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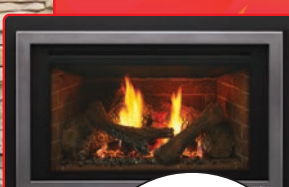
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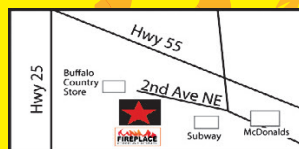


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## Use hardiness zones for thriving veggie gardens

Vegetables need a certain number of growing days with ideal conditions in order to mature and produce a viable yield. These conditions vary depending on the vegetables being grown, with plants thriving in key zones across the country. The gardening resource Fine Gardening says certain vegetable varieties are specially bred for, or may be best suited to, certain climates. Knowing which vegetables are ideal for where you live can give your garden the best chances for success.

The first step is reviewing the USDA Hardiness Zone Map to determine your specific cli-

mate zone. Canada also has a Plant Hardiness Zone map. These maps are based on the extreme minimum temperatures in the zones, and can be a useful tool in determining which plants will thrive where you live.

Additional variables to consider include the amount of precipitation the area gets, average humidity, maximum temperatures, and soil conditions. Here's a look at the best produce for certain regions of the country based on hardiness zones.

### Zones 1 and 2

Located in Alaska, the north-



ern continental United States, high mountains, and the upper latitudes of Canada, this zone features long, cold winters and the shortest growing season (April to September). The best plants will be those that require short intervals between planting and harvest, like asparagus, lettuce, kale, broccoli, and vine tomatoes.

### Zones 3 and 4

This zone encompasses the uppermost United States and cool mountain regions, as well as wide swaths of British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Ontario, and Quebec. The growing season in zones 3 and 4 lasts from April to October. Vine tomatoes, broccoli, kale, lettuces, spinach, strawberries, sweet peas, pole beans, and potatoes are some of the plants that will do well in these zones.

### Zones 5 and 6

Zones 5 and 6 encompass much of the continental United States, the southern-most Canadian provinces and coastal Nova Scotia. The growing season in zones 5 and 6 starts in March and can extend into October. Try melons, squashes, corn, strawberries, lettuce and other greens, and tomatoes in these zones.

### Zones 7 & 8

With a growing season from March to November, these zones are marked by long, hot summers and mild winters, conditions common to the southwest and many southern states. Corn, tomatoes, melons, collard greens, carrots, and others are good choices for this region.

### Zones 9 and 10

These zones include the deep South of the United States, Florida, southern California, and much of the Gulf coast. The growing season is quite long, ranging from February to November. In addition to much of the previously mentioned produce, plants like peppers, citrus, yams, peaches, figs and bananas have the best chances of success in these zones.

### Zones 11 to 13

These are the most tropical zones and are found in Hawaii and Puerto Rico. Growing seasons in zones 11 to 13 extend year-round. Only plants that require the coldest temperatures (sub-40 F) will not do well here.

Knowing the hardiness zone can help gardeners choose the best plants for their gardens.



## 2022 AAS Ornamental Winner



Article & photo by  
All-America  
Selections

*Begonia Viking™  
Explorer Rose on  
Green F1*

Erase that sea-faring conqueror image and replace it with this garden-faring beauty that performs exceptionally well and has high impact color. This trailing begonia "explores" the garden by spreading and spilling its

branches over the edges of hanging baskets and containers. Prolific rose-colored flowers stand out against the glossy green foliage and do so all season long. It has a strong tolerance to heat & many diseases, as well as both wet & dry conditions. "Stellar performance for containers" states one AAS Judge. "Good plant with season-long integrity," says another. These new Vikings are sure to be a garden favorite.

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## Upgrade bathroom safety features

Bathrooms can benefit from updates that improve their form and function. While styles and color patterns may inspire bathroom renovations, improvements to safety also should be considered.

Bathrooms can be one of the most dangerous rooms in a house. Bath and shower areas account for about two-

thirds of accidental injuries in these spaces. Many other injuries involve the toilet. In 2008, a thorough investigation of bathroom dangers conducted by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention found that mishaps near the bathtub, shower, toilet, and sink caused an estimated 234,094 nonfatal injuries in the United States

among people aged 15 years and older.

