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# In this issue...

#### **By Laura Walter** Editor

Welcome, friends, to Coastal Home & Garden.

Since the COVID-19 pandemic hit the U.S., some people have spent more time in the house than ever. Others have been working harder than ever to keep public services going, so home becomes an important sanctuary. Everyone deserves a safe place that they enjoy, and in this issue, we introduce you to some people who have put much love into their homes — and gotten much love in return.

In this issue, we talk about finding your space, making it welcoming and making it your own, from paint and throw pillows to the memories made there.

For those looking to sell a house, we ask the experts how to put your best foot forward and gain some insight to Sussex County's real estate market. We also dig into the details, from deep cleaning to coastal storm protections.

So, wherever you call home, make it your own!

4	Looking at Sussex County Residential Real Estate	35	Storm Preparation
6	Making Your Home a Sanctuary	38	Staging the Home
14	Chandler House, Frankford	40	Plants in the House
20	Strategies for Cleaning and Refreshing Your Home	46	Hurley House, Frankford
21	Redecorating feat. J. Conn Scott	51	5 Must-Do Home Improvements
26	Barn House, South Bethany	52	6 Ways to Reduce Single-Use Plastics

On the cover:

Autumn flowers and gourds allow households to keep decorating with natural elements, well into the cold season. 

Stock photo



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# Sussex County residential real estate is doing 'crazy' well

#### **By Laura Walter** Editor

People have been looking closely at their surroundings lately — either stuck at home because of COVID-19 restrictions and precautions, or realizing that teleconferencing can be done anywhere. Although the coronavirus pandemic hit many industries hard, Sussex County's residential real estate market is doing excellently.

"We had a sharp decline in April when there was so much uncertainty with COVID, but ... we found that our home sales have increased," said Patricia Anderson, CEO of the Sussex County Association of Realtors (SCAOR) trade association.

"People are moving out of the larger

areas into the smaller states," Anderson said. "Those living in the city are looking for more home space because they have more home offices."

With so many adults telecommuting and students doing remote learning, "They are looking for homes where everyone can be at home working, but not on top of each other."

The irony is that "They're coming to a place that's relatively spread out, but now it's not going to be. They're leaving a crowded place to create a crowded place," Anderson mused.

"In Sussex County, our new-home construction is just crazy," she said, and up by 25 percent from last year, and housing developments that were in the permitting pipeline are still building.

However, there are fewer existing

homes coming onto the market for resale. For instance, folks near retirement age are wanting to hold onto their extra bedrooms/office space, and because resale inventory is so small, potential sellers who would still downsize are afraid they won't find a new place to move into. Plus, they may be telecommuting now, too.

Resort area real estate statistics can be skewed because some vacation houses are listed for rent and sale at the same time.

"Our existing home inventory became smaller because a lot of those homes came off the sale market, [though] they did rent them for the season," Anderson said. "But we found that a lot of those

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Before

# Where is your sanctuary?

By Susan Lyons Publisher

Nearly everyone has that special place at their home where they can get away from everything and relax.

This year, more than ever, that has been something people need. It may be your kitchen, your sewing room, your garage, your workshop or even the bathroom. A place for a hot soak with a glass of wine. It could be out in your kayak in the middle of the bay all by yourself, knitting a sweater, painting a picture or sitting in a duck blind as the sun just starts peeking over the horizon. But we all have that one special place where we can escape. You could call it a sanctuary. For me, our backyard is my sanctuary. As a Facebook friend so aptly commented on my photo of my husband, Andy, and our dogs walking through the backyard, "It is a place of peace."

It's not a big backyard. In fact, it really is pretty small. But as petite as it is, I seem have a hard time keeping up with it, as there are always several half-done projects or wannabe projects in various stages of completion laying around the yard and deck.

A mild winter got me outside early this year for clean-up, and cancelation of everything in the spring, even softball (Can you even fathom the Lyons family not being at a softball game?), and staying-

Please turn to page 10

Coastal Home & Garden



folks are investment owners or secondhome owners, and they decided they were going to retain that home. So, our resale inventory became a lot smaller.

"It's just been a crazy market," she said. And compared to the skyrocketing prices for the early 2000s, prices are now rising steadily, but more fairly.

"Listing prices seem to be very fair in keeping with the market ... We're seeing that through the multiple offers, some homes are selling for a percentage above the list price. It's not like what we saw in 2008, where there was an over-inflation of value," Anderson said. "This is just the art of the negotiation. The value is comparable. They're not over-valuing the properties — in this area, at least."

With so much shopping available online, data is everywhere.

"Our buyers are becoming a lot more sophisticated and have a lot more information available than before. Everything's available to you at the stroke of a few keys," although buyers have to be careful about evaluating the source and correctly interpreting information. 'Our buyers are becoming a lot more sophisticated and have a lot more information available than before. Everything's available to you at the stroke of a few keys.'

-Patricia Anderson, CEO of SCAOR



"They're making their decisions a lot more on the analytics."

So, naturally home buyers are looking at the number of bedrooms and square footage. But internet access has become such an important factor that the regional Bright MLS system is updating its system to include broadband as a data point.

"People are really wondering what technology infrastructure exists," especially internet speeds and availability. "This is a need. You have put families in a situation where kids are now doing schoolwork at home, and yet they have dial-up."

Public safety has also become an increasingly popular search criterion, Anderson said.

In Anderson's own neighborhood, she said, she's seen three homes sell in the past seven months to semi-retired families who amended their search to a larger home.

"It was the first time they looked at crime rates. They had not looked at it before, and it was the deciding factor for our county. ... They specifically chose this area because," she said, of its nonproximity to major cities.

Civil unrest may have been on people's minds, especially last spring. Greg Goldman, a branch vice president at Coldwell Banker Residential Brokerage in Ocean View, got a call from a Los Angeles man whose parents live on the Delmarva Peninsula.

"He said, 'I've been locked up in my [several-thousand-dollars]-a-month studio apartment in L.A., and I'm outside of the grocery store downstairs, which was just destroyed by the riots, and I'm done," Goldman recounted the man saying.

But Sussex County has always been a popular destination, and the market had been heating up in general. And regardless of the reason, they're coming.

"It's clear across the county. This trend is being seen by everybody. Before, you used to see the disparity between [coastal] east Sussex and west Sussex," Anderson said. "My hope is that we will see probably a boom on the western side. I don't know that for a fact, but looking at the numbers and inventory and all that, I'm hoping that the interest will spread over to the western side [and] take pressure off of eastern Sussex."

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home more had me actually accomplishing a few major projects and again many other projects in various stages of completion. And yes, I do have ADD.

