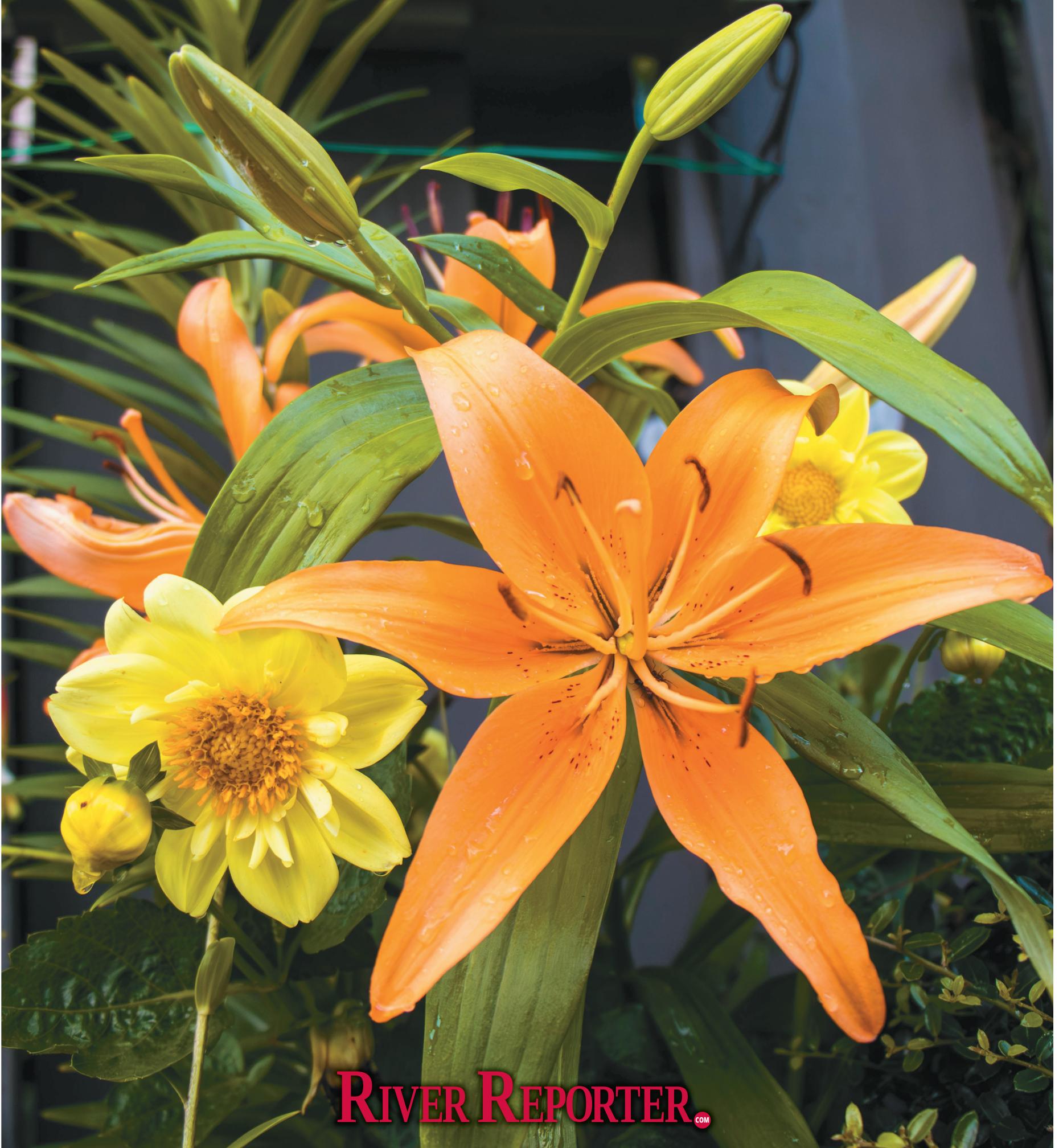


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CONTENTS

A sanctuary in a Quonset hutpage 5
By TED WADDELL

Bug off! page 11
By JANE ANDERSON

Dang! What ate my plants?..... page 15
By SHARON PEDUTO

Easy outdoor living page 19
By BARBARA WINFIELD

Bringing the outdoors in page 23
By RACHEL ACEVEDO

Local farmers' markets..... page 27
By JANE ANDERSON

Spring fever page 29
By JUDE WATERSTON

Editor's letter:

Dear Reader,

In our neck of the woods, it's nearly criminal not to spend every beautifully warm day outside. In this issue we explore the glories of outdoor living around here in the summertime—and some of the more annoying parts, too.

Pictured is a perfect allium—just the ticket to keep browsing deer at bay.

Jude Waterston walks us through a local farmer's market and shares the recipe for a scrumptious side dish with ingredients you can pick up there. Enjoy more photos she took, along with information on where to shop for local bounty.

Sharon Peduto tackles some of the less-attractive parts of summer living—animal and insect pests that threaten your home gardens. And we interview a local pest-control expert to find out the best ways to shoo critters away from your house itself.

Designer Rachel Acevedo shows us how to blur the lines between indoors and out by using biophilic design ideas. Intrigued? It's a great read, and educational, too.

Barbara Winfield shares her thoughts on relaxing elements you can bring to your decks and patios, from trellises and fire pits to comfy accessories and outdoor kitchens.

Finally, we talk to a local couple who have turned a Quonset hut into their warm and bright home.

After soaking up all these ideas, I urge you to not waste another minute; just get outside and enjoy these fleeting, gorgeous days while we can. Thank you, as always, for reading!

Jane Anderson, section editor



RR photo by Jane Anderson
An allium to keep the deer at bay.

RIVER REPORTER

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On the cover:

Lilies in bloom are a sign of summer.

