



Love your landscape: 6 hottest trends



As the days grow longer and warmer and retailers open garden centers and roll out patio displays, it's that time of year when homeowners, and even renters, start planning, plotting and planting.

The hottest landscape design trends this spring reflect the desire to bring the indoors out — to create

comfortable landscapes that are both functional and beautiful — and find ways to connect with nature.

Outdoor rooms and fully customized living spaces top the trend list, according to the National Association of Landscape Professionals (NALP). But there's also renewed interest in sustainable landscapes that support the environment and natural ecosystems, says Missy Henriksen, vice president of public affairs for NALP.

1 FULLY CUSTOMIZED OUTDOOR LIVING SPACES

Backyard entertaining used to revolve around a deck, patio or pool, but today's landscapes have become extensions of interior spaces, complete with furniture, appliances and romantic canopy bedrooms. Comfortable living and dining rooms with weatherproof furnishings, built-in bars, brick ovens and fireplaces, even outdoor movie theaters, are transforming the way people enjoy the outdoors.

Themed spaces also are on the rise, and a hot trend is to decorate with whimsical and personalized pieces, anything from a child's tricycle to old fishing gear to English country or French bistro accents, to reflect various interests and life stages, Henriksen says.

"One of the key things that we're seeing is people really wanting to enjoy their outdoor living environment," she says. "But they want things that will make their outdoor area unique, that personalization that's different than their neighbors."

2 LIGHTED AND HIGH-TECH LANDSCAPES

Installing solar-powered lighting or energy-efficient LED lights is another way landscapes are going green. LED lighting has made it much more feasible to



Take advantage of the next sunny day and start raking.

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add creative and functional light displays in gardens and along walkways. Backyard Wi-Fi, TV and audio systems, which can be monitored and controlled via technology, are other ways outdoor landscapes are going high-tech.

"You can control landscape lighting via your iPad and create different moods," says David Marciniak, owner/lead designer of Revolutionary Gardens in Culpeper, Va. "LED has given a lot more flexibility to lighting because you're only pulling 2 or 3 watts per fixture."

3 ECO-FRIENDLY AND NATIVE GARDENS

Native plants help attract birds, insects and wildlife, but they also help manage rainwater runoff, stop the spread of invasive species and support the larger ecosystem. Natuescaping encourages the use of perennial native plants and grasses to design environmentally conscious landscapes.

"I've been floored in the amount of interest I've had in that in the last two years," Marciniak says. "I am seeing so much interest in native plantings and everything that goes along with that, trying to be true to the site and the area along with trying to be true to pollinators and the birds."

One thing that has helped is an increase in the number of suppliers for native plants in his area, Marciniak says, and some parts of the country offer rebates and other incentives to plant native species to help with stormwater management.

4 EDIBLE LANDSCAPES

Pots of fresh herbs, lettuce and other easy-to-grow fruits and vegetables add texture and color variety to outdoor landscapes. Along with being more environmentally conscious, people also want to know where their food comes from and, in many cases, have taken up growing their own. Container gardens and portable living wall planter systems, which take up less space and require less care, make it easier for those with space and time constraints and provide a supply of fresh ingredients right out the back door.

"It's a way for people to enjoy their outdoor space and that connection to nature and herbs taste a little fresher and better when you've had the satisfaction of actually growing them," Henriksen says. "It doesn't matter the size of your outdoor space. You can create beautiful and functional container gardens on a patio or balcony."

5 FRESHWATER FEATURES

Along with attracting wildlife, freshwater features like ponds, fountains and waterfalls create a soothing environment to relax and escape or drown out noise from neighbors. Birds and other critters appreciate freshwater sources, but they also are necessary to manage or recycle stormwater. Thoughtful inclusion of rain barrels, rain gardens and stone retaining walls add visual variety and dimension to lush landscapes, while serving to collect, clean or stop water. In fact, water and other non-plant features, including sculptures or pottery, are becoming focal points in landscapes, according to NALP.

