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LAWN & GARDEN *Guide*

A Special Guide of the East Penn Valley & Northern Berks Merchandisers April 18, 2018

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Items To Improve Outdoor Living Spaces

The popularity of outdoor living spaces has been growing for years. A 2014 study from the home remodeling and design platform Houzz found that 56 percent of homeowners were making updates to improve their yards for entertaining. Similarly, nearly 60 percent of architectural practices surveyed by the American Institute of Architects in 2016 said outdoor living spaces were popular features in the homes they built.

Outdoor living spaces may also be sound investments for homeowners looking to improve the resale value of their properties. According to Remodeling magazine's 2017 "Cost vs. Value" report, outdoor living spaces returned between 55 and 71 percent of homeowners' initial investments at resale.

When planning an outdoor living space, homeowners with ample backyards have much to work with. However, to make the most of the space while simultaneously hoping to get as strong a return on their investments as possible, homeowners should look to create spaces that offer broad appeal and are not too personalized. The following are some popular outdoor living space features homeowners may want to consider.

OUTDOOR KITCHENS: allow homeowners to prepare more than just traditional backyard barbecue fare. A standalone charcoal grill in the backyard might get the job done, but a built-in gas grill complete with burners and surrounding granite countertop makes for a more functional outdoor entertaining space.

WARMING FEATURES: that can keep homeowners and their guests warm after the sun sets include outdoor fireplaces and firepits. Such features can provide a focal point in the backyard while also extending the outdoor living season into autumn and even early winter.

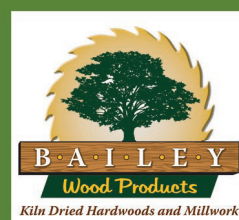
PORCH SPACE: Outdoor living spaces are often found in the backyard, but homeowners with bigger front yards than backyards may want to expand or open their porch spaces to create more space outside. Porch swings and rocking chairs provide a great place to relax, and porch spaces are covered, meaning homeowners can continue to enjoy time outside even when it begins to rain. Outdoor living spaces are growing in popularity. Homeowners who want to capitalize on this trend can do so in various ways.

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Herbein's carries an extensive line of natural and organic products that are safer not only for your plants, but also pets and family. Check out our "We are Manic about Organics" department for quality brands and products. Keep in mind we also carry products for canning, beekeeping, and backyard chicken raising, where you'll find new items on the shelf for spring.

Interested in making changes to your landscape? Herbein's is known to carry hundreds of shrubs and trees that will add the right amount of character to your property and give it the curb appeal that you desire. Be sure to stop by and check in often as we receive new inventory weekly! We also offer delivery and installation.

Are you looking to maintain a lush green lawn? Look no further than Herbein's Lawn Center where you'll find Dan, their lawn care specialist, ready to answer questions and eager to help you choose the correct seed and fertilizer program for your specific needs. *Remember to have your soil tested by picking up a Penn State Soil Test Kit - available at Herbein's for only \$10.00! This is crucial for the success of your lawn and garden.

A must see is the vast line of pottery and outdoor living accessories including furniture, fire pits, chimineas, umbrellas, statuary, fountains, benches and more. Take a stroll through the garden center to find one-of-a-kind pieces to compliment your outdoor space.

Unfortunately, it is time for the egg-hatching of the Spotted Lanternfly. If you're aware of this insect, you know of the severity of its existence and level of concern it is giving to not only homeowners but wineries, the hardwood industry, farmers, arborists and many other people and businesses in Pennsylvania. At Herbein's we are staying up-to-date and in constant contact with the PA Dept. of Agriculture and the Penn State Extension to learn more about the SLF as new information presents itself. We also carry several products that the homeowner can use to deter the SLF. Stop by the garden center and see which products will work best for your individual situation.

Herbein's Garden Center provides quality service and products to our customers and strives to maintain an active presence in the community. Follow us on Facebook and watch our website for news and information.