RR photo by Amanda Reed

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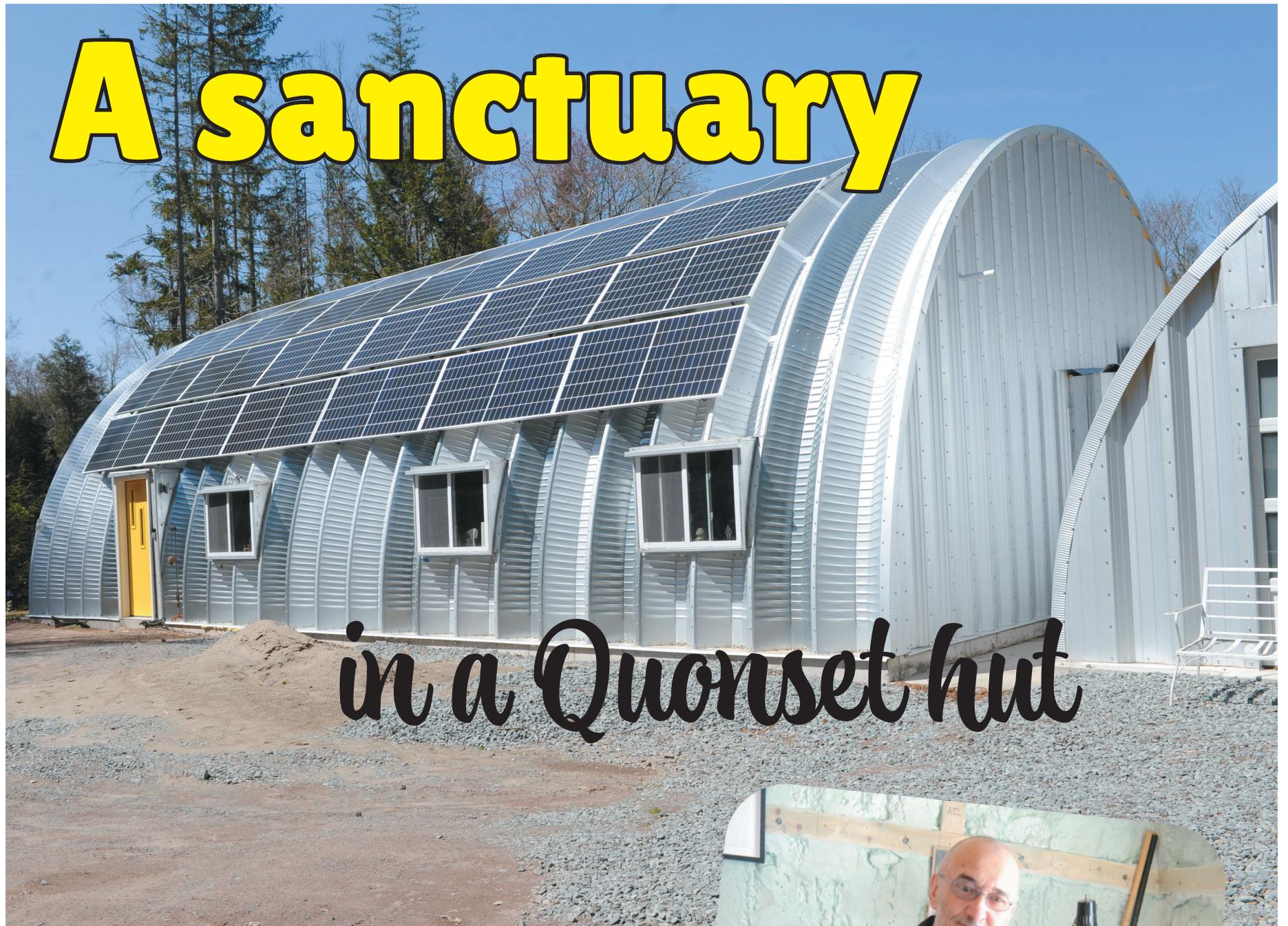
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A sanctuary

in a Quonset hut



RR photos by Ted Waddell

Quonset huts are lightweight, prefabricated structures made of corrugated galvanized steel, featuring a semi-cylindrical cross-section.

By **TED WADDELL**

PARKSVILLE, NY — It's not your grandfather's Quonset hut from World War II: a local couple have created a state-of-the-art, highly energy-efficient home nestled in the woods, with a series of small, spring-fed waterfalls adding tranquility to the environment.

A few years ago, Rob and Kim Rayevsky purchased the 12.8-acre parcel through Les Stone, a well-traveled photojournalist turned local real estate agent.

The couple operated the fabled Rolling River Café in Parksville for a decade, before moving on to run the kitchen at Upward Brewery in neighboring Livingston Manor for a couple of years. Then they returned to Parksville to build their new home while starting Double Up, an eatery fashioned from a vintage double-decker tour bus—which came here from London by way of Philadelphia.

The Rayevskys said they wanted to have something simple in the way of a new residence. Kim recalled of the initial stages of planning: “We started bookmarking log cabins, kits and Quonset huts, something modern, and one day we sat down together and went through all the different bookmarks, and we both got really excited about Quonset huts.”

Quonset huts are lightweight, prefabricated structures made of corrugated galvanized steel. They feature a semi-cylindrical cross-section, which was developed in the United States and was based on the Nissen hut, introduced by the British in the First World War.

As America entered World War II, the U.S. Navy needed a building that could be shipped anywhere in the battle-torn globe. By the end of the conflict, an estimated 170,000 of these early Quonset huts were manufactured.

— Page 7



Rob Rayevsky is pictured in his artist's studio.

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SANCTUARY - Page 5

The Raveskys' new home is still a work in progress, as they are in the process of finishing the interior walls, but it boasts a remarkably homey feeling. Their eclectic collections of art and furnishings comfort the couple and their trio of furry friends—a pair of dachshunds named Frankie and Sigi, along with Zeppo, a winsome tabby cat. (Speaking of cats, while at the Rolling River Café, the couple took care of four felines, named after the Marx Brothers—minus Gummo—as Harpo, Groucho, Chico and Zeppo.)

The house is situated in the middle of predominantly spruce forest, and as you walk down the hill beside a sparkling stream, the landscape changes to hemlocks, which Rob Rayevsky likened to a Hansel and Gretel experience.

Having built this unique structure, they are currently in the process of completing Double Up, a 1980 Bristol Lodekka retired tour bus. It'll be turned into a new restaurant, and will be situated at the site of the old Memories Antique Center near Route 17. That is now on the boards to be reborn as the Conflux Gallery, thanks to New York City artists and film producers Marcus Brooks and Ali Azios.

Of the transition from café owners to running a brewery kitchen, to the eve of launching the Double Up restaurant and building a new place to hang their coats, Rayevsky shared a bit of his personal philosophy of life: "I don't look back, only look forward... You can't step in the same water twice."

The home was designed to be highly energy efficient, with a 10.32 kW (grid-tied with lithium battery backup) photovoltaic system of 24 solar panels of the south-facing roof.

The system offsets the emission of 12.7 tons of CO₂, and produces the same amount of electricity as burning six tons of coal or 372.2 gallons of oil per year, the equivalent of planting and sustaining 46.2 acres of trees over 25 years.

"The whole thing is like an erector set," said Kim Reyevesky. "It's very complicated, with a certain height to it to give it an airiness feeling, and when we wake up in the mornings under that 10-foot ceiling in the bedroom, it's a very magical place."



The Quonset hut is filled with an eclectic collection of art and cherished collectibles.



The couple's eclectic collections are comforting.



Kim and Rob Rayevsky relax in their living room with Frankie the cat.



Spotted in the artist's studio.



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BUG OFF!



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Mosquitoes are the bane of our existence up here, but there are ways to keep down their populations.

A local expert offers tips on controlling pests inside and outside this summer

By JANE ANDERSON

We love spending time outdoors and opening the windows and doors of our home to let in the summer breezes and sunshine. But oftentimes, unwanted critters find their way indoors, and it can be difficult to get them out.

Dave Luczyski, of Nuisance and Pest Control by Dave, offered tips on controlling pests like ants and bugs inside your home—and reducing the population of annoying mosquitoes and ticks outside, too.

Carpenter ants love the wood inside your home; truthfully, they adore any moisture in your house that softens the wood so they can tunnel out galleries in which to reside.

A telltale sign of an ant infestation is a pile of sawdust. “Compared to termites, who get nutrition from wood, carpenter ants just tunnel through the wood and discard the sawdust,” Luczyski said. Controlling moisture in your house—by repairing leaks and using a dehumidifier in the summer—keeps the “no vacancy” sign legit.

Wasps and bees are a nuisance, and a danger if anyone in the family is allergic. Here, the key is to cut down on the tiny little cracks and openings in your home. “They get in through vents, cracks around windows and the ridge vents on the roof,” said Luczyski. “Any insect doesn’t really need a big hole; they always seem to find a way to get in.”

