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Easy ways to enjoy living color in your outdoor space this fall

STOCK PHOTO Homes & Design

As temperatures drop and seasons turn, that doesn't mean you have to give up on the vivid blooms you love so much in your yard. Strategically adding seasonal plants that can withstand cooler weather is a great way to bring color and dimension to outdoor spaces, enhancing your curb appeal into the autumn months.

To educate and inspire, the plant and gardening experts at Ball Horticultural Company share simple tips, top trends and standout plants that are ideal for fall:

Pollinator plants in traditional autumn hues

There's no easier way to add autumn atmosphere to your entryway, walkways and flower boxes than with the warm hues of rich yellows and sunny oranges. Blooms in these colors convey happiness and warmth, making them beautifully eye-catching. Some plants in these tones are especially attractive to bees and butterflies, helping create pollinator-friendly spaces.

For example, award-winning Echinacea Artisan Yellow Ombre is a native-type

prairie plant that attracts songbirds, bees and butterflies throughout fall, and into winter. It's drought tolerant and low maintenance, making it a no-brainer for colorful autumn gardens.

Another great option as the weather cools is Achillea Milly Rock Yellow Terracotta. This perennial has a breathtaking golden-orange color that is perfect for fall because it is frost tolerant, plus it attracts pollinators while resisting hungry rabbits and deer.

Moody blues are trending for fall

While yellow and orange are quintessential fall colors, you can add an on-trend element to your outdoor space with Spreading Pansy Cool Wave Blue. The stunning dark, moody blue hue plays nicely when combined with a jewel-toned autumn palette. It is also a standout choice by itself, reflecting the cooler weather, crisp air and clear night skies associated with the fall months.

The vibrant shade of solid blue is beautiful in planters and hanging baskets, as well as in landscaping and window

boxes. This sun-loving variety is a spreading pansy, meaning it can serve as great groundcover, as well. You can enjoy this pansy in fall, and with superior overwintering hardiness, it's the earliest pansy to return in the spring.

Create dimension through floral shapes

Color is one important aspect of landscape design, but to really elevate your outdoor appeal, consider dimension as well. Creating variables in plants through shape and texture adds visual interest, bringing new depth to a space. To create this, mix florals with greenery and don't be afraid of nontraditional flower shapes.

The perfect example is Celosia, which features blooms in unique shapes such as plumes, spikes or wavy crests. You can create any outdoor aesthetic you desire with varieties available in yellow, orange, red and dark purple. Each adds texture and dimension, pairing well with mums and other popular autumn florals.

(BPT)

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The key to a comfortable home

Komfort Heating and Cooling offers the services that bring peace of mind

By **Sandra Landen Machaj**

CORRESPONDENT

For 46 years Komfort Heating and Cooling, Inc., in Elkhorn has provided top-line heating and air conditioning services for both residential and commercial buildings in southeastern Wisconsin and northern Illinois areas.

While the company was purchased about a year ago by current owner Kraig Edelman, the quality of their service has not changed.

“We offer a variety of services from replacement of older equipment to providing new equipment for new construction,” said Nicole Mane, manager of Komfort Heating and Cooling, Inc. “A variety of quality heating and air conditioning units including ones produced by Lennox, Carrier, Goodman, and Concord are available.”

As winter ended, we found ourselves turning down our thermostats until we realized that spring is finally here to stay. Once the temperature has risen to a degree that heating from the furnace is no longer needed, the furnace was turned off. The windows opened and the spring breezes are enjoyed throughout the home. But then it is time to think about getting ready for the summer cooling season.

“The most important thing a customer can do to be certain that they have a working heating or air conditioning unit throughout the season is to have yearly inspections on the furnace and on the air conditioning unit,” said Nick Romani, a Komfort Heating and Cooling, Inc. technician, who routinely cleans, inspects and installs HVAC equipment. “This is the time of year to call and schedule your air conditioning equipment inspection and cleaning to be sure it is ready for the upcoming cooling



season.”

In addition to regular cleaning, Romani reminds homeowners to be certain to keep objects off the drain line.

“If the drain line is crushed due to weight on it, water backs up into the furnace causing damage,” added Romani.

According to both Mane and Romani, an air conditioner may last 15 to 20 years if properly maintained but it does require yearly cleaning and filter changes as needed for maximum durability.

• CONTINUED ON PAGE 6



above: Komfort Heating and Cooling is located between Elkhorn and Delavan on Highway 11. The company services customers throughout Southeast Wisconsin and Northern Illinois. **top:** Manager Nicole Mane and Technician Nick Romani point out the features of a Lennox Furnace at Komfort Heating and Cooling. Komfort also carries other top brands to create a variety of choices for homeowners.