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Introduce Earthworms Into The Garden

Gardeners eager to revitalize their lawns and gardens may spend hundreds of dollars on tools and products designed to improve soil and growing conditions. Although many of these items can be advantageous, gardeners also may want to look to nature's best garden helpers: earthworms. It is believed that nearly 3,000 different types of earthworms inhabit the planet. Worms have been around for hundreds of millions of years. Worms can be seen as bait dangling on fishing lines or as meals for red-breasted robins. But these subterranean dwellers play their biggest role beneath the soil. Earthworms move through dirt as they search for food. The worms consume particles in the soil, helping to recycle materials like dead leaves, plant parts, decaying animals, and feces. Through their travels, worms also serve to aerate the soil. Worms bring the subsoil closer to the surface and mix it with the topsoil. Earthworms' castings also help naturally fer-



tilize the areas in which they reside. The slimy mucus that worms leave behind contains nitrogen, which also helps to amend the soil. The University of Illinois Extension says most earthworms found, particularly in North America, can only grow so long, even though some worms seem like they stretch forever underneath the ground. Depending on the type of worm and how many segments it has, as well as its age and ability to get nutritious foods, worms typically reach only a few inches in length, offers National Geographic. There are some anomalies, however. The Oregon giant earthworm is one of the largest earthworms found in North America, growing to more than three feet in length.

Worms need the correct mix of oxygen, moisture and favorable temperatures to survive. If they do not have these components, they will seek them out elsewhere. Because of the many benefits earthworms provide, they can be a boon to landscapes.

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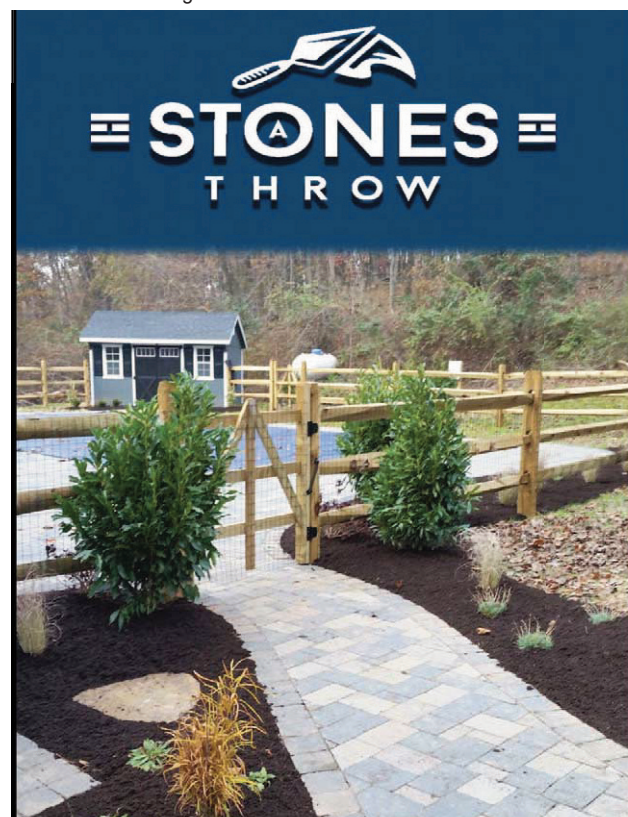
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Awnings Can Make Outdoor Spaces More Comfortable

Many homeowners are eager to step outdoors upon the return of warm weather. Outdoor living spaces have grown in popularity as more and more homeowners embrace opportunities to entertain and lounge around in their yards. Outdoor entertaining areas can be great, but such spaces may go unused when summer sun makes it uncomfortable to spend time outdoors. But a retractable awning can change all that. Homeowners often find awnings can be worthwhile investments that can be beneficial both inside and outside of the home.



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INCREASE USABLE YARD SPACE: Awnings can create privacy and establish boundaries for outdoor living areas. Place an awning over a deck, tables and chairs, or an entire patio area. Some people like to install awnings over a portion of their pools to provide shade for those who want to escape the sun's rays. Motorized awnings can be retracted with the push of a button, which can help homeowners with physical limitations.

PROTECT AGAINST SUN DAMAGE: Awnings provide excellent protection against sun damage, as they can shield outdoor furniture from direct sunlight, helping to reduce the chances for discoloration or fading.

REDUCE AIR CONDITIONING COSTS: In addition to shading outdoor living areas, smaller awnings can be placed over southern- and western-facing windows, shielding interiors against the sun's rays. In turn, this may reduce reliance on air conditioners.

EXPAND GARDENING POSSIBILITIES: Some plants require very specific light conditions to grow. Awnings can protect shade-loving plants from harsh sunlight and filter the sun for plants that require indirect light. They can be placed over a patio container garden or permanent garden structure.