Seniors are particularly vulnerable in the bathroom due to reduced mobility and flexibility, visual impairment and other factors. However, some key modifications can make bathrooms much safer for aging populations.

• **Raised toilet seat:** Install an ADA-compliant raised toilet seat. Standard toilet seats are roughly 15 inches high, but elevated seats can raise the bowl an additional two to four inches. Another option is to invest in risers that can be attached to an existing toilet.

• **Grab bars:** Seniors may use towel holders as grab bars, which don't have stability and can dislodge from the wall. Install secured side grip bars by the toilet and inside the shower to make maneuvering easier.

• **Water temperature:** Seniors may be vulnerable to hot water temperatures. Lower the water temperature setting on the hot water heater. StaySafe.org recommends 120 F.

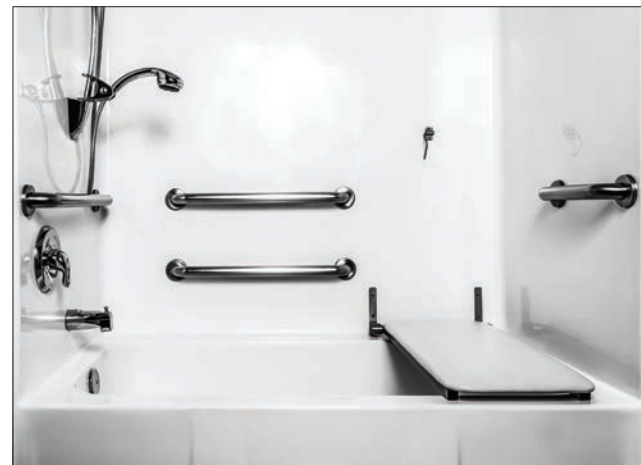
• **Faucets:** Change faucet handles to paddle-style handles rather than knobs. Knobs can be challenging to grip for those with arthritis in their hands. Also, handles that are easier for seniors to use can reduce the risk of the elderly losing their balance as they attempt to gain leverage to turn the water on and off.

• **Nonslip mats:** Nonslip mats or tape strips can be used in showers and tub bottoms, as well as outside of the shower to reduce the risk of slips and falls. Rugs should have rubberized, slip-resistant backing.

• **Rounded corners:** Choose counters and fixtures with rounded corners. Should a senior fall against something, the rounded corner may prevent serious injury.

• **Shower benches and transfer seats:** Benches and transfer seats make it easier getting in and out of the shower. Also, sitting while showering reduces the risk of becoming light-headed or losing balance.

• **Walk-in tubs/showers:** Minimizing the threshold to the shower or bathtub is an important safety feature. Some manufacturers make walk-in tubs with doors that secure and make watertight seals.



Showers that don't have a lip or tub to scale also are better for seniors.

• **Lighting:** Eyesight weakens over time, so improve lighting with combinations of overhead lighting and softer side lighting. Night lights or

soft-glowing toilet lights can make it easier to get around the bathroom in the middle of the night.

These are just some improvements that can create safer bathroom environments for seniors.

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## 2022 AAS Ornamental Winner



**Article & photo by**  
**All-America**  
**Selections**  
**Celosia Flamma**  
**Orange**

Flamma is coming in hot! Get ready to bring some fiery orange color to your garden with Flamma ("The Flame") celosia. This compact variety has numerous branches, each with a strong flower plume, as well as secondary blooms, which give a long show of color in the garden. AAS Judges were impressed with the superior garden performance and

how well it stood up to hot, humid, and rainy conditions during the trial season. Not only does Flamma have exceptional heat tolerance but also stuns with its early flowers that won't fade. Whether you decide to grow this in beds or in containers (it was trialed in both) you will have a great show of orange color all season long.

Plants should be spaced 10-12 inches apart. They tend to be bushy, and grow to 9-11 inches in height. They will bloom late spring to frost, and have a bloom size of 5 inches.



## The basics of container gardening



Gardening is a rewarding hobby that has been linked to health benefits like reduced stress and improved mental well-being. Gardening also can lead to an inviting home landscape full of attractive blooms and/or delicious foods.

Backyard gardens have long been planted after clearing a plot of land, tilling and amending the soil, and planting rows of favorite crops. However, gardening can be less labor-intensive and even more successful when people consider the many benefits of container gardening.

