

FALL

Home & Garden



Set Beautiful Boundaries

Border gardens are the backdrop for the rest of the yard and, properly done, add depth, dimension and color to make the garden come alive.

Ask your garden center experts about what works best in your growing zone and then look for these beauties to add to your borders.

PANSIES

Pansies are the annual stars of the fall garden. They thrive in USDA zones 6-10 and come in just about any color you can imagine. Plus, they're frost hardy. Plant them together for a mass of color or put individual plants into bare spots at the front for pops of color. Dead-head the plants regularly to keep them blooming.

BLACK-EYED SUSANS

This native wildflower belongs to the sunflower family and looks like it with bright yellow petals around a strikingly dark center. It's a drought-tolerant plant that loves full sun and attracts pollinators such as bees and butterflies. They're hardy in zones 3-9 and readily self-seed, meaning they'll be back.

DAHLIAS

Dahlias come in a range of colors and branch out from tuberous roots that can be overwintered in place as long as the climate isn't too cold (think



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zone 7 and up). They grow upright and, depending on the variation, can have contrasting foliage in addition to bright blooms. Plant them in a site with good drainage that gets full sun. They're also container friendly.

AGAPANTHUS

Agapanthus feature bright, purple or white blooms that

arch up out of lime green leaves and are good for the middle tier of the border. They love heat and are hardy in zones 8-11 and prefer partial sunlight, especially in warmer, southern climates. They can stay evergreen through winter, adding interest even in colder months.

LUPINES

If you're looking for tall,

structural color, look no further than the lupine. It's a diverse family of more than 500 flowering perennials that bloom from spring to summer with fragrant blossoms. They're hardy from zones 4-9, but may turn annual in warmer climates.

CONEFLOWER

Otherwise known as echinacea, they have large, showy

blooms with petals that push away from a large, vibrant center. They're members of the daisy family and are native to North America. The flowers grow at the end of 2-4 foot stems, so put them toward the center or back of a border garden. They're hardy in zones 3-9 and are adaptable to growing conditions across most of the U.S.

Ideas for a No-Mow Yard

American grass yards cover about 1.9% of the land area of the U.S. and keeping them green can guzzle millions of gallons of water per day.

Furthermore, gas-powered lawn and garden equipment consumes gas and spits out pollution and noise. The good news is there are options for no-mow yards for anywhere in the country. Depending on your hardiness zone, here are some plants to consider.

CLOVER

White Dutch Clover or microclover handles pets and walking well and can green up any remaining turf by drawing in more nitrogen. Microclover is a newer, low-growing variety and can take occasional mowing if needed. It's hardy zones 3-10 and doesn't bloom.

BLUE STAR CREEPER

This small, fast-growing groundcover is a great no-mow substitute. It can take foot traffic and holds up well to sunlight or shade (but the flower color may be more muted the more shade there is). Speaking of flowers, they do bloom tiny, pale blue flowers from spring through late summer and offers tiny green leaves all year round. It's hardy in zones 5-9.



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VERONICA 'WATERPERRY BLUE'

Another blue or purple flowering star of the no-mow lawn is Veronica or speedwell. It grows to five inches tall and spreads to 15 inches wide, spreading deep green leaves that turn coppery in fall and tiny blue booms in the spring and

summer. It's hardy in zones 5-8.

MOSS

Shade has its own solution — moss. It stays green all year and requires very little maintenance. It also, depending on the variety, has a soft, carpet-like texture and is good for the soil. It likes compacted,

acidic, nutrient-poor soils, but you can test your soil and amend it to make sure. Get your moss from a reputable local nursery; crafting moss won't grow.

CREEPING JENNY OR MONEYWORT

This is a fast-spreading

green or even gold groundcover that can trail over slopes and walls.

It has yellow flowers and spreads quickly but not vertically, getting a mere two inches tall.

It likes most terrain and soil, including shade, and is hardy in zones 3-9.

Efficient Window Treatments

Thermal window treatments work by blocking sun and radiant heat in summer, but they can also help in colder months with retaining heat.

About 30% of a home's heating energy is lost through windows, the U.S. Department of Energy says, and thermal window coverings can help mitigate that loss.

CERTIFICATIONS

The Department of Energy says to look for window products certified by the Attachments Energy Rating Council (AERC). The council's rating indicates the product has been certified according to strict standards maintained by the independent organization. The group has a certified product search that allows you to find the right product for you.

