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Gardening for the Greener Good

Philadelphia – August 25, 2007 – From tots to grandmothers, concern for the environment is at an all time high, and there is no easier way to go green this spring than in the backyard.

According to trend spotters from the Garden Media Group (www.gardenmediagroup.com), being “green” in the backyard is definitely the life-changing, enduring trend across the board in gardening circles for 2008, while more and more environmentally responsible homeowners find ways to cultivate ‘green backyards’ without sacrificing style, beauty or time.

“Gardening is no longer for self-gratification,” says Susan McCoy, a leading trend-spotter in the gardening industry “Today gardeners around the world are digging in for the greener good. Just by planting something, they are helping to restore the balance of nature and help heal the earth one garden at a time.”

Futurist Faith Popcorn agrees. “Consumers today are more ecologically aware than preceding generations,” she says. “They feel a personal sense of responsibility to save our society.” They feel a need to make a difference, to be part of the solution not the problem.

Steve Hutton, president of the Conard-Pyle Co., sees this in gardening, too. “We’ve come to a point in time when gardeners want their landscapes to benefit the environment, not pose a potential threat to it.”

With more and more people playing, entertaining and even working in their backyard yards, they want products that are safe for their pets and family, and that means safe for the environment, too.

McCoy says this sense of environmental responsibility coupled with our passion for healthy living is causing a real shift in what homeowners are asking for at the retail garden centers. “Gardeners now know fertilizers, potting soils and the plants they use impact the environment in a positive way, and they are proud to do their part to be good stewards of their little piece of the earth,” says McCoy

The 2007 Cone Consumer Environmental Survey supports this movement, citing that almost two-thirds of customers would pay more for environmentally friendly products that are “readily available” where they shop.

To stay in-the know about 2008’s hottest, healthiest new garden styles, here are GMG’s 2008 outdoor living trends, presented to garden editors and writers at the **2007 Garden Writer’s Symposium in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.**

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



GMG 2008 Trends Report

What's In **What's Out**

What's In

Gardening for the Greener Good is In

Eco-Chic Gardens Are Forever In.

Buying Local is In.

Water in the Garden is In.

Smart n' Easy Gardens Are In.

Corresponding Color Combinations Are In.

Curvaceous Gardens Are In.

Well-Lit Gardens Are In

Gardening for the Birds & Bees is in

What's Out

Gardening for Self Gratification is Out

Chemical Needy Gardens are Way Out.

Big Eco-Footprints Are Out

Wasting Water is Out

High Maintenance Gardens Are Out

Complementary Color Combos are Out.

Square Gardens are Out.

"In the Dark" Gardens Are Out

Reckless Gardening is Out

Gardening for the Greener Good is In. Gardening for Self Gratification is Out.

Concern and heightened awareness for the environment has reached its tipping point and has flowed into mainstream America with crashing speed. "Environmentally savvy homeowners know it's not just good enough to live an environmentally friendly lifestyle, you've got to be environmentally responsible, too," says McCoy. They're actively seeking ways to conserve water; use locally produced or recycled materials, and employ environmentally responsible maintenance practices. Ball Horticultural, the world's leading supplier of bedding plants and flowers, believes "sustainability takes 'thinking green' to a higher level, and that consumers now expect forward-looking brands to do the eco-work for them." Environmentally responsible gardeners, seeking sustainable plants and plant food options, should keep an eye out for green options, like the new Simply Beautiful® drought-tolerant Solcito Zinnia as well as the Knock Out® series of roses from Conard-Pyle/Star® Roses.

Eco-Chic Gardens Are Forever In. Chemical Needy Gardens are Way Out.

"Eco-Ethics is one of the top consumer trends of the year, and it is flowing into the gardening," says McCoy. Spurred by an overwhelming concern for the health of their pets, children and Mother Earth, homeowners are seeking eco-chic garden products. They are now 'just saying no' to chemical-based pesticides and fungicides, and are selecting plants that are bred to withstand attacks by disease and insects.

Unlike organic products of the 60's, this new generation of eco-chic products actually works. Gardeners worried about not harming wildlife lunching on their landscapes are also concerned about the wildlife repellants that they are using on their yard. For those that don't want to use chemicals or products that smell like rotten eggs, a slew of new eco-chic repellants are now available for Bambi and all his friends.



GMG 2008 Trends Report

What's In What's Out

Buying Local is In. Big Eco-Footprints are Out.

Consumers are becoming increasingly aware of the environmental footprint business have on the environment, and about the health benefits of buying locally grown foods. Garden companies like The Organic Mechanic Soil Company (organicmechanicsoil.com) are positively affecting the world in their operation by minimizing their impact on our environment. From their post-consumer recycled packaging to their production process which utilizes wind power for energy, this company is "right on." Organic Mechanic(R) Potting Soil substitutes locally made composts for peat, protecting unique ecosystems while producing a nutrient rich potting soil that allows consumers to use less chemicals. All this from a company that is focusing distribution efforts locally in the Mid-Atlantic region to help reduce the "miles spent on the road" in-between producer and consumer.

