exterior plywood cost almost \$40.00 and a 2x6 spruce stud is almost \$14.00 per piece. At these prices it is worth it to have a crew de-construct a building, saving the lumber rather than demolish it with a wrecking ball. Along with the traditional high value salvage items such as copper piping and steel beams, less popular materials are becoming economically viable. Crude oil is being extracted from asphalt shingles and being used for fuel or paving projects. Drywall which contains gypsum is being recycled and used to make new drywall, and other agricultural products.

Today's landfill stream is made up of around 40% construction debris. As building costs continue to go up, salvagers will find new ways of extracting valuable materials in a cost-effective way, driving prices down for new materials, reducing the consumption of natural resources, and mitigating the effects of pollution by over used landfills.

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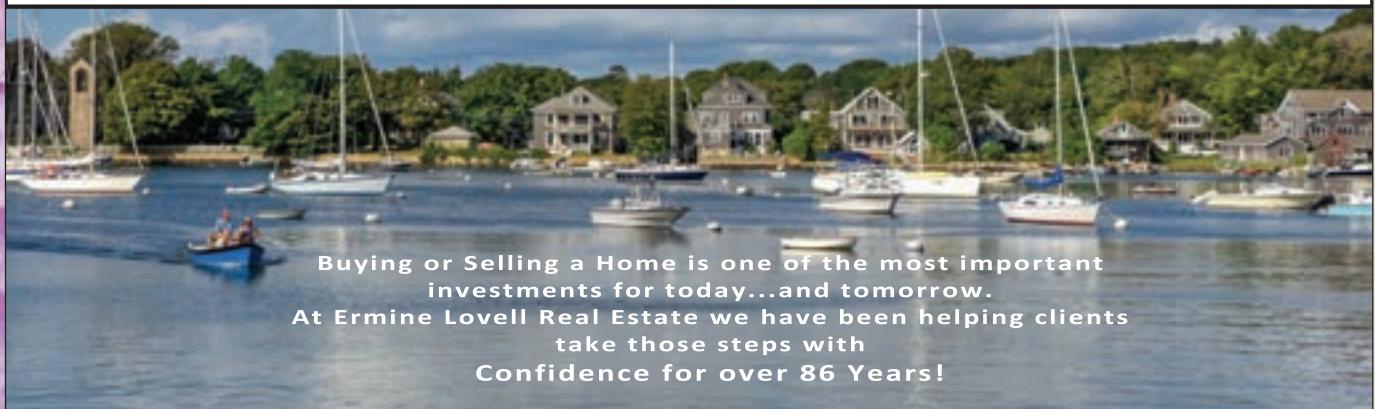
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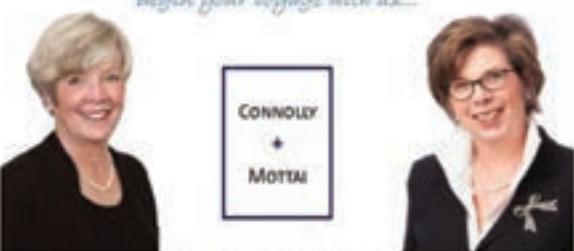
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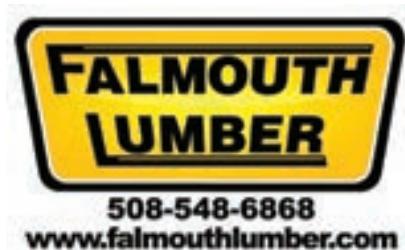
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