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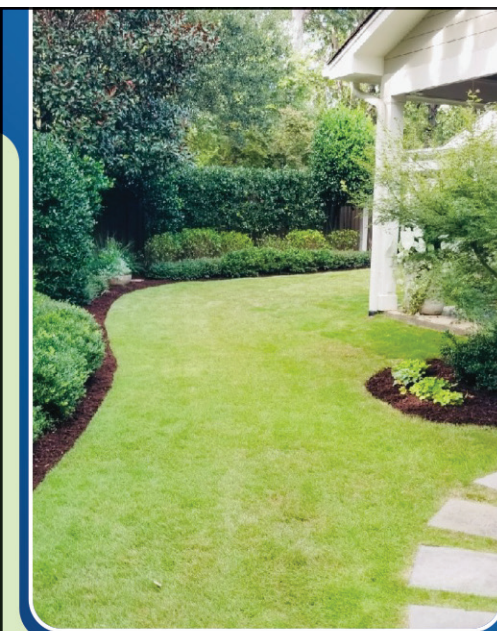
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About the cover

Inez Saum and Frances Deignan take cuttings from a coleus, put rooting hormones on them and place them in soil, at the Master Gardner Greenhouse at the MSU Extension in Columbus. Inez has been a master gardener for 21 years and is the chairman of the greenhouse. Frances has been a master gardener for 12 years and is the chairman of the plant sale. Photo by Deanna Robinson/Dispatch Staff



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Helpful tips and tricks to help your garden grow above the rest

Nursery manager sees explosion of interest in growing food

BY GRANT MCLAUGHLIN

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More people than ever are getting into growing their own food in home gardens, says one greenhouse manager in Columbus.

Mary Tuggle, manager at Walton's Greenhouse on 18th Avenue in Columbus has seen many first time vegetable gardeners in her day, but whereas she once saw two to three new gardeners a day in 2019, she now sees about five.

"Now a lot of people are unsure of the economy and the cost of buying (food) at stores," Tuggle said. "And you just can't beat fresh."

Green Thumb 101: What you need to get started

The first thing to do is know what you are growing, Tuggle said.

As far as "beginner proof" plants go, Tuggle recommends starting with tomatoes, cucumbers, watermelon and squash, which start growing between March and April if grown from seed, and can be bought as transplants in early spring onward. These plants are easy to manage and usually grow a hefty crop, Tuggle said.

To get started, Tuggle said to use raised beds 12 inches deep, four inches wide and eight inches long. Pots are also a good option. Expect to pay around \$100 or more, depending on how extensive your raised beds and pots are.

Oktibbeha County Co-op Assistant Manager Rodney Kendrick recommends taking a good look at the soil you buy and making sure to purchase soil conditioners – which can cost anywhere between \$4 and \$20 – to help amend any sand-based soils prone to drying too fast. He also recommends buying a soil testing kit, which costs around \$10.

The Mississippi State Extension service also provides soil testing services.

"Sandy soils are going to dry out a lot quicker," Kendrick said. "Your soil has to retain a lot of water, and you can amend those soils with products we have like raised bed soil in bags that are complete growing mediums that you would use if you're growing out, like fertilizers, soil conditioners, soil based products that have organic wood type matter in it."

Tuggle also recommends first time planters purchase Osmocote fertilizer, a slow release fertilizer priced at \$11.99-\$29.99 depending on size.

Some do's for your first garden

Once you have mixed in your soil, purchased your plants, beds and containers, it's time to get digging. With that in mind, here are some tips to keep the garden



Grant McLaughlin/Dispatch Staff

Tommy Krump, 7, and Sam Krump shop for blueberry bushes at Walton's Greenhouse. Walton's Manager Mary Tuggle said gardening amongst younger people has become more popular in recent years, but beginner gardeners need to know how and when to plant, when to water and what equipment to use before planting.

growing.

Kendrick said plants like tomatoes, squash and watermelons only need intermittent watering.

"You need to know when to water," he said. "Watering too much can hurt you. You'll have insect issues and fungus issues."

Kendrick also recommends using insecticides. Knowing how your plants are susceptible to insects and how to keep them safe will keep aphids, stink bugs and other insects.

Once you know your enemies and how and when to water, all that is left to do is plant.

Tuggle said planting in late March to early April, just before Easter or right after is usually the best time to get your plants in the ground. If you plant them too early, you might end up with a shorter growth cycle.

"It (the cold) slows the growing process down," she said. "You can plant it this week and it'll come up and you plant two weeks (from now) and they will be ahead of the one you planted this week because the cold will hit it and change the (growing) cycle."