### What is container gardening?

As its name implies, container gardening is growing plants inside of containers. These containers can be flower pots, rectangular deck boxes or even large raised garden beds.

### Pros to container gardening

One of the advantages of container gardening is that plants can be moved in and out of sunlight to ensure the right growing conditions. This isn't as easily achieved when gardens are stationary. Also, beginner gardeners may be more able to control soil conditions inside of a small container rather than a vast ground-based garden, which will require a good deal of manual labor. Pots and boxes also can be grouped together to create eye-popping displays, usually at lower costs than the sheer volume of plants that would be needed to fill out an expansive landscape.

### Cons to container gardening

Container garden plants will not have direct access to the

ground, so they need gardeners to create the ideal growing conditions. Developing the right care formula can be challenging. The home and garden resource The Spruce says that drainage is an important factor in container gardening, and most containers do not offer enough drainage holes. If water cannot escape the soil, the roots of the plants can rot and die. It's not enough to add stones or gravel to the bottom of containers. Drill additional holes in the bottom (1/2-inch in diameter for small or medium-sized pots; one inch in diameter for larger pots). Also, be sure to check on soil moisture so that watering can be adjusted. During hot stretches, plants may need to be watered more frequently.

### Plan for plants that play well

Grouping plants together can create visually stunning combinations. However, it is important to choose plants that require the same amount of light and moisture. Look at plant tags when visiting the garden center and select complementary plants, or ask a store employee. Mixing different plant shapes, colors and leaf textures, as well as plants of various heights, can help containers look filled out.

### Feed plants accordingly

Plants need nutrition to thrive in containers. Quality potting

mixes will contain fertilizers, but nutrition will wane over time. Every couple of weeks, container plants will need either fresh potting mix or granular fertilizer added to feed them. Oregon State University Extension Services suggests using a slow-release fertilizer or worm castings several times

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throughout the season.

Container gardening is a great way to add plants to smaller patios, reduce the workload involved in maintaining expansive gardens, and customize conditions for optimal growth.

### How to Grow

The seeds should be sowed in substrate or sand with proper irrigation. After 20 days, the grower should transplant the young plant to the field or an 18-24 inches pot. The eggplant "Icicle" is very vigorous in the field. It requires full sun. The first harvest will start on the 60th day after transplanting. The yield of the "Icicle" is quite heavy, so we suggest the gardener arrange a proper staking system or supporting rope to keep the plant upright.

## 2022 AAS Edible-Vegetable Winner

Article & photo by  
All-America  
Selections

### Eggplant Icicle F1

This cylindrical white eggplant earned the prestigious AAS award for several reasons. The Icicle plant has fewer spines than most eggplants, making for a less painful harvest! With larger fruits than other white eggplants, it produces a nice yield while also providing fewer seeds. The large, durable, and vigorous plants hold up to insect damage and the environment. The pure white skin does not tend to yellow like many other white varieties of eggplant. The improved taste and texture has universal appeal (whether fresh or

cooked), one judge served it to his children: "Even my 11-year-old asked for seconds when I breaded and fried them at home." That's a culinary testimonial!



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## Tips for negotiating with contractors



Spring is the season for fixing up a home. Homeowners who aren't interested in doing the work themselves turn to contractors to ensure the job is done not only to code, but on time and efficiently.

After receiving an initial estimate from a contractor, homeowners may wonder if there is any additional wiggle room in contractors' costs.

Certain contractors are willing to negotiate while others are firm in their prices. However, learning the basics of negotiation can put homeowners

in position to save money on dream renovations.

### Do your homework

Getting the best price typically require shopping around and not settling on the first bid. Experts recommend getting at least three estimates on the same job — and be sure to let each contractor know that you are soliciting multiple bids. This alone may entice a specific contractor to give you his or her best offer up front. Avoid simply choosing the lowest bid. Look at quality of work, repu-

tation and reviews. If you like a costly contractor more than another, see if that contractor is willing to match a lower bid to win the job.

### Pick the right season

As with other industries, home renovation work heats up during certain seasons or times of year. General contractors may be more willing to negotiate for a lower price depending on when their busy season may be. Jobs may slow down in winter, for example.

