

HOME



A special publication of the
**Wood County
MONITOR**
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& garden

Curb appeal

*A little of this
and a little of that
add up to money
for home sellers*

Real estate agent Karl Foerster, with Century 21 Town and Country Realty, has spent more than three decades selling property and one thing he firmly believes is how crucial a first impression is when it comes to selling a house.

"If it doesn't look good – if the outside is shabby then they're going to think the inside is going to be the same way," the 35-year real estate agent said. "What you want to do is make it inviting. Impression is everything."

The semi-retired career real estate agent said many small things that don't cost money but take some effort can add up to a favorable impression and, in the long run, more money in the sale of your house.

Cutting the grass, trimming the bushes, hosing off the front of the house and painting the front door will go a long way towards selling a home. And even if you haven't used your porch light in years, make sure it works. Gopher mounds piling up in the front yard can result in a bad impression. Cut limbs that brush against roofs that may rub shingles off and sweep the front sidewalk and porch.

"When is the last time you washed windows," he asked. He said that many of the people who buy homes in East Texas come here to enjoy the natural beauty of the area because in the cities where they are moving from they don't have that. He highly recommends opening blinds, pulling back the drapes and letting the sun shine in – through clean windows.

"It's all just common sense things," he said but for anyone selling a house, the advice from a veteran real estate agent is worth heeding.

As far as renovations, Foerster said most final home buying decisions are made by a woman or a wife. This means that the kitchen is of the most importance, a bathroom second and closets third. However, kitchen redos, with the high desirability of granite countertops and tile floors, can be costly and run as much as \$25,000.

"Thankfully, we have a good enough economic climate that people can afford to buy," the larger homes with updated rooms. He said that the majority of homes that are being sold in town are older homes but many new homes are cropping up in the rural areas of Wood County outside city limits.

And one last thing to communicate the welcome vibe to people approaching your house for first time – set a couple of pots of chrysanthemums on the front porch. "Just do things that register with people," he said, and in a positive way.

**'Impression
is everything'**

GETTING THE MOST BANG

FOR YOUR REMODELING BUCKS

As a contractor and real estate expert, I am often asked by homeowners for advice on the best projects for their remodeling dollars. While it's important to first consider the purpose of the remodel (is it for yourself, for resale, or as part of an income-generating suite?), there are some remodels that have proven to be reliable investments over time. Some of these include:

Kitchens and bathrooms. Remodels here top the list. High-end finishes, like marble and quartz countertops and stainless steel or commercial grade appliances, are greatly coveted. Clever storage is desirable, along with home automation -- a new and growing trend.

Bathrooms. This one is simple. The hottest bathrooms right now aim to replicate a spa-like experience. From color and accessories to scents and lighting, transforming this room into a relaxation haven will maximize its appeal.

Basements. Basement remodels are among the best ways to

gain space without going the route of a costly addition, but the key is doing it right. Address moisture issues first, and hire professionals for plumbing, electrical and mechanical work. Insulate with a water-repellant insulation made from inorganic materials to improve energy efficiency, and then focus on the finishes.

Insulation. Installing, topping up or replacing insulation is one of the most cost-effective ways to increase energy efficiency and save money over the life of your home. For exterior walls, basements headers, cathedral ceilings, and attics, I recommend a product called Roxul Comfort-batt stone wool insulation for exceptional thermal performance. For interior walls and between floors, I'm a big fan of Roxul Safe 'n' Sound for its excellent sound dampening qualities. Both products are fire resistant up to 2,150F, resistant to mold and mildew, and Greenguard-certified to the highest level for air quality.

Smaller fixes. Know that you



Scott McGillivray

don't have to spend a lot of money to realize a good return. Can't afford a full-out kitchen or bathroom remodel? Consider painting walls and cabinets, replacing outdated hardware or fixtures and installing new lighting for an impactful refresh. When it comes to living spaces, it's amazing what a splash of color, some new flooring, carefully selected accessories and strategic lighting can do for the look and feel of a room. Save a little extra by doing it yourself. With a positive attitude and some elbow grease, you can make a big difference with projects that require low to moderate know-how. (MS)

Scott McGillivray is the award-winning TV host of the hit series "Income Property" on DIY Network, a full-time real estate investor, contractor, author, and educator. Follow him on Twitter @smcgillivray.



How to determine if items can be composted

Compost is an eco-friendly way to grow a healthy and flourishing garden bed or landscape. Full of nutrients and rich organic materials, compost is often called "black gold" by gardeners for the many benefits it provides.

