

2024

FALL FIX-UP



The
Brookings
Register



Autumn in Bloom

COLORFUL FLOWERS AREN'T FOUND ONLY IN THE SUMMER

So many perennials, ground covers and annuals reach their peak during the warmer months, leading most amateur gardeners to assume that fall can't match their beauty. But a number of plants put on their own breathtaking show of color every autumn. You just need to know which flourish later in the year — and whether your climate will support them.

FALL FLOWERS

Landscapes and gardens don't have to go dormant in the fall. Several kinds of flowers burst with life long after the beaches empty and swimming pools have closed: New York asters offer bursts of blue, white, pink and purple. Cosmos also remain in bloom from mid-summer into the fall, adding pops of red, pink, white, yellow and orange. Showy stonecrop will perennially turn from pink into a gorgeous crimson as autumn unfolds. Boltonia's daisy-like flowers boast pinks and whites that will perfectly border any fall garden.

SHRUBS AND TREES

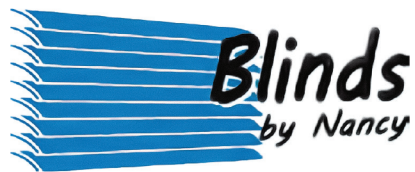
Flowers aren't the only plants that put on a bright and exciting performance after summer memories fade. Lush, green oak-leaved hydrangea turn ruby red every autumn. The

American yellowwood's fragrant white blooms will drop off as fall begins, but then the leaves transform into an amazing yellow color. The white fringe tree also boasts dazzling yellow foliage. Red pillar, a perfectly named form of Japanese barberry, will add a flourish of reddish-purple leaves to your late-season landscape. The amur maple's foliage transforms from green to orange in autumn's earliest months, while the leaves of a kousa dogwood turn a striking red.

CLIMATE CONSIDERATIONS

Several areas of the country are rightly famous for their fall colors, but that doesn't mean you can't turn your personal landscape into something special for the season. You just have to pay attention to specific temperature zones. Conditions in your area impact whether these flowers, shrubs and trees will do well. Talk to professional gardeners, experts at garden centers or personnel from local ag centers to find out more, since recommended temperature zones play such a huge role in whether these plants thrive. Choose with an eye on average high and low temperatures, and your fall garden will be enlivened for years to come.

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FIVE RENOVATIONS THAT PROVIDE a Strong Return on Investment



Renovations that make homeowners and residents of a home happy are always worth the investment. Though it's certainly true that projects that create more functional, usable space and add comfort and convenience are worth the price, such renovations are even more beneficial if they provide a good return on homeowners' financial investment. Returns are often cashed in when homeowners put their homes up for sale, and each year Remodeling magazine releases its "Cost vs. Value Report," which considers a wealth of data across the United States to determine which renovations return the highest percentage of homeowners' financial investment. According to the "2024 Cost vs. Value Report," the following are five projects that provide a strong return on investment (ROI).

1. GARAGE DOOR REPLACEMENT:

The average job cost for this project is slightly more than \$4,500 but the project is valued at \$8,751, providing an especially high 194 percent ROI.

2. STEEL DOOR REPLACEMENT:

Remodeling magazine notes that a steel entry door replacement is worth double what it was worth in 2023. This project offers a 188 percent ROI on an average investment of \$2,355.

3. MANUFACTURED STONE VENEER:

A manufactured stone veneer is a man-made product that appears as if it's natural stone. Many homeowners prefer manufactured stone veneer to natural stone because of the price, as the former is less expensive and easier to install, which means lower labor costs as well. The comparatively low cost of manufactured stone veneer is perhaps one reason why it averages a roughly 153 percent ROI on an average cost of just more than \$11,000.

4. GRAND ENTRANCE UPSCALE (FIBERGLASS):

Few things are as awe-inspiring as an impressive entryway, and upgrading to a grand fiberglass entrance door provides a 97 percent ROI. Components of these entryways can vary, but Remodeling magazine notes the project may entail removing an existing entry door and cutting and reframing the opening for a larger with dual sidelights.