### Talk about supplies

Even after getting a good bid, you may be able to speak with your contractor about lowering costs even more by choosing less costly supplies. Find out if contractors can source materials from a low-cost supplier. In addition, discuss if you can purchase your own supplies.

### Ask to do a portion

Be honest with the contractor about your budget and figure out if there is any way for you to do some of the work to lower costs. The contractor can give you jobs that are within your

abilities, which can shave dollars off the final price.

### Know your rights and laws

Understand the laws governing contract language in your state or province. Contracts should also spell out the

change order process so that expectations of changes and costs will be known in advance.

These are just some of the tactics homeowners can use when negotiating the price of home remodels or improvements.

tiful big fruits do not crack as much. What really sets this variety apart is the excellent flavor and a high Brix for a sweeter than normal pink tomato. Bonus: Much better disease resistance than controls in both the Southeast and Heartland regions.

### How to Grow

Staking is required, as plants can reach 6 feet in height. Watering is the standard requirement for tomatoes. Little to no pruning is required.

## 2022 AAS Edible – Vegetable Winner



### Article & photo by All-America Selections Tomato Pink Delicious

With "Delicious" in its name, it has to be good! This early maturing tomato supports the trend of having heirloom look, flavor and texture with hybrid disease resistance and improved germination meaning it is much easier for home gardeners to grow. When grown next to the comparisons, this variety is definitely earlier

with a higher yield and a very uniform fruit size. The beau-



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# Preparing garden beds for spring and beyond

April 24, 2022 The Drummer Home Inspirations Section 7

Gardening enthusiasts may have been thinking about their landscape plans throughout the winter, eager to once again get their hands dirty with soil. Whether a home gardener is making preparations for edible crops or beautiful flowers, he or she must take time to make the soil amenable to planting. To establish hearty, durable plants, gardeners can focus on three main areas: addressing soil composition, cultivating and adding nutrients.

## Soil composition

Many gardeners prefer growing a variety of plants in their gardens. Such an approach requires taking inventory of the type of soil in one's garden and making the necessary modifications so that the types of vegetables, herbs, shrubs, or flowers that will be planted can grow in strongly. In fact, according to the plant company Proven Winners, the most important step to developing good roots is preparing the soil.

Take a sample of the soil and examine it to see what is present. If the soil is too full of clay, too sandy, too dense, or too loose, that can lead to problems where plants cannot grow in strong. Work with a garden center to add the right soil amendments to make a rich soil. This may include organic compost or manure, which will also add nutrients to the soil.

## Cultivation

Cultivating the soil can involve different steps. Removal of weeds, errant rocks, roots, and other items will help prepare the soil. Mother Earth News suggests working on garden



Begin preparing garden bed soil early for new plants.

soil when the soil is damp but never wet; otherwise, garden soil can become messy and clumpy. Use a digging fork or

shovel to lightly turn the soil when it's mostly dry. Gentle tillings also can open up the soil to incorporate the nutritional amendments and relieve compaction that likely occurred from freezing temps and snow pressure. Tilling also helps with drainage and oxygen delivery to roots. The DIY Network suggests turning over soil at a depth of 12 inches to work the soil — about the length of a shovel spade. However, the resource Earth Easy says that existing garden beds have a complex soil ecosystem and simply top-dressing with

compost or manure can be enough preparation for planting. Gardeners can experiment with the methods that work best for their gardens.

## Nutrition

Testing the pH and the levels of certain nutrients in the soil, namely nitrogen, phosphorous and potassium, will give gardeners an idea of other soil additions that may be needed. Soils with a pH below 6.2 often can benefit from the addition of lime several weeks before planting. Soil tests will determine just how much fertilizer to add to the soil. Complete fertil-

izers will have equal amounts of nitrogen, phosphorous and potassium. Individual fertilizers can amend the soil with only these nutritional elements that are needed.

Top-dressing empty beds with a layer of mulch or compost can prevent weed growth and preserve moisture until it is time to plant. If existing shrubs or plants are in garden beds, use more care so as not to disturb roots or dig too deeply.

Preparing garden beds takes some effort initially, but can be well worth the work when plants flourish throughout the growing season.