OPEN AND CLOSE STRATEGICALLY

Most window coverings are movable, the department says, but about 75% of residential window coverings stay in the same position all the time. The agency warns people not to fall into that habit and open and close your coverings depending on conditions outside. If it's cool and sunny, leave your window treatments open to take advantage of the sun's heat. If



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it's cold and cloudy, leave them closed to keep the heater or furnace's warmth in.

Hang the draperies as close to the windows as possible and make sure the drapes fall onto a windowsill or to the floor. Installing a cornice at the top of the drapery or placing the drapes against the ceiling can

further reduce heat loss.

The Department of Energy says that keeping conventional drapes closed during cold weather can reduce heat loss from a warm room up to 10%. In cold weather, close the draperies at night and keep any that don't receive sunlight closed during the day. For extra

protection, hang two sets of draperies together. The room-side drapery will maintain around the same temperature as the interior space, the Department of Energy says.

WINDOW FILMS

For extra protection, the Department of Energy says win-

dow films applied to the glazing surface of the window can protect against glare, solar heat gain and UV exposure. However, they can block heat even in cooler weather. Be aware if you have these films on your windows, trying to use the sun's heat to your advantage in winter months may not work.



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Styling Your Fireplace

For homes with a fireplace, there's no quicker way to get warm and cozy than by lighting a fire. However, it's important to style these focal points of the home carefully.

The U.S. Fire Administration says fireplaces cause about 27,900 residential building heating fires every year, resulting in 115 deaths, 525 injuries and millions in property damage.

USING THE WALL SPACE

Optimize the wall space above your fireplace by hanging a large gallery wall or your favorite large-format wall art. You can opt for mirrors or even a gathering of mirrors to anchor the space and enlarge the appearance of your room. You can create groupings

of family photos to really personalize the space.

HANGING BY THE TV

You can install your television above the fireplace. This is probably a job for a professional installer to make sure it's far enough away to not be affected by the fireplace's heat. Also, fishing the wires in the wall and mounting a heavy appliance like the TV can be difficult for even the best DIY'er. Talk to your local electronics store to find reputable installers in

your area and find out what accessories you may need or want.

OPTIONS FOR THE INSIDE

If you live in a warmer climate or maybe aren't comfortable running the fireplace as usual, you can turn off the fuel source, such as the gas, remove the logs, close the flue and arrange candles in an attractive group — use varying heights and colors to add interest — and light those to give you hygge without the hassle. Do make sure not to leave any lit candles unattended; if you're still concerned, look into LED candles that look realistic.

OPTIONS IF YOU DON'T HAVE A FIREPLACE

If you don't have a fireplace

installed in your home, you can still enjoy the ambiance.

Hang a wall-mounted electric fireplace or choose furniture, such as a television console, with an electric fireplace built in. Add firepit glass with appropriate units that come in a wide array of colors and reflect the light of the fire.

MODEL OF A MANTLE

Stock your mantle with collections of various sizes, including super cozy lanterns, candles or family pictures. Garlands are a good choice provided they don't dangle too close to any heat source.

Mantles are a good place for soft, ambient lighting or adding height with tall vases with slender, elegant stems.

Enjoying High Tech Outdoors

Fall is a great time to enjoy the great outdoors, including while watching college football or other sporting events or even your favorite shows.

It's entirely possible, if you choose the right setup that can handle the weather and the sun.

DON'T USE A REGULAR TV

Inside televisions aren't meant to be used outside. Full stop. Even if it's under cover. Condensation is one concern; the natural rise and fall of temperatures will cause condensation in the unit. Also, the wind will blow in rain and dust, no matter how far your roof sticks out. Extreme temperatures are another concern, says the experts at Crutchfield. Regular TVs, even in the shade, will overheat on a hot day and cold temperatures can damage the unit.

WHY OUTDOOR TVS ARE SPECIAL

These TVs, Crutchfield says, are built tough. They are sealed and powder coated to resist rust and corrosion. Their cabinets and cables are watertight, preventing any electrical hazards. They have special systems to protect them from extreme heat and



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cold and have extra-bright screens to make sure you can see all the action.

INSTALLING AN OUTDOOR TV

If possible, you'll want the outdoor TV to face north so the sun is always behind it for optimal daytime viewing. Pick

a spot that's at least partially sheltered and invest in an outdoor TV cover and use it when the TV isn't in use to protect your investment. Use an outdoor TV mount that's engineered for exposure to the elements and consider getting a movable one with tilt and swivel so you can position the

screen to minimize glare.