I have a feeling that maybe you all did the same. Every project that you have been putting off for the last several years has been done this year. Everyone is remodeling, painting, cleaning out closets. Bread has been baked, masks have been sewed, puzzles have been completed, garages and attics have been rearranged, and old photos have been sorted.

Through this entire pandemic, I have spent all day inside an office with just a third of our staff working in-house, and it has not been easy. So when I come home, it is all about sunshine, birds singing and flowers blooming dogs trying to catch bumblebees, listening to blues or jazz while drinking a cup of tea or a glass of wine. It is a place to think, a place to just zone out and a place to pray.

Over the years, the yard has changed as trees have grown and provided more shade. Plants have been moved or new ones added, while some have died. Shabby-chic yard art has been placed throughout, culled from numerous yard sales and antiques shops.

Each year, I try new color schemes and different plants to see what works best in certain spots. In Carole King's words from "Tapestry," "It is the ever-changing vision of the ever-changing view." No two years are alike, as plants are moved, pots are added and this woman keeps digging in the dirt. There is a creative outlet in doing yardwork where the yard and deck are my canvas, with artistic license to do whatever I want. It re-

lieves the stress of the day by doing physical work. It is a place to entertain, and to eat, a place to relax at the firepit or watch the grandkids play in the fairy garden or the playhouse, and to watch the dogs chase each other, running free, since it is also fenced in.

For some reason, the moonflowers have been phenomenal this summer, with eight to 10 blooms a day. For anyone not familiar with moonflowers, they are large white flowers about 6 inches wide that grow on a vine. They don't bloom until early evening, and sometimes you can literally sit there and watch a bloom open over a 20-minute timeframe. At first light, I go out to see how many opened over the entire evening, and sit and admire their delicate petals with my

morning coffee.

This last six months have had me thinking a lot about what is really important in my life. I have slowed down considerably, enjoyed spending time with family and close friends, and worked to make myself a better person.

Find your sanctuary if you have not already, or your place of peace — whether it is a place or a hobby — the one thing that puts you in your happy place. Life is stressful for everyone thoughout the entire country right now, and the entire world, for that matter, and I don't see that changing anytime soon. We all just need to stop for a moment and smell the roses.



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# New stewards of Chandler House add their flair

#### By Kerin Magill Staff Reporter

Susan Lee and Kyle Quillen bought their home in Frankford in July 2019 with the full knowledge that they aren't the only "owners."

Their new home is known as the Captain Ebe Chandler House, a stately Victorian on Main Street in Frankford, and as Quillen put it, "It's not just our house — it's Frankford's house."

The house was built in 1873 by Captain Joshua Townsend. Another ship captain, Ebe (pronounced "Ebb") Chandler, later bought it, and members of that family lived there for five generations.

A portrait of Chandler is painted on the house itself, on a wall just inside the front door — a fairly recent addition to the house.

Quillen, and Lee had been looking for an "old house" for a while when a Google search turned up the Chandler House, he said.

Since moving in, the couple has begun to tackle projects based on what "needs" to be done first. Take the foundation, for example. The pre-settlement home inspection, Lee said, worked out to be a pretty good "to-do" list for the homebuyers.

"It really is," Quillen agreed.

At the top of that list was shoring up the foundation piers.

"Some of the brick ones were just turning to dust," Quillen said.

"To me, managing the underneath of the house, with the moisture and all that, for this age of a house, that was like, 'We've got to get this under control," Quillen said. "It's the stuff you never see; that's the stuff that's going to make this house last another 50 to 100 years."

He said he marvels at what he has discovered about the house as he has explored it. As an example, he mentioned the home's 6-inch square support beams, some of which "still have bark on them." Many, if not all, of those beams probably came from trees on the very land on which the house was built, Quillen said.

While the "encapsulation" process to protect the foundation wasn't a lot of fun, Lee said she is happy that "we're getting to the fun part" which for her means decorating the inside of the house.

Please turn to page 17





CH &G

# "lt's not just our house — it's Frankford's house."

The historic Capt. Ebe Chandler House in Franford, DE ■ Photo by Tyler Valliant

Susan Lee and Kyle Quillen



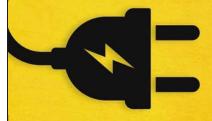




Owners feel pride and responsibility to preserve classic elemts of the Chandler House Photos by Tyler Valliant

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At the time we interviewed the couple in late September, they were awaiting one of the first major décor purchases — ornate drapes to grace the windows in the front of the house.

The most recent focus has been on restoring the roofs of the gazebos on either side of the expansive front porch.

Bayside Exteriors was chosen to do the work, Quillen said, because of their experience with replacing cedar roofing shingles on older homes in Lewes and Rehoboth Beach. The octagonal shape of the gazebo roofs make replacing the shingles even more challenging than a basic roof, because the angles, and the diamond shape of the shingles, mean they have to be hand-cut.

The porch itself was added to the house in 1911 — when Chandler had the 5,200square-foot house moved back from its original site, which was right at the edge of the road. The original position can be seen in a photo of the house apparently taken before the move, which shows a horse and buggy right up next to the front of the house.

The finials on the gazebos — a feature that was brought to the new owners' attention

through more old photos of the house — have also been restored to their former shine.

"I thought they came out pretty good," Quillen said of the exterior ornaments.

"What's interesting — the longer we've lived here," Quillen said, "we start finding out stuff about the house," such as, evidently, the dining room was originally in a different spot, as was the front door. "At one point, this was a duplex," Quillen said, so another door was added and some rooms were reconfigured.

Some discoveries are more mysterious, such as a window in the upper levels of the three-story house that doesn't seem to open into an actual room. Quillen said he hopes to explore it further, but he'll have to figure out a way to do it that doesn't involve climbing through a very small opening.

"I'm a fairly big guy," he said. "I don't really want to get stuck."

Other aspects of the renovation have fallen into their hands — but not easily. They recalled a trip to a local architectural salvage business.

"We pulled up to it, and Kyle said, 'Hey, that looks like the piece that's missing from our house," Lee said.

Indeed, the owner told them that the trim

piece had come "off a roof down in Frankford," she said. "So we had to buy back part of our own house," Quillen said.

The Chandler House property also includes three outbuildings — including one that still houses the home's original boiler (no longer in use) and one that was apparently an outhouse.

At some point — likely at least five years down the road — the couple hopes to open the house as a bed-and-breakfast. While it had been a bed-and-breakfast for a while under former ownership, it hasn't been for years.