## 2022 AAS Edible – Vegetable Winner



Article & photo by  
All-America  
Selections  
Lettuce Bauer

Oakleaf lettuce is a delicious and versatile edible that is super easy (and fast) to grow in the garden. Harvest at the baby leaf stage or grow into the rosette-shaped full-sized head. Bauer will please with its darker green color and nicely uniform compact size that can be grown almost anywhere...in-ground, containers, or window boxes. The dense heads produce a

Lettuce Bauer  
Continued on Page 8

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## Planning ahead is vital to a successful renovation

Remodeling projects are significant undertakings. Homeowners must consider a host of variables before any such project can begin. While planning ahead may take time, it is essential to ensuring successful completion of a renovation project. Consider these pre-renovation planning pointers to help any job go smoothly.

### Determine your motivation for renovating

Renovation projects often involve balancing needs and

wants, and determining if a project is a necessity or a luxury can set the timeline and course of the project. Is the roof leaking? If so, immediate action is necessary. Could the kitchen be a bit more functional? If the kitchen is still manageable, a homeowner may be able to wait a little bit to get better prices on appliances or contracting services.

Separating needs from wants helps homeowners map out a viable timeline that maximizes productivity and affordability.

### Get professional advice

Many homeowners are under the impression that doing the work themselves can save a considerable amount of money. This may be the case for homeowners with renovation experience. But by and large, professional contractors are an asset to any renovation. They can provide a realistic overview of the project, map out projected costs, point out areas that could be troublesome, and may have industry contacts that can keep supply



costs low. Even if a homeowner will do a portion of the job, a contractor can do the bulk of the work and keep the project on budget.

### Get necessary permits

Permits are designed to ensure the work is being done to code and in a safe manner. However, they are not without additional costs and processing time, and that can cause some homeowners to skip this step. According to the home information site The Spruce, building permits cost anywhere from \$400 to about \$2,200 for new home construction. Building permits for smaller

projects can cost \$100 or less, and typically are based on a percentage of the anticipated cost of the project.

A permit may be issued the day the application is submitted, while other cities and towns may issue permits up to two or more weeks later. Factor permit fees and processing times into the renovation plan.

If it comes to light a homeowner did work without a required permit, he or she may face penalties; may have to tear out work done to have it inspected or redone; some may be unable to sell a home until permits have been obtained and work has been done to code. Homeowners insurance coverage also may be affected if homeowners do not obtain the proper permits.

Other considerations when planning a renovation include writing out a strict budget, gathering inspiration, drawing up to-scale renovation plans, pouring over material reviews, and getting recommendations for reliable professionals to do the job. While not every obstacle can be avoided, planning is a good way to start successfully.

## Lettuce Bauer

Continued from Page 7  
plethora of sweet, crisp sturdy leaves. Now all you need is your favorite vinaigrette!

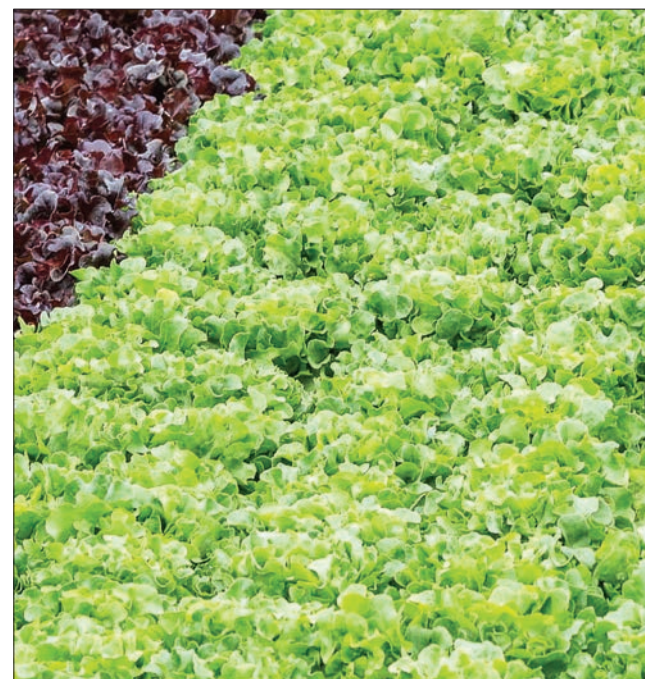
One judge went a step further and tried growing Bauer in a home aeroponics system. He reported that it did brilliantly, making it an excellent candidate for controlled environment production.