5. MINOR KITCHEN REMODEL:

According to the "2024 U.S. Houzz & Home Study" from Houzz Research, kitchens were the most popular rooms to renovate in 2023. There's no denying the appeal of a newly renovated kitchen, and homeowners considering such a project may be happy to learn that a minor kitchen remodel that costs an average of around \$27,000 provides a 96 percent ROI. Bankrate.com notes that minor kitchen remodels typically keep the current kitchen design, size and layout intact, but these projects may involve painting walls, refreshing backsplash, replacing lighting and plumbing fixtures, and changing cabinet hardware and facades.

Home renovations that provide a significant ROI can make homeowners happy once a project is completed and even happier when the day comes to put a home up for sale.

HOW TO RECOGNIZE WHEN IT'S TIME TO **Replace Your Windows**



Windows are a major component of a home. Window installation professionals will tell homeowners that the average life span of residential windows is between 15 and 30 years. Most well-maintained products can last 20 years, so homeowners who have windows approaching that age may want to schedule a window assessment and possible replacement. Replacing windows is a job that requires advanced skill, and this is not a do-it-yourself project. There are many qualified professional window installation companies that will work with homeowners to measure, order and install windows that will fit with the style of a home and local weather, all while providing features the homeowner desires.

For those wondering when to replace windows, Pella and Renewal by Andersen, two of the premiere window manufacturers, offer these guidelines.

DIFFICULTY OPENING AND CLOSING WINDOWS.

A window that does not operate as it should can aggravate homeowners. If windows are sticking shut or cannot be securely closed, it's probably time for something new.

THERE'S APPARENT WINDOW DAMAGE.

Accidents happen, and if a rock is kicked up from a lawnmower and cracks a window or if spring baseball practice has gone awry with an errant throw, windows may require replacement.

DRAFTS IN THE WINDOW ARE COMMON.

If heating and cooling systems are working overtime, drafty, poorly insulated windows could be to blame. Various agencies can perform energy efficiency tests in a home. Windows that are determined to be the weak spots should be replaced.

DATED WINDOWS ARE PRESENT IN THE HOME.

Older windows may pose safety hazards, especially those in older homes. A larger window may be needed to comply with fire safety codes allowing for window egress. Dated windows also may simply look "old" and compromise the aesthetics of a home.

OUTDOOR NOISES ARE NOTICED QUITE READILY.

Newer windows can help reduce noise transmission. So those leaf blowers, airplanes, barking dogs, and kids playing basketball up the street won't disturb homeowners as they try to enjoy some peace and quiet indoors.

FADING INDOORS IS NOTED.

Windows that do not feature low-emissivity (Low-E) glass coatings will not block UV rays. Those rays can cause fading to wood floors and furniture or pretty much anything the sunlight touches. Replacing existing windows with Low-E coating alternatives can safeguard belongings and improve window efficiency.

Window replacement may be necessary when existing windows are showing signs of aging or damage.

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The Perfect Fall Centerpiece

AUTUMN'S COLORS MAKE ANY GATHERING WARM AND INVITING

Foliage, plants, traditional items and candles in the shades of autumn can provide just the right season-focused touch for your next table setting. Then complement your fall centerpiece with handpicked accessories to complete the look.

BRING THE OUTSIDE IN

Look for leaves, branches, vegetables and flowers that reflect the traditional colors of fall — from rich reds to bold oranges to warm yellows. Weave them together into a circular or oval shape to create the foundation of your centerpiece, or craft a free-form garland. You could also paint a plain woven bread basket to create a cozy place to collect it all. If you're not necessarily that crafty, you can also purchase an autumn-themed centerpiece and use these handpicked items to personalize it. Cornucopias are a classic choice that will provide timeless memories for a new generation. Place fall-colored and -scented flowers around the arrangement. Complete the centerpiece with wheat sprigs, small pumpkins and squash, or other seasonal foods like apples.

FINISHING THE LOOK

Select napkins, placemats and a tablecloth that fit into the

color palette you've created with the centerpiece. Then get creative: Paint leaf patterns by hand on wooden napkin rings to give them a sense of homemade charm. A hollowed-out pumpkin can also be used as a vase. Large fallen leaves from outdoors can serve as fall-focused place cards. Rinse them first, then allow each to dry before carefully inscribing them with the names of friends and family. Go around the table, placing one in front of each plate.