Some helpful don'ts

Tuggle said one of the biggest mistakes people make is trying to plant too many crops in the same circle. It is best to pay attention to how far you space your plants from one another. Your smaller plants should be to 12

to 18 inches apart. Plants of intermediate size should be placed at least 18 to 24 inches apart so they all have enough room to grow.

"They'll get a three gallon generic pot that is 12 inches deep and then I'll put six tomatoes in it," she said. "You can't keep enough water on that once that plant grows."

Another thing to avoid is trusting your neighbors to water your plants while you are off on summer vacation. If you do ask someone to water the plants while you're gone, make sure they know to water as often as you do and don't just spray the hose on them the day before you get back.

"They go out of town and leave their neighbor's teenage son watching their water," she said. "He's going to water the day before they get back. You have to know that person is a consistent waterer and won't leave them soaking in water (either)."

Kendrick also advises beginners to keep their first garden small. Planting too much can become a burden rather than a passtime if you plant more than you are willing to harvest. To avoid this, start small, buy one of each and start from there, afterall, there is always next year to do more if you need to, he said.

"You have to plant a lot of seed to make the crop have enough but if you buy a six pack of squash, you have a family of them, that's all you need," he said.

Making the most of your yard landscape

From trimming shrubs and trees to adding new plants, professionals offer their input

BY ROBERT SCOTT

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Warmer weather is here, and that has those who have been cooped up during winter itching to get outside.

The most common outlet for this pent up energy is the yard.

Yards say a lot about a person. To maintain a healthy, beautiful yard, proper landscaping is essential.

Will Spann, owner of S&S Landscaping in Columbus, said when it comes to landscaping, there are some common misconceptions.

“Monday through Friday, I bid jobs all day long,” Spann said. “We run into questions like, ‘When should I do this? When should I do that? Are my plants going to come back this year?’ That’s the No. 1 question.”

The concern over perennial plants and their apparent demise during the winter can cause gardeners to act rashly, pulling the plants and starting over. However, patience is key in situations like this.

“I would wait until at least the end of March or into April. ... A lot of people right now are wanting to pull some plants up that they think are dead. ... Don’t give up hope,” he said.

In the meantime, it is important to decide what new additions to a yard are desired, because no work should commence without a solid plan in place.

Everything that is planted must be maintained, and that is where many often fall short, according to Spann.

“Are you willing to water as much as is needed?” he said. “We want all of this magnificent stuff, but we don’t have time to water it. ... Think about that before you drop a bunch of money on landscaping that you can’t take care of.”

Another key aspect of yard management is pruning and trimming bushes, shrubs and even trees.

Pruning is when dead or overgrown branches, stems, etc. are cut off to encourage new growth.

However, the trimmings do not have to go to waste.

Ralph Null, a retired Mississippi State University professor and longtime floral designer said items such as the trimmings from a yard can be used to create beautiful floral arrangements that brighten up the inside of a home as well.

“I use a lot of native flora and fauna, so I collected everything I could from my yard,” Null said.



Robert Scott/Dispatch Staff

Will Spann, owner of S&S Landscaping in Columbus, gives a presentation on landscaping to the Lowndes County Master Gardeners. He said there are common landscaping misconceptions such as weed barrier, overwatering, what type of mulch is best and when is the best time to plant?

“I would wait until at least the end of March or into April. ... A lot of people right now are wanting to pull some plants up that they think are dead. ... Don’t give up hope.”

Will Spann, owner of S&S Landscaping

An issue that many local gardeners face is deer. The woodland creatures wreak havoc on local lawns, but Spann offered up some seemingly deer-resistant plants he has found success with.

They include: loropetalum, Sunshine Ligustrum, Vintage Jade, abelia, barberry, forsythia, ornamental grasses and boxwoods.

“(Combating deer) is tough,” he said. “It’s a battle.”

Ultimately, Spann said the key to a successful landscape is careful planning and implementation.

Trees, especially Crepe myrtle, should not be planted too close to houses or sidewalks. Shrubs should not be clustered together, and should instead be planted 3-feet-apart from the trunk. Holly offers a nice, green addition to the landscape, but it requires full sun and regular pruning.

These things need to be taken into consideration before planting begins.

“I’m also really big on planning for the future,” he said. “How big is this plant going to get? That’s something that people don’t think about when they start planting. Did you plant it too close to your house? People try to crowd their beds to make them look so nice at first, when two or three years of patience would help out a lot. Because what I see is, people call us and say it is out of control. They just didn’t preplan.”