### How to Grow

Bauer can be direct-seeded or transplanted and is broadly adapted for in-ground, raised bed, or container plantings. Lettuce seeds need light to germinate and should be planted 1/8 – 1/4 of an inch deep. Compact heads allow for

tighter spacing than full-sized varieties. Heads should be harvested at mini to medium size for best flavor. It is recommended to plant multiple successions throughout the season for a continuous harvest.



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## 2022 AAS Ornamental Winner



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**Sunflower Concert  
Bell F1**

Concert Bell puts on quite a performance with a unique flower presentation of multiple clusters of 10 to 12 flowers on an erect columnar stem. Beautiful golden

yellow blooms appear earlier than the comparisons. Each plant grows to a very uniform height of 5 to 6 feet and if used as a cut flower, makes an instant, ready-made bouquet from just one cut. Excellent seed germination makes this beauty very easy to grow and is perfect for continuous sowing to keep blooms going through

the end of summer. Concert Bell was trialed in a year of adverse weather conditions and multiple judges commented on its durability and sturdiness even through strong storms and winds.

### How to Grow

Recommended spacing is 13-15 inches to enjoy multiple flowers along the primary stem from the top to the middle. Direct-sowing every 3 weeks after the last frost date in well-drained soil in good sunlight is recommended for continual summer to fall blooms. Germination temp 70-80°F. Pollenless.

Plant multiple successions throughout the season for a continuous harvest.



## Popular insect repellent plants

Homeowners choose plants for their properties based on a number of variables. Some may be into growing their own foods, while others desire their gardens to be an awe-inspiring mélange of bright colors and alluring scents. There's no wrong reason to plant a fresh garden, but some plants offer extra benefits, such as repelling insects.

Insects can be a nuisance and a threat to individuals' overall health. According to the American Academy of Family Physicians, insect-borne diseases are viral and bacterial illnesses that develop from

insect bites. Mosquitoes, sand flies and fleas are some examples of insects that can pass on disease. Fever, chills, headache, and muscle soreness are just a few of the more common symptoms linked to insect-borne diseases.

The good news for avid gardeners is that certain plants can help repel insects and provide the additional benefits like fresh food and aesthetic appeal that so many people love.

• **Basil:** The aroma of fresh

basil is enough to compel any gardener to make a place for it in their garden. But there's more to fresh basil than its scent, as the Farmers Almanac notes it can be used to repel mosquitoes and moths.

• **Lavender:** Fleas, flies, mosquitoes, and moths are not fans of this aromatic and colorful member of the mint family. Bees tend to be drawn to

### Repellent Plants

Continued on Page 11

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## Low-cost ways to revamp living areas

Home improvement projects require substantial financial investment. But just because

a homeowner wants to bring a fresh look indoors doesn't mean he or she has to break

the bank along the way.

Living rooms are some of the most frequently used spaces in a home, and they can use an update from time to time to stay on trend or to make the area more functional for a changing family dynamic. Here are some budget-friendly ideas for breathing new life into living room designs.

• **Establish the budget.** Homeowners should figure out how many dollars they can designate to a living room makeover before purchasing supplies or hiring out the work. Figure out the scope of the remodel, visit stores or suppliers to price out materials, get estimates from contractors, and then plan for some unforeseen circumstances along the way to determine if this type of renovation is affordable. If not, scale things back until the project more closely aligns with your budget.

• **Change the paint color.** Lighter and brighter colors are on trend. A can or two of paint can do wonders for updating a space without a large financial commitment. Pair that new paint color with new window



coverings and complementary throw pillows to pull the theme together with minimal expense.

• **Update the flooring.** Tired, outdated carpeting or other flooring can use an overhaul. While solid hardwood flooring may be preferable, there are

many types of laminate flooring that mimic the looks of popular wood colors and styles for a fraction of the cost. Plus, many are sold at home improvement retailers and even at warehouse clubs or online for reasonable prices. Laminate floor-

ing also may be a potential DIY job for a skilled homeowner, saving even more money.