Like other insects, such as cluster flies and boxelder bugs, wasps and bees like the sunny side of the house—so homeowners should regularly pay close attention to southern-exposure siding and windows, he added.

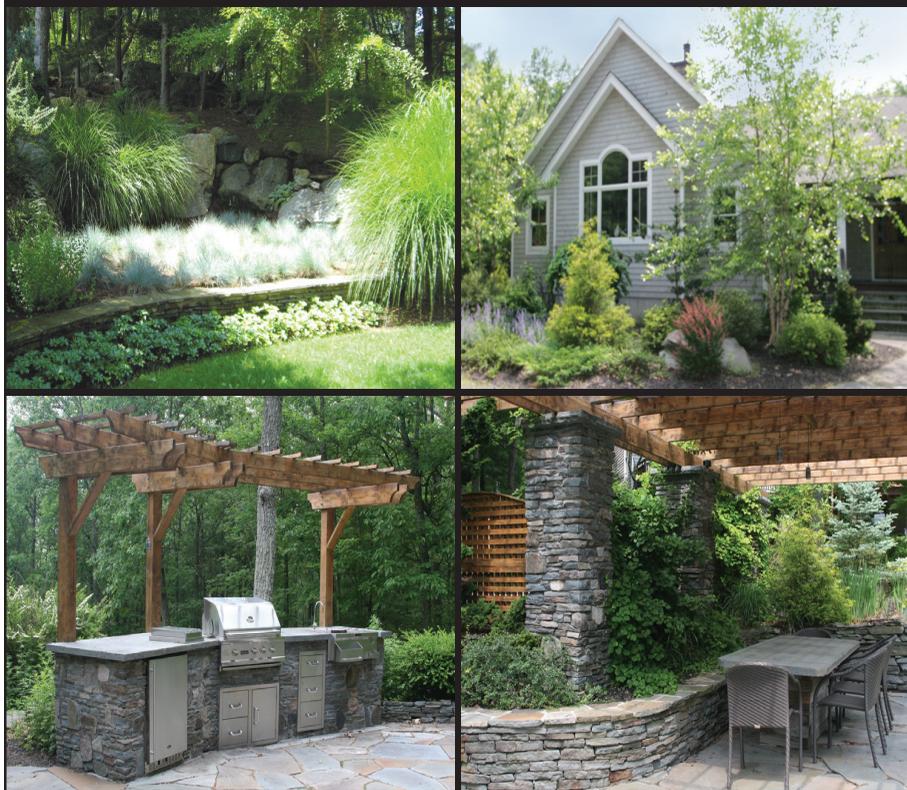
Eight-legged creatures can be found year-round, but our woodsy areas attract bigger spiders than weekenders and summer-home occupants are used to—like wolf spiders and fishing spiders. They aren’t out to get you, nor are they particularly venomous.

Again, the key is to reduce points of entry into your home. And if one does make its way in, consider trapping it in a container and letting it go outside.

- Page 13

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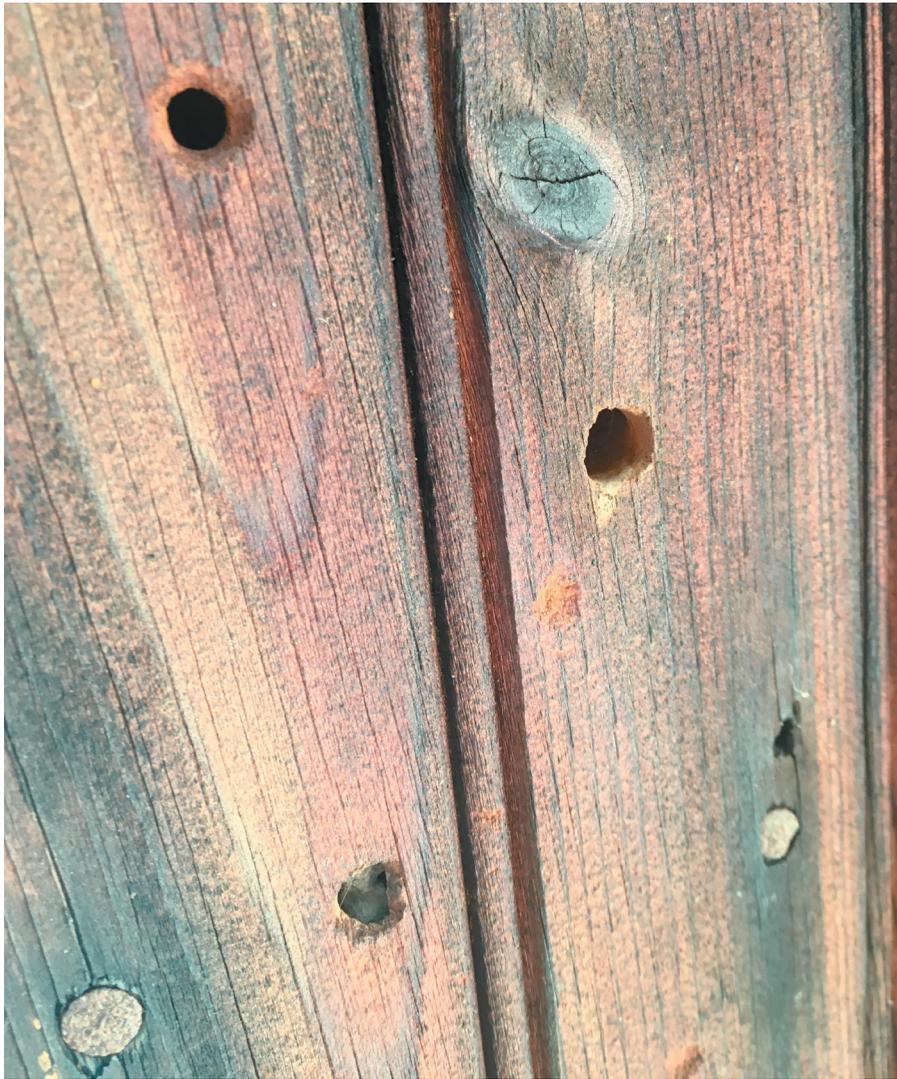
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The New York State Integrated Pest Management Program, via Flickr

Tell-tale holes are a sign of carpenter bees.

BUG OFF - Page 11

Stink bugs and boxelder bugs are also harmless but unwanted in your living quarters. Trapping (or vacuuming) and releasing them outside is the most humane way to control them. Especially, do not squish stink bugs, as the odor they release will attract more.

Carpenter bees are a special breed of pest. Boring holes into wood for nests, the flying buzzsaws can wreak havoc on decks and structural supports. Luczynski's company treats the individual holes and plugs them afterward. Carpenter bees like softer wood, so the rule of thumb to keep moisture out of the wood applies here, too.

Bats are docile, mosquito-eating mammals, but we certainly don't want them inside our homes. "Bats are definitely beneficial, but when they come into a living area, their droppings can become harmful to people with asthma and allergies," Luczynski says. His company removes errant bats, seals up entryways, and cleans and sanitizes the area. Bat houses, special boxes attached to trees on the property, are anecdotally helpful in keeping bats outside your house.