6 SOOTHING HUES

The color of flowers, furniture and accessories will complement the colors found in nature and help create a soothing, outdoor oasis this year. For the first time, Pantone, the authority on color, has announced the blending of two colors — Rose Quartz and Serenity — as its Pantone Color of the Year. These soft, nature-inspired pink and blue hues will bloom in gardens this year as heritage rose bushes, Catherine Woodbury daylilies, Angelique tulips, blue lace delphinium, French hydrangea and others, Henriksen says.

Whether you are starting from scratch or want to redo a mature landscape, have a large backyard or a small patio or deck, the good news is beautifying your outdoor space is within reach regardless of budget. There is a wide selection of outdoor furniture and plants at a variety of price points, Marciniak says.

"What I'm finding more and more is people are looking for a great space and asking 'How can we use this in the most effective way?'" he says. "It's exciting and there's some really, really cool stuff happening and getting people excited to go outside. All of a sudden you have these beautiful outdoor spaces at a variety of price points and income levels."

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Get ready!

Gardens need post-winter prep

Metro Creative Connection

Lawns and gardens can bear the brunt of winter weather and are often in need of tender loving care by the time spring arrives. Preparing a garden for spring and summer involves assessing any damage that harsh weather might have caused. As temperatures climb, gardeners can heed the following post-winter garden preparation tips in an effort to ensure some successful gardening in the months ahead.

• **Assess the damage.**

Even if winter was mild, gardens might still have suffered some damage. Inspect garden beds and any fencing or barriers designed to keep wildlife from getting into the garden. Before planting anew, fix any damage that Mother Nature or local wildlife might have caused during the past several months.

• **Clear debris.**

Garden beds and surrounding landscapes that survived winter without being damaged might still be littered with debris. Remove fallen leaves, branches and even litter that blew about on windy winter days before planting season. Make sure to discard any debris effectively so it does not find its way back into

the garden.

• **Turn the greenhouse into a clean house.**

Spring cleaning is not just for the interior of a home. Cleaning a greenhouse in advance of spring can help gardeners evict any overwintering pests that can threaten plant life once spring gardening season arrives. A thorough cleaning, which should include cleaning the inside of greenhouse glass and washing flower pots and plant trays, also can prevent plant diseases from surviving into spring.