"We get people stopping and asking if it's still a bed-and-breakfast," Quillen said, before chuckling and admitting that he's been tempted to say, "Sure, come on in; we'll make some eggs."

The public's interest in the house and its renovation has been an aspect he said he didn't expect.

"When Kyle's out here working, he can barely get anything done with people stopping," Lee said, to which Quillen quickly added, "which is great, but — you're all sweaty, you don't look your best, it's like 90 degrees."

Please to turn page 18



Coastal Home & Garden

Quillen said he enjoys the renovation work, though.

"It's not terribly difficult; it's just having the time to do it."

But he did admit that old houses have their own challenges.

"You patch one crack and another one opens up. ... It's not a real renovation until you've given something a good, thorough cussing," he said.

For Lee, the house fulfills a lifelong dream. "I was a history major in college," she said.

"I've always wanted an old house; I just didn't think it was ever going to happen."

Both Lee and Quillen are quick to praise the care the house's prior owners, Robert and Marla Daisey, took of the historic property.

"Although I didn't know him from anyone when we bought the house, Robert and I have become good friends," Quillen said.

Marla Daisey, who died in 2016, left her touch on the home in many ways, and Quillen and Lee are keen to honor her in the process of their renovations. One way they plan to do so is to name the home's courtyard after her.

"Last year, Cheryl," Quillen said of Frankford town clerk Cheryl Lynch, "paid us the ultimate compliment. I had Christmas trees in each of the gazebos. She said, "That's exactly what [Marla] would have done. So that made us feel good."

Lee said, "Someone repeated to me that Marla would have loved that the house was full of life and pets and kids." Although their "kids" are grown and out of the house, the couple has said much of the family has let it be known they expect Christmas to be celebrated at their parents' new home.

"The kids call it 'The Pointy House," she said.

There are household traditions dating back to Chandler that Quillen and Lee said they plan to honor as well. They include one that is hinted at by a bottle of copper-colored liquid sitting in the home's parlor.

"Ebe Chandler drank peach brandy every day at 4 o'clock," she said.

When the Daiseys operated the house as a bed and breakfast, Lee said, she would leave peach brandy out at that time every afternoon for guests to enjoy.

Their hope, Quillen said, is to make the grand old house "period-correct. But I don't think we wanted it to be a house where you didn't feel like you could go into the rooms," Quillen said. "You want to make it so that it's not like a museum. You want to make it so it's inviting and people feel comfortable."



Susan Lee and Kyle Quillen ■ Photos by Tyler Valliant

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Please turn to page 24



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People putting their time, efforts into their homes

> By Susan Canfora Staff Reporter



Maybe it was spending more time at home, during warnings of the coronavirus, that gave families time to look around their homes and realize it was time to spruce up, maybe redecorate.

"It could be. But I know this — I have never been busier," said Richard Scott, president of three J. Conn Scott furniture stores in Selbyville and Rehoboth Beach, and the third generation of the family to be involved in running the businesses his grandfather,

J. Conn Scott, started in 1924.

"People are redoing houses. They are seeing what they have. They are saving money by not going on vacation or going out to dinner, and they are putting a lot of effort back into their homes. They might have decided they are going to stay in the home longer.



People can work from home. They have been doing that, so decks have become work areas. Porches are work areas. We've been working with customers to decorate, whether it's interior paint or redesigning a room.

"We go in with some furniture they picked out. The first thing we do is we use what they have, then bring in new things and change some of the placement of the furniture, whether it's on an angle or adding new pieces.

"It gives a personal touch. But it is their furniture. It is their house," Scott said.

Sometimes, when he and his wife, Lisa, arrive at a customer's home, they ask the family to leave for an hour or two.

"We place the new things with the old things, in a whole different way. A lot of it is accessories. That's what makes a home: accessories — the picture frames, cleaning up some books, changing lamps. That's been a big part of what's going on with homes," he explained.

The Scotts have also redesigned home offices.

"Some people use a tabletop instead of a desk now, because nobody needs drawers and files as much anymore. We might put a table behind a sofa so one of the workers can be part of the living environment without being locked away. The man can read the paper, the woman can be on the internet. We might float a sofa into the middle of the room then put a desk behind it," Scott said.

Areas aren't necessarily transformed into full offices for working at home, but often become family rooms that include work areas, to serve a double function, Scott said.

"We went into a couple houses this year, while people were staying at home during the coronavirus, and the owners said, 'We have five working people here in this house, and everybody needs a space,' so a lot of work areas are being created in bedrooms. It can be hard to find quiet space. We always ask the families what they need," he said.

Popular colors change every year. Currently, he said, the trend is softer and more soothing, with icy blues, warm creams and earth tones, as well as use of natural products. Raffia can be incorporated into headboards and benches. Bright colors are still being seen, as well as throw pillows, lamps and tabletop accessories Scott described as "elegant," including vases, bowls, candlesticks and glassware.

"Lamps and throw pillows can freshen up



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a house. Lamps are all different. There is no trend. Throw pillows are very colorful. We are taking expensive fabrics and covering pillows," he said.

About 90 percent of homes use area rugs instead of having wall-to-wall carpeting, and many are fashioned from pet-friendly material. Oriental rugs in soft colors are popular, said Scott.

The staff at J. Conn Scott have been providing clients with expert advice for many years but Scott said professional decorators aren't mandatory if someone wants to refresh a home.

"No, not at all," he said.

"They can do it on their own. Go look at your favorite magazines again. Look at what other people are doing. A house can become a home again just with freshening it up. Paint and wallpaper are the cheapest ways to do that," he said.

"You can spend up to tens of thousands of dollars, but there is no real average cost. It's up to the homeowner."



J. Conn Scott has locations in Selbyville & Rehoboth Beach. ■ photos submitted



With more of us spending time at home

over the last few months, you're probably noticing every bit of dust, pet hair and dirt accumulating on the floor, and in nooks and crannies. And it's harder than ever to keep up with regular cleaning while the whole family is together inside. What are the best ways to focus your cleaning efforts, and how can you tackle tidying tasks with everyone underfoot?

Here are some tools and tips to keep your house — and home office, and home school looking and feeling great.

(1) Set regular cleaning times — Review everyone's schedules and block out times for

cleaning chores each week that are predictable. Enlist older kids to help out, or



arrange for teens or your partner to involve

get to work indoors. Make sure to leave

younger kids in a backyard activity while you

enough time to get your tasks completed so you don't feel rushed.