Mosquitoes and ticks are annoying and potentially harmful. If you want to keep them at bay, you've got to keep your property trimmed and clean, according to Luczynski. "If you don't maintain your property, it's going to be hard to control insects," he says. "We have a lot of summer homes up here, and it's important for the owners to constantly take a good look at their houses so they can spot issues before they become worse."

Removing sources of standing water—old tires and junk around the yard are big culprits—eradicates mosquito nurseries. And be aware of your birdfeeders and birdbaths, too: If they're not regularly emptied and cleaned, they'll collect nasty water that becomes a breeding ground for bugs.

Keep the property free of tall grasses and leaf piles, so you don't attract tick families. Nuisance and Pest Control by Dave sprays an organic, botanical oil around customers' yards to kill mosquitoes and ticks so they aren't as much of a worry.

As you might imagine, this is the busy season for pest control—in addition to the above, homeowners might encounter squirrels, raccoons and even snakes inside their homes. But keep a cool head about it, keep up your home, and call in help when you need it.



Carpenter ants leave their calling cards with piles of sawdust.

Thadgudry; CC0; via Wikimedia Commons

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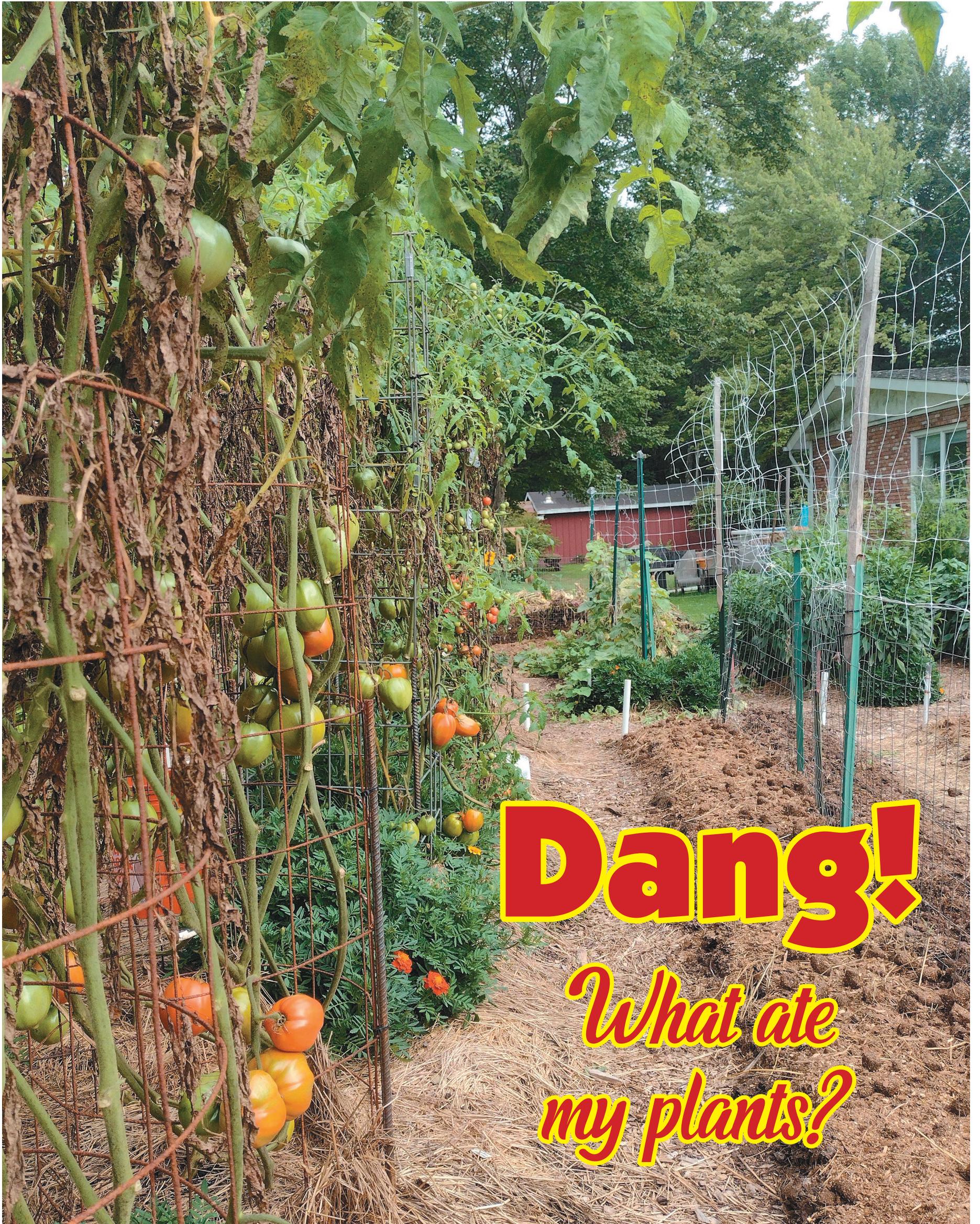
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Dang!

*What ate
my plants?*

Bob Hoffman's Victory Garden in Beach Lake, PA, employs fencing to keep out deer and rabbits.

RR photo by Sharon Peduto



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By SHARON PEDUTO

REGION — If you're a novice or expert gardener, you'll probably encounter critters in your garden.

The culprits eating your plants or vegetables are most likely deer, rabbits and insects.

After all the time, money and hard work tending your gardens, it's normal to feel disappointment when your garden bounty is eaten by something other than humans.

Unfortunately, there are only deterrents, and nothing is foolproof—unless you are lucky enough to have a flat roof to plant upon.

Good bugs vs. bad bugs

Fortunately, many plants that deter rabbits and deer are the same plants that attract “assassin insects.” Predatory wasps, ladybugs and hoverflies (they look like tiny bees, but are harmless to humans) are just a few desirable insects in your gardens. These bugs kill off the bad bugs eating the vegetation, but are not harmful to us.

Toxic relationships

Poisonous plants have been used for generations to buffer the effects of animal browsing. Have you ever seen your tulips disappear, but not your daffodils? Deer and rabbits stay away from daffodils because daffodils are poisonous.

According to the Farmer's Almanac, “[Animals] avoid eating daffodils, bleeding hearts, foxgloves, and poppies.” All four of those plants are gorgeous as well as poisonous—and flourish in our Zone 5 landscape.

What's that smell?

Strong odors—and, surprisingly, not just foul ones—are deterrents to furry friends as well as repellent to mosquitoes and flies. Lavender is one such plant that they avoid. Others include salvia, Russian sage, Moonbeam tickseed, Firewitch dianthus and the allium Summer Beauty (not a surprise, since alliums are in the onion family).

The benefits go beyond browse resistance, as those flowers also attract pollinators.

Self-seeding yarrow is not only a rabbit and deer deterrent, but repels some bad insects and attracts good insects.

Do your research, though: Marigolds, said to deter plant lice and mosquitoes, might deter rabbits but they are eye candy, as it were, for deer.

Bodacious and herbaceous

Basil, sage, thyme, dill, coriander, fennel, parsley and caraway are not only tasty herbs, but also attract good insects while deterring rabbits and deer.

Ornamental onions, like the above-mentioned allium, come in a delightful array of colors. They are edible, they self-seed, and they smell yucky to critters.

Planting onions and garlic around/within your gardens might also help. Anecdotally, garlic oil sprayed on plants will repel everything from insects to deer.