One of the main advantages to compost, apart from the way it boosts plant growth and health, is that it is relatively low cost to produce.

Compost is created by food scraps and other materials that are left to break down naturally. Backyard composting speeds up the natural process of decomposition. In optimal conditions, organic matter can decompose more quickly.

According to the University of Illinois Extension, microorganisms like bacteria, fungi and actinomycetes account for most of the decomposition that takes place in a compost pile. However, insects also can do their part to create compost. Such in-

sects are referred to as "physical composters" because they break down materials by chewing, grinding and digesting them into smaller pieces. Bacteria create an oxidation process that heats up the compost pile and aids in its decomposition.

Homeowners can create their own compost piles with just a few items. Some of the staples of composting include foods that normally would be discarded. Vegetable peels, fruit rinds, eggshells, coffee grounds, and the like can be put into a compost pile.

Meats and poultry should not be placed in a compost pile because of the threat of harmful pathogens and bacteria.

Other items that are not food-related also can be added to compost piles. It may be challenging to determine which

ones are applicable (SEE COMPOSTING GUIDE, PAGE 2D)

These products are usually considered safe:

- paper plates with no coating
- products made from bagasse, a fibrous matter that remains after sugarcane or sorghum stalks are crushed
- cardboard boxes
- paper towels
- wax paper
- wax-covered paper cups
- products certified as compostable by BPI
- certified bio-plastics

Anything that is coated in plastic that is not a bio-plastic must go into the trash or be reused in another way.

Composting is a cost-effective, viable way to reduce trash and produce a beneficial product for gardening and landscaping.

Meats and poultry should not be placed in a compost pile because of the threat of harmful pathogens and bacteria.



YES

Fruit Peels/ Rinds

Tea Bags

Vegetable Scraps

Plant Trimmings

Weeds with Set Seeds

Meat

Large Wood Pieces

Cat Litter

Dried Leaves

Egg Shells

Coffee Grinds

Shredded paper

Coal/ Ash

Fish

Dairy Products

Sawdust

Straw/ Small Branches

Cardboard

Animal Manure

Natural Fibres

Walnuts

Citrus Fruit Insides

Fruit Stones

Non-Biodegradable Products

NO

Why switching to LED bulbs can make a big difference

(StatePoint) It may seem like a small detail, but the way you light your home can have a big impact on the environment and your energy bills. Indeed, widespread use of light-emitting diode (LED) lighting has the greatest potential impact on energy savings in the United States, according to government findings.

Add it Up
Using at least 75 percent less energy and lasting 25 times longer than incandescent lighting, residential LEDs, especially ENERGY STAR-rated products, can help you significantly reduce the cost of lighting your home. And this is truer than ever, as the price of this technology has declined and the uses for it have expanded. Even LED decorative holiday lighting can be purchased these days, giving consumers more opportuni-

ties to light their homes and lives efficiently.

Community Efforts
Community efforts are helping to make sweeping change and brighten lives. For example, the Environmental Protection Agency’s “Change the World Tour,” is a national program designed to motivate consumers to purchase ENERGY STAR-certified LED bulbs that bring energy-efficient lighting to communities in need.

Leading the charge are forward-thinking companies, such as ProVia, a manufacturer of home renovation products, including energy-efficient entry doors, replacement windows, vinyl siding and manufactured stone. They have partnered with Thompson Creek Window and Fairfax County Public Schools to teach students the importance of changing to ENERGY STAR-certified



PHOTO SOURCE: (c) Magneticmcc - Fotolia.com

LED light bulbs. ProVia is also donating LED light bulbs to Habitat for Humanity and encouraging their employees to get on board personally by making a commitment to purchase ENERGY STAR-certified LED

light bulbs. With these kinds of efforts taking place nationwide, LED adoption in local communities is expected to continue to rise. To learn more about the campaign, visit provia.com/change.

Take the Time
Swapping out traditional bulbs for energy-efficient alternatives is a simple home project that requires no special skills or tools, just a commitment to lowering one’s carbon footprint. Take an afternoon to make this

simple swap that promises to have a long-lasting and major impact. Actions taken by individuals may feel small, but on a collective scale, greening your home means greening your community and the larger world.



