



Lawn & Garden time

The Mendota Reporter
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Creating a garden in the shade

By Melinda Myers

Don't let limited sunlight stop you from growing a beautiful garden. Make the most of shady locations with proper plant selection and design strategies.

Start the season with native spring ephemerals like hepatica, spring beauties and trout lilies. These plants grow and flower early in the season before the trees leaf out, shading the area. They dieback soon after flowering as shade tolerant plants fill the garden. Look for those native to your region.

Select bright and lime green foliage plants that stand out in the shady corners of your landscape. Combine them with your favorite dark leafed and flowered plants that tend to disappear in the shade. The contrasting colors help both plants pop.

Use plants with variegated foliage to light up the garden long after their flowers fade. Siberian bugloss (Brunnera) has blue forget-me-not-like flowers in spring and variegated heart shaped leaves. Variegated Solomon Seal's

upright stems covered with green leaves edged in cream, white bell-shaped flowers and yellow fall color provide multiple seasons of interest.

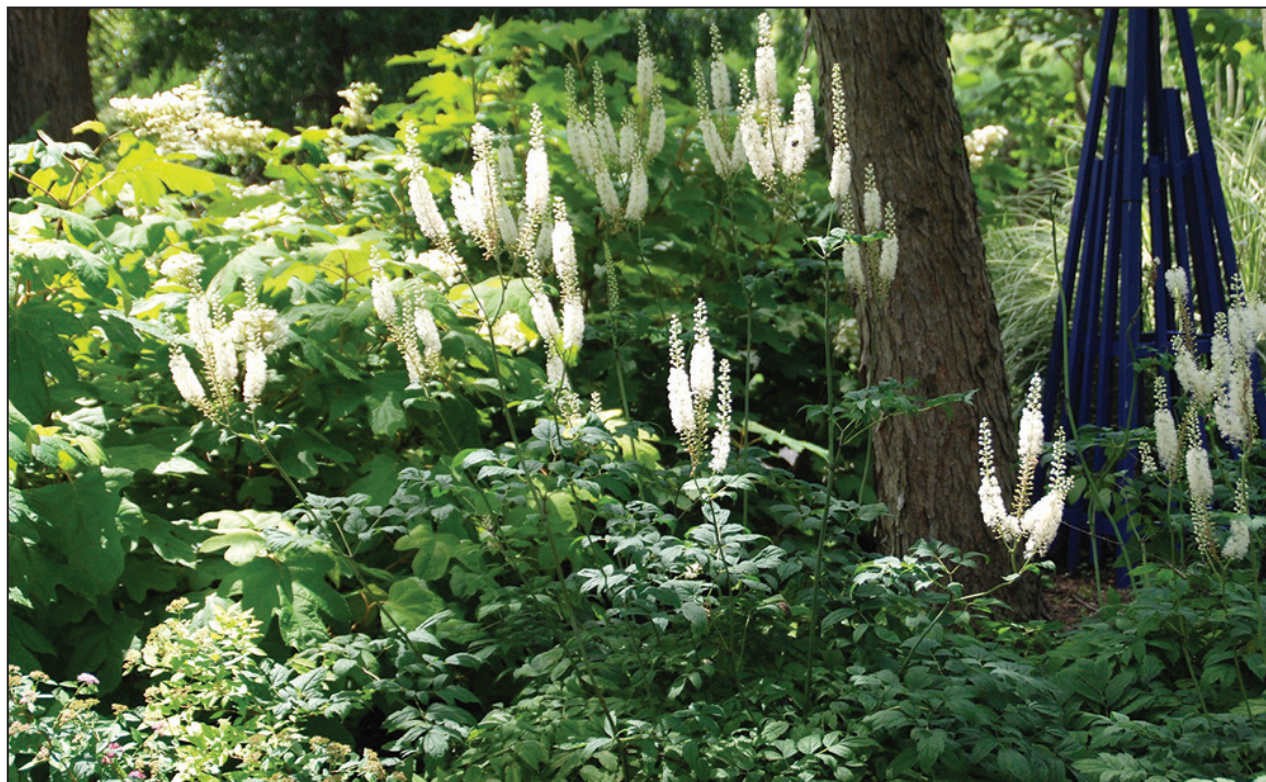
Barrenwort (Epimedium) also provides seasonal color in the shade. The heart shaped leaves are tinged red and emerge with the flowers in spring. The leaves turn green for the summer and then change once again to red in fall.