You've got a friend in bee

Research “companion plants” that bring good insects to fight the bad ones. For example, tomatoes, basil and peppers grow nicely together; the basil's scent camouflages the scent of the tomatoes and peppers from pests like thrips and moths. Conversely, roses and tomatoes are not good companions.

The trick with herbs, flowers and bulbs—

such as garlic and green onions—that attract the good insects and deter furry creatures is to intersperse them along with your garden flowers or garden vegetables and find out what works with what.

Taking the good with the bad

Bob Hoffman, whose Victory Garden is located on Route 652 in Beach Lake, PA, has been gardening all his life. He's had deer, rabbits, field mice, voles and even bears invading his 6,000-square-foot Edenesque space.

His take on insects and animals is simple: “It's nature—93 percent of insects are good for your plants.”

What keeps the deer from destroying his garden? He believes it's the noise from Route 652, but that's not the end-all solution.

This year, he is experimenting with onions as well as garlic around other vegetables. What also helps is the four-foot-tall fence around the garden. He cleverly attached another four feet of clear plastic fencing, because according to Hoffman, “deer don't see very well.”

Confuse and conquer is another tactic in the Victory Garden. It's laid out like a maze. “If the deer jump in, there's no clear way of getting out,” Hoffman explains. “They want to know there's a way to exit.”

Good fences make good gardens

Fences definitely aid in deterring deer from eating the edibles. Deer can and will jump fences that are not 10 feet tall or more.

And build under, as well as above, the dirt. To prevent rabbits from tunneling under your gardens, it is suggested to get those fences six inches underground. Plant bushes, flowers, and herbs inside your veggie garden—especially the flowers that invite the good insects in and keep the bad insects at bay.

Poochie pest control

Pets, according to home-improvement show and website “This Old House,” “are extremely helpful for deer management.” The scent and bark of your companion animals naturally deter deer and rabbits.

Coyote urine is sold in stores. Cats run like the wind. And when all else fails, imitate: Rubber snakes and plastic owls can be useful, but have to be moved around your garden regularly to work, as rabbits rapidly learn the dummies are of no consequence. Motion sprinklers, pinwheels and things that move with the wind also deter pests.

Barriers against bucks

Deer and rabbits like smooth-leaved plants and tender shoots from the early growth of trees and bushes. Protect your young trees by encircling them with chicken wire or fencing. Ensure the trunk has room to grow. This prevents bucks from rubbing against trees to mark their territory early in the season and again later in the year to help shed their antlers.

Save your money

Sensor lights do not work. Gadgets that claim to make sounds that only deer, dogs, raccoons, chipmunks etc. can hear—do nothing.

Be aware, if deer are hungry, nothing will stop them—unless you're a hunter, it's deer season and you can legally keep them from reaching your garden. As a friend's grandfather would say, “Time to get the gun.”



RR photo by Sharon Peduto

Yarrow, coneflower, marigolds and lavender all repel some bad bugs from your garden.

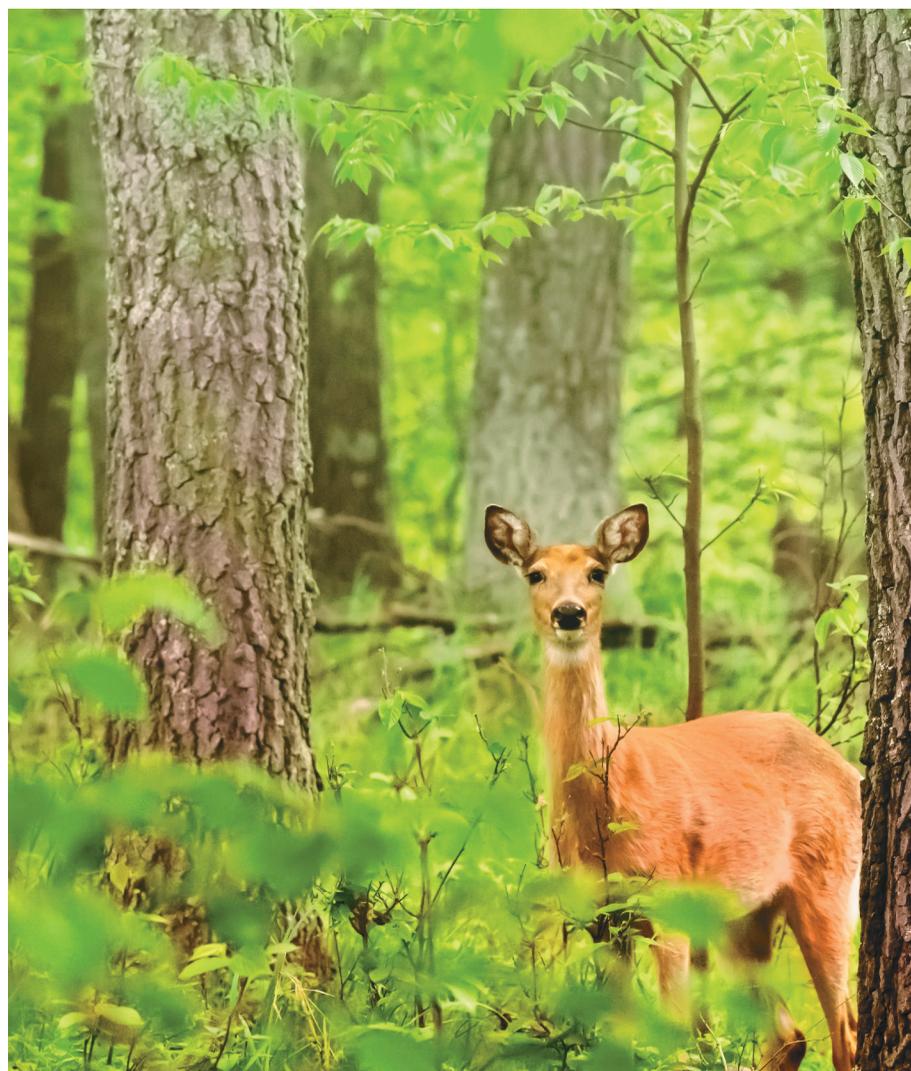


Photo by Robin Lyon on Unsplash

Deer are beautiful creatures—until they browse your garden down to the stems.

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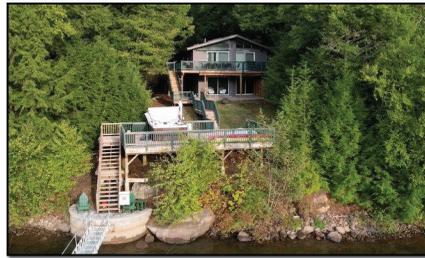
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Easy outdoor living



Photo by Sheila Brown, CC0 public domain

A seating area doesn't have to be extensive; personalize with favorite pillows and flowers.

By **BARBARA WINFIELD**

As the summer months unfold, warm weather creates a unique chance to expand our living space to include the outdoors.

Regardless of the size of your home, a thoughtfully decorated outdoor space, porch, deck or patio can extend your living space.

Here are some ideas to enhance your outdoor abode.

Play with a full deck

If you have the space in your backyard, consider adding a deck with multiple levels to create separate areas to entertain, dine and relax. If you already have a deck, consider adding another level or two.