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Vegetable and Herb Planting dates for Spring

Crop	Plant Seedlings or Transplants	Start Seeds Outdoors
Arugula	N/A	* Mar 7-22 ☾Mar 7
Basil	* Mar 22-Apr 12 ☾Mar 22-Apr 5	N/A
Beets	N/A	* Mar 7-29 ☾Mar 8-20
Bell Peppers	* Mar 29-Apr 12 ☾Mar 29-Apr 5	N/A
Broccoli	* Feb 21-Mar 15 ☾Feb 21-Mar 7	N/A
Cabbage	* Feb 21-Mar 7 ☾Feb 21-Mar 7	N/A
Cantaloupes	* Apr 5-19 ☾Apr 5	N/A
Carrots	N/A	* Feb 14-28 ☾Feb 14-19
Cauliflower	* Feb 21-Mar 15 ☾Feb 12-Mar 7	N/A
Celery	* Mar 29-Apr 12 ☾Mar 29-Apr 5	N/A
Chives	N/A	* Feb 21-28 ☾Feb 21-28
Cilantro (Coriander)	N/A	* Mar 22-Apr 5 ☾Mar 22-Apr 5
Corn	N/A	* Apr 5-26 ☾Apr 5, Apr 20-26
Cucumbers	* Apr 5-19 ☾Apr 5	N/A
Dill	N/A	* Mar 22-Apr 26 ☾Mar 22-Apr 5, Apr 19-26
Eggplants	* Apr 5-19 ☾Apr 5	N/A
Green Beans	N/A	* Mar 29-Apr 19 ☾Mar 29-Apr 5, Apr 19
Jalapeño Peppers	* Mar 29-Apr 12 ☾Mar 29-Apr 5	N/A
Kale	* Feb 21-Mar 15 ☾Feb 21-Mar 7	N/A
Kohlrabi	* Feb 28-Mar 7 ☾Feb 28-Mar 7	N/A
Lettuce	* Mar 7-Apr 5 ☾Mar 7, Mar 23-Apr 5	N/A
Okra	N/A	* Apr 5-19 ☾Apr 5
Onions	N/A	* Feb 21-Mar 15 ☾Mar 8-15
Oregano	* Mar 22-Apr 12 ☾Mar 22-Apr 5	N/A
Parsley	N/A	* Feb 21-Mar 7 ☾Feb 21-Mar 7
Parsnips	N/A	* Feb 28-Mar 22 ☾Mar 8-20
Peas	N/A	* Feb 7-28 ☾Feb 20-28
Potatoes	N/A	* Mar 15-Apr 5 ☾Mar 15-20
Pumpkins	* Apr 5-19 ☾Apr 5	N/A
Radishes	N/A	* Jan 24-Feb 14 ☾Feb 6-14
Rosemary	* Mar 29-Apr 19 ☾Mar 29-Apr 5, Apr 19	N/A
Sage	* Mar 22-Apr 5 ☾Mar 22-Apr 5	N/A
Spinach	N/A	* Feb 7-28 ☾Feb 20-28
Sweet Potatoes	N/A	* Apr 12-26 ☾Apr 12-18
Swiss Chard	* Feb 28-Mar 7 ☾Feb 28-Mar 7	N/A
Thyme	* Mar 22-Apr 12 ☾Mar 22-Apr 5	N/A
Tomatoes	* Mar 29-Apr 19 ☾Mar 29-Apr 5, Apr 19	N/A
Turnips	N/A	* Feb 21-Mar 15 ☾Mar 8-15
Watermelons	* Apr 5-19 ☾Apr 5	N/A
Winter Squash	N/A	* Apr 5-May 3 ☾Apr 5, Apr 20-May 3
Zucchini	N/A	* Apr 5-May 3 ☾Apr 5, Apr 20-May 3

On average, the last spring frost occurs on March 22.

* **Frost dates** — indicate the best planting dates based on your local average frost dates. Average frost dates are based on historical weather data and are the planting guideline used by most gardeners.

☾ **Moon dates** — indicate the best planting dates based on your local frost dates and Moon phases. Planting by the Moon is considered a more traditional technique.