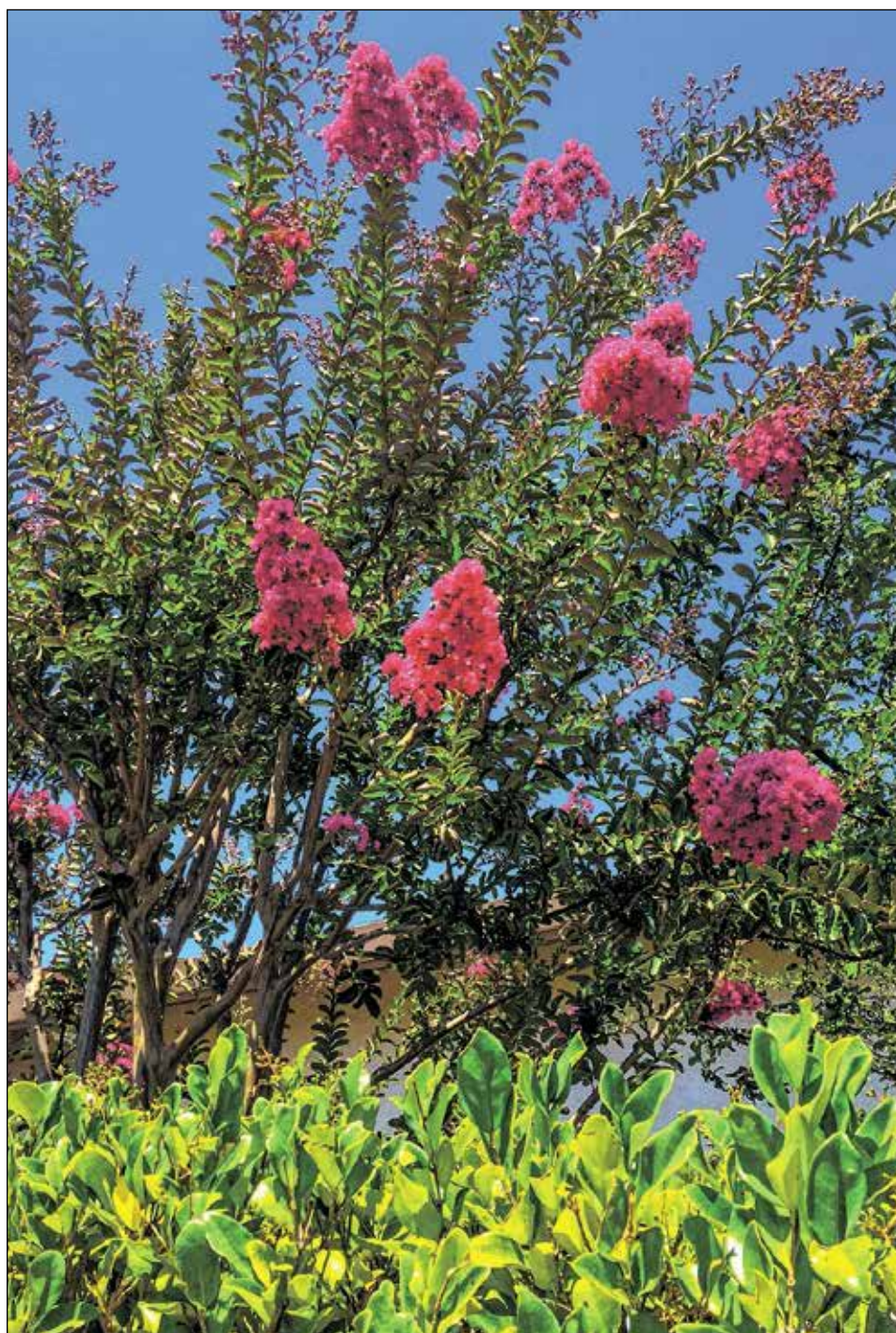
• **Check for pests.**

Speak with a local gardening professional to determine if there are any local pests to look out for and how to recognize and remove these pests from gardens. Pests may hibernate

in the soil during the winter, and such unwelcome visitors can make it difficult for gardens to thrive come spring and summer.

• **Assess plant location.**

If plants, flowers or gardens have struggled in recent years or never grew especially vibrant, then gardeners may want to assess the location of their plant life before spring gardening season begins. Some plants may not be getting enough sunlight in certain locations on a property, while others might be overexposed to the sun during spring and summer. Moving plants that are not thriving prior to the start of spring gardening season may be just what gardens need to flourish in the coming weeks.



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Spring gardening season is right around the corner, so now is an ideal time to prepare gardens for the warmer seasons ahead.

Landscaping needs vary by season

Metro Creative Connection

Judging a home by its appearance is often par for the home-buying course. In fact, according to the National Association of Realtors, 49 percent of buying decisions are made from the street.

An appealing home exterior suggests the homeowner takes pride in his or her home and wants to make every effort to maintain that home. Curb appeal involves various components a home's exterior, but beautiful landscaping can make a home stand out. While maintaining a lawn is something many homeowners may think is exclusive to spring and summer, lawn maintenance is really a year-round endeavor. The following steps can help anyone maintain curb appeal no matter the season.



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Maintaining a landscape through the seasons makes a home attractive all year long.