Create privacy

One key to a successful outdoor space is privacy. One way to achieve this is to build a wood fence to provide a buffer for a driveway or close neighbor, or use a trellis or screen of latticework. Open latticework also allows air to circulate. To add a decorative touch, plant climbing vines or roses to provide texture and color.

The outdoor home

When decorating an outdoor living space, be inspired by the things you love about your indoor spaces and apply the same concepts.

Comfortable outdoor seating is one of the most important features to include in your backyard decorating plan. Large colorful outdoor pillows, benches and rocking chairs are great choices to create a cozy space for you and your guests to relax.

An easy way to add pattern and color to an outdoor room is with indoor/outdoor area rugs. Inexpensive and available in a multitude of designs, a patterned area rug is a quick and easy way to give an outdoor space

→ Page 21



Photo by Fiberon Tropics, www.flickr.com/photos/fiberon

Multilevel decking and pergolas provide interest and shade to your backyard. Pictured is Fiberon Tropics composite decking in Jatoba from flickr.com.

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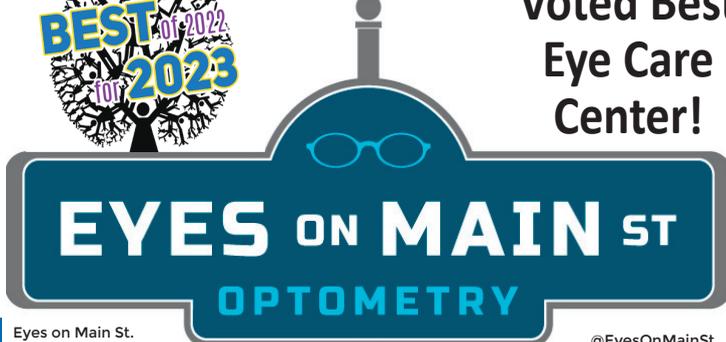
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EASY - Page 19

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Floral abundance

When it comes to simple backyard decorating on a budget, you can never go wrong with flowers. Plants and flowers are ideal for adding a natural spot of color to your deck, porch or patio. Go to your local plant nursery and buy window boxes and flowerpots to fill with your favorite blossoms.

If you plan to use large decorative planters, set them on a base or platform fitted with casters—or you can purchase planters with wheels for easy mobility. Fit wooden window boxes or planters with waterproof liners to protect the wood from moisture. Make sure there are drainage holes.

The sound of water

Besides colorful furnishings and flowers, an appealing outdoor space incorporates all the senses, including sound. And what is more relaxing than moving water?

Adding an outdoor fountain to your living space can create an inexpensive water feature without taking up lots of room. Place the fountain in a small garden nearby or on an end table on the deck or patio.

Casting shade

Consider adding a roof element to your outdoor living space to protect residents and visitors from rain and to provide shade. This can consist of a roof, an awning, a shaded pergola or an oversize umbrella.

Alight at night

Create a beautiful look by investing in outdoor lighting. Drape string lights across your porch or deck railing or across your outdoor living room to give it a starry-night feel. Add outside wall sconces and overhead pendants—or, for an elegant touch, hang a chandelier.

Access to an electrical outlet isn't a necessity, either: place solar-powered lanterns on side tables and decorative solar-powered pathway lights to outline patios and walkways.

Cookout

An outdoor kitchen is a great way to prepare summer meals or entertain guests. There are several ways to include an outdoor kitchen in your backyard, ranging from a simple charcoal grill and table on a patio to a kitchen kit that includes an island, grill, storage and refrigerator. Check with your local home-and-garden store for information on installing a kitchen that is right for you.

Another great and inexpensive backyard addition is a fire pit. You can build it yourself out of wall stones (check the internet for instructions), or purchase a metal one that's also budget-friendly. Include ample comfortable seating around your fire pit to accommodate friends and family who are sure to come by to roast marshmallows.

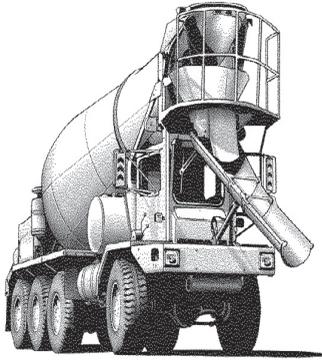
No matter how you choose to decorate your outdoor living areas, make sure to add your personal touch—whether it's a favorite color scheme, furniture style or sentimental accessory or two. Then sit back, relax and enjoy the summer!



Fire pits are a great and easy way to relax with friends for the evening.

Photo by Jeremiah Bartlett on Unsplash

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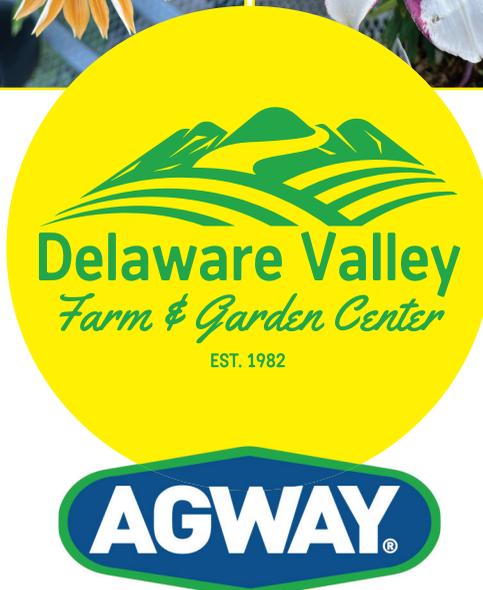


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Bringing the outdoors in



A designer's guide to embracing biophilic design

By RACHEL ACEVEDO

Biophilic design doesn't exactly roll off the tongue, I know. It's the fancy term for designing your space with natural materials and actual nature to blur the line between inside and out.

The events of the last few years have brought a lot of attention to the health benefits of bringing greenery indoors. It improves our mood; our physical well-being; even our focus, productivity and ability to heal (Billings and Gatersleben, 2015).

But for those of us—guilty as charged—who don't have a green thumb, it can feel like money wasted when that new peace lily you purchased to cleanse the air is now fighting for its life.

Luckily, there are more ways than one to nod to nature without using actual greenery. There are plants that provide all the benefits with minimal maintenance for when you're ready to dip your toes into being a plant parent.

Let's dive in.



Contributed photo
Rachel Acevedo



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BRINGING - Page 23

Favor soft natural materials over hard or synthetic ones

You don't need to be staring at a sea of plants in your living room to be connected to nature. Choosing natural materials for your furnishings is grounding, and makes the introduction of more plant-life into the space more cohesive. Here's how:

Swap out a metal or glass coffee table for a wooden one with a light stain or natural finish.

Opt for linen window treatments and bedding, and natural-fiber rugs like jute or wool.

Choose a natural stone backsplash, countertop or flooring in your kitchens and mudrooms.

Add subtle natural accents to a wall in the form of grasscloth wallpaper or limewash paint.

Increase access to natural light

If you are in a position to add windows or skylights to your home, go for it. No one ever wished they had less natural light.

If you're not so fortunate, make the most of the light you do have by lightening up your window treatments with sheer or semi-sheer curtains, instead of blackout or light-filtering ones. Second, add mirrors throughout your home and position them opposite the windows. These will reflect and bounce light around the room, giving the illusion of having more windows than you really do.