Earth-Kind Living Expo
Offered at two locations

November 18, 2016
First Baptist Church, 116 Oak Ave
SULPHUR SPRINGS, TEXAS OR

December 2, 2016
Ben E. Keith 2019 West Oak
PALESTINE, TEXAS

For more information and to register,
go to <https://agrilife.org/earthkindliving>

Pre-registration October 10-November 10: \$25
(after November 10 or on-site: \$35)

For general information, contact Larry Pierce at lpierce@ag.tamu.edu

ABOUT THE CONFERENCE

This conference will introduce consumers, producers, and volunteers to Earth-Kind Living, a balanced system using university-research-proven techniques for quality living, environmental stewardship, and overall well-being. Experts will share information on agricultural production, land stewardship, health and wellness, and Earth-Kind friendly homes.

SPEAKERS AND TOPICS

General Sessions:

Research Based Truth in Agricultural Production, Land Stewardship, Health and Wellness
Susan Ballabina, PhD
Ron Gill, PhD
Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service

Environmental Stewardship, Managing for the Next Generation
Steve Nelle, Range & Wildlife Specialist
Gary Price, Rancher and Businessman

Food Waste
Jenna Anding, PhD
Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service

Concurrent Sessions:

Earth-Kind Pasture Management
Clint Perkins, MS

Earth-Kind Vegetables and Herbs
Tim Hartmann, MS

Earth-Kind Landscapes
Steve George, PhD

Earth-Kind Kitchen - Kitchen Composting, Pantry Pests, Vermiculture
Jheri-Lynn McSwain, MS
Denita Young, MEd

Earth-Kind Beekeeping
Janet Rowe - Master Gardener

Earth-Kind Home - Air Quality, Energy Efficiency, Water
Mandy Patrick, MA

TEXAS A&M
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Texas A&M AgriLife Extension provides equal opportunities in its programs and employment to all persons, regardless of race, color, sex, religion, national origin, disability, age, genetic information, veteran status, sexual orientation, or gender identity. The Texas A&M University System, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and the County Commissioners Courts of Texas Cooperating

Is your clothes dryer energy efficient?

(StatePoint) If you are looking to be more energy efficient at home, you are in good company. Consumers nationwide are looking for new ways to reduce their energy use in their single-family homes, condominiums and apartments because using less energy helps save money and builds a more sustainable planet.

Fortunately, great strides have been made in efficiency for major appliances that would have been unimaginable decades ago.

One noticeable exception, until recently, has been clothes dryers. In 2012, the average electric clothes dryer used almost as much energy annually as the average refrigerator, dishwasher and clothes washer combined, according to a report from the Natural Resources Defense Council.

Here are a couple of things to consider that can help you select a sustainable dryer that also fits the design of your home.

Review Ratings
The most respected guide for sustainability in appliances is the Association for Home Appliance Manufacturers (AHAM) Sustainability Standards. Before making its ratings, AHAM considers a broad range of product attributes, including energy and water efficiency, manufacturing and materials. AHAM just started providing standards for dryers. To check its free rating and review other resources, visit aham.org.

Consider Ventless Dryers
This relatively new type of dryer is changing the energy efficiency equation. Ventless dryers recycle air within the unit, and offer an ideal way to help reduce energy consumption. They are also gentle on clothes, because they don’t heat the air as much as a traditional dryer.

There are two types: condenser and heat pump. The most efficient are the heat pump dryers, which use a refrigeration system to dry and recycle air before returning it to the drum. Consumers can choose from two Whirlpool brand dryer sizes that range from a compact model to a 7.4 cu ft HybridCare True Ventless Heat Pump Dryer.

Ventless dryers have another major benefit. They can fit into spaces beyond the laundry room -- such as closets in condominiums and apartments -- because there’s no need for a vent, just an electrical outlet. With many home designs moving from traditional layouts with a laundry room to open designs, this allows a washer and dryer to be placed virtually anywhere in the home.



Photo courtesy of Getty Images

GET PREPPED FOR WINTER

FAMILY FEATURES

The onset and arrival of colder temperatures means that it’s time once again to brace yourself – and your home – for everything that winter weather threatens to throw at you. From cool, drafty air wafting into your house to friends and family bringing snow and sand inside with them, it’s important to remember the preparation to go through before winter strikes.

In order to help keep your home warm, cozy and clean throughout the winter months, follow these seven tips to get started:

Check the Roof

With warm days dwindling, it’s never too early to look over your roof for damaged shingles or other various problems. Because winter brings along cold weather and plenty of precipitation, cracks in the roof can cause major issues down the road. If heights and ladders aren’t your thing, try using binoculars from ground level to check things out.