Spring

Spring is a season of renewal when plants and trees will begin to look fresh and green once more. Spring maintenance includes applying fertilizer to lawns, replenishing mulch in planting beds,

creating more pronounced edges around the lawn and garden beds, and testing soil. Some homeowners like to apply a weed-prevention product in the spring as well. Spring is a good time to plant annuals that will add a pop of color to the landscape. For those

concerned about permanent planting, container gardening allows homeowners to move around planters in a configuration that works best for them.

Summer

Summer landscaping is all about maintaining what

was established in the spring. Regular mowing, weeding and trimming can keep a landscape manicured. Other than drought, weeds are perhaps the biggest lawn and garden nuisance to a landscape in the summertime. Black medic, carpetweed, knotweed, mallow and prostate spurge are some of the weeds that will crop up during the summer. Seeds begin to germinate as soil warms up. According to the University of Maryland Extension, control with a broadleaf postemergent herbicide applied when the weed is actively growing will help prevent weeds from suffocating lawns.

Autumn

Autumn is often a forgotten season when it comes to maintaining a landscape. However, fall is a key time to keep landscapes in order. According to the landscaping resource LoveYourLandscape.com, fall is the ideal time to tend to a lawn that just endured summer heat.

Seeding and fertilizing can ensure a stronger lawn come next spring. Perennials should be pruned and cut back. Raking leaves will help keep the property looking presentable.

Winter

One of the ways to maintain an attractive landscape throughout winter is to install plants that can survive the colder temperatures. Winterberry is a cousin of holly, but loses its leaves in the fall. The bright red berries can be a stark contrast to the white of winter snowfall. Camellia is an evergreen that blooms from fall to early spring and looks like pink roses. Heather is a popular plant in the United Kingdom, but is growing in popularity on this side of the Atlantic as well. The Home Depot says this plant blooms all year and offers beautiful flowers in summer and fall. In winter, the thick foliage makes for an appealing contrast to the more delicate blooms of other winter plants.

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Design a garden for all senses

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Gardens add visual appeal to a yard, but gardens also can appeal to individuals' senses of smell, taste, touch and sound. Gardeners who want to create gardens that appeal to various senses can do so in the following ways.

Sight

Aesthetic appeal is one of the most sought-after benefits of gardening. However, many homeowners put in so much effort planting for one particular season that they may not give thought to ensuring the garden looks vibrant no matter the time of year.

Gardeners can research planting zones to find plants that will blossom at different times of the year so they can enjoy impressive, aesthetically appealing gardens year-round. Spring bulbs can bloom early on, while annual and perennial summer favorites will thrive under the summer sun. Beautyberry and caryopteris will fill out in the autumn, while holly or mahonia can look lovely in the winter.