Finally, incorporate tasteful sunlamps into your darkest rooms (dimly lit office spaces are a great place for these) so that you don't enter a midday, sun-deficient slump.

Invest in hardy plants and cut flowers

For those terrified of plant maintenance, succulents are the way to go. They can thrive in both direct or indirect light and only require watering once every two to four weeks. They also come in an array of gorgeous colors and forms.

Watering tip: Wait until the soil is fully dry, and then drench the plant, or dunk it in water and let drain.

Pothos plants are vine-like and leafy. They add a punch of green beauty and are super easy to propagate in soil or water. They only require direct low light or indirect low light, so they don't need to crowd your window space to thrive. These are my favorite plants to cut trimmings from—add them to clear glass vases throughout the home.

Place a few cut stems in water and watch them grow a beautiful root system. Free decor is always a plus.

Monstera plants are guest favorites with their large decorative leaves. They're also plant-parent favorites for their easy maintenance.

Place these beauties in medium light, and water once every one to two weeks after the soil is completely dry.

When it comes to cut flowers, you can't go wrong with a beautiful bouquet. A simple bunch of tulips or a more elaborate dis-



Photo by Timothy Buck on Unsplash

Increasing the amount of natural light coming into a room makes a world of difference.

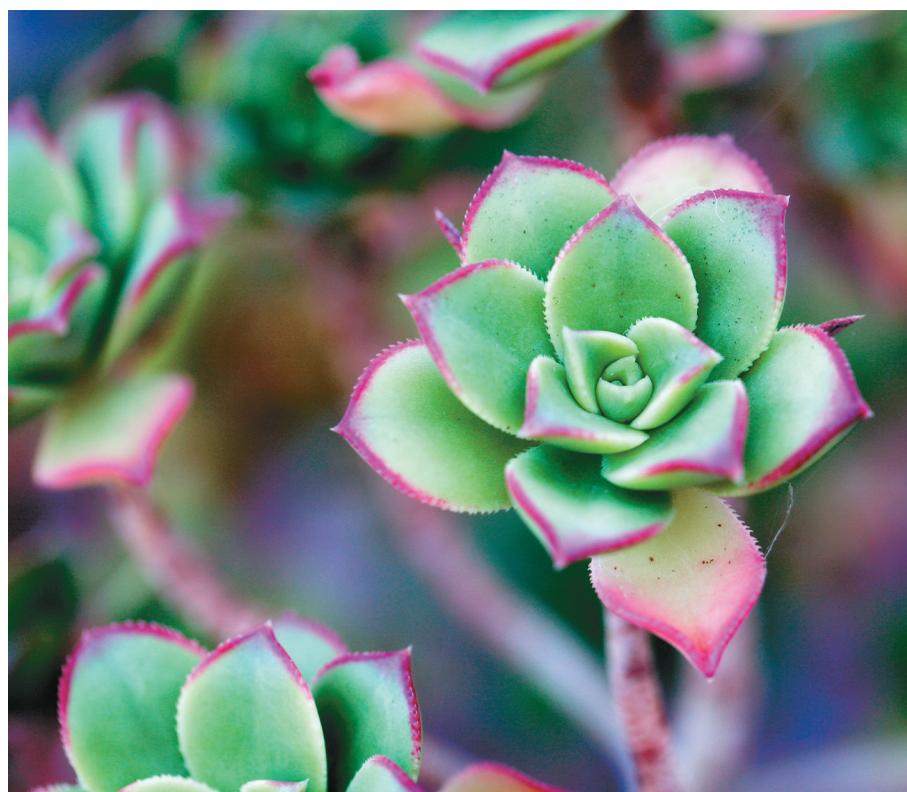


Image by manseok Kim from Pixabay

Succulents can thrive in both direct or indirect light, and only require watering once every two to four weeks.

play of wildflowers adds whimsy, romance and a pop of color to any room, and only requires some fresh water every two to three days for maximum life.

Pro tip: If you have a tendency to over-water, invest in planters that self-drain to save you (and your plant) from yourself.

That's it. Three simple ways to experience nature even when you can't be sunbathing. Implement just one of these tips and your health will thank you. You don't have to wait until your workday is done to get outdoors and soak up all that nature has to offer. Follow these easy-to-implement guidelines and reap the benefits all day long.

Rachel Acevedo is a Hawley, PA-based interior designer who combines interior design with life design. Rachel believes that the right surroundings can transform your mindset and your life, allowing you to achieve growth mentally, emotionally and physically. She is committed to curating a design process for each client that helps them live their most elevated life. Learn more at rachelacevedodesign.com, or call 908/674-2890.



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RR photo by Jude Waterston

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www.jeffersonvillefarmersmarket.com/ **Kauneonga Lake Farmers & Makers Market**

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kauneongalakefarmersmarket.org/index.html

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Benefits accepted: FMNP, Senior FMNP, SNAP/EBT, Fresh Connect

www.mamakatingfarmersmarket.com/ **Narrowsburg Farmers' Market**

7 Erie Ave., Narrowsburg
Saturdays, 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. from May 20 to October 28

Benefits accepted: FMNP, Senior FMNP
narrowsburgfarmersmarket.org/

Rock Hill Farmers' Market

223 Rock Hill Dr., Rock Hill
Saturdays, 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. from June 3 to September 30

Benefits accepted: FMNP, Senior FMNP, SNAP/EBT, Fresh Connect
www.rockhillfarmersmarket.org/

Roscoe Farmers Market

1978 Old Rte. 17, Roscoe
Sundays, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. from May 21 to October 8

Benefits accepted: FMNP, Senior FMNP
Facebook: Roscoe Farmers Market

Sullivan Fresh Monticello Farmers' Market

10 Jefferson St., Monticello
Operated by Cornell Cooperative Extension Sullivan County
Thursdays, 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. from June 29 to September 28

Benefits accepted: FMNP, Senior FMNP, SNAP/EBT, Fresh Connect, Sullivan Fresh Rx

sullivance.org/agriculture/sullivan-fresh-pennsylvania

For benefits covered by PA farmers' markets, contact the individual markets.

Hawley Farmers Market

Bingham Park, Main Avenue, Hawley
Fridays, 2 p.m. to 5 p.m. from May through October

1 p.m. to 4 p.m. starting in November indoors at the Hawley Hub, 318 Main Ave., Hawley

Hawleyfarmersmarket.weebly.com

Milford Farmers Market

506 Broad St., Milford
Sundays 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. from May 14 to October 8

Facebook: [milfordfarmersmarketpa](https://www.facebook.com/milfordfarmersmarketpa)

Wayne County Farmers' Market

200 Willow Ave., Honesdale
Saturdays, 9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. from mid-May through October

Facebook: Wayne County Farmers Market

—Compiled by Jane Anderson

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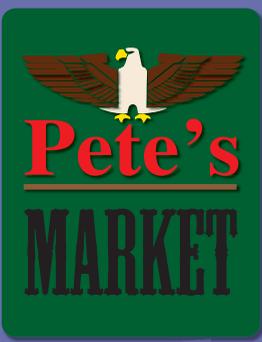
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SPRING FEVER

RR photos by Jude Waterston

Chard, tomatillo and ramps

By JUDE WATERSTON

I returned to Sullivan County in late April, after spending half a year in Oaxaca, Mexico. There, the produce is abundant year-round, and only occasionally does a vendor tell me that some fruit or vegetable I'm looking for is out of season. A few weeks later I usually find the item back on display.