Clean the Gutters

After the trees shake loose of their leaves throughout the fall, it’s always imperative to keep the gutters clean of debris. If your gutters fill up with leaves and other junk, the runoff from rain and snow has nowhere to go except in unwanted crevices in your roof.

Seal Leaks Around Windows and Doors

Caulk is a cheap, simple solution to one of winter’s most annoying little habits – sending cold drafts into your house. Look closely as you check around windows and doors for small cracks then carefully seal up the problem.

Install Door Sweeps

Another way to keep warm air in and cool air out is to use door sweeps on the bottom of all exterior doors. A door sweep is a simple device that can be attached to the door frame to help seal the space between the bottom of the door and the floor.

Reverse Ceiling Fans

While some ceiling fans require flipping blades, most new fans simply have a reverse feature to make the blades spin clockwise. This easy fix can help pull room air upward and cause warm air – which has risen to the ceiling – to be forced back downward.

Keep Out Sand and Snow

Rather than sweeping and vacuuming your entryway every evening, place rugs and storage bins close to your front door, garage and any other entrance to the home so that you and your guests don’t track sand and snow into the house when inclement weather hits.

Stock Up on Winter Gear

Unfortunately, it’s impossible to know exactly what each winter will bring. Rather than trying to fight the elements on a snowy day to find salt for your sidewalk or a new shovel to clear the driveway, stock up on these items and other winter essentials long before Mother Nature strikes.

Winter can be a pain, especially for homeowners, but staying on top of your preparation and being ready for cold weather’s reach can help make snow season easier to handle. For more tips to get your home ready for winter, visit elivingtoday.com.



Simple Steps to Maintain Natural Stone

Natural stone adds elegance and style to any home. With a nearly endless array of colors, textures and designs, it’s easy to create a one-of-a-kind look for your kitchen or bath. However, without proper care, that carefully selected natural stone may quickly start to show wear and tear.

Not only does natural stone lend a beautifully sophisticated aesthetic, it’s generally regarded as a practical choice because it’s more durable than many other materials. However, granite, marble, travertine and other natural-stone and quartz surfaces do require proper care and attention to maintain that luxurious finish. Keep your natural stone in top condition with these tips from the experts at Granite Gold.

Clean often. Even if your surface appears clean, the safest bet is to clean it after every meal preparation.

The most miniscule particle could have a detrimental effect on your natural stone. Avoid common cleaners and abrasives. They can break down the protective seal and you could be faced with costly repair or replacement. Also, give special attention to the scrubbing pad you use; many are too abrasive for expensive stone counters and leave unsightly scratches.

Seal frequently. Frequently sealing granite countertops and all other natural stone surfaces maintains maximum surface protection, penetrating stone surfaces to provide superior, long-lasting resistance to staining, etching and soil buildup.

If you’re not sure whether it’s time to reseal, it’s easy to test. Pour water (about 3 inches in diameter) on the surface and let it sit for 30 minutes. Be sure to do this in several locations, since the integrity of the

seal could vary from one area to another. If the water beads, then the stone remains sealed. However, if the stone is penetrated – signified by a dark mark or ring created by the water – it is time to reseal.

Polish regularly. Polishing stone provides two great benefits. First, polishing after cleaning will bring out the stone’s natural beauty. Second, it will reinforce the protective seal and provide ongoing protection against water spots and fingerprints. One time-saving but effective solution after sealing is Granite Gold Clean & Shine, which provides the cleaning power of the line’s Daily Cleaner and the luster from the Polish in one easy-to-use formula.

You can find the products nationwide at Walmart, Lowe’s, Home Depot and Bed Bath & Beyond; check the product locator at GraniteGold.com.

Handy home safety guidelines for families

From **ANGIE MONK**
Wood County Extension Agent

Home safe home... this is the goal of every family. You can use this checklist to make your home safer for everyone; especially homes with young families.

- Go through every room, hallway and other areas in and around the home. Look at the yard, storage sheds, basements and any place a child might go.
- Check that all medications are in original containers with child-proof caps.
- Discard old prescription drugs.
- Separate household cleaners from

food and put out of children’s reach.

- Check for poisonous plants at a child’s level
- *Check cabinets and drawers within a child’s reach for sharp, small (swallowable) toxic or other dangerous objects. This includes matches, lighters, pins, buttons, scissors, knives, razors, alcohol or medications.
- Attach safety gates at the top and bottom of stairs to protect infants and toddlers.
- Unplug and store electrical appliances (radio, hair dryer, razors) in bathroom when not in use.
- Install smoke detector in hall or near bedrooms. Place one detector on every

level of the house. Inspect these monthly.