Vegetable Planting dates for Fall

Crop	Start Seeds Indoors by	Plant Seedlings or Transplants	Start Seeds Outdoors
Arugula	N/A	N/A	* Oct 2
Beets	N/A	N/A	* Sep 22
Bell Peppers	* May 24	* Jul 19	N/A
Broccoli	* Jul 26	* Aug 23	N/A
Cabbage	* Jul 16	* Aug 13	N/A
Cantaloupes	N/A	N/A	* Jul 9
Carrots	N/A	N/A	* Sep 17
Cauliflower	* Jul 26	* Aug 23	N/A
Celery	* May 15	* Jul 24	N/A
Corn	N/A	N/A	* Jul 29
Cucumbers	N/A	N/A	* Aug 3
Eggplants	* May 24	* Jul 19	N/A
Green Beans	N/A	N/A	* Aug 3
Jalapeño Peppers	* Jun 13	* Aug 8	N/A
Kale	* Aug 15	* Sep 12	N/A
Kohlrabi	N/A	N/A	* Sep 17
Lettuce	N/A	N/A	* Sep 27
Okra	N/A	N/A	* Jul 29
Parsnips	N/A	N/A	* Aug 3
Peas	N/A	N/A	* Sep 2
Potatoes	N/A	N/A	* Aug 23
Pumpkins	N/A	N/A	* Jun 19
Radishes	N/A	N/A	* Oct 2
Spinach	N/A	N/A	* Oct 12
Sweet Potatoes	* Jun 4	* Jul 9	N/A
Swiss Chard	N/A	N/A	* Sep 27
Tomatoes	* May 29	* Jul 24	N/A
Turnips	N/A	N/A	* Sep 27
Watermelons	N/A	N/A	* Jul 9
Winter Squash	N/A	N/A	* Jul 24
Zucchini	N/A	N/A	* Aug 8

On average, the first frost occurs on November 6.

What Is Planting by the Moon?

Planting by the Moon (also called “Gardening by the Moon”) is a traditional way to plant your above- and below-ground crops, especially at the start of the season. Here’s how it works:

Plant annual flowers and vegetables that bear crops above ground during the light, or waxing, of the Moon. In other words, plant from the day the Moon is new until the day it is full.

Plant flowering bulbs, biennial and perennial flowers, and vegetables that bear crops below ground during the dark, or waning, of the Moon. In other words, plant from the day after the Moon is full until the day before it is new again.

Old-time farmers swear that this practice results in a larger, tastier harvest, so we’ve included planting by the Moon dates in our planting calendar, too.

Source: Almanac.com

When to start Perennial Flower Seeds

Flower	Start Seeds Indoors	Plant Outdoors
	(Weeks before last SPRING frost date)	
Anise Hyssop	8-10 weeks	On the last frost date
Asclepias (Milkweed)	10-12 weeks	1-2 weeks after last frost
Catmint	8-10 weeks	On last frost date
Columbine	8-10 weeks	On last frost date
Coreopsis	8-10 weeks	On last frost date
Daisy	10-12 weeks	1-2 weeks before last frost
Delphinium (perennial)	10-12 weeks	1-2 weeks before last frost
Dianthus	10-12 weeks	1-2 weeks before last frost
Echinacea (Coneflower)	8-10 weeks	On last frost date
Foxglove (Digitalis)	10-12 weeks	1-2 weeks after last frost
Gaillardia	8-10 weeks	On last frost date
Helianthus	8-10 weeks	On last frost date
Heliopsis	10-12 weeks	1-2 weeks after last frost
Hibiscus	8-10 weeks	1-2 weeks after last frost
Hollyhock	8-10 weeks	On last frost date
Monarda (Bee Balm)	8-10 weeks	On last frost date
Phlox (perennial)	10-12 weeks	1-2 weeks after last frost
Rudbeckia (Black-Eyed Susan)	8-10 weeks	1-2 weeks before last frost
Thyme	8-10 weeks	On last frost date
Viola	8-10 weeks	1-2 weeks before last frost
Yarrow	8-10 weeks	On last frost date

Perennial flowers

Perennials are plants that are capable of surviving two or more years. While they may die back to the ground in winter, their roots survive underground and produce new foliage as the increased light and warmth of spring arrives. Most perennials will bloom in the same year that they are planted, while others may need to spend time becoming established first (particularly if planted later in the growing season).

When to plant Bulbs

Bulbs to plant in the fall

Allium
Anemone
Bluebell (Hyacinthiodes)
Crocus
Daffodil
Fritillaria
Glory-of-the-Snow (Chionodoxa)
Grape Hyacinth (Muscari)
Hyacinth (Hyacinthus)
Iris*
Snowdrop (Galanthus)
Squill (Scilla)
Tulip

Bulbs to plant in the spring

Begonia (tuberous)
Caladium
Calla Lily
Canna
Dahlia
Daylily*
Crocsmia
Elephant Ear
Freesia
Gladiolus
Lily, Asiatic/Oriental (Lillium)

Caring for Bulbs

Wait until spring-flowing bulbs have finished blooming and their foliage has died back before digging, dividing, or moving them around. Mark their locations with brightly-colored popsicle sticks so you can find them more easily in late summer or early fall, which is the time to divide and transplant.