OTHER ACCESSORIES

House any other peripherals, such as a cable box or media streamer, in a weather-protected space. These accessories generally aren't built for outdoor use. Run the cables to the outdoor

television through the walls for a clean, simple installation. If you're using the TV with Wi-Fi, you may need a range extender to get the signal to where you need it. If you need to purchase an antenna for live over-the-air broadcasts, make sure you get one meant for outdoor use.

Managing Compost

Composting is a useful way to manage organic scraps from the kitchen and yard and turn it into a stable soil amendment that can be used to build soil health and provide nutrients to plants.

But just dumping scraps in a pile and hoping for the best won't yield you results you need. Here's how to manage your organic waste and your compost pile.

WHAT YOU NEED FOR COMPOSTING

You need the right mix of scraps for composting. It's helpful, the EPA says, to think of the ingredients in terms of browns, greens, moisture and oxygen. Browns are carbon-rich materials. These are things such as dry leaves, plant stalks, shredded uncolored paper and brown bags, shredded cardboard without tape or wax coatings and untreated wood chips. Greens are fruit and veggie scraps, grass clippings, coffee grounds and crushed eggshells.

The EPA says not to put meat, fish and bones; cheese and dairy products; fats, oils and grease; cooked foods; plants and grass treated with herbicides; aggressive weeds or weeds with seeds; treated or



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painted wood; dryer lint; pet waste; glossy paper and produce stickers into your compost pile.

START YOUR PILE

Begin collecting scraps for the compost pile in your kitchen and in a space outside. Set up a space for the pile in a spot that's easily accessible and has good drainage. Choose a bin or other kind of containment and get it set up. You want to make sure there's a way to water it

nearby.

Add browns and greens to the pile, making sure they're broken up in smaller pieces to help the materials break down faster. Start with a four to six-inch layer of bulky brown items, then layer in greens and smaller browns. Add water to dampen the pile. Then, keep it going. Try to add at least two or three times the browns as greens and make sure food scraps are covered by browns. Turn your compost

occasionally and maintain a moisture level to ensure the materials have the consistency of a wrung-out sponge.

DECOMPOSING

As your compost decomposes, the pile will get hot. In the center, it can reach 130-160 degrees. These hot temperatures help reduce the presence of pathogens and weed seeds. If the pile gets too dry, the EPA says to moisten it and turn it. If it has a bad odor, add more

browns and turn the pile. If it's not heating up, mix in greens and turn the pile.

When the pile is no longer heating up after mixing or when there's no more visible food scraps, allow the pile to cure for about four weeks. The pile should shrink to about a third of its original size. Your compost will be ready to use in about three to five months. It should look like dark, loose soil and smell like fresh soil, too.

Reducing Noise Pollution

We know about pollution from things like car exhaust or wastewater, but noise pollution is real, too.

You can't see it, but it's there, in everything from lawn equipment, ringing telephones, to even things like planes taking off and traffic.

WHAT ARE THE EFFECTS OF NOISE POLLUTION?

One of the most obvious consequences of noise pollution is noise-induced hearing loss. This comes from regular exposure to noise that measures over 85 decibels. When noise gets too loud, it can damage parts of the ear that can't repair themselves. This hearing loss is usually gradual and may not be noticed until it's significant.

NOISE POLLUTION AROUND THE HOME

There are ways you can reduce noise pollution in and around your home. Inside, seal gaps and windows to prevent outside sound (and air) from leaking in. Consider upgrading to double-paned or laminated soundproof windows if you live in a particularly loud environment. You can surround yourself with soft furnishings. Hard surfaces can reflect and amplify sound.

Outside, one of the principal culprits in noise pollution is lawn equipment. Instead of loud internal combustion



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power equipment, consider switching to electric tools when you can. Not only do they not depend on fossil fuels and emit exhaust, but they can be quieter than traditional, gas-powered lawn equipment.

Another common source of noise pollution is car traffic. Make sure your cars and other vehicles are regularly

maintained to manage loud engine or exhaust noise. Keep the volume down on car stereos as well as on TVs and radios.

OTHER THINGS YOU CAN DO

There are other ways you can help buffer noise around your home. They include:

- Planting rows of evergreen trees, shrubs or hedges to absorb and deflect sound waves.
- Advocate for urban noise reduction policies, including concrete sound barriers, speed limit reductions and quiet zones.
- Help institute initiatives such as construction hours, quiet hours and commercial

venue hours.

- Enlist help from advocacy groups such as Quiet Communities, Noise Free America or the Center for Hearing and Communication. Get your neighbors involved and share information about the cardiovascular and mental health effects of rises in noise exposure.