• **Introduce a fireplace.** Fireplaces were once hot commodities, but that popularity waned in the 1970s and 1980s. Homeowners with chimneys may discover a fireplace was boarded over and the bare bones still exist that can be renovated to bring back character. There also are ventless freestanding units that are quite affordable that can mimic the look of a built-in fireplace.

• **Reupholster instead of replace furniture.** There's no need to throw away quality furniture if the fabric is the only thing impeding design. New upholstery or even a slipcover can update designs.

• **Conquer clutter.** Rather than adding something to the living room, remove clutter to give the room a more airy feel. This can instantly change the look of the room. Use cord covers to tame plugs for electronics and remove unnecessary furniture from the room.

• **Improve lighting.** Another easy and often inexpensive fix is to change lighting fixtures, including using brighter, more energy efficient LED bulbs, and to assess lighting needs to eliminate dark corners of rooms that can make the space seem drab.

Living room spaces in need of an update often can benefit from improvements that go easy on the wallet.

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## How to pick the right trees for your property



Trees benefit a landscape by serving both aesthetic and utilitarian functions. A home surrounded by healthy green trees can be a sight to behold, and those same trees can benefit surrounding plants and wildlife at the same time.

As appealing as trees are, not all trees and landscapes make for the perfect match. The Arbor Day Foundation notes the importance of planning when designing a landscape. Planning ensures the trees homeowners ultimately choose for their properties will

grow well in the soil and moisture present in their yards.

Careful consideration of a handful of variables can help homeowners determine which trees will make the best fit for their properties.

• **Height:** Homeowners must consider the projected height of a tree before planting it. Avoid trees that will bump into anything when fully grown, as that can adversely affect surrounding greenery and pose a safety hazard. The ADF's tree sizing guide can be accessed at <https://www.arborday.org/>

trees/rightTreeAndPlace/size. cfm and serves as an invaluable resource for homeowners who want to plant new trees around their properties.

• **Canopy spread:** Trees grow out as well as up, so it's important to consider their potential width at maturity as well. The ADF sizing guide can help homeowners get an idea of how wide a tree is likely to be at maturity. Trees that spread out quite a bit don't necessarily need to be avoided, but it's important that they're planted far enough apart so they don't adversely affect surrounding plants. In addition, wide trees that are planted too close together can make the landscape appear crowded, taking something away from its aesthetic appeal.

• **Growth rate:** Growth rate is an important variable because it can affect how quickly homeowners will see changes in their landscapes. Homeowners who want to plant for privacy can consider trees with quick growth rates or purchase more mature trees that are already near full growth. Those who are not in need of instant transformation can try trees with slower growth rates, which the ADF notes typically live longer than fast-growing species.

• **Requirements:** Different trees require different amounts of sun and moisture and different soil components to thrive. Homeowners can have their soil tested to determine which trees will thrive in it. Local garden centers can be a great resource for homeowners who want insight as to which trees will thrive in their local climates.

Trees serve many functions on a property. Choosing the right trees for a landscape requires careful consideration of a host of variables.



## Repellant Plants

**Continued from Page 9**  
lavender, a durable plant that many garden centers recommend in areas prone to drought or hot summers without much precipitation.

• **Mint:** Mint is another plant that is instantly recognizable for its aroma. But mint lovers may not realize that it's also great for keeping ants at bay. Mint also can be used to repel mosquitoes, but gardeners with no experience planting mint should plant it in pots. That's because the Farmers Almanac notes mint is an especially aggressive spreader that can quickly take over a garden. Separating mint in pots can prevent it from bullying its way into other plants' domains.

• **Lemongrass:** Lemongrass is a tropical grass that's so

fragrant it's often used in perfumes. Lemongrass contains citronella, which many people associate with repelling mosquitoes. A potted lemongrass plant can repel these unwanted guests, keeping them away from decks, porches and/or

patios all summer long.  
• **Chrysanthemums:** The Farmers' Almanac® recommends using chrysanthemums, which repel a range of insects from bedbugs to fleas to ants, as border plants around a home. That's because they contain the natural insecticide pyrethrin, which can serve as something of an insect-repelling boundary around a home.

Insects are unwanted guests around a home each spring, summer and fall. Certain plants can help repel insects and serve as an eco-friendly alternative to insecticides.



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