(2) Find easy-to-use tools that get the job done — For a quick and easy deep-clean of floors, plus removal of pet hair and dust

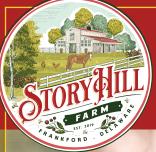
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# Farewell to the barn house

Preparing a rustic South Bethany home for its third life

#### **By Laura Walter** Editor

South Bethany's "barn house" has been a familiar sight for nearly 40 years, perched comfortably on the canalfront, a source of nostalgia for all who pass. "The Barn" arrived at 106 Anchorage Drive around the early 1980s, constructed of wooden beams and siding from an Amish farmer near Lancaster, Pa.

John Cuddy and Valerie "Val" Cuddy purchased the rustic two-story house in 2000 as a coastal escape from their primary home in Vienna, Va.

"I think we're affectionately known as the 'beach barn' by many people in the neighborhood," Val said.

"All the side walls are red and gray barn wood," she said. "When you walk in here, it looks like it should be a mountain retreat, so you're not really expecting a beach house."



'I think we're affectionately known as the "beach barn" by many people in the neighborhood.' – Val Cuddy

> CH &G

The pine siding was milled nearby in Greenwood, Del., and the wide floorboards come from an old tobacco barn. The house is full of classic wood interiors, old latches, hardware, massive screws and bolts. The heavy metal drawer handles can double as bottle openers. At one time, old tools and farming implements also hung from the wall.

South Bethany is mostly bound by water on both sides, so the Cuddys had a short walk to the beach, "plus the canal where the kids were catching eels and crabs and fish — we knew

that would be a high area of entertainment," Val said.

Many a night was spent playing Scrabble or Parcheesi at an oversized picnic table on the screened-in back porch, which overlooks the yard and a small dock on the Anchorage Canal.

"We've been here 20 years and have made the most beautiful family and friend memories in the Right, the barn as it originally looked before being renovated with Amish materials from Lancaster. ■ Photo submitted

Left background image, a brick wall in the 'beach barn' gives the converted barn a rustic look. Below, a unique set of stairs made of wood that will likely be reclaimed. The rustic materials came from farm country to coastal Delaware and will now go in pieces to Baltimore City.

Photos by Laura Walter

world," Val said.

The house has always been open to relatives (rather than vacation renters), so everyone in the family had a key, and Val oversaw the "reservation" calendar. And in that time, they watched the children grow up.

"Our nephews were just babies, so they



learned how to surf-fish with their grand-fathers," she said.

It was the allure of the location that brought the Cuddys there in 2000, and they still find it alluring 20 years later. That's why, in 2020, finally ready for an upgrade, they are giving up the house, instead of their 1/6-acre lot. They are pack-



ing up the house for deconstruction and will build a new, more modern, house on the same lot.

"This is a beautiful little neighborhood. It really is. That is one of the best things about having found this house," Val said.

#### Saving the past while looking ahead

Emptying the walls of two decades' worth of photographs and décor from three bedrooms (and a loft!) has allowed the couple to reflect on a favorite corner or nook once more before the barn house is removed in the autumn of 2020.

In its time, the wide 6-by-6-inch crossbeam has supported both the roof and numerous tchotchkes. An old whaler lamp was fitted for electric. But it's the small Harry Potter-style bunkbed under the stairs that the children always clamored for.

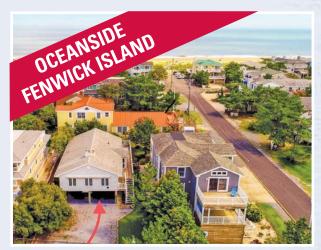
"It really is a charmer," Val said of the house. "Our family is a little bit sad it's coming down."

She estimated that previous owner Barbara Speight and her family had the house built around 1983. One Speight

Please turn to page 30

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son visited a few years ago to show his family the doors he and his father once built. Meanwhile, plenty of other folks around town have said, "We used to rent this house many years ago," or "I just love this little house," she added.

The barn's woodstove has warmed the families in winter, but it's never been a completely airtight house. Since coming to South Bethany, the original shape has remained, but the new tan siding, red roof and white trim are more airtight than before. The barn house has gained some climate control and lost its secondstory deck. The drafty cedar-shake roof was replaced by a metal, with skylights and insulation.

And as much as they've enjoyed the barn house at the beach, the barn felt a little like someone else's dream, John said. Brainstorming the rebuild has been an on-paper hobby for years that could finally begin around New Year's 2021.

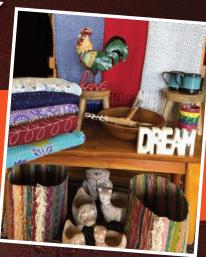
The new beach house will feature a fourth complete bedroom, handicappedaccessibility, a more airtight building envelope, a defined front-door entrance,



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modern building practices, more porch space on the west wide...

Some elements of the barn will likely return to the new house, such as a handful of timbers to become accent pieces. Some wooden themes will be repeated, but with smooth and sanded lines instead of the rough-hewn beams. They'll abandon the dark, rustic stuff for a brighter, coastal wooden design.

## A second chance for everyone

But the old barn isn't destined for the landfill. Her life will continue, in pieces. The Cuddys found a more deserving fate for the barn house: with the Second Chance nonprofit in Baltimore.

"They're going to take the interior apart, piece by piece, as I understand it. Apparently, there's some value to the old wood," Val mused.

Second Chance carefully removes all reusable elements through deconstruction, instead of demolition. They sell the reclaimed materials for new building projects at the Baltimore retail center.

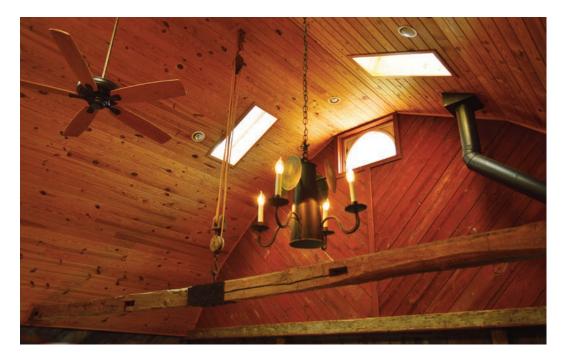
Please turn to page 32

A detail shot from the cupboards in the 'beach barn' home in South Bethany. ■ Photo by Laura Walter

Some elements of the barn will likely return to the new house, such as a handful of timbers to become accent pieces.

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Meanwhile, their primary mission is to train and hire unemployed individuals to learn the hands-on skills and business tactics for the whole operation. This "living classroom" generates tax advantages for the property owners who donate.

"The benefits kind of have a ripple effect, so we'll get a little break on our

The barn features skylights, fans, a whaler's lamp and much more. ■ Photo by Laura Walter

taxes," Val said, "and Second Chance will be able to sell the materials that they take out, and continue their work helping people."

