

Spring Lawn & Garden



2023
GUIDE





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The Basics Of Mulching

Mulch is available in various forms. Like other land and garden products, mulch can go a long way toward helping plants thrive. Mulch comprises just about any material that is spread over the surface of soil. Its purpose is primarily to help soil retain moisture. In addition, mulch can staunch weed growth, keep soil cool, improve the aesthetics of garden beds, and even improve soil nutrient composition. When the right mulch is chosen, it can reduce the amount of time homeowners spend watering and weeding their gardens and insulate plants from dramatic changes in weather. Gardeners may not realize that mulch also can prevent garden soil from becoming overly compacted. This can mean beneficial earthworms can move easily through the soil, creating channels for water and depositing their nutrient-rich waste products. Gardeners can choose organic or inorganic mulch. Organic mulches are derived from natural materials that will decompose over time, lending organic matter as well as various nutrients to the soil. Organic mulches also may contain beneficial microorganisms that can fight against plant diseases. Inorganic mulches may be made of stones, landscape fabrics and plastic. Both types will need to be amended or replaced as they degrade. Those who want the most environmentally-friendly mulching materials can choose all-natural mulches instead of synthetic alternatives. To work effectively, mulch should be applied in a two- to three-inch layer of material, state the experts at Old World Garden Farms. This is the ideal amount to retain soil moisture and suppress weed growth without choking plants. Also, mulch that is too thick may make it impossible for water to penetrate, or it may prevent the soil from airing out, causing continuously wet conditions that lead to root and stem rot. Mulch should not be placed directly against plant crowns or tree bases, as this can promote the development of disease. It may also serve as a habitat for bark- and stem-eating rodents. It's also suggested that watering newly installed bark or wood mulches to prevent fungi from colonizing in dry mulch and causing problems like a water-repellent surface on the mulch. Home landscapers considering mulch types may find that compost, manure and grass clippings (from nonpesticide-treated lawns) can be inexpensive and versatile in garden beds. The home advice site The Spruce notes that newspaper may also be effective. Many newspapers have switched over to organic dyes, especially for their black and white sections. Newspapers are an inexpensive way to suppress weeds and act like organic mulch in beds. They can be covered with other organic mulch, like shredded bark, for more visual appeal. Mulch can be a versatile asset when doing gardening projects around home landscapes. And the benefits are more than just aesthetic.



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Avoid Invasive Plant Species

Intuition may suggest all plants that provide habitats for wildlife and produce oxygen for the atmosphere are good no matter where they are planted. However, non-native plant species that are introduced into areas across North America can pose significant threats to an ecosystem. Foreign plants can wreak havoc on native plant species and agricultural industries. Scores of plants are aggressively invading certain areas of the country. Invasive species are introduced largely due to human action, such as planting non-native plants. Plants also may be introduced through boating and fishing. Wind and rain may introduce non-native plants to a particular region, while some plants are introduced through animals. The organization PlayCleanGo.org says that not all non-native plants are harmful and some can be beneficial. But non-native plants that take over and cause severe damage in areas outside of their normal range are considered to be invasive, and efforts must be made to keep invasives under control. Gaining awareness of the pathways through which invasives spread can help people avoid introducing invasive species.

Some invasive plants are very attractive and they may be for sale at some garden centers, but such plants should be avoided for the benefit of local ecosystems. In addition, weeds and seeds can be hidden in potting mixes or lawn and garden products and essentially sneak their way into regions where they do not belong.

Homeowners who learn to recognize invasive species can decrease their risk of introducing such plants to their properties. The following are some common invasive species:

- Garlic mustard
- Mayweed
- Norway maple
- Yellow rocket
- Australian pine
- Oxeye daisy
- Bermuda grass
- Ground ivy
- Chinese privet
- Cotton thistle
- Purple loosestrife
- Japanese honeysuckle
- English ivy
- Kudzu
- Autumn olive
- Paper mulberry

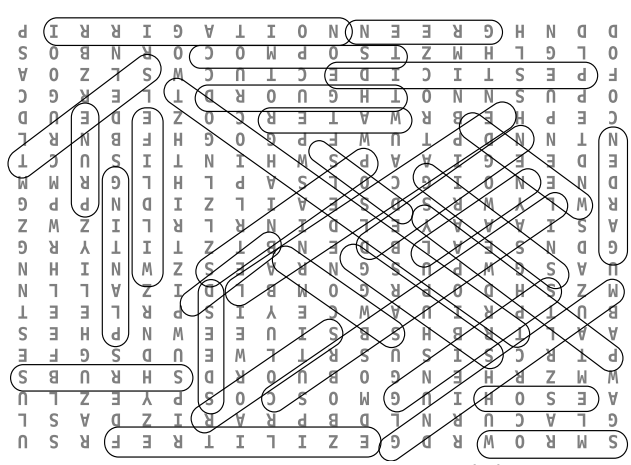
People can learn more about invasive species by speaking with lawn and garden professionals.

LANDSCAPE WORD SEARCH

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O L G L H M Z T S O P M O C O R N B O S
D D N H G R E E N N O I T A G I R R I P

WORDS

- BED
- COMPOST
- CURB APPEAL
- DESIGN
- DROUGHT
- FERTILIZE
- GARDEN
- GRASS
- GREEN
- GRUBS
- HOSE
- IRRIGATION
- LANDSCAPE
- LAWN
- MULCHING
- PATHWAY
- PESTICIDE
- PLANTING
- PLANTS
- PRUNE
- ROOTS
- ROWS
- SEEDS
- SHRUBS
- SOD
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- WATER
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Types Of Firepits For Your Backyard Oasis

Outdoor entertaining areas are popular among homeowners, and firepits are one of the most sought-after additions to such spaces. Various styles are available to homeowners who want to add firepits to their backyards, and choosing the right type may come down to budget, the amount of yard space available or even personal preference.