ADD VALUE FOR BUYERS: For those who may be selling their homes soon, awning may help them receive top dollar. Today's buyers want houses that have attractive and functional exteriors, and an awning can provide that competitive advantage over similar homes in the neighborhood.

When renovating outdoor areas, homeowners should not overlook awnings that can make outdoor living spaces more livable.

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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, according to HGTV. 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

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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. The University of Connecticut Home & Garden Education Center says 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. The center also suggests watering newly installed bark- and 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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Foodies find it hard to beat vine-ripened tomatoes plucked right out of a garden. Other edibles, such as fresh lettuce for a small luncheon salad or a handful of fresh parsley right out of a pot to add to a marinade, also add a lot to meals.

The convenience and flavor of freshly grown edibles propels many home gardeners to grow produce and herb gardens in their yards. But those short on outdoor space may be happy to learn that many edibles grow equally as well indoors as outdoors.

Many people maintain comfortable temperatures between 70 and 75 F in their homes all year long, which can be the ideal condition for growing an array of edibles no matter the season. For those with homes that receive ample sunlight (or if homeowners are willing to supplement with artificial light), growing conditions can be even stronger. An indoor garden can comprise as much space as a homeowner is willing to devote. Shelving can maximize vertical areas and enable gardeners to include even more planting room.

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Keep these tips in mind when cultivating indoor edible gardens.

•**TOMATOES:** Tomatoes should be reserved for the sunniest spot in a home or one where additional UV light can be used. Tomatoes will need pots or containers that are roughly six inches deep with ample drainage. Keep in mind that tomatoes grown indoors will be smaller than outside fruits, and you may want to consider plum or cherry tomato varieties.

•**CUCUMBERS:** For those fresh salad mixes, cucumbers can be grown indoors in large pots so they can have space to develop. Be sure to put a climbing structure in the pot so that vines can grow vertically, and place cucumbers in a sunny, warm location.

•**CARROTS:** Natural Living Ideas says that if you have between four and five hours of bright sunlight per day and deep pots with loose, well-draining soil, you can cultivate carrots indoors. Carrots prefer cooler spots for sweet yields. Plus, carrot greens can make for attractive indoor decorations.

•**MICROGREENS:** Swiss chard, basil, dill, kale, and other greens can provide nutrient-dense additions to any meals. These plants do not require a lot of depth to a container and can thrive on a sunny windowsill in a room that's between 60 and 70 F.

•**SCALLIONS:** These plants of the onion family add flavor to many recipes. When scallions are grown at home, gardeners can snip off the greens as needed. Choose deep pots so the scallions can establish strong root systems.

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•**TURNIPS:** Large, deep pots are needed to grow turnips, says Loyal Gardener. You can grow them from seeds and be harvesting turnips in about two months. Homeowners or apartment dwellers can experiment with different types of edibles indoors. The result can be fresh foods no matter the season.

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The Benefits Of Water Features In Garden Landscapes

Many homeowners aspire to make their homes appear as beautiful and welcoming as possible. Exterior renovations may be high on homeowners' to-do lists, and landscaping is oftentimes a key component of those projects.

When planning gardens, homeowners stand out against the greenery and foliage and can be used to create focal points around the garden or yard. A single fountain can draw the eye, while a trickling stream or waterfall can deliver water to various spots in the landscape.

- Aesthetic appeal: Water elements stand out against the greenery and foliage and can be used to create focal points around the garden or yard. A single fountain can draw the eye, while a trickling stream or waterfall can deliver water to various spots in the landscape.

- Soothing sound: Rain drops on a rooftop or waves lapping on a shoreline elicit feelings of harmony and relaxation. Water features can bring that gentle sound close to home, further enhancing the ambiance.

- Brings texture: Water has its own unique and fluid texture that can provide stark contrast to blades of grass or the hard lines of architectural elements, such as pergolas or retaining walls. A pond or fountain can soften lines.

- Enhance the natural ecosystem: Water features can attract wildlife to a property. Birds may visit to take a quick sip, and dragonflies are sure to dart and hover over the shimmering ripples. Inviting natural wildlife to the yard can add hours of entertainment by enjoying the animals and insects.

- Remedy problem areas: Rather than fighting with the landscape, homeowners can adapt it. An area of the yard prone to soggy conditions or flooding can be transformed into a pond or waterfall to work with natural surroundings.