Smell

Gardeners can dot their landscapes with aromatic trees, shrubs and flowers

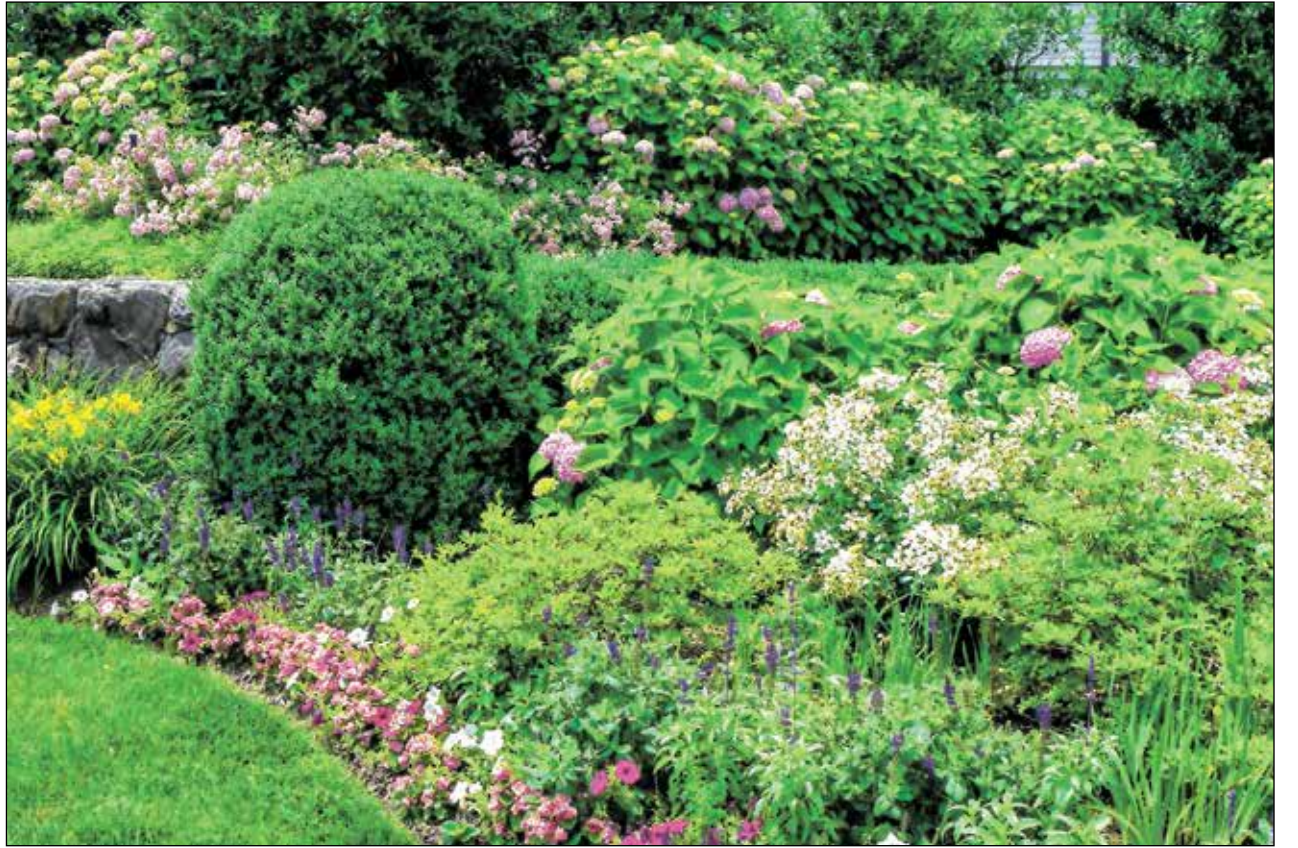
that will make stepping out into the garden that much more special. Some of the more fragrant plants include gardenia, dianthus, calendula, lavender and jasmine. Shrubs such as fragrant pineapple broom, Anne Russell viburnum and Christmas box can add fragrance as well.

Touch

Apart from including trees and shrubs of various textures in the garden, look for other ways to stimulate a tactile response. Water features add relaxing sound and beauty. Stones, moss, mulch and other accents have varied textures that can stimulate the sense of touch in various ways. Don't forget to include a sitting area so that you can immerse yourself fully in the garden.

Taste

Gardeners can expand their gardens to include



Photos / Metro Creative Graphics

Go beyond visual appeal when designing a garden. When gardeners tap into all five senses, they can enjoy their landscapes even more than they already do.

fruit-bearing trees and rows of vegetables. Produce can be harvested from early spring through late fall depending on the crops planted.

Sound

The lively sounds of the garden are created by the wildlife that come to

pollinate and enjoy the environment gardeners have created. By choosing indigenous plants, gardeners can be sure that insects and small critters will seek refuge within the foliage.

Songbirds also will add character to a yard. The Audubon Society suggests including a water source and a songbird border of shrubs along your property's edge. Provide food sources and make sure

they are located a fair distance from the main action of the yard so as not to scare off birds. Wait for musical chickadees, goldfinches, orioles and cardinals to arrive and enjoy the accommodations.