OTHER HELPFUL TIPS

Make sure your centerpiece isn't so large that there isn't room for glasses, condiments and serving platters. It also shouldn't be so tall that guests struggle to see one another. Don't light the candles, since that may interfere with the scrumptious aromas associated with the meal you'll serve at this fall gathering. Don't be afraid to keep it simple: Arrange a grouping of mismatched gourds and pumpkins to very easily transform your tabletop. Focus on varying sizes and colors. Rather than worrying with formal floral arrangements, collect dried branch stalks in a variety of vases. For more pops of color, wrap the branches with wool and fleece, creating a sculptural conversation piece.



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Prepare Your Garden FOR WINTER'S ONSLAUGHT



Individuals who don't live near the equator or in another warm climate know that winter will rear its chilly head this year. Cold temperatures and snowy conditions may be excellent for skiing and sledding, but gardeners recognize these conditions are not ideal for their plants.

The inevitable slowing of activity in the garden during fall marks a time to shift attention from constant plant care to preparing the landscape for next season. It may be tempting to simply let Mother Nature take over, but a little pre-winter TLC can ensure gardens make it through winter unscathed.

REMOVE SPENT PLANTS

Decomposing organic material is the basis for compost and other fertilizers. However, vegetable plants that are left to sit can lead to decay in the garden. Decaying plants can serve as hosts for pest populations and diseases. Rotting vegetables also can drop unwanted seeds into the soil, which eventually can strip nutrients that normally would go to next year's crops.

Ornamental plants and perennials can be cut back in fall. Cut down stalks and remove leaves.

PLANT A COVER CROP

The gardening resource *This Is My Garden* recommends planting a cover crop to set the stage for a successful spring. A cover crop protects the soil and can return nutrients to it. When the soil is bare during winter, weed seeds can easily blow in and lie in wait, ultimately becoming a problem during the ensuing year. Cover crops can include clover or field peas, which will increase the levels of available nitrogen.

AMEND THE SOIL

Fall is a perfect time to add soil amendments, such as manure and compost. These fertilizers will add nutrients and break down gradually, enriching the soil over the winter.

REPLENISH MULCH

Gardeners may have added mulch around shrubs and other areas of the landscape early in the season because it is attractive. But mulch also does much to reduce water loss and protect the soil from erosion. It may inhibit weed growth as well. Replacing mulch when the mercury drops can insulate the soil, which helps to regulate soil temperature. A thick layer of mulch around root vegetables left in the garden can offer protection against hard frosts.

DIVIDE BULBS

Divide plant bulbs and plant them where you want flowers like daffodils and tulips to grow in the spring.

PRUNE DORMANT PLANTS

Wait until plants are dormant to prune them and adjust their shape. Most shrubs and trees should be pruned in late winter, right before new growth.

MOVE POTTED PLANTS

Bring delicate plants into a sheltered area, such as a greenhouse or indoor garage, so they can continue to thrive during the winter.

Fall and winter still provide opportunities to spend time in the garden. At this point in the year, gardeners can prepare landscapes for the next season.



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GET THOSE Gutters Cleaned



When gutters are working as they should, they provide a largely unnoticed defense against rain intrusion, foundation erosion and water damage.

As they fail, however, these very serious issues can begin to quietly take root. You may find yourself with a hefty repair bill when all that was needed in the first place was more regular maintenance. There is also an acknowledged lifespan for these systems, based on the material they're made of.

HOW THEY WORK

Properly installed, well maintained gutters keep rain from entering eaves and exterior walls. They also keep water away from your foundation. Without this important drainage system, water intrusions can lead to mold and rot, stain siding and brick, and potentially even destabilize your home. Water that hasn't been rerouted may collect around the perimeter of the structure, creating the ideal condition for interior flooding and foundation cracks.

WHAT TO LOOK FOR

Blockages and dislodged joints are the most common problems associated with these systems. It's critical to make regular inspections since overflows lead to all of the same issues as having no gutters at all. That's particularly true in the fall, since wetter weather is ahead.

Overflows may also be caused by poorly designed systems that do not have enough downspouts to handle average rain showers.

