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OUTDOOR LIVING DRIVING GARDENING TRENDS FOR 2006

For homeowners today, it is now “in” to be “out!” Outside that is... cooking, entertaining, reading, relaxing and even working in the great outdoors.

But we’re not talking camping here. We’re talking “outdoor living” and it’s the biggest trend in gardening in years. Higher fuel prices are expected to further drive this trend as we continue to stay closer to home for our entertainment and relaxation needs.

For today’s style conscious homeowner, the walls of the home seem to have come tumbling down and now the homeowner’s focus is on decorating the outside of the home on the deck, the patio and all around their property.

According to Unity Marketing, outdoor living products and services reached \$62.5 billion in 2004, and plants accounted for only a third the sales.

“It’s not just about gardening anymore, and it certainly is not about the Latin name of plants,” says Susan McCoy, president of the Garden Media Group, who has predicted outdoor living trends for the past five years.

This outdoor living trend is turning everyday homeowners into exterior decorators, using high-end fabrics they match with the latest “brand name” flowers and plants, exterior lighting that looks like fine table lamps, cozy couches that double as beds, and containers adding spots of color throughout the yard.

According to a survey by the Garden Writers Association, almost half of those that garden say they “decorate” with containers. They also are adding garden art and knick knacks to the outdoor scape that give their property it’s very own “personality”.

“If we can take our living outside, we are,” says McCoy. “Our backyards and patios now serve as playgrounds, living rooms, kitchens, home offices and havens.”

To turn your home decorating style inside out, here are GMG’s trends in outdoor living for 2006 that were presented to garden editors and writers at the 57th GWA Symposium in Vancouver.

For a complete list of what’s shaping gardening, visit www.gardenmediagroup.com.



What's In What's Out for 2006

What's In

Lived In Gardens Are In

Simple Elegance Is In

Safe Gardening Is In

Gardening in Small Spaces Is In.

Pot-scaping Is In

Home Grown Is In

Adventuresome Is In

Boom without Bloom Is In

Mixing Containers Is In

Indoor Living Color Is In

Fountains Are In

What's Out

Showplace Gardens Are Out

Fussy Gardens Are Out

Reckless Gardening Is Out

Colossal Landscapes Are Out.

1-D Containers Are Out

Fast Food Is Out

Safe Is Out

Just Flowers Are Out

Mixed Containers Are Out

Plant-less Houses Are Out

Ponds Are Out

Lived In Gardens Are In. Showplace Gardens Are Out. Homeowners want easy and simple gardens that are low maintenance and full of color. They have become more self-confident and know how to add their personal signature to their backyards. There has been a shift in focus from inside the home to the outdoors, and consumers are buying "enhancements" to add to their outdoor lifestyles like Viking grills, plasma screen outdoor televisions and entertainment "tents."

Simple Elegance Is In. Fussy Gardens Are Out. Less is still more. The key this season is to garden with style and simple elegance. According to Tres Fromme, planning & design specialist at the famous Longwood Gardens, "It is simple elegance enlivened with a healthy dollop of luxury." He recommends buying two or three great pieces like something from Campania's Longwood Collection and then work your garden around them. Instead of lots of mediocre "stuff," think smaller quality "spots" around the yard. The buzz words are post-modernism, new minimalism and modern American classics.

Safe Gardening Is In. Reckless Gardening Is Out.

In keeping with the healthy living trend, consumers are seeking sustainable gardening principles. As a result, there is a shift to get plants off chemicals and on a healthier, holistic lifestyle. Gardening underground is taking on new life. More than ever before, gardeners are realizing that great gardens begin underground with nutrient-rich soil. Products like LazyMan™ Liquid Soil Aerator and LazyMan™ Organic Soil Conditioner make it easy to enhance soil quality for naturally healthy lawns and gardens. ZEBA's Quench is being rolled out on the West Coast. It's an all natural product that absorbs and stores 300-400 times its weight in water. A preventive, rather than a curative approach, to plant care is also gaining ground. Products like Messenger®, turn on a plant's natural response system to prevent attacks by disease and pests. The result of these preventative measures is stronger and healthier plants, and that means less work for the homeowner in the long run.