- Fasten curtains away from fireplaces, heaters, or ovens.
- *Ensure that screens or guards are in front of fireplaces, wood stoves, and open heaters.
- Place non-skid mats or decals in the tub or shower.
- Place plastic safety plugs in unused electrical outlets and extension cord sockets.
- Examine toys for sharp edges and removable small parts.
- Check toy boxes for safe closing, lightweight lids or no lids. All toy boxes should be ventilated in case a child

crawls inside.

- Keep first aid supplies well stocked and easily available.
 - Plan and practice family fire escape routes and procedures.
 - Store tools and power equipment out of child’s reach
 - Store firearms unloaded in locked cabinets with shells in separate locked area.
 - Post 911 and other emergency phone numbers on or near the phone
 - Review home safety rules with children often
- Items on this checklist are a resource from the U.S. Consumer Products Safety Commission.

Embrace greenscaping for a healthy lawn

Lawn and garden enthusiasts are often on the lookout for new trends that can make their lawns and gardens healthier and more robust. One trend that has gained considerable popularity in recent years is the move toward greenscaping, a set of landscaping practices that the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency says can improve the health and appearance of lawns and gardens while protecting and preserving the planet’s natural resources.

Why greenscape?
While the opportunity to protect and preserve natural resources is reason enough for many lawn and garden enthusiasts to embrace greenscaping, there are additional benefits to turning a landscape into a greenscape. Greenscaping promotes the planting of native plants, which are already accustomed to local climates and therefore do not require as much time

and effort to care for than non-native plants. Non-native plants may struggle to adapt to foreign climates, requiring homeowners to water them more frequently than native plants. And homeowners who plant non-native plants can expect to spend money to ensure they survive. So non-native plants can waste water and also cost homeowners time and money.

How can I greenscape?
Planting native plants is just one element of greenscaping. The following are a handful of additional ways men and women with green thumbs can turn their properties into healthy greenscapes.

- Build and maintain healthy soil. The EPA notes that a single teaspoon of healthy soil contains roughly four billion organisms. These organisms help create a loose soil structure that promotes strong, healthy roots. In addition, healthy soil recycles nutrients

for plants while protecting them from certain pests and diseases.

One way to create healthy soil is to conduct a soil test to determine if it has any nitrogen, phosphorous, potassium or lime deficiencies. Another way to build healthy soil is to add compost when mixing top soil for new garden beds or plants. Among its many benefits, compost can help soil retain nutrients and water.

- Water effectively. Lawns and gardens need water to thrive, but overwatering can be just as harmful to lawns as drought. Make a list of the types of plants (including the types of grass) in your yard, and then do your homework to determine how much water each plant needs.

The EPA notes that vegetables and other annuals should be watered at the first sign of wilting, while perennials typically only need water if they are still sagging when temperatures

cool in the evening. Trees and shrubs with fully established roots usually do not require any watering, though they might need some in years that are especially dry.

Avoid watering in mid-day, when summertime temperatures are typically at their hottest and water is likely to evaporate. In addition, watering in the evening may encourage the growth of mold or disease, so water in the early morning.

- Practice “grasscycling.” When mowing the grass, leave clippings on the lawn (though not in large piles dumped from buckets attached to the mower). It’s a misconception that grass clippings contribute to the buildup of thatch that blocks water from getting to the soil. In fact, when clippings are left on the lawn, the soil recycles the clippings into fertilizer.

Learn more about greenscaping by visiting the EPA at www.epa.gov.

Less fuel, more power

Lawn care technologies that provide strength, sustainability

As homeowners constantly look for ways to be more environmentally friendly, lawn equipment is a good place to start. There are revolutionary lawn care products on the market today that provide a more efficient way to accomplish tasks around the yard without sacrificing power and strength.

Electronic fuel-injected engines, which have been used for decades on the automotive side, are now available on riding lawn tractors. The technology reduces emissions and delivers excellent fuel consumption – using up to 25 percent less fuel than standard carbureted engines while providing the same amount of power.

“Lower fuel consumption is a top benefit to residential lawn mower customers,” said Emily Sword, director of

brand marketing for Cub Cadet. “A riding mower with a fuel-injected engine is one way to achieve those fuel savings, using significantly less fuel without compromising power.”