Add some height to those shady areas with bugbane. The leaves are topped with white spires of flowers in summer or fall, depending on the variety selected.

The white or pink blossoms of Roger's flower brighten the early summer garden. The big, bold leaves of this moisture-loving perennial resemble those of a horse chestnut tree.

The narrow leaves of sedges and Hakone grass create a striking contrast with the bold leaves of hostas. For an even bolder statement and focal point include a few elephant ears.

Look for shade tolerant plants with a variety of leaf shapes and sizes. The dif-



Select bright and lime green foliage plants that stand out in the shady corners of your landscape and combine them with your favorite dark leafed and flowered plants that tend to disappear in the shade.

ferences in texture add interest to the shade garden. Repeat the leaf sizes and shapes to unify the garden. Use this same strategy to create continuity between

sun and shade gardens in your landscape.

Include a variety of plant shapes. Use columnar plants to create a focal point and weeping and mounded plants for a sense of fluidity in the garden.

A lack of sun is not the only factor to consider when planning a shade garden. The density of the canopy of trees or an overhang may also limit the water that reaches and is available to the plants below. Growing dry, shade-tolerant perennials will help reduce your long-term maintenance. Barrenwort, liriopse, coral bells, foam flower, sweet woodruff and hellebores are fairly shade tolerant once established.

Make sure all new plantings are watered

thoroughly and when the top few inches of soil are crumbly and moist. Proper watering the first few years will result in deep, drought tolerant root systems that will help these plants grow and flourish despite the dry shade.

When planting under or near trees, be careful not to kill the trees when creating your shade garden. Don't cut or remove surface roots, creating entryways for insects and diseases. Adding as little as an inch of soil over the roots can kill some tree species. Avoid deep cultivation which can damage the feeder roots that are critical for water and nutrient absorption since the majority grow within the top 12 inches of soil.

If there's too much shade

to grow even shade-loving plants, consider mulch to protect the soil and tree roots. Add a chair for relaxing and enjoy this cool space as summer temperatures rise.

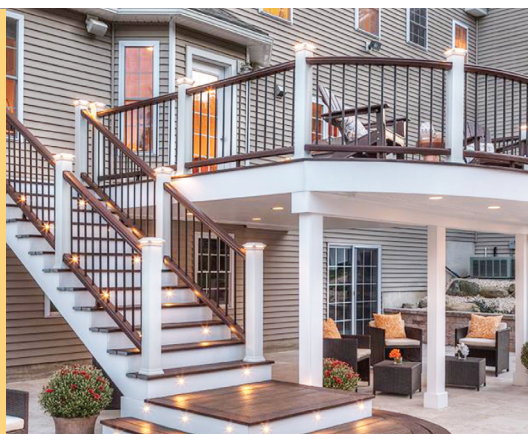
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Gardening can be less labor-intensive with a container garden

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



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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 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.

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When to use crabgrass preventer

As the temperatures start to warm up, your lawn will begin to come alive. With this comes the possibility of crabgrass. Crabgrass is a common weed that can invade your property. While it's not harmful, it can be an eyesore in an otherwise luscious and thriving lawn.

Apply your preventer before soil temperatures reach over 55 degrees for three days.

Crabgrass seeds start to germinate as the soil warms up. Initial emergence typically occurs when the ground gets to be about 55°F, and most seeds germinate between 60°F and 70°F. Sunlight, wind, moisture, and the amount of shade your lawn receives predominantly influence soil temperatures. In the Midwest, the soil reaches these temperatures in the springtime with the onset of warmer temperatures.

Considering all of this, the appropriate time to apply your weed treatment is when the soil temperature is 55°F. Be conscious of the soil temperature in your local area by entering your city or zip code into the GreenCast soil temperature tool at <https://www.greencastonline.com/tools/soil-temperature>.

The timing in which you administer crabgrass preventer to your lawn is crucial for

effectiveness. If used too early, it can break down before the seeds germinate. If used too late, a full-blown infestation could already be underway.

Pay close attention to the soil temperature and try to apply a crabgrass preventer right before it's forecasted to rain, if possible. The rain will wash the treatment off the grass blades into the soil and the crabgrass seed.