SANDRA LANDEN MACHAJ Homes & Design



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KOMFORT HEATING • CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5

“Air filters need to be changed regularly. If you have filters that are only 1 inch thick, they need to be replaced every one to three months. For homes that have the thicker 4-inch, filters they generally need to be changed every six months,” added Romani. “Although it is good to check the filter regularly, and if needed replace when dirty, no matter what the time span is between changes. The small cost of a clean filter can save money on furnace use, electricity and provide cleaner air for the family to breathe.”

Think spring

In early spring, Romani recommends clearing the area around the outside air conditioning unit. Remove all the dead brush and leaves that are near the unit to prevent them from blowing into the unit and clogging the fan blades. He also recommends that there are no bushes growing around the unit.

“Bushes restrict the air flow needed for the air conditioner to provide the best cooling,” Romani said. “While many cover the air conditioner for the winter, it is better if only the top is covered. When the sides are also covered, it makes a warm hideaway for rodents who also like to gnaw on the wiring,” added Romani. “I suggest covering the top of the unit with a board.”

Spring is a good time to think about cleaning out your dryer vent, something that is often overlooked by homeowners. Just as cleaning and servicing the air conditioner yearly is important, maintaining a clean and clear dryer vent is also important. Cleaning the dryer vent is another service available at Komfort Heating and Air Conditioning. The dryer vent cleaning can be scheduled when the air conditioner is serviced.

There are signs that your vent is in need of cleaning. You may notice that the amount of time to dry each load has increased to over 40 minutes. The clothing that you remove from the dryer may feel exceptionally hot to the touch. Blocked dryer vents are often

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responsible for home fires, which can easily be avoided by a simple cleaning.

If it has been more than a year since the vent has had a professional cleaning, your dryer vent is overdue for a cleaning, according to the crew at Komfort.

When your air conditioner is getting close to the time to consider replacing it, you may feel it still has a couple of years left. There are reasons to replace it before it dies, including better efficiency from a newer model. Since you don't know when it will break down for good, you may end up without air conditioning during the hottest heat wave.

New standards coming

In January 2023 the government standards for whole house air conditioners are changing, according to Mane. The SEER rating, which stands for Seasonal Energy Efficiency Ratio for air conditioners now stands at 13. This is the federal minimum, but it will be raised to 14 in 2023.

"Replacing the unit now when you can still do so at the lower SEER rating will be a less expensive unit than when the new ratings are required," said Mane.

However, she also notes that the newer units can save money and energy in the long run. The older units, especially as they approach 20 years of age, become less efficient. Replacing the old model with a newer model may help save money in energy costs as well as providing a more comfortable environment.

Most people are familiar with the traditional air conditioning units that are tied in with their warm air furnace. But there is another type of air conditioning system that works for those who have a hot water heating system. The boiler furnace system heats individual rooms through radiators instead of air vents. For these with boilers, the traditional air conditioning systems used in most homes will not work, without adding ductwork throughout the home. Another type of air conditioning, known as ductless mini splits, can be installed for whole house cooling without adding ductwork throughout the home.

The cooling unit, sits outside the home just as the traditional cooling system would, but inside there is a different look. On the wall there appears to be the equivalent of the front of a portable air conditioner, such as one that would be seen mounted in a window for single room cooling.

"These systems are good for homes without the duct work needed for the traditional air conditioning systems or for use in an area that has a spot that doesn't get good air flow to keep it cool," added Romani.

How to keep your cool

To be certain that your equipment remains in top working condition, Komfort Heating and Cooling advises customers to consider



Technician Nick Romani services a furnace. Each furnace should be serviced yearly before the heating season begins to assure that it works properly throughout the season, he said. In spring the air conditioner needs to be serviced.

SUBMITTED PHOTO Homes & Design

purchasing a maintenance plan. They offer three separate levels of maintenance plans to suit your needs and your budget.

All three plans, the Platinum Package, the Gold Package and the Silver Package include two service appointments per year. The service appointments include a 23-point furnace service, and a 17-point air conditioner service. They also include a 10% discount on parts and emergency priority scheduling.

In addition to these basic services, the Platinum Package includes no diagnostic fees even if needed after hours. Humidifier service with pads is also included in the Platinum Package as well as a detailed indoor air quality analysis to assure clean air in your home.

The Gold Package includes regular hours diagnostic fees even if needed after hours. It also includes the humidifier service with pad replacement as needed.

Each service package has a different price level, which can be obtained by calling Komfort Heating and Cooling.

"When ready to consider replacing your furnace and your air conditioner, give us a

call. We will gladly set up an appointment to share costs and information about what will work best in your home. Each home requires an inspection to be sure the right size unit is provided," said Mane

The new furnace will have all new fittings custom fabricated either in the workroom or on their special fabricating truck at the job site.

Whether to purchase both a new furnace and air conditioning unit at the same time is dependent on the age of each unit and the homeowner's budget.

"If they are about the same age, it is best to replace them together and it usually results in a lower cost to purchase and install them at the same time," said Mane. "If the air conditioner or the furnace does not need to be replaced then it is fine to just replace one of them."