Fall is also the time to dig up summer-flowering bulbs that need to be stored inside for winter.

* This hardy perennial may be planted in the spring or fall.

When to start Annual Flower Seeds

Flower	Start Seeds Indoors	Plant Outdoors
	(Weeks before last SPRING frost date)	
Allium	6-8 weeks	On last frost date
Ageratum	6-8 weeks	On last frost date
Alyssum	6-8 weeks	1-2 weeks before last frost
Aster	6-8 weeks	On last frost date
Bachelor Button	6-8 weeks	On last frost date
Calendula	6-8 weeks	1-2 weeks before last frost
Celosia	6-8 weeks	On last frost date
Coleus	8-10 weeks	1-2 weeks after last frost
Cosmos	6-8 weeks	On last frost date
Delphinium (annual)	6-8 weeks	1-2 weeks before last frost
Gomphrena	6-8 weeks	On last frost date
Impatiens	8-10 weeks	1-2 weeks after last frost
Marigolds	6-8 weeks	On last frost date
Morning Glory*	3-4 weeks	After last frost
Nicotiana	6-8 weeks	On last frost date
Petunia	8-10 weeks	On last frost date
Phlox (annual)	8-10 weeks	On last frost date
Salvia	6-8 weeks	On last frost date
Scabiosa	6-8 weeks	On last frost date
Snapdragon	8-10 weeks	On last frost date
Statice	6-8 weeks	On last frost date
Stock	8-10 weeks	On last frost date
Strawflower	6-8 weeks	On last frost date
Sunflower*	3-4 weeks	1-2 weeks after last frost
Verbena	8-10 weeks	On last frost date
Zinnia*	4-6 weeks	1-2 weeks after last frost

* These fast-growing annuals are often started outdoors after the danger of frost has passed.

Annual flowers

Annuals are plants that sprout, grow, bloom, and go to seed all in one season and only for one season. When winter comes, the plant dies, relying on its many seeds to germinate in the following spring. Because of this, most annual flowers are easy to grow from seed, taking about 6 to 8 weeks to grow to a transplantable size, though there are always exceptions to the rule. Some seeds may just take longer to germinate and slower-growing annuals will need to be started earlier. (Be sure to read the backs of your seed packets for plant- and variety-specific recommendations!)

Saving seeds for next year

In the fall, save your zinnia seeds, sunflower seeds, and more. Remember that after flowers bloom, their seeds remain, containing the promise of spring.

What was once a prolific season of non-stop growth with its vining, flowering and blooming burst of colors, slowly gives way in autumn. Before autumn fades, walk outside and collect some of the flower seeds still on the plant.

Many old-fashioned annuals grow quite well from seeds collected and stored at home. Zinnias, sunflowers, cosmos, marigolds, California poppies, impatiens, petunias, cleome, snapdragons, nigella and calendula are among the easiest seeds to harvest and replant in the spring.

Perennial seeds can also be saved. Just keep in mind that some perennials may take a couple years from seed to maturity. So, it's not the fastest way to go, but it's certainly more cost-effective than buying starter plants at a nursery.

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The outdoors are 'in' this year

Local interior designers talk bringing nature into your home

BY ABIGAIL SIPE ROCHESTER

arochester@cdispatch.com

Not everyone has the space or the time to keep a garden. Sometimes, bringing the outside into your home is the best bet to stay connected with nature.

"Being connected to nature makes you feel more comfortable," said Penny Bowen of Penny Bowen Interior Designs. "It makes you feel more comfortable in your surroundings and at home. And more peaceful... It helps your attitude towards life, because you feel more at peace and more at one with your surroundings."

Bowen, a Columbus designer, has over thirty years of experience in designing people's homes. She and Cyndi Parker, the manager at Something Southern in Starkville, talked about the best ways to give your living space a natural connection.

Parker and Bowen both agreed that bringing nature into your home is in style this year. To achieve the look, each designer focused on the materials in a home before all else.

Bowen said materials like wood, stone, and even brick can be used to create a more natural look. It is helpful if these materials are already pre-existing in a home's flooring or walls. But she said you can also add more natural materials through furniture choices.

Bowen pointed out a table with logs as a base that she recently styled in a home as an example of how to bring more wood into a space.

"Natural is definitely a trend this year," Bowen said. "I recently took a tree trunk base table and put a glass top on it, as a way to bring in those natural elements into a room."