How to Apply Crabgrass Preventer

If you're wondering how to prevent crabgrass, the best thing you can do is to put down a preventer before the crabgrass seeds sprout. Crabgrass preventer is a pre-emergent herbicide as opposed to a post-emergent herbicide, so if you're applying in early spring, you're already a few steps ahead of the game.

If you do not apply the crabgrass preventer in time, do not panic. There are a multitude of crabgrass spray killers to kill crabgrass and other irritating weeds.

There are several ways to control lawn weeds in addition to herbicides. You can pick weeds by hand, add mulch to your backyard, and cut your lawn regularly to help hinder lawn weeds and keep your yard in tip-top shape.



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Determining which outdoor furniture to purchase is as simple as viewing it as an extension of your living space.

How to live BIG in your backyard this summer

(BPT) - The sun is shining, a warm breeze is blowing and you're itching to get outside. You finally step out the door, and what do you see? A vast, empty space with untapped potential. When it comes to designing your backyard

Some of the top trends in backyard accent décor themes right now include bohemian, farmhouse, coastal and mid-century.

staycation station for the summer, you want to make a BIG statement. After all, this is the place where you can be the hostess with the mostest, ready to mix up some margs at a moment's notice or mingle late into the night by firelight. Patio and outdoor spaces can be tricky to style and decorate. Here is a step-by-step guide to deck out your backyard this summer.

Step 1: Maximize value and comfort

The foundation of any space is furniture. Determining which outdoor furniture to purchase is as simple as viewing it as an extension of your living space. Think about how it will be used and how many people will use it. Create different vignettes and focus on "moments" you want to create in your space. Perhaps you want a cozy little spot for a fire pit. Or maybe you're planning on hosting a neighborhood potluck around a massive outdoor dining table. Catching some poolside rays will require some lounge chairs with, of course, a side table to hold your vacation drinks. Gazebos, sofas, tables, chairs, swings and matching coolers are all important pieces to consider when designing your space. And because this furniture will be outside and exposed to the elements, don't forget to look for items that are trendy AND affordable.

Step 2: Light up your night

To fully maximize use

of your outdoor space, you'll next need to focus on lighting. And if you've ever wondered to yourself: am I fancy enough for an outdoor chandelier? The answer is yes. You can also try mixing and matching candle-lit statement lanterns to give chill vibes to all who come by. Another option would be to create a focal point with a fire pit, which comes in all forms these days, from grand outdoor fireplaces to smokeless metal drums and classy table centerpieces. If you want to set the mood while keeping the bugs away, hang up some string lights and the bugs will fly high as you lie low.

Step 3: Delight in the details

Now we've arrived at the really fun part - decorating your new space. Some of the top trends in backyard accent décor themes right now include bohemian, farmhouse, coastal and mid-century. Regardless of the theme you choose, one of the first elements that will tie your space together is an outdoor rug. The brighter the pattern, the better! Since this will live outside, we're looking for big patterns and splashes of color to hide big splashes of dirt. Once you've got your theme and your color scheme, work in some oversized planters, stylish accent pillows, a scalloped umbrella, durable dining ware and even some low-maintenance but impressive faux plants for the finishing touch.

It's always a good time to improve your lot!



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Get kids excited about gardening

Many adults understand the joy of gardening, but gardening can be equally fun for children as well. While some adults may feel that certain children do not have the patience or perseverance to see plants grow from seeds to adulthood, selecting plants that are hardy and sprout quickly may be the key to igniting a love of gardening in children.

Choosing seeds that sprout quickly can hold the attention of children who are new to gardening. Many different plants fit this bill. Beans, peas, sunflower seeds, and bell pepper seeds are easy to start and germinate quickly. In addition, many leafy vegetables, such as chard, lettuce, spinach, and mustard, germinate in three to five days. Herbs, such as basil and parsley, also sprout fast. All of these plants are good options for introducing children to gardening, as each provides quick gratification.

To further interest children, it is a good idea to plant seeds in a way that allows youngsters to monitor the progress of growth. Use a transparent container, such as rinsed-out glass jars and canisters, to house the plant. Such containers give kids an unobstructed view of the process, during which children can plot the progress of seed germination and easily spot root and stem development. Once the seedlings grow larger, they can be transplanted into different containers.