Garden in Small Spaces Is In. Colossal Landscapes Are Out. As lot sizes shrink and people downsize their homes, consumers are gardening more in less space, on patios and decks, on rooftops and, of course, in containers. Vertical gardening is in, growing either up or down from balconies or on patios. According to Raymond Evison, the leading breeder of clematis in the world, dwarf sized annuals, perennials and shrubs are now specifically bred for small spaces. Pixie impatiens, Sunblaze roses and Patio Clematis™ are all proportionate to the size of small gardens.

Pot-scaping Is In. 1-D Containers Are Out. Container gardening has stepped off the back porch and patio and moved into the landscape, showing up in beds and borders or standing alone like a eye catching exclamation point. Busy homeowners find decorating their yard with "spots of pots" an easy way to splash color throughout the yard. Plants like the Raymond Evison Patio Clematis™ or Halo Hydrangeas™ are perfect choices to under plant with Wave® petunias or Simply Beautiful® annuals in containers.

Home Grown Is In. Fast Food Is Out. Reflecting society's current enthusiasm for healthy eating and a desire for fresh, flavorsome fruits and vegetables, vegetable gardening is coming back en vogue. Herbs and veggies are being grown alone or mixed in containers. Growing your own vegetables and flowers is the new status symbol of luxury. It is a luxury of the heart that says, "I care, and I have time." George C. Ball, Jr., president of W. Atlee Burpee, the most well known name in gardening, believes, "If we can teach our children where foods comes from, we can teach them to be healthier for life."

Adventuresome Is In. Safe Is Out. We have left the cocoon and are now ready for bold adventures. Cottage gardens are safe and comfortable. Zen gardens are edgy. Use plants with great architecture and texture, like Summer Chocolate mimosa, to make a bold statement against a stark background. Expect to see lots of red, purple and gold to enliven the yard. "Colors are very much alive with people who are committed to gardening at any level," says Steve Hutton, president of The Conard-Pyle Co. To make a stylish statement use clashing colors like Fanfare® Bright Coral and Fanfare® Pink Sparkle spreading impatiens. Plant big sweeps of Knock Out® roses and mix them up with Double Wave Blue Velvet spreading petunias. Venture into this brave new "color me quick" world by searching new plants at the Lawn & Garden Yellow Pages at www.lgyp.com.

Boom without Bloom Is In. Flowers Only Are Out. Busy gardeners want plants that are colorful and easy to grow, and few plants fit that bill better than big, bold and beautiful-leaf plants. They scream high style and sophistication, providing all-season color for sunny or shady spots. From simple accents to exotic focal points, these new beauties offer high impact choices for almost any garden spot. With striking foliage in an eye-catching, multicolor pattern, Blazin' Rose iresine and Kong coleus has excellent garden appeal. Tropical plants are ideal for large mixed containers or combination plantings, where they strut their stuff without getting lost among other varieties.

Mixing Containers Is In. Mixed Containers Are Out. Well-mixed containers are not completely out, but as Elvin McDonald, garden editor of Better Homes & Gardens, says, "Plants in too many colors and textures look as tasteless as wearing plaids, stripes and prints together." Plant several of one variety per container or several different varieties, all in one color family, per pot. Then group colorful containers together to create an avalanche of copious color.

Indoor Living Color Is In. Plant-less Houses Are Out. Ferns, snake plants and palms aren't for your grandmother's parlor any longer. Homes with lots of open space and sun porches are being filled with houseplants. Many houseplants do double duty -- indoors during cold weather and moved to decorate the deck or patio in the summer. For many people their first introduction to gardening is tending to a houseplant in college or in their first apartment. Plants like long-blooming orchids are adorning desk in offices and improving the beauty and health of the environment while increasing productivity!

Fountains Are In. Ponds Are Out. Water gardening, which dropped about 27% last year as an in ground activity, is now popping up in other forms. Containers and Fountains. The trend is to keep sound, motion and water in the garden, but, in a simplistic, beautiful, and easy way. Fountains and container water gardens are all the rage, creating motion, sound and beauty- all at the same time- effortlessly.

For more gardening trends, visit www.gardenmediagroup.com.

Resources:

Campania International, www.campaniainternational.com

Garden Media Group www.gardenmediagroup.com

Hines Horticulture www.hineshort.com

Messenger www.messenger.info

Raymond Evison Clematis Collection www.evisonclematis.com

Simply Beautiful® www.simplybeautifulgardens.com

LazyMan www.outsidepride.com

The Conard-Pyle Co. www.starroses.com or www.starplants.com

W. Atlee Burpee www.burpee.com

Wave Petunias www.wave-rave.com