Rebecca, our yoga teacher, had emailed me while we were in Mexico to say she'd been to Wild Yarrow Farm in Cochection, and the owner, Jeffrey, had seedlings for arugula, onions, leeks, mustard greens, lettuce and kale.

On Jeffrey's website I saw with excitement that he has lots of varieties of basil and other herbs. This is of utmost importance to me, as I use fresh herbs in my cooking daily until fall, when their demise always grieves me.

I was eager to return home and see what else was available in our area, both at the farmers' markets and at nearby farms and nurseries.

When we first pulled into the driveway after being picked up by a friend at Newark Airport and deposited back home, I immediately saw the light and dark yellow heads of daffodils all over the property.

We had heard rumors that it had been an unusually mild winter, but I was still surprised to see the daffs and our forsythia in full bloom.

As I passed my garden, which abuts the house, I saw that mint, thyme and chives had sprouted up in full force. I was getting spring fever!

My sister Janet and I didn't get to the farmer's market in Callicoon until mid-May. We came home to find the weather cold, cloudy and rainy. The driveway became mud and we didn't venture out much until it let up.

I didn't know what to expect at the market, so spent some time walking from booth to booth to get an idea of what was available. I was surprised to see vegetables that I think of more as cold-weather fare being sold: potatoes, beets, purple and yellow on-

- Page 31



Mise en place for sauté of Swiss chard and ramps

SPRING FEVER ~ Page 29

ions, shallots and carrots.

But I soon spotted Swiss chard, wild and cremini mushrooms, spinach, delicate microgreens, bok choy and totsoi. Totsoi is a leafy green popular throughout Asia. Its taste is more delicate than bok choy and is similar to that of spinach. I bought a bunch to use in a stir-fry.

There were a handful of vendors selling flowering plants as well as herbs. As usual, there were baked goods, both gluten-free and those offered by bakers of sweet traditional fare. Additionally, I noted maple syrup, fresh eggs, wine, meat and chicken, as well as an assortment of apples.

Then I hit upon the harbingers of this time of the year: sunchokes, fiddlehead ferns and ramps. Sunchokes, previously called Jerusalem artichokes, are a tuberous root of a native North American plant in the sunflower family.

Their sweet, nutty, crunchy qualities make them ideal for eating raw, thinly sliced in salads, or on their own with a drizzle of extra-virgin olive oil and topped with shaved or grated Parmigiano-Reggiano cheese.

They can be sliced and roasted like potatoes, or made into a creamy soup.

Fiddleheads are the furled front of a young fern, harvested for use as a vegetable. The taste is sweet like asparagus, grassy and snappy like green beans, with a touch of broccoli stems.

I'm not sure why many people go gaga over ramps, since I can't recall if I've ever used them, but I was determined to try them this year and bought a bunch. They look similar to spring onions, but the flavor is garlicky, which mellows once cooked. As with spring onions, you can eat ramps from top (long flat leaves) to bulb.

I very much like Swiss chard and have used it in many ways. It's sometimes sautéed with onions, so I thought I'd try using the ramps instead for more of a kick. Chard stems can be cut like celery and used in a dish; they simply need more time in the pan to soften.

The simple recipe I came up with can be jazzed up with a variety of other elements. For instance, when you remove the pan lid, add a handful of dried cranberries or raisins. Or add some toasted almonds, sliced or slivered, just before serving.

One more option: crumble a little feta or goat cheese on top of the dish at the table.

Welcome to spring, and here's to summer, with the abundance of sun-kissed fruit, vegetables and herbs at our fingertips.



RR photo by Jude Waterston

Sauté of Swiss chard and ramps with herbs

Sauté of Swiss chard and ramps

Serves 2, amply

1 large bunch Swiss chard, preferably rainbow

1 bunch ramps. If ramps are unavailable, feel free to use spring onions, scallions or shallots in their place

2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil

1 garlic clove, minced

1/2 teaspoon flaky sea or kosher salt

Freshly ground black pepper

A healthy pinch of nutmeg, preferably freshly grated

2 teaspoons of balsamic or aged Spanish sherry vinegar

1 1/2 tablespoons snipped fresh chives

1 1/2 tablespoons finely chopped fresh mint

Prepare the Swiss chard: Slice off the last bit of stems, then cut the stems as you would for celery, into 1-inch slices. Remove the stems in the middle of each leaf of chard and discard. Stack the leaves and cut into 1-inch slices.

Separately, wash and spin dry the stems, then the sliced chard. Set aside.

Prepare the ramps: Rinse and dry the ramps. Slice off the hairy roots and discard. Slice the bulbs, on the diagonal into thin rounds, as you would for scallions. Set aside.

Stack and cut the long green leaves into 1-inch pieces, then set aside. Discard the thin purplish stems.

Prepare the dish: Select a large skillet with a lid. Heat the oil in the skillet over medium heat. Add the chopped chard stems and sauté for 2 minutes. Add the garlic, ramp-bulb slices, nutmeg, salt and pepper. Cook, stirring, for about 2-3 minutes, making sure the garlic doesn't burn. Add the chopped Swiss chard and the ramp leaves to the skillet. Add 2 tablespoons of water and cover. Let the leaves wilt for about 2 minutes. Remove the lid and continue cooking, stirring, until the chard is completely wilted, about 1 minute.

Remove from the heat and throw in 1 tablespoon each mint and chives. Stir, then drizzle with the vinegar and place in a shallow serving dish.

Finish with the remainder of the chives and mint, and serve.

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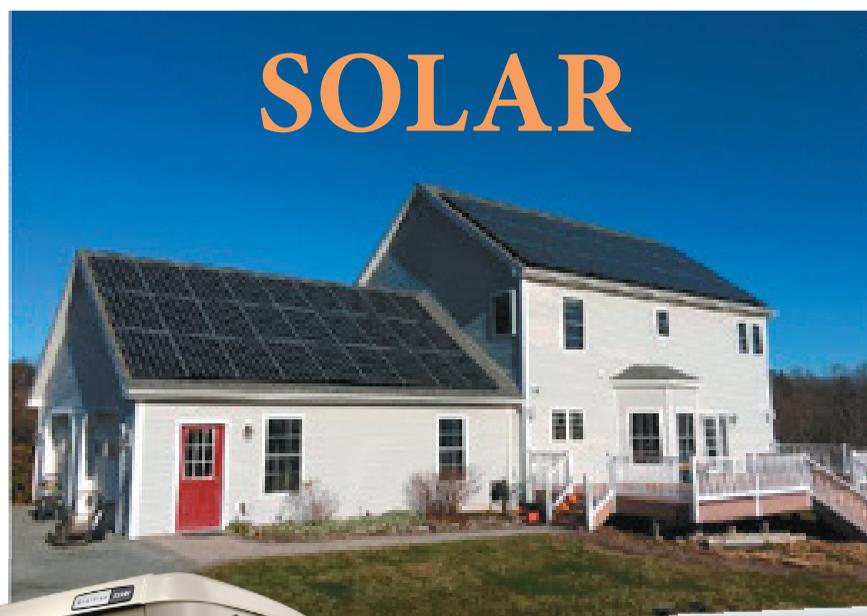
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