The goal is a self-sustaining system that preserves the environment, architectural heritage, "green" jobs, the workers and their families. "We'll all miss it.

that's for sure, and we'll miss all the fun that

we've had over years," Val concluded, looking around the emptying house. "But you have to look forward, right?"



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portable charging stand lets you store and charge anywhere, without drilling holes into your wall. The vacuum has two quick-release batteries for up to 120 minutes of run time.

(3) Look out upon cleaner pastures — Nothing makes your outlook brighter than sparkling clean windows. For a fresh and natural approach, try a blend of equal amounts distilled vinegar and hot water to wash the windows, using a squeegee to dry with no streaking.

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sider hiring out. You'll be amazed at the difference it makes when you have clean windows both inside and out.

(4) Consider rearranging the furniture — Sometimes your furniture is arranged the way it is because, well, hasn't it always been that way? Clearing out bulky, little-used furniture or finding a better arrangement can really breathe new life into any room. Before beginning the hard work of moving furniture around, however, first make a plan. Talk with family members to gather their input. Sketch out the room on paper or use an online room-arranging template to explore al-





ternatives. This is the fun part that kids may enjoy. Let everyone brainstorm and don't dismiss any ideas out of hand — they might actually work! Consider the flow of traffic in and out of the room, if you have a focal point (like a picture window, TV or piano) and how you actually want to use the room. Get rid of pieces that serve no purpose and don't look good in the room. Sometimes less really is more.

(5) Launder or deep-clean fabrics — If it's been a while since you've done a deep clean, launder fabrics that are machine-washable (such as sofa covers or lightweight curtains) and use a steamcleaner for carpet and upholstery. Steam-cleaning equipment can be rented if necessary. Refreshing your home regularly not only helps improve your health by reducing allergens, but can also really lift your mood and outlook. Spending more time at home will be much more pleasant and enjoyable when you know your whole environment is fresh and clean. For more tools to make your home life even better, check out www.lg.com.

**By Brandpoint** 



Coastal Home & Garden



# Top tips for weathering storm season

#### Mark Chisholm Brandpoint

It's not over yet. Just past the peak of hurricane season, weather forecasters have already had to resort to the Greek alphabet to name storms. And with severe storms and tornados appearing around the country, it is more important than ever to take steps and be prepared before, during and after a storm.

One of the biggest threats during any storm is tree damage.

A tree might seem like it would be able to sustain the forces of a large storm, but whether it is unseen internal damage, wet, unstable ground, or proximity to power lines, trees are vulnerable during severe storms and can present a significant hazard. The following tips from expert arborist and Stihl spokesperson Mark Chisholm can help you protect yourself, your family and your property from a storm.

Please turn to the next page

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### Before the storm:

- Develop a relationship with a certified treecare professional. By choosing the right company ahead of time, you'll likely be prioritized as an existing customer when a storm does hit.
- Conduct a pre-storm assessment and identify trouble spots — a pre-storm assessment can help you identify potential hazards on your property such as cracks in tree trunks or major limbs, hollow or decayed trees, limbs extending over a roof, or trees in close proximity to power lines.
- Take measures to prevent damage after assessing possible hazards to your property, consider measures to limit potential damage. Remove dead, diseased or damaged limbs. Inspect leaning trees and consider removing those with large cavities. Prune branches that are too close to your house and over the street, and check your gutters and be sure to remove any debris to prevent water damage. For any work in and around your home, consider calling a professional, and always call a professional to assess and/or remove anything within close proximity to utility lines. Never attempt to do this yourself.

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#### During the storm:

Don't try to be a hero. Your property is not more important than your life. Prepare in advance, follow guidelines for evacuation and shelter.

#### After the storm:

- More people are injured after a storm than during one. Storm-damaged trees present unique challenges and dangers. Put safety first. Evaluate what you can handle and what's for a professional anything not on the ground should definitely be handled by a professional. Some things could be a threat to your life, such as large broken or hanging limbs where chainsaw work is needed, or branches that are too close to a utility line. Never approach or attempt to move downed utility lines, and immediately report branches close to or touching utility lines.
   If you're skilled enough to do the work your-
- If you're skilled enough to do the work yourself, always wear proper attire and protective equipment including boots, gloves, protective glasses, chainsaw-protective pants, a helmet system and hearing protection.



Please turn to page 45





# Staging can be the difference-maker in selling your home

Before and after: investing to upgrade a few details can be the difference in attracting home buyers.

Photo courtesy Atlantic Exposure

#### By Darin J. McCann Executive Editor

There are times it pays to be the buyer, and times it pays to be the seller. These days, in this particular market, it is a good time to be selling your home.

With a comparatively-limited inventory of houses on the market, and a never-ending slate of new homes on that market alongside re-sales, the competition is pretty heavy. Add in that, because of the COVID-19 and its accompanying limitations on travel, many home buyers are exclusively looking at their choices online (and sometimes buying just based off those online views), and sellers need to have a proverbial ace in their sleeves. You know, that little something to set that property apart from the others.

#### Enter staging.

At its heart, staging is preparing a home aesthetically to make it a more eye-pleasing presentation for potential buyers. In some cases, that may mean temporary fixes, such as with model homes that will eventually go to buyers bare and unfurnished. In this area, however, there is a different dynamic — the large percentage of home sales that are second homes.

"You have to remember that a lot of the homes that sell here are sold furnished," explained Kathleen Barnes of Seaside Home Staging & Design. "And a lot of those homes have been used as rental homes or second homes for people who live somewhere else, so that furniture and the décor have basically been there forever."

Barnes said she will come in to a home and get a feel for what is there. She tries to keep whatever is possible, but maybe changing bedding, or lamps, along with adding a few new pieces, can give the home a whole new "clean" look. She explained that a person might not want to completely refurnish or paint a second home or rental that they purchased — they really want it to be turn-key, in many cases. Staging not only gets the house ready to sell, it also makes it ready for the buyer to get started enjoying it right away.

"Staging is actually marketing," said Barnes. "It's not only price, but it has to look really nice as well."

She spoke of the competition to sell houses right now, and how a few touches here and there can truly make the difference between selling your house quickly or not — and for the price that is expected.

"We've come in on several properties that had been on the market for a while and staged them, and the owners received multiple bids within just a few days of that," said Barnes. "It works."

She explained that a seller investing in the aesthetics of a home is simply sound business, but with a more immediate return than other investments.