- **Wood firepit:** As their name suggests, wood firepits burn wood, which may appeal to homeowners who already have wood-burning fireplaces inside their homes. Because they don't require homeowners to tap into gas lines, wood firepits are generally easy to set up and install, and many homeowners prefer the aesthetic appeal of crackling wood and flames that's synonymous with wood firepits.
- **Gas firepit:** Gas firepits are touted for their convenience, as they don't require homeowners to carry wood and build fires. Upon being connected to a gas source, gas firepits provide fire at the click of a switch. Gas firepits are also appreciated for their safety, as there is little or no risk that flames from gas firepits will grow too large and become difficult to control.
- **Gas fire tables:** Gas fire tables might be ideal for those homeowners whose sense of decor favors more modern looks. Gas fire tables come in a variety of shapes and sizes and, like gas firepits, there's no need to struggle with lighting a fire or carrying firewood.
- **Tabletop firepits:** Homeowners, condominium or apartment dwellers with limited backyard space may want to consider the convenience of tabletop firepits. Restaurants may use tabletop firepits in their outdoor seating areas because they provide warmth and ambiance without taking up much space. Tabletop firepits fueled by gas will not need to be connected to a gas source, which may appeal to

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consumers who want something that's simple as well as small.

- **Fire urns:** While they might not technically qualify as firepits, fire urns provide a similar effect as firepits. Fire urns are typically

gas-powered and may be an ideal choice for homeowners who are looking for a unique, awe-inspiring feature for their outdoor entertaining areas.



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Savor These Beautiful (And Edible) Flowers

Cultivating beautiful blooms is a popular pastime for gardeners near and far. While gazing at a yard full of vibrant colors or enjoying the aroma of freshly cut blooms is enough for many gardeners, others may want to embrace a long-enduring tradition — growing edible flowers. Cooking with edible flowers is a trend that has endured for centuries. According to *Fleurs Gourmandes*, the first recorded history of edible flowers occurred in 140 BC. Use of calendula in salads dates back to the ancient Greeks and Romans. Victorian-era candied flowers and flower-encrusted sweets took edible flowers to new heights. Today, nothing may make a meal seem more gourmet than the inclusion of flower petals in the recipe. Of course, before delving into the expanded world of cooking using edible blooms, some notes of caution should first be



mentioned. Avoid flowers that may have been sprayed with fungicides, herbicides or insecticides. To verify safety, only use edible flowers grown specifically for this purpose, not flowers picked from roadsides or from landscapes. Secondly, remember that not all flowers are edible. Some can be poisonous or cause severe gastrointestinal upset when consumed. That

means all flowers should be carefully researched prior to experimenting with them in the kitchen. To begin growing — and eating — edible flowers, refer to this list of varieties deemed safe and be careful to double-check against allergies and any interactions with medications prior to use.

- **Allium:** These are blossoms

from the allium family, which include garlic, chives and leeks. These flowers can be used to add flavor to foods.

- **Basil blossoms:** It may be customary to pinch off the blossoms of basil, which come in colors from white to lavender in order to stimulate growth of the leaves of the plant. However, the blossoms, which are more mild than the leaves, can be tasty as well.
- **Calendula:** Sometimes known as "poor man's saffron," this yellow flower in the marigold family can taste like saffron when it's sautéed. Uncooked, calendula can have spicy notes that add variety to salads and garnishes.
- **Chamomile:** This plant features small, daisy-type flowers that can be used in treats and teas.
- **Cilantro:** The flowers from the cilantro plant can be eaten, just as the leaves and the seeds that form the spice coriander.
- **Fennel:** Just like the plant itself, the flowers of fennel have a subtle licorice flavor.
- **Hibiscus:** Hibiscus blooms are famously used in hibiscus tea, which is tart and cranberry-like.
- **Lavender:** The sweet, perfumed taste of lavender works in cocktails and desserts.
- **Marigolds:** These tiny flowers may be used in vegetable gardens to repel animal and insect pests. Blossoms have a fresh citrus taste that can be used in cooking.
- **Pansies:** These vibrant early bloomers can take on a winter-green flavor and look beautiful when glazed on cakes and other desserts.
- **Roses:** Beautiful to behold, rose petals can lend a subtle, fruity flavor to many different foods as well.
- **Zucchini:** The blossoms from this squash, which have a slightly sweet taste, can be enjoyed in many different ways. Some people batter and fry the blossoms, while others may stuff them with herbs and cheeses.

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Once Upon A Time....

There was an owner of a very successful ice cream shop. This owner built his business by having the creamiest ice cream around and by letting his customers know about them through extensive advertising. His business was so successful that he was able to send his son to a prestigious Ivy League school where his son was studying to receive his M.B.A.

One day the son came home for a break and promptly questioned his father "Dad, don't you know that there is a recession going on out there?" The father replied that his business was going very well, but the son persisted telling his father "Dad, you've got to cut back." So the father, figuring his son knew all about business, followed the son's advice. He promptly cut his advertising budget and then cut his cone & ice cream orders. Before long, business in fact did slow down. So the father replied to the son "You were right, son. Business is terrible. There is a recession going on out there."



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