Look for signs of rust, since that's a sign that you've reached the end of the system's natural lifespan. The average galvanized steel or aluminum guttering system is meant to last about 20 years, according to the National Association of Home Builders. If it's time for a major repair or replacement, seek out a licensed, insured contractor.

PROCEED WITH CAUTION

Inspecting your gutters will obviously involve time spent on a ladder, and that can lead to a dangerous situation if you don't proceed with caution.

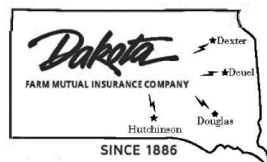
Use a spotter to ensure that the ladder is sturdy and secure. The International Association of Certified Home Inspectors also recommends that you constantly reposition your ladder, rather than reaching beyond your immediate grasp.

Working in that position potentially creates an imbalance issue. Wear gloves since there may be loose fasteners or sharp debris lodged in the gutters. If you plan to inspect your gutters from the roof, be sure to wear footwear with proper gripping.



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A BEGINNER'S GUIDE TO Fall Planting and Maintenance



Spring and summer are perhaps the busiest times of year for gardeners. However, fall also is a prime time to tend to gardens.

The tree and bare root retailer Bower & Branch advises that soil temperatures in many regions of the country may still be warm enough to encourage root growth well into the start of winter. Furthermore, fall is often the ideal time to plant, fertilize and keep a garden going or to get a head start on next year's bounty.



Here are some tips to make the most of the fall gardening season.

THINK ABOUT FALL ANNUALS AND BULB PLANTING.

Near the end of September, start planting cool-weather-loving pansies and violas for pops of color as summer flowers fade. Also, it's a good idea to stock up on bulbs that will bloom in the months to come before they sell out in stores. Wait until the temperatures really cool down before planting them in desired spots for spring sprouts.



SOW SALAD SEEDS.

Lettuce, spinach, radishes, and arugula tolerate cooler temperatures. Try new and interesting lettuce varieties and enjoy salads well into the fall season.

TAKE INVENTORY OF THE SUN.

Positioning a garden carefully means maximizing hours of sunlight, which begin to dwindle in the fall. Experts say gardens grow best in sunny locations that receive six hours of direct sunlight each day. This is where container gardens can be helpful, as they allow gardeners to move plants into spots that will get ample sunlight.

FILL IN LANDSCAPING GAPS.

Some fall plants can add color around the landscape and brighten up homes to add curb appeal. In addition to pansies and violas, asters, kale and chrysanthemums are fall blooms. Keep in mind that mums can come back year after year. So take them out of those flower pots and get them into the ground. They can be enjoyed next year as well, sprouting in early spring and developing leaves and buds through late summer.

CLEAN UP UNWANTED GROWTH.

Fall is an ideal time to cut back spent vegetable plants and get rid of errant weeds. Rather than bagging leaves, mow them with a grass catcher and then add the mix to a vegetable garden as an excellent soil insulator. The nitrogen and carbon will fertilize the soil, enhancing growing possibilities and limiting weed growth.

PROPAGATE PLANTS IN THE FALL.

As temperatures gradually begin to cool, start taking cuttings from perennials, gathering seed pods from azaleas and rhododendrons and dividing hardwood cuttings, says the resource Gardening Know How. Consult with a garden center or horticulturist on the proper ways to propagate stems using rooting hormone and other techniques.

CONTINUE TO WATER PLANTS.

Water is essential in the fall and winter as roots can still be growing. Gradually reduce watering duration as plants go dormant.

Fall planting and maintenance can extend gardening season and improve the chances of growing a healthy spring garden.