For those who want to take fuel-savings even further, there’s an even more efficient lawn mowing option. The RZT-S ZERO is the first electric zero-turn rider with steering wheel control and four-wheel steering. It does not require gasoline, oil or an oil filter and gives off no emissions or engine noise, making it one of the most environmentally friendly lawn mowers on the market.

On an overnight charge, the electric motor is ready for 60 minutes of cutting in “blade boost mode” – which is enough power to mow an acre on a single charge with no power fade.



Dual direct-drive electric motors power each blade for efficient and abundant power with a 42-inch cutting width. There are also no worries of turf damage caused by the turning of the wheels. The exclusive steering wheel control and four-wheel steering provides unsurpassed maneuverability on all types of terrain, with exceptional traction and stability on hills.

There’s also technology available for hand-held lawn equipment

that gives off no emissions. CORE, a sophisticated motor technology that delivers more torque with longer runtimes and no gasoline is available in string trimmers, hedgers and leaf blowers. It’s the same type of technology used in wind turbines and submarines. In addition to no emissions, it offers reduced noise and high torque levels equal to two-cycle gasoline engines.

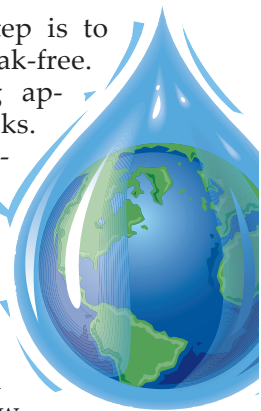
(SOURCE: Family Features)

Use these water smart tips at home to aid conservation

From **ANGIE MONK**
Wood County Extension Agent

Water conservation begins at home, and we must all do our part. We need to develop an attitude of conserving water so we will be conscious of using less water in all aspects of our lives.

Stop leaks. The first step is to make sure your home is leak-free. Check indoor water-using appliances and devices for leaks. Many silent leaks allow water and your money to go down the drain. Dripping faucets that are leaking at a rate of one drop per second can waste 2,700 gallons of water per year.



Start a new habit. Set a goal to start one or more new habits to conserve water such as:

- Take showers instead of baths
- Don’t let faucet run continuously when brushing teeth, shaving, and washing dishes
- Wash only full loads of clothes or use the appropriate lower water level

Replace your equipment with water-efficient equipment. Homes with high-efficiency plumbing fixtures and appliances save about 30 percent of indoor water use and yield substantial savings.

Remember: What we do affects the quality and quantity of the water we have available. By keeping that in mind, you are helping protect water resources now and in the future. As the saying goes “every drop counts.”

GRAY'S NURSERY AND GARDEN CENTER

In Mineola on Highway 37N
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FALL:
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FALL HOURS: MON. - FRI. 9:00am - 5:30pm
SAT. 9:00am - 4:00pm
Sunday - CLOSED (Until Spring)

Mums don't have to be exclusive to fall

Chrysanthemums, often referred to as “mums,” are among the most popular flowers for autumn plantings and landscape decor. But these hardy, often vividly colored plants are worthy of attention as early as the spring gardening season.

Although mums are most often purchased in September and October and cast aside shortly thereafter, the plant that many people mistake for an annual is actually a perennial -- meaning with the proper care it can come back year after year. By planting mums in the spring, gardeners ensure the plants have enough time to develop solid root systems, including their hallmark underground runners that enable them to grow tall and wide and overwinter.

While it’s best to plant potted mums that were used in fall decorating after the flowers die and before winter sets in, some container plants can still thrive and come back the following year. When cleaning gardens in the spring, do not trash withered mums that may have been stashed behind the shed. Try planting them and you may be surprised that they thrive and rebloom in the garden this year. Remove the dead branches and dried-up parts of the plant only after new shoots begin to grow.

Gardening experts advise planting mums in

sunny spots with southern exposure. However, be sure to keep the plants away from artificial lighting, such as streetlamps or garden accent lighting, as mums are short-day plants that bloom only when the hours of darkness are greater than the hours of daylight. Mums that get too much light at night may not bloom to their fullest capacity, or they may be “leggy,” with longer stems instead of being compact. Pruning or “pinching” mums in June and July will help keep mums compact as well, resulting in more flowers.

Mums desire a rich and moist but well-drained soil. Planted mums will require less water than container plants, but the ground should never become soggy. Well-watered plants will offer more flowers.

Hardy mums work well as edging, in mass groupings to create a shrub-like appearance and even in containers. Thanks to their relative affordability, mums are an inexpensive way to dress up landscapes. Mums are hardy in USDA zones five through nine.

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