"Getting a new HVAC unit for a home you are selling is a big deal and helps with selling the house, but it's not necessarily visible," said Barnes. "Staging is an immediate an obvious upgrade to your home. ... It's a business expense, like getting a new roof to improve your investment."



Neighbor.com shared a story on the benefits of staging, and discussed its impact in real-dollar amounts.

"According to the National Association of Realtors, for every \$100 invested in staging your home, the potential return is \$400," they wrote. "That's a 4X return for doing a few simple things! When selling something as expensive as a home, this is well worth your time."

The Northwest Indiana Times tackled staging's impact on the time a home stays

on the market.

"U.S. research states that home staging can reduce a listing's time on the market by one-third to half, and could fetch as much as 6 percent to 20 percent more than an empty home or a home not properly staged."

The benefits are real, and the benefits provided by a professional in the field can be even more advantageous to a seller — or a buyer who wants his or her new home to be "turn-key."

To see before-after photos of how staging can change a property, go to Seaside's website at www.homestaginganddesignsells.com. Barnes can also be reached at (302) 542-3045.

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## Getting real benefits from the plants around us

**By Susan Canfora** Staff Reporter

Living among plants — whether in the house, on the porch or as landscaping — is calming, but the benefits have much deeper roots.

"Plants are so important. They put off oxygen. Without plants, without trees, there is no clean air, so they are essential. Even houseplants help filter the air," said Brian Trader, deputy executive director and director of horticulture at the Delaware Botanic Gardens in Dagsboro.

Trader, who earned his doctorate in horticulture from

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Virginia Tech, as well as a master's degree in plant pathology, physiology and weed science, said the mission of the gardens is to "create an inspirational, educational and sustainable public botanic garden in southern Delaware for the benefit and enjoyment of all."

But that pleasure is possible at home, too.

"The greenery they provide is great for our mental wellbeing. It's been proven. There have been so many studies that have shown a connection to nature and a connection to plants, how they have helped people, not only people with mental anguish but with loss of a loved one, heartache. They also help us heal if we've had surgery.

"For some people, the act of taking care of, and nurturing, something living is beneficial. Maybe they don't have room for a pet or they don't have time to walk a dog or clean out a litter box. This is becoming popular with the younger generation, where they don't have room to have a child yet and they are working. A huge trend right now is plant-parenting," Trader said.

Most nurture house plants, maybe succulents, snake plants or mother-in-law's tongue — so named because the tip looks like a tongue.

Concerning native plants, Trader said there are many that would thrive in a planter or pot "if you want to decorate your front

porch or your front steps."

"A lot of native plants provide interest through the berries. A great example is winterberry holly, which is a native. People use that because it has beautiful berries after all the leaves fall off," he said.

Magnolia has dark green leaves, and American holly can be situated in a pot or planter. To get berries, he noted, be sure to buy a female American holly.

It's possible to take outdoor plants indoors, if desired, but it's unwise to put them into a corner of the house where they won't get enough light. They must be transitioned.

"It's acclimation. You want to acclimate those plants from bright light to lower light over time. If they're growing out in full sun, is there an opportunity to put them on a shaded porch, then into your house and in front of your window? A lot of people bring in tropical plants — ferns hanging on the porch, palms they put out during the summer months that wouldn't survive a frost here," he said.

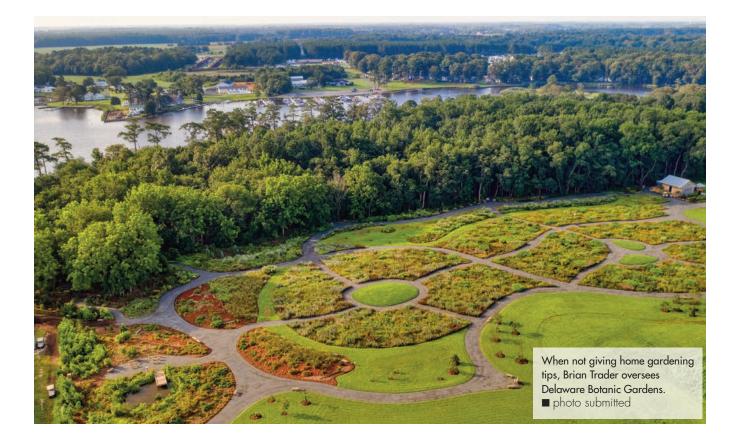
Some native plants grow in shade, under trees or in a forest, and are already used to

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thriving in low light.

"If you were to bring them inside, they would have a higher likelihood of thriving than plants that grow in full sun. For example, some native ferns might do well indoors. ... Native sedges that are more grass-like would do well in the house. But most people leave all of these outside," he said.

Interestingly, he noted, most house plants are tropical plants, natives of Africa or the Middle East, such as the snake plant, pothos and spat flower.

For something to thrive indoors, he said, "Don't look for native plants, because you are taking them out of their natural environment. The best thing to do is to look for a tropical plant that is accustomed to low light," he said.

When planting trees, Trader recommended keeping in mind they live 50 or 60 years, with oaks living hundreds of years.

"You have to plant it accordingly. You have to consider the care it will need and think about the climate," he said, adding that



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In the Delaware Botanic Gardens, he said, "We are looking at what will grow well 50 years from now, and taking into consideration pests and diseases that are problems now."

"What will temperatures be like 50 years from now? Some trees, like sugar maple, we are not planting at the gardens because they are struggling under our summers in the Mid-Atlantic area," he said.

At his home, Trader has plants both indoors and outside.

"I have plants everywhere. I love plants. I would say I am a little bit a of a plant fanatic. I have agaves, African violets, succulents. Outside, it's the same. I have an assortment of natives and non-natives. I try to make sure I have interest throughout the year. Bulbs bloom in the spring. Perennials start late spring and bloom into early summer, then shrubs and trees have winter interest," he said.

There's a native dogwood that has bright red stems. Starting in a few weeks, when it drops its leaves, the stems will still be colorful during the winter, he said.

"I consider all the seasons and the plants so I always have something of interest to enjoy," said Trader, who grew up on a farm south of the Maryland-Virginia border.

From childhood, he helped his father plant potatoes. Both his paternal and maternal grandparents had an affection for gardens and plants. His grandfather grew tomatoes, and his grandmother had a large pond with daffodils planted nearby.

"Every day, she had fresh-cut flowers in the house. I was immersed in gardening the whole time I was growing up," he said.



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Never operate a chainsaw from a ladder, roof, in a tree or while standing on any other insecure surface — leave these jobs for the pros.

#### **Evaluate damage:**

A storm-damaged tree may not have to be removed. Inspect your trees to see if they're healthy despite storm damage. If at least 50 percent of the tree's crown is still intact, and the remaining branches can form a new branch structure, then there is a good chance the tree can be saved.