Parker agreed with Bowen that the materials in your home are key to achieving a natural look. She focused on wood as one of the "most natural" materials.

"You have to think about what's outside. Trees, the sky, and everything else. You have to consider the colors and the textures," Parker said. "I would focus on natural wood tones in your furniture."

Both designers stressed that the best way to get your home to feel more natural is by using a variety of materials and textures, to create variety in your home.

Bowen and Parker also stressed that you need to emphasize the windows in your home, as sunlight is key to bringing the outside in.

"Natural light and bright spaces are beneficial physically and emotionally," Parker said. "People are generally more positive and generally more creative in those environments."

Parker said to avoid anything that blocks the windows, and if you want draperies, you should make sure they don't "obstruct" any light that comes through.



Pictured is a wooden-base glass top table that Penny Bowen recently styled into a home.

Photo courtesy of Penny Bowen

"Natural light and bright spaces are beneficial physically and emotionally. People are generally more positive and generally more creative in those environments."

Cyndi Parker, manager at Something Southern

Parker said to avoid blinds, and to put your draperies as high as possible and wider than the window, so they can be pulled out of the way when needed.

Bowen pushed the window coverings in a different direction, continuing to play with a variety of different textures to draw attention to the windows.

"If you do a gauzy, sheer type of drapery panel, that would feel light and airy," Bowen said. "And then the shade on the window, you could use a woven wood shade, which is a more natural material."

But if you can't change the materials in your home, or you're working on a budget, both designers pointed towards two things: Paint and plants.

"Probably the least-expensive and highest impact option would be plants," Bowen said. "Next would be painting. Like if you painted your walls in natural colors, like sky blue, green, or tan... One trendy color is off-white, and then you can put natural materials against the off-white, and it stands out like it's a blank canvas."

Parker remained in the same color palette, but recommended using white for the walls, and a sky blue

color on the ceiling. She said that this combination is both natural and reminiscent of older southern homes.

Or, if you favor darker natural colors, Parker pointed towards creating an accent wall.

"Maybe you could do a deep green on that wall, and that could be your accent wall," Parker said. "That just means that when you do your draperies that rest along that wall, you do those in white, so you get that strong dramatic contrast and that focus on your accent wall."

Parker also said to bring in plants, real or fake, to make your home come alive.

"You have to think about greenery and florals. You can easily bring in plants, whether they're real plants that you have to maintain or faux ones that look real, not the cheap ones," Parker said. "Another thing we like to use are tall wispy branches. You might have a tall pot where you put just a few branches in that you would easily see outdoors."

For a more unique look, Bowen recommended going for a "plant wall," as an extra way to bring vegetation into your house. This could mean installing faux plant paneling, hanging plants from macrame plant hangers, or using live plants on a "plant bookshelf."

"Another thing you could do is take a bookcase, like a floor to ceiling bookcase, and line it with sedum, or another succulent," Bowen said. "That kind of repetitive thing is very artistic, but also very natural because you're working with plants."

No matter what you're doing to bring nature into your home, Bowen emphasized that you have to "think outside of the box."

Spring cleaning: Don't toss that 'junk,' it may be valuable!

STATEPOINT MEDIA

It's time to hit the garage, basement, attic and closets for that age-old task of spring cleaning! Before hauling unwanted possessions to the curb, you may be surprised to learn they might be valuable — especially if you have sports cards and memorabilia gathering dust.

With prices of sports cards rising in recent years, take time to determine if yours are valuable and how to best sell them.

“Older sports cards and memorabilia aren't just highly collectible; they can be worth lots of money.

Recent sales of scarce vintage cards have topped anywhere from thousands of dollars to tens of thousands, even hundreds of thousands. And really rare cards can go higher,” says Al Crisafulli, Auction Director at Love of the Game Auctions, an internet sports auction house that helps families identify and sell valuable items.

Crisafulli has assisted people in selling such keepsakes as a grandparent's autograph collection and an uncle's childhood baseball cards, for tens of thousands of dollars. In one life-changing event, he helped a family determine that a baseball bat that spent decades protecting their home was used by Hall of Famer Lou Gehrig — and Love of the Game Auctions sold it for almost half a million dollars.

Today, that bat could bring more than a million dollars. The key is understand-

WHAT'S IT WORTH?

Take your found treasures to Mississippi Roadshow at Trotter Convention Center April 21 beginning at 10 a.m. A \$100 ticket covers entry, food and a single appraisal.

ing what makes old sports collectibles valuable. To help, Crisafulli is sharing some tips:

Older is usually pricier

Cards from the 1960s and earlier are collectible, and those from before the 1940s can be worth a lot of money, especially those depicting stars. Do you have cards of Hall of Famers, such as Mickey Mantle, Babe Ruth, Honus Wagner or Ty Cobb? Even non-stars from the early days of a sport can be worth big bucks, especially if the cards have no creases and retain sharp corners and original gloss.