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Flower and Garden Show blooms with beautiful plans

By Jonathan Turner
jturner@qconline.com

It feels like spring has sprung for several weeks already, but when the season has officially bloomed, you can check out ideas to beautify your oasis at the **2017 Flower & Garden Show, March 24-26, at the QCCA Expo Center, 2621 4th Ave., Rock Island.**

The wide variety of vendors — 190 are planned — includes businesses specializing in landscaping, gardens, flowers, trees, lawn furniture, stone paving, decks, fruit and vegetable growing, siding and windows, fences, cookware and kitchens and more.

Among the exhibitors (descriptions according to their website or social media) will be:

• **Aunt Rhodie's Landscaping and Design Studio, 2012 E. 11th St., Davenport:** Located in the Village of East Davenport, Aunt Rhodie's "specializes in unusual and hard to find plants and offers the best products available in the market. By incorporating your ideas into a comprehensive design, we can create a concept that will develop a unique and original vision for your landscape."

• **Meyer Landscape and Design, 2817 47th St., Moline:** "Growing our plants at our growing division in Taylor Ridge, Illinois, is one way we can provide the healthy plant material to you. We also maintain a knowledgeable staff



Hundreds came out to see the 2016 Flower & Garden Show at the QCCA Expo Center in Rock Island.

of designers, horticulturists, installation crews, irrigation designers and lighting specialists to assist you with your gardening and landscape questions."

• **Quint City Stone Center, 7551 Northwest Blvd., Davenport:** It offers one of the largest selections of landscaping and building materials and accessories in the Midwest. "We stock hundreds of varieties of landscaping stone, natural stone-edging and wall stone, concrete-block retaining-wall systems, and many styles of concrete pavers and patio blocks. We also offer a large selection of decorative rock and mulch."

• **Quad City Lawn and Landscape, 942 N. Marquette St., Davenport:** Its services include lawn care and maintenance, tree and bush trimming and maintenance, mulching and decorative rock, stump grinding, irrigation systems, weed control, fertilization, outdoor pest removal, retaining walls and patios.

• **C & J Landscaping, 11507 U.S. Highway 150, Orion:** It provides a wide range of landscaping solutions, from lawn care to hardscape services. They include chemical treatments, computer generated landscape design, decorative rock, hauling, lawn care, mulch

installation, patio construction, pond and retaining wall installation, seasonal cleanup, seeding, sodding, waterfall and snow removal.

• **Countryman Landscape & Hardscape, 400 19th Ave., East Moline:** It specializes in patios, retaining walls, and landscape lighting, with designs such as water features and fireplaces that are integrated into landscape and hardscape projects. Services and products include excavating, drainage solutions, patios, walkways, retaining walls, plant enclosures and decorative walls.

Show director Rob Junker tries to include environmentally friendly vendors and products, and differ-

ent speakers each year. The show always has popular water features, including waterfalls.