#### Repair minor damage and debris:

Remove any broken branches, stubs or jagged remains of limbs. Smaller branches should be pruned at the point where they join larger ones. Don't worry if the tree's appearance is not perfect.

#### Stay educated:

Learn more tips on tree safety, chainsaw safety, finding a tree care professional, and how to prepare for storms by visiting StihlUSA.com.

Mark Chisholm is a third-generation arborist with his family-owned Aspen Tree Expert Company in New Jersey and Stihl Inc. spokesperson.



Willem Lambertson navigates Indian Street in Fenwick Island during Hurricane Sandy with his mother, Jill, and their sidekick, Twyla. Coastal Point file photo



Coastal Home & Garden

# An effort of joy

Carol Hurley relaxes by the fire pit on her patio near Dagsboro. Hurley says she uses the fire pit year-round and it's one of her most favorite spots at her home. photos by Kerin Magill





&Ĝ







#### By Kerin Magill Staff Reporter

When Carol Hurley's daughter's former playhouse was expanded to become a fullfledged "she-shed," it took on the look of the quintessential chill-out space for the retired family consumer-sciences teacher.

Its rocking-chair-bedecked porch, however, belies the building's real purpose: the launching pad for Hurley's passion for collecting and decorating.

Standing in the middle of shed, Hurley looks at the neat stacks of plastic bins surrounding her and explains that, for starters, she has pillows "for every holiday."

One room in her spacious Dagsboro-area home, in fact, gets a makeover for each season. Currently, it's decorated in shades of orange, but she said that, depending on the season, it could be turquoise, or red and green for the Christmas holidays.

"I change it at least four times a year," she said.

That, however, doesn't begin to do justice to Hurley's house full of treasures.

The dedicated yard-saler said that most of the collected things in her home came either from combing through the cast-off possessions of others or has been passed down through her family. Some of it was even free — Hurley said she is not above snagging things from trash set out at someone else's curbside.

One example of how the old "one man's trash is another man's treasure" sits in the kitchen of Hurley's home — an Australian kitchen cupboard she said she saw a Facebook post about, and promptly rescued from junk-heap status.

The large cupboard is in perfect shape right down to the stained-glass windows on its cabinet doors and the tin flour bin behind one of them.

"All I did was dust it off," she said of the gleaming wood storage piece.

Collections of everything from Fiesta dishware to antique dolls and toy sewing

Please turn to page 48



#### Starting from left - She-Shed ■ photos by Kerin Magill

The porch of Carol Hurley's "she shed" offers a nice place to sit and relax. Inside, however, it's all business - rows of plastic bins contain all of the decorations she has collected over the years to make her home a delightful refuge no matter the season.

The dining room of the Hurley home is a perfect example of how Hurley has combined family treasures with garage sale finds to create a cozy gathering spot.

A 19th century building now located on Hurley's property houses what she calls her "family museum" - collections of everything from kitchen utensils to toys -that have been handed down through generations.

The front porch of Carol and Brent Hurley's home is bedecked in fall flowers and foliage, with a lighted pumpkin garland just for fun and sparkle.

machines are tucked into shelves and cupboards all over the Hurleys' home. A spare bedroom holds the rope-framed bed where her mother, Wanda Powell, was born; the bed is topped with a hand-crocheted canopy.

Behind the house where Hurley and her husband have lived for more than 30 years, a small 19th-century building holds what she calls her "family museum." Shelves hold antique cooking utensils, more antique dolls, chalkware salt and pepper shakers... A pot-belly stove takes up one corner.

Many of the collections there are labeled by their provenance — much of it given to her by her own mom, now in her 90s. A guest book holds names of family members, as well as random guests who have perused the tiny building's treasures over the years.

Hurley's collection of family heirlooms also includes such things as "going away dresses" from both of her grandmothers — the outfits they changed into after their wedding ceremonies.

Near the "museum," Hurley's husband's outhouse collection rings the edge of the property. He has nine, Hurley said adding that he actually won a contest for his collection of antique potties.

The expansive front porch of Hurley's home is yet another pallet for her decorating talents. For fall, huge bright chrysanthemums flank the porch, while an oversized wreath and a lighted garland grace the front door. Yard sale finds including a small porcelain-topped table dot the porch and beckon visitors to sit for a while.

Hurley's back porch, she said, might be her favorite part of her home. With its central, glass-rock fireplace giving off a welcoming glow, it's the perfect spot to sip a cup of coffee and plan her next project. The she-shed, just down the driveway, awaits her next inspiration.

"If you're going to spend this much time decorating," she said, "you might as well enjoy it."



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Coastal Home & Garden

# 5 Must-do home improvements for fall

The average American home has nine DIY jobs that need to be tackled, according to a study conducted by Porch.com. Fall is the perfect time to give your home a little TLC and start checking off projects on your to-do list. Here are five easy fall fixups to get your home ready for the upcoming season:

• Paint the front door — Nothing gives your home an instant facelift like a freshly painted front door. Painted exterior doors can boost curb appeal, add character and provide a trendy but tasteful first impression of your home. Choose a color that will make your front door pop and improve the look of your home's exterior in less than an afternoon.

• Repair holes in the drywall — Whether the damage is small, like a picture frame nail or anchor, or as large as doorknob damage, DAP's new Eclipse Rapid Wall Repair Patches make repairing holes in drywall so fast and easy anyone can do it. DAP's Eclipse provides a durable, mess-free repair that requires no spackling, sanding or additional tools — simply patch the damage and it's ready to paint immediately, allowing projects to be finished in minutes, rather than hours or days.

• Freshen up the landscaping - Planting new flowers or shrubbery is an easy way to bring pops of fall colors to the front of your home. Keep it simple, and pick plants in one or two hues that contrast with the exterior of your home. Regular mowing and tending to weeds will always help your front yard look its best.

• Seal window and doors — Small gaps and cracks around windows and doors can



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allow cold air and rain to make its way inside. Keep your home protected and warm during the fall and winter seasons by replacing worn exterior caulk with DAP Dynaflex Ultra Advanced Exterior Sealant. Dynaflex Ultra uses DAP's exclusive WeatherMax Technology to create a waterproof and weatherproof seal that won't crack or discolor over time.

• Replace the furnace filter — Dirty filters mean your furnace will likely work harder. Regularly changing the filters in your central air and heating system can significantly im-

prove its efficiency and longevity, while easing the pressure on your wallet. In most homes, filters should be changed monthly during the heating season. You should also have your furnace serviced periodically to make sure it is working properly and to help avoid larger repairs later on when the temperature drops. For more tips to help tackle your fall home improvement checklist, visit DAP.com.