If you have very old cards from the 1880s through the 1930s, look for tobacco, gum and candy brands, such as Old Judge, Piedmont, Sweet Caporal, Goudey or American Caramel.

If you want to sell sports items for the most money, consider a specialty auction, such as Love of the Game, which has the expertise to properly research sports ephemera and maintains bidder lists of collectors specializing in sports. More information is available at loveofthegameauctions.com.

Postcards and photographs

We all have keepsakes of vacation destinations,



StatePoint Media image

Sports memorabilia and other collectibles can worth lots of money.

but most aren't valuable. However, photographs and postcards depicting sports stars and ballparks can be significant. Look for early “real photo” postcards from the 1900s through the 1940s, which are photographs printed on postcard backs.

As with sports cards, star power matters, so preserve those Babe Ruths as opposed to images of your great grandma's baby cousin once-removed. And when it comes to photos, look for old markings on the back, such as photographer, publication and date stamps.

Memorabilia

Set aside old advertising posters depicting sports stars and food, tobacco or sporting goods brands. Ads from magazines aren't valuable, but those used as

store displays and for other marketing purposes can be pricey. Tin signs from the 1960 and earlier can be highly prized, but reproductions aren't.

Your family's sporting goods, such as balls, gloves and bats, can be valuable. Pre-1950s uniforms and catcher's masks, helmets and other equipment are highly collected, especially when endorsed by star players. Top condition brings the highest prices, but even used equipment can be valuable.

“The golden rule is the older the sports card or item, the more valuable it usually is. Pre-1975 pieces start to get interesting and are worth researching,” says Crisafulli.

Don't just clean out your “junk” this spring, examine it closely to potentially maximize its value.

How to be a nurturing plant parent in 3 easy steps

STATEPOINT MEDIA

Plants add color, life and vibrancy to your home's indoor and outdoor spaces and can even improve indoor air quality. However, if you are new to plant ownership, you may be wondering how to make your foliage thrive. Here's are three tips for healthier plants:

1. Make a move: Many plants that do well outdoors in the warmer months can't tolerate the cold. So don't wait for subfreezing temperatures to bring planters indoors for the season. Be sure to give your newly-transported plants the right amount of light. This may require using special grow lights. Keep in mind though that different types of plants thrive better with different color spectrums and intensities, so group plants under the right lights accordingly. If your indoor air is dry in winter, you may find that misting the leaves of your warm climate and tropical plants will help provide needed humidity.

2. Prevent pests: Unfortunately, keeping houseplants often attracts insects that can harm them and bug you. But there are steps you can take to prevent a pest problem in your home. One important thing you can do is to be sure you are not overwatering plants. Too much water in effect drowns plants. It can also create standing water that becomes a breeding ground for flying insects. You can also provide round-the-clock protection from fruit flies, gnats and flies by plugging a Zevo Flying Insect Trap into a regular outlet near your plants and wherever flying insects enter your home or gather. Rather than chemical insecticides, the traps use multi-spectrum light technology to attract flying bugs into a discreet glue sheet cartridge. When the cartridge is full, replace it and toss the used one without ever having to touch a dead bug. To learn more, visit zevoinsect.com.

3. Know your lifestyle and limitations: There are many plant species that while beautiful, don't require much care. So, if you're new to owning plants, consider starting out with lower-maintenance options, such as succulents or snake plants. Because these plants don't need much water, they are also great options for those who travel frequently or those who are simply forgetful. Have furry friends? Always check whether a given plant is toxic to pets before bringing one home.

Having a green thumb can seem like magic. However, with the right tools and knowledge, anyone can become a nurturing plant parent.

Spring clean your home office with these easy tips

STATEPOINT MEDIA

In the pursuit of work-life balance, you may mentally compartmentalize your home office from the rest of the house. But that doesn't mean this space should get a pass where spring cleaning is concerned. Here are three easy ways to spruce up your workspace this season:

1. **File:** Make time to finally tackle that growing stack of paperwork. Decide what needs to be filed away, what needs to be shredded, and what can simply be recycled. (This would be a good time to manage those digital files as well.) If you don't already have a dedicated filing system, put one in place to keep things organized moving forward. Short on floor space? Use a wall-mounted paper organizer instead of a traditional filing cabinet.