Many seedlings can sprout with water alone. Children can easily grow new plants from clippings of a mature plant left resting in a shallow cup of water, and seeds may not even need soil to germinate. Kids may

have luck sprinkling seeds on a dampened, crumpled-up piece of paper towel. Cotton balls also make a good place to nestle seeds. Either material will hold on to water, keeping the seeds moist until they sprout. Afterward, the seedlings can be carefully moved into a soil-and-compost mix. The paper towel and the cotton balls will decompose and add to the organic matter already in the soil.

Edible plants often make good choices for children because kids can reap the rewards of their efforts. Herbs can be sprinkled onto food, or fruits and vegetables can be grown in containers and then served at mealtime. Kids can show pride in their accomplishments, especially if they have tangible results on the dinner plate.

Children who want to try something different can explore other types of plants. Aquatic plants, or those found at the pet store to grow in aquariums, can be easy to grow. They need little more than a container, fresh water and sunlight. Cacti and other succulents are also fun to explore. These plants are quite hardy in that they can stand up to moderate abuse, such as failure to water frequently enough. The unique appearance of cacti make them interesting focal points for an indoor garden.

A love of gardening that's fostered inside can also be explored outdoors. Set aside a plot of dirt where kids can sow their own seeds and tend to their own gardens. This hobby can help children learn patience and hard work while fostering an appreciation of nature.



Gardening is a hobby that can help children learn patience and hard work while fostering an appreciation of nature.



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Enlist nature's help for managing garden pests

By Melinda Myers

Put away the harsh chemicals and work in concert with nature to manage pests in the garden. Create an inviting habitat for nature's pest controllers to enlist their help with your gardening efforts.

Lady beetles, praying mantis and other beneficial insects feed on damaging pests like aphids. Just tolerate a bit of damage and wait for the good guys to move in and clean up the problem.

Grow a few plants to attract these and other beneficial insects to your landscape. Dill and its relatives attract parasitic wasps, coreopsis brings in the aphid-eating lacewings, and milkweed attracts lady beetles as well as monarch and other butterflies. Add some hyssop to attract the pirate bugs that eat thrips, spider mites and leafhoppers. Then plant members of the aster family to attract spiders that eat a variety of insects.

Invite songbirds into your gardens. They add motion and color to the landscape and help manage garden pests. Most songbirds eat a combination of fruits, berries, seeds, and insects. Their diet varies with the season. During spring and summer, they eat lots of insects and spiders when they are plentiful, easy to catch and an important part of their hatchlings' diet.

A birdbath will help attract them and beneficial insects to the garden. Select one with sloping sides for easy access to the water. Add a few seed producing flowers like black-eyed Susans, coneflowers, salvia, coreopsis and more. If space allows, include a few berry producing shrubs like dogwoods and evergreens

for shelter.

Leave some leaf litter under trees and shrubs and in the garden for toads that dine on slugs and other insects. Include a shallow pond or water feature. Even a shallow saucer filled with chlorine-free water is effective. Place rocks in and around the water for added toad appeal. Purchase or make your own toad abode from a ceramic or clay pot. Place it in a shady location near a garden filled with protein-rich insects. Set it directly on the soil and elevate one side with stones or use a cracked or broken pot that provides an entryway for the toad.

If you can't wait for nature's help, look for more eco-friendly options. Knock aphids and mites off plants with a strong blast of water. Trap slugs with shallow cans filled with beer. Trap and kill aphids in yellow bowls filled with soapy water.

Use barriers of floating row covers to keep pests like cabbage worms, Japanese beetles and bean beetles off plants that don't need bees for pollination. These fabrics let air, light and water through so just loosely cover the plants at planting, anchor the edges and allow the plants to support the fabric.

Use these fabrics to help manage squash vine borer and squash bugs. Cover squash plants at planting. Remove the fabric as soon as the plants begin flowering for bees to pollinate the flowers. Only use this method if these pests were not a problem in this area of the garden the previous growing season.

Remove and destroy, smash, or prune out pest-infested stems as they are found. Enlist the



Purchase or make your own toad abode from a ceramic or clay pot. Place it in a shady location near a garden filled with protein-rich insects.

help of young gardeners. Teach them the difference between the good and bad bugs in the garden. Then show them how to pluck, drop and stomp the plant-damaging pests. They'll burn off some excess energy while helping maintain your garden.

If you decide to intervene with a chemical control, look for the most eco-friendly option on the market. Always read and follow label directions as these chemicals are designed to kill insects and if misapplied can harm beneficial insects as well.

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