- Foster a passion: Many people turn to water features so they can explore the hobby of nurturing an outdoor aquarium. Koi ponds are relatively easy to install and maintain, and the vibrant fish add visual appeal.

- Add a personal touch: Water features are as unique as the homeowners who create them. To set landscaping apart from neighbors' homes, homeowners can add fountains, ponds or flowing water elements to their properties. Decorative water features also can be melded with pools and spas to help these manmade recreational areas seem like they were carved right out of the natural landscape. Water features can take landscapes to the next level with sounds, texture, movement, and beauty.

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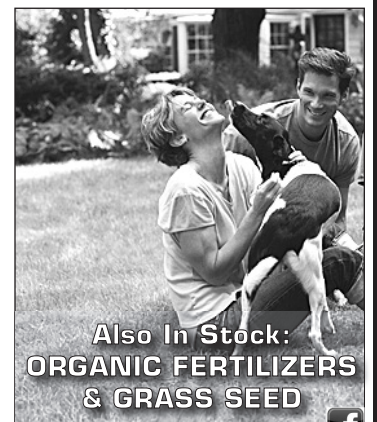
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Avoid Invasive Plant Species

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 looses-trife
- Japanese honeysuckle
- English ivy
- Kudzu
- Autumn olive
- Paper mulberry

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

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How To Control Common Spring Pests

Just when winter thaws out and people are anxious to enjoy the blooming flowers and luscious lawns of spring, pesky pests can appear and impact comfort levels and safety.

Many pests resume their levels of activity as spring draws closer and temperatures warm up. The presence of these insects and rodents may cause problems in and around a home, which makes it essential to recognize them and avoid issues. The following are some of the more common spring pests and how to remedy infestations.

PAVEMENT ANTS: are some of the most common pests residents encounter inside and outside of their homes. These ants are light brown to black with appendages that are lighter than the rest of their bodies. Small in stature, pavement ants have parallel lines on their heads and thorax, according to pest extermination company Orkin. Although pavement ants nest outdoors, they can enter homes through small crevices in search of food scraps. Their large colonies may not disappear until treatment is introduced. Keep foods in tightly sealed containers, clear counters and floors of crumbs, and address water sources, such as leaks. Pesticides may be needed in extreme conditions.

FLEAS: are tiny, jumping, biting pests that must find a host upon which to live. As ectoparasites, they feed on blood while living on the body of living hosts. Pets can bring fleas inside the yard and home in warm weather. According to the University of California Statewide Integrated Pest Management Program, flea larvae develop more quickly at higher temperatures. At normal room temperatures, the entire life cycle of a flea is about 18 days.

Several flea control products are available to control fleas on cats and dogs. There also may be powders and sprays to alleviate flea infestations in the home. Vacuuming is also very effective in killing larvae in the carpet and at picking up adults.

WASPS: An errant wasp, hornet or yellow jacket may have survived winter and ridden out the colder temperatures within a home. Once the weather warms, queens will begin to look for places to lay eggs and establish colonies. Treating areas where wasps are seen entering and leaving the home is key. Seal holes as soon as possible. Although wasps help control other insect populations, their painful

stings and potentially aggressive nature can make them challenging to have around a home. If a nest is found, hire a professional to remove it.

SPIDERS: Some spiders are not harmful enough to humans and pets to be much of a problem. In fact, spiders can be helpful to have around to control the populations of other insects. Still, many homeowners would prefer these web-

slinging friends remain outdoors. Therefore, sealing cracks in a home's foundation and repairing small openings around windows and doors can help keep spiders out. Also, alleviating moisture issues in basements, garages or attics may keep out other bugs that would be prey to spiders. Homeowners can take the steps necessary to cut down on pests in and around their homes.



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Recognizing And Addressing Leaf Spot

Homeowners who take pride in their properties may be alarmed to notice seemingly spotted leaves on their trees. Such spots may be indicative of a condition known as leaf spot.

In spite of its appearance, leaf spot is often harmless. According to the Missouri Botanical Garden, leaf spot is a term used to describe a number of diseases that can affect the foliage of ornamentals and shade trees. Often caused by fungi that can spread thanks to wind and/or spring rains, leaf spot also may be a byproduct of bacteria. As unsightly as leaf spot can be, the Missouri Botanical Garden advises that established plants will only be adversely affected by leaf spot if defoliation occurs three or more years in a row.