2. **Dust:** Improve indoor air quality for healthier, happier working hours. Periodically dust your desk, your computer and monitor, the baseboards, lamps and the tops of ceiling fans. Vacuum the carpet and rugs and sweep the floor. Also, consider using an air purifier to reduce dust, allergens and other air pollutants. If you're not sensitive to pollen, invite a fresh breeze by cracking open a window on warmer days.

3. **Disinfect:** After a rough cold and flu season, it's a good idea to reset your workspace by disinfecting the items you touch most frequently, such as doorknobs, cabinet handles, light switches, your keyboard, your mouse, landline receivers and handheld devices. This is especially important to add to your checklist if your home office is visited by clients or colleagues.

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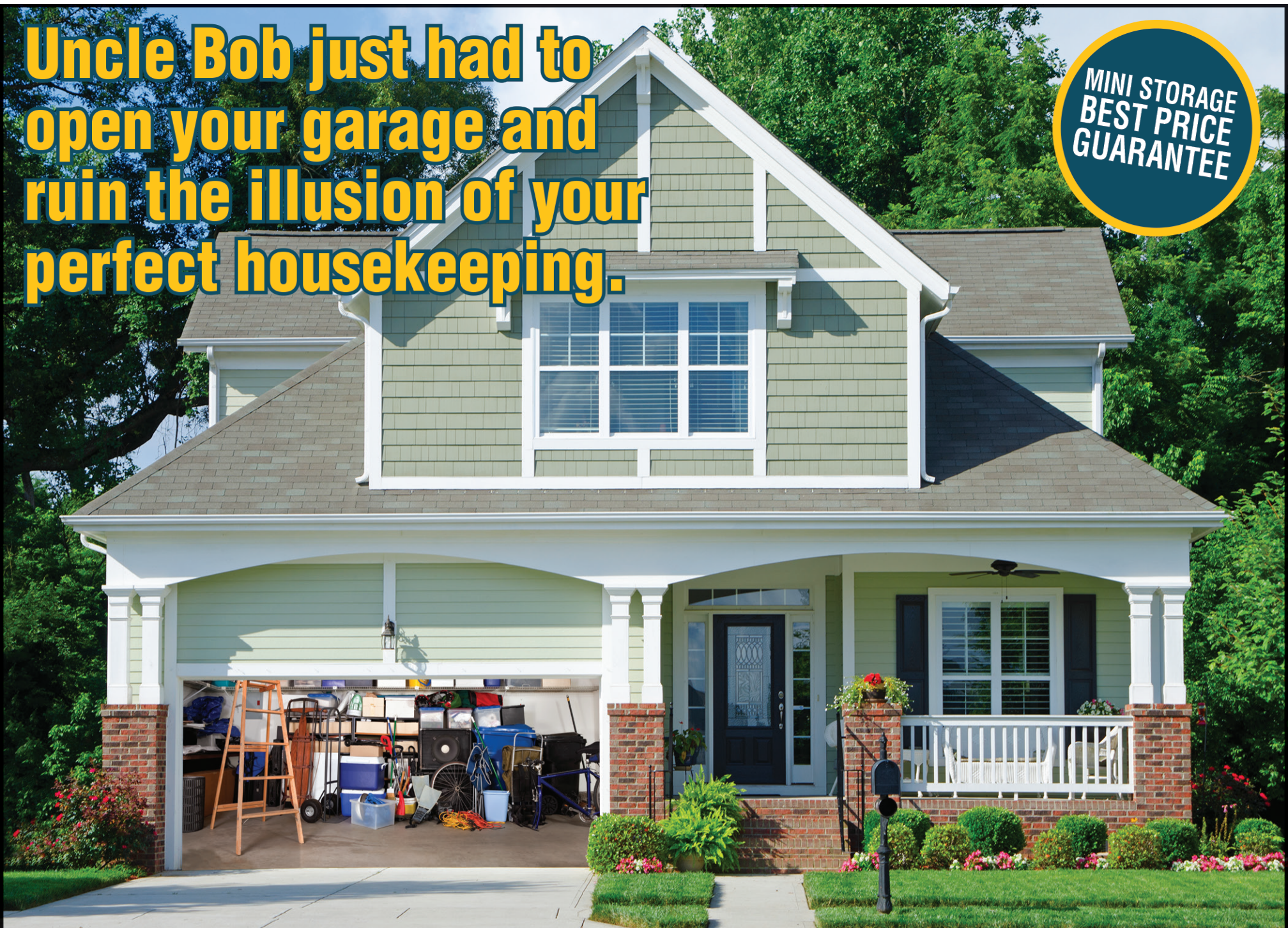
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