**By Brandpoint** 



# 6 Ways to reduce single-use plastic during a pandemic



The COVID-19 pandemic has increased the consumption of singleuse plastic, as disposable mask and glove usage has skyrocketed. Additionally, many businesses have eliminated the option to use reusable shopping bags at a store or to bring your own mug to a coffeeshop. There's no doubt these measures are important to help stop the spread of the virus, but there are simple steps we should be taking to help reduce our single-use plastic consumption and achieve a more sustainable way of living, even during the coronavirus pandemic. Here are six:

• Buy local — If possible, get out to your local farmers' market or butcher for your grocery shopping. Farmers' market vendors often use less packaging, and you can ask your butcher to wrap your meat in waxed paper instead of plastic. Shopping local is also a great way to support your community.

• Swap your cleaning tools — The leading spray-mop uses single-use plastic pads. As the average household uses 1,411 of these pads annually, more than 8 million pounds of singleuse plastic waste is generated every year in the U.S. alone. But it's easy to make smarter, greener choices. For example, the O-Cedar ProMist MAX Microfiber Spray Mop features a reusable, machine-washable microfiber pad and a refillable bottle to cut down on plastic waste while removing more than 99 percent of bacteria with just water.

• Plate over bowl, bowl over plate — If you're doing more cooking at home, you're likely finding yourself with leftovers. Ditch the plastic wrap and use your dishes as an easy, inexpensive food-storage solution. To do this, place a plate or saucer over a bowl to cover its contents or, alternatively, flip any size of bowl over leftovers on a plate. It's a simple solution using what you already have. You'll be protecting your food from drying out in the fridge while eliminating your plastic waste.

• DIY cleaning solutions — With all the extra cleaning you're doing around the house, buying cleaning solutions in disposable bottles for your home can be expensive and result in additional plastic waste. The average household goes through 18 bottles a year of cleaning solution when using the leading disposable spray mop. Instead, use a refillable bottle and make your own cleaning solution using water and your choice of vinegar or castile soap. • Wear a cloth mask — Safety guidelines make it difficult to go anywhere without wearing a face covering. But the popularity of disposable face masks has impacted the amount of plastic in the waste stream, according to a report by the L.A. Times. Where it's safe to do so, do your part by opting to wear reusable cloth masks — you can find them just about anywhere these days.

• Avoid plastic where you can — When you're ordering takeout, be sure to ask the restaurant to leave out any extra disposable materials. For example, let them know you don't need disposable silverware. And although most coffee shops and cafés aren't accepting reusable drink containers, you can still bring your own reusable straw. These tips make it easier to do your part in reducing plastic waste. For more information on why you should swap to the O-Cedar ProMist MAX Microfiber Spray Mop, visit https://ocedar.com/swap-your-mop.

By Brandpoint



# Expert tips to maximize your victory garden

Quarantine and social distancing have inspired renewed interest in gardening and home cooking. These two activities go hand-in-hand as people grow their own produce and herbs that can be plucked just steps from the kitchen where they can whip up tasty creations. In fact, this movement revived the concept of victory gardens, which help people become more self-reliant during challenging times.

#### What is a victory garden?

Victory gardens were common during World War I and II, when people were encouraged to grow their own foods to supplement their household needs and open the food supply for the troops. People would grow fast-yield crops in virtually any open soil, whether that be on their properties or in community gardens.

Victory gardens were trending in the summer of 2020 because people want to positively utilize their space while spending time at home. In fact, more than half (55 percent) of American adults are gardening or caring for their lawn during the COVID-19 outbreak, according to a survey of 1,000 nationally representative U.S. adults by Wakefield Research for Miracle-Gro.

Growing a victory garden with your family is a wonderful way to bond, enjoy fresh air and lower your grocery bill. With the surge in cooking at home, many Americans are discovering the joy of using fresh items from their gardens. Two-thirds (67 percent) of adults are growing or plan to grow edible plants, including vegetables (52 percent), herbs (33 percent) and fruits (31 percent), according to the survey.

## How to get the most out of your victory garden

Proper care will help ensure a bountiful harvest from your victory garden. Miracle-Gro's Sara Eff, scientist in gardens at R&D, offers these helpful tips for getting the most

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out of some of the most popular garden plants:

- A storm-damaged tree may not have to be removed. Inspect your trees to see if they're healthy despite storm damage. If at least 50 percent of the tree's crown is still intact, and the remaining branches can form a new branch structure, then there is a good chance the tree can be saved.
- Add supports: As garden plants grow, many need a little support. This helps keep leaves out of the dirt, prevents many diseases and strengthens against the elements. For example, pepper plants should be staked to help support the main stem. Tomatoes benefit from a cage to protect the fruit-bearing branches. Plants such as peas, beans and cucumbers love to climb a trellis, plus it makes it easier to pick them.
- Nourish well: Like a multivitamin for your garden, you may consider supercharging your plants with Miracle-Gro

Performance Organics Edibles Plant Nutrition Granules made from a mix of natural and organic ingredients. Specially formulated for growing tomatoes, vegetables, herbs and fruits, it's applied dry and watered in to start feeding. This can help plants grow faster, stronger and promotes higher yields than unfed plants.

- Water wisely: Be aware of precipitation and how much Mother Nature is providing. Use a water gauge to help, if needed. Gardens need about 1 inch of water per week, but you may need to supply more, depending on heat and drought conditions. Keep in mind, deeper watering every few days is ideal rather than quick sprinkles, with the early morning hours being best to avoid evaporation.
- To pinch or not to pinch: Small unnecessary stems and leaves can be pruned or hand-pinched to stimulate growth upward. For example, tomato suckers are small leaves off the main stem. Any below the lowest set of flowers can be removed or pinched off.

Be sure to research proper trimming per plant variety as each one is unique. For example, when a basil plant blooms at the top, you pinch it off so that the leaves stay intact. However, you would never pinch tomato flowers, because that's what turns into fruit.

Second harvests: With a bit of smart planning, you can enjoy multiple harvests that provide fresh foods into fall. Early maturing crops, like lettuce, radishes and beets can be replanted midto late summer and provide another round of produce. For second plantings, choose fast-maturing, disease-resistant varieties of plants. For example, some leafy greens, such as kale, prefer cooler weather and can even survive frosts.

Follow these simple steps and you'll be well on your way to growing your own victory garden. For additional gardening tips and planting advice, visit www.miraclegro.com.

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