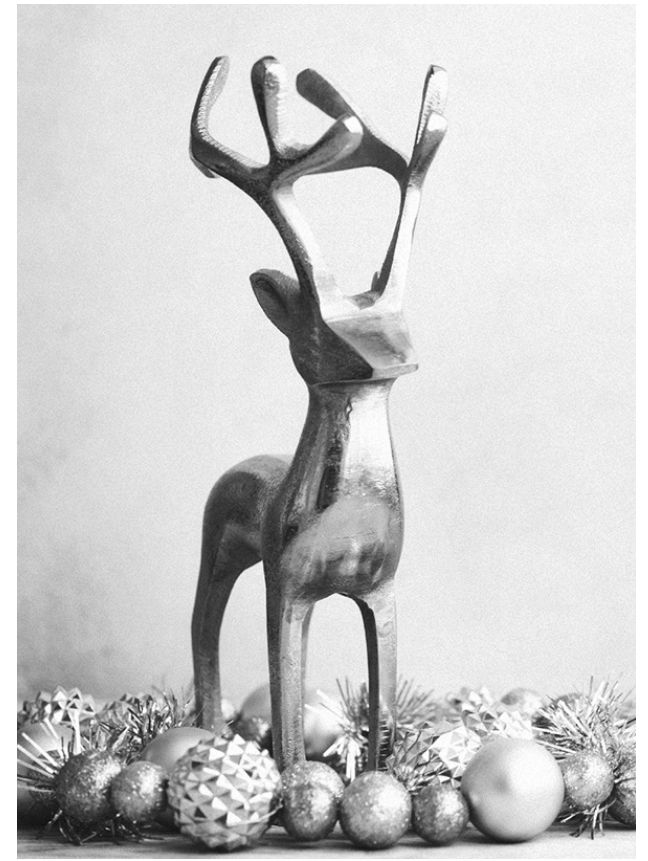
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STOCK UP ON Winter Supplies

If one thing is a certainty in these post-pandemic days, it's that shortages are an ongoing reality.

When the crisp autumn air starts to descend, it's a clear sign that winter is just around the corner. As the seasons change, it's important to take time out to prepare for the colder months ahead. One essential aspect of this is to stock up on winter supplies in the fall. This ensures a smooth and comfortable transition into winter and doesn't leave you flailing when there is a run on winter goods and shelves become as fallow as the trees.

INDOOR ITEMS

Prepare your home for the colder months by making sure you have enough extra blankets, space heaters or programmable thermostats to maintain a cozy indoor temperature. Purchase air purifiers.

If you have a fireplace or wood-burning stove, stock up on firewood. Make sure it's properly seasoned and stored in a dry place. Additionally, if you rely on other fuel sources such as propane, kerosene or heating oil, purchase an adequate supply to last through the winter.

Winter storms can lead to power failures or other emergencies. Don't be part of the crowds making a last-minute rush

on the grocery store for toilet paper. Stock an emergency kit in advance with items such as flashlights, batteries, a first aid kit, bottled water and a battery-powered radio. Stock your pantry with non-perishable food items like canned goods, dried fruits, nuts, pasta, rice and long-lasting staples.

Consider purchasing a backup power source like a generator or portable power bank.

Winter often brings a higher risk of colds, flu and other illnesses. Stock up on over-the-counter medications for common cold symptoms, cough syrup, sore throat lozenges and fever reducers. Don't be without a COVID-19 test as if you start experiencing symptoms, you're not going to want to leave the house. Have a well-stocked medicine cabinet with any prescription medications you may need.

OUTDOOR ITEMS

Climate change has brought snow to places unused to getting it. Be ready to tackle snowfall by equipping yourself with essential snow removal tools. This may include snow shovels, ice scrapers and de-icing agents such as rock salt or calcium chloride. If you live in an area that gets regular snow, don't wait until the first blizzard to buy a snow blower. Regularly check and maintain your tools to make sure they are in good working condition.

Fall is a good time to buy patio heaters and winter sports equipment.

If you live in an area with heavy snowfall or icy conditions, it's essential to have a winter car kit. Include such items as an ice scraper, snowbrush, jumper cables, a shovel, a flashlight, extra blankets and non-perishable snacks. Buy winter snow tires in the fall so you are ready when the first bad weather hits. If you need them, buy snow chains for your tires.

HOLIDAYS AND SEASONAL DECORATIONS

Some holiday stuff will go fast, especially since they are hitting the store shelves earlier every year. Buy whatever decorations you need for the holidays you celebrate early. Purchase or retrieve items such as ornaments, lights, candles and festive indoor and outdoor décor to add cheer and warmth to your home.

If there are certain gifts that are on your "must-have" list, make sure you get them early in case these items are out of stock later in the season.

By stocking up on essential winter supplies in the fall, you can face the colder months with confidence and ensure a comfortable and safe winter season.

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