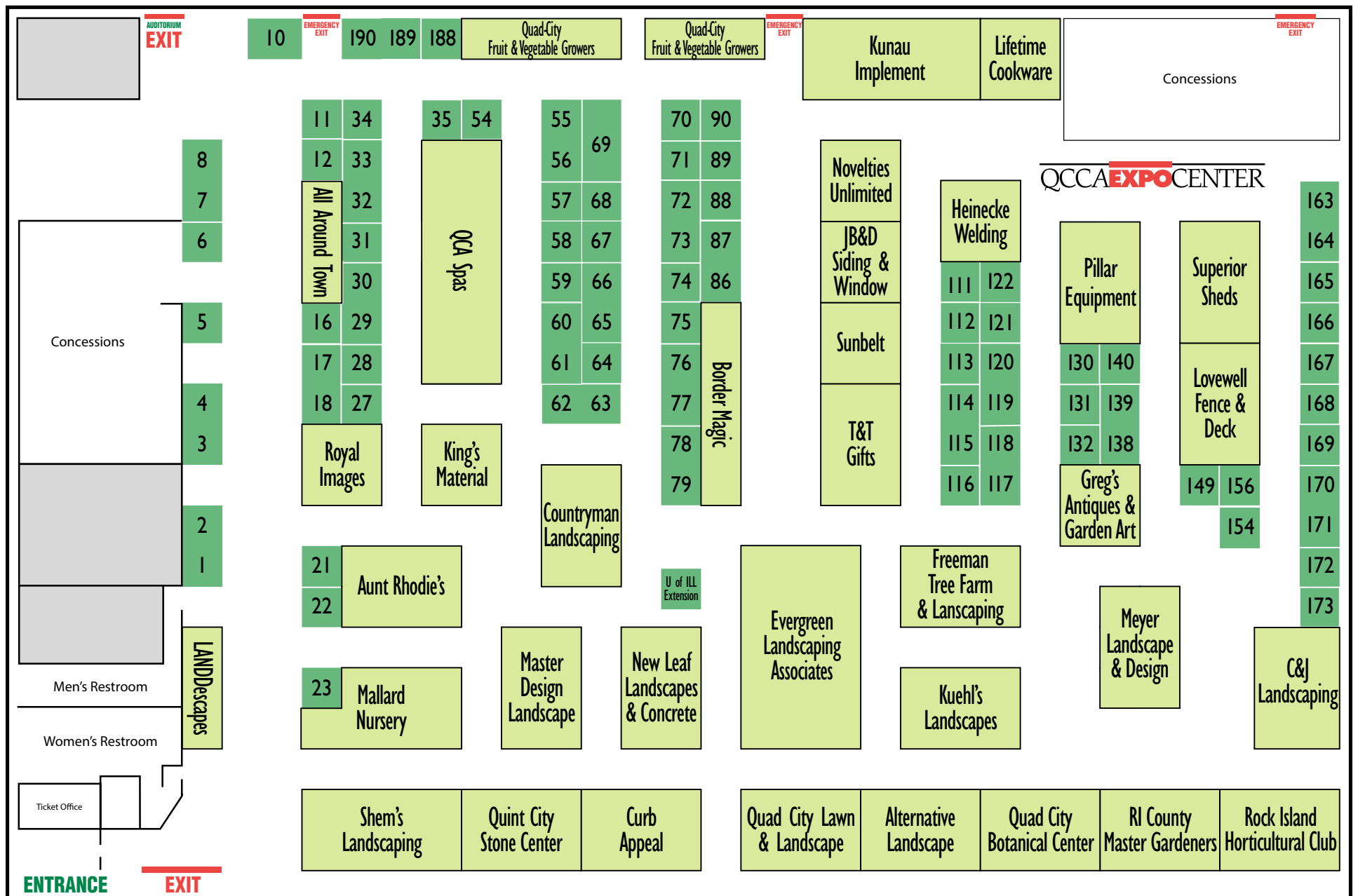
Scheduled speakers will include:

• **University of Illinois Extension Master Gardener Alice Maslanka (11 a.m. each day):** She'll talk about how to make a shady garden respite, covering both the art and science of gardening in the shade. She'll discuss how to grow and tend a variety of plant options beyond the usual hosta and fern.

• **University of Illinois Extension Horticulture Educator Martha Smith (12:30 p.m. Friday and 2 p.m. Sunday):** This lesson will walk you through the design process step-by-step, to keep a garden flowering and visually interesting from spring through fall, with a few winter accents as well.

The show also will feature wood-carving demonstrations each afternoon. Hours are 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. Friday and Saturday, and 10 to 4 p.m. Sunday. Admission is \$8 for adults, \$1 for children 6-15, and free to kids younger than 6. Senior (age 65 and older) day is Friday, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., with admission of \$6.

Show proceeds will go to the Quad City Conservation Alliance, which is comprised of five local conservation clubs that together own the Expo Center. The non-profit group gives out \$35,000 to \$50,000 in grants annually.



Enjoy the show!

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