While leaf spot is often harmless, homeowners should still learn to recognize it and document its presence to ensure it does not become a long-term problem.

HOW TO RECOGNIZE LEAF SPOT: Because leaf spot is an umbrella term that refers to various diseases, its symptoms can vary depending on which type of leaf spot is affecting a tree.

- Spots: The spots of leaf spot

vary in size and color depending on the plant, the organism that's affecting it and the stage of development. Spots are typically brown, but can be tan or black as well.

- Margins: Another sign of leaf spot is the presence of concentric rings or dark margins on the leaves around the infected areas.
- Black dots: If fungus is the cause of the leaf spot, the fungal bodies may appear as black dots in the spots. These dots may be within the rings or in central clusters.
- Yellow leaves: Some leaves that are infected with leaf spot turn yellow and drop prematurely.

If leaf spots are not noticed immediately, they may gradually combine to form large blotches.

HOW TO ADDRESS LEAF SPOT: Leaf spot does not necessarily need to be addressed. As the Missouri Botanical Garden notes, many trees tolerate leaf spot and suffer little to no damage. In addition, the University of Minnesota Extension notes that the majority of leaf spot diseases affect only a small percentage of infected trees' overall leaf area



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and are only minimal stressors on the trees. But homeowners who want to address leaf spot can take certain steps to do so.

- REMOVE INFECTED LEAVES. As infected leaves fall, homeowners can remove them so the spores that caused the initial infection cannot be blown onto healthy leaves and spread the disease.
- REMOVE DEAD TWIGS. Removing dead twigs also can help get rid of spores that can contribute to infection.
- CHANGE WATERING TECHNIQUES. When watering trees, homeowners who want to prevent leaf spot or stop it from spreading can avoid overhead watering, instead using soaker hoses. Watering early in the day also can give foliage ample time to dry off before nightfall.
- Prune plants. Pruning plants promotes healthy air circulation

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and reduces crowding, which can help keep foliage dry, making trees less vulnerable to leaf spot. As unsightly as it can appear, leaf spot is often harmless. But homeowners can take steps to prevent it and stop it from spreading to healthy leaves.

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Rain barrells provide an eco-friendly opportunity to repurpose rain water while helping home-

owners conserve water and save money. But homeowners must exercise caution when using rain barrels in their lawns and gardens. Water collected by rain water should never be used for drinking, cooking or bathing. Pet owners should know that water collected by rain barrels also should not be used to bathe pets. Rain barrel lids should also be tightly secured to prevent mosquito infestations. Secure rain barrels to also protect children

and pets from falling in. Overflow valves should always direct water away from structures to prevent water damage to homes or sheds. In addition, to reduce risk of falls and injury, homeowners should be certain that water is not directed toward sidewalks, driveways or other areas where foot traffic is common. Before the arrival of winter, homeowners should disconnect their rain barrels from downspouts to prevent the formation of ice.

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Gardening attracts new devotees year after year. While Baby Boomers may spend more on gardening than any other demographic, even millennials are getting on the gardening bandwagon. When it comes to outfitting a gardening shed, gardeners will not want to be without certain tools and gear.

- DIGGING SHOVEL:** A rounded-blade digging shovel is needed to plant shrubs and trees as well as to excavate areas in a landscape.
- RAKE:** A rake can be used to clear the ground, remove thatch and leaves from a lawn and level soil in a garden bed.
- HAND TOOLS:** such as a hand fork and trowel, are essential for small digging jobs, especially when working with flower pots or containers.
- EDGING SPADE:** This flat-blade shovel is handy to have around because of its versatility. Edging spades can slice turf, edge gardens and cut through roots.
- PRUNERS:** Most sharpened pruners can cut through stems and branches effortlessly.
- HOSE:** Choose a high-quality hose that is lightweight and durable, as hoses will always be necessary.



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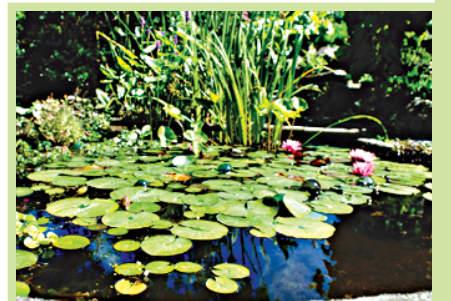
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