Water in the Garden is In. Wasting Water is Out.

According to the 2006 National Gardening Survey, water gardening is up a whopping 49 percent. But today, adding a water feature to your garden doesn't mean back breaking work or budget-busting water bills. The chicest new way to add a water element outdoors is with petite water pods and fountains. Unlike man-made water ponds, the new small scale pods require a lot less water and maintenance. Fountains that re-circulate water will also be wildly popular in 2008. Try adding one of Campania International's (campaniainternational.com) classic and contemporary eco-friendly FountainLite® fountains that replicate the look of lead or iron but are lighter than traditional materials. Concern over limited water resources receives national attention.

Saving water is not only in, but mandatory in many areas. Many water districts are offering rebates for landscape water saving devices. Look for more smart solutions for water saving and rain harvesting to help us be better stewards of the land and our landscapes. For tips and strategies, visit anla.org/waterwise or epa.gov/watersense.

Smart n' Easy Gardens are In. High Maintenance Gardens are Out.

Design trends may change rapidly, but lifestyle trends do not. The uber-busy consumer is busier than ever, and he or she demand products that simplify their life without breaking the bank. The good news is that spring 2008 will usher in an overwhelming assortment of *Smart Garden* products. From regionally customized fertilizers to disease-resistant plants like the Bahama Bay Hibiscus that require no pesticides, saving time, money and doing right by planet has never been easier. Other smart gardening plants to be introduced in 2008 include Hines Horticulture's Black Flamingo, a low maintenance perennial that works well in the landscape or as a houseplant and the new "novice-proof" Thai Delight Caladium collection which also requires minimal care or know-how to grow successfully.

Corresponding Color Combinations are in. All in the Family Color Combos are out.

Simplicity in the garden remains hot for 2008, but this season there's a new twist on the old monochromatic look. Instead of potting or planting just one basic color family, try adding foliage plants or succulents with variegated leaves as an accent. To create a harmonious look, just be sure that one or two of the colors in the variegated leaves picks up color from one of the other plants in the arrangement. To give you a clear picture on how this technique works, just imagine pairing a multi-colored pink, black and beige printed scarf with a pair of black pants and a cream sweater. And there you have it. Shade gardeners, interested in this type of combination, should consider Salsa™ Asian Jasmine as their accent plant. Salsa, a variegated perennial that thrives in the shade, offers eye-catching colors like red, orange, green, yellow and white.



GMG 2008 Trends Report

What's In What's Out

Curvaceous Gardens are In. Square Gardens are Out.

It is no longer hip to be square. As more gardeners go natural in their gardening techniques we are seeing more organic or free-flowing design in the garden as well. Today, homeowners are choosing to trade in their box-shaped lawns for a much more curvaceous look. But they're doing it in more ways than one. "Some gardeners are opting to install curve-shaped beds that whip around the perimeter of the front and backyard," says McCoy. According to Unity Marketing, almost three-fourths of luxury homebuyers are installing outdoor shelters, like gazebos from Amish Country Gazebos (amishgazebos.com) to 'break-up the space.' Circular brick patios, curved walkways and statuary are being installed to lead the eye around the garden room in a way that is much more visually stimulating than traditional designs.

Well-Lit Gardens are In. "In The Dark" Gardens are Out.

"Lighted features have become an essential element for 24 hours use of the garden," says designer Peter Cilio of Campania International (campaniainternational.com). From stylish table lamps to modern freestanding cast stone wall fountains, such as Campania's Echo Fountain, equipped with a submersible egg lights, homeowners want dramatic night-time illumination in the garden. Amish Country Gazebo makes it easy by offering an "electrical ready" option upon delivery of its custom-made gazebos. Gazebo goers can now hang chandeliers or instantly plug-in outdoor floor lamps for immediate use day or night.

Gardening for the Birds & Bees is in. Reckless Gardening is out.

As we seek to restore the balance of nature, creating natural shelter that birds can retreat to and planting flowers and plants to attract and feed wildlife is increasingly become more important. Potting up evergreens, planting vines beneath a deck railing and even potting up flowers and placing them around a deck or patio will give these creatures a place to hide, and for some birds, bees, ladybugs and even bats and other beneficial insects fruit and nectar to eat. Planting or potting red blooms, such as Simply Beautiful's Aztec Dark Red Verbena will attract hummingbirds and Star® Plants Grand Bleu™ caryopteris will be covered with bees and butterflies. Another easy way to go green in the garden is to go easy on insecticides or stop using them altogether.

Resources

Amish Country Gazebo www.amishgazebos.com
Campania International www.campaniainternational.com
Conard-Pyle Co. www.starroses.com or www.starplants.com
Garden Media Group www.gardenmediagroup.com
Hines Horticulture www.hineshort.com
Organic Mechanics, www.organicmechanicsoil.com
Simply Beautiful® www.simplybeautifulgardens.com
Wave Petunias www.wave-rave.com