Komfort Heating and Cooling Inc. is at 5384 Highway 11, Elkhorn. To set up an appointment for services or to replace a furnace or air conditioner, contact them at 262-723-2662 or visit their website, www.Komfortheating.com.

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Advice for the exterior

Mathers helps homeowners get ready for fall and winter

By **Jason Arndt**

STAFF WRITER

Mather's Improvement Service, LTD, of Burlington, has served the community for generations by offering high quality materials and service.

The home improvement company launched in 1996 by Robert Mather and his brother placed an emphasis on hard work and customer service.

Since then, the company has been in the same family, with Robert passing on the business to his daughter, Chris, and her husband, Mark Zusan.

Chris and Mark, meanwhile, plan on handing the reigns of company operation to their sons – Matt and Ben – upon their retirement in the future.

“Mather's has come to be known in the community as the best in exterior home

remodeling,” the online profile states.

Exterior work includes roofing, siding, gutters, windows and doors, soffit and fascia as well as awnings.

Timothy Machroli, marketing director, said Mather's has seen more demand in roofing and siding projects in recent years.

However, entering the fall, Mather's often sees customer interest in gutter protection increase, considering the season brings debris.

“We do seamless gutters – we are a franchise of ABC Seamless – so this is one of the highest levels of products that we offer,” Machroli said.

From seamless steel gutters to standard aluminum, according to its website, Mather's Improvement feature custom mitered corners and strong durable covers.

Mather's Improvement, meanwhile, offers gutter guards, or gutter covers.

Guarding gutters

Gutter covers protect a home's drainage system from debris and even pests from clogging gutters.

Additional benefits include cutting down on gutter cleaning, maintaining effectiveness of a drainage system, and can come in multiple colors to suit any home.

As the season changes, Machroli offered simple suggestions to people looking to maintain their properties for the fall and winter months.

Suggestions include a basic inspection, mainly roofing and gutters, according to Machroli.

“You should do a visual inspection, taking a good look at what condition your roof is in

• CONTINUED ON PAGE 10

Mather's Improvement Service LTD., of Burlington, has been in the same family for multiple generations. From left: Ben Zusan, Mark Zusan, Chris Zusan and Matt Zusan.

SUBMITTED PHOTO Homes & Design

is important,” he said, adding homeowners need to assess problem areas such as shingles lifting off or gutters coming loose.

Additionally, before leaves fall, or debris accumulates, Machroli noted proactivity is important.

“Get your gutters cleaned out and make sure they are functioning properly,” he said.

Looking ahead

Although Mather’s operates year-round, with employees working in most conditions, Machroli said customers often reach out to the company for future projects.

Future projects, he said, primarily consist of spring home improvement needs.

“To be honest, we start seeing people thinking about next year,” said Machroli.

Meanwhile, within the last year, Machroli reported an uptick in demand for siding projects.

At Mather’s, Machroli noted, the establishment offers durable steel siding, which can stand the test of time.

“This year, we had a lot of interest in siding, which is the seamless siding and is a steel product,” he said. “So, it is extremely durable and lasts a long time.”

Machroli, meanwhile, reiterated Mather’s remains committed to quality and to the community.

“One of the biggest things is we are a



Cleaning gutters is an annual fall ritual that requires ladders and a steady hand. Many home improvement contractors recommend installing gutter covers to keep debris out of a home’s drainage system and keep homeowners off their ladders.

STOCK PHOTO Homes & Design

family-owned business, we have been here in Burlington for 50 plus years,” he said.

“We are focused on quality materials and quality work.”

Mather’s Improvement Service LTD, 30735 Durand Ave., Burlington is accessible online at mathersimprovement.com or by phone at 262-763-7884.

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Wood floors grow in popularity

They've become sought after for renovation projects

By **Jason Arndt**

STAFF WRITER

Wood flooring products, especially hardwood and solid wood, have grown in popularity in recent years.

According to a recent study from Transparency Market Research, analysts discovered a rapidly expanding construction in several regions has led to a rise in sales of hardwood flooring.

"Abundant demand for wood flooring for interiors of residential and commercial building has spurred flooring manufacturers to launch a wide variety of products," the study released in August stated.

The study noted the increased demand as well as launch of new products has created multiple revenue possibilities and noted the industry segment could reach nearly \$90 billion by the end of 2031.

Additionally, the study stated most companies have responded, expanding

their flooring products to cater to consumer needs.

Those needs, according to the study, are largely attributed to the rise in renovation and decoration of indoor and outdoor wood surfaces.

"Need for affordable range of flooring products has broaden scope for wood flooring market players," the study stated. "They are unveiling wood floors with different texture, color, and size which enrich the visual appeal, warmth of the interior space, and reduce maintenance hassle."

Hardwood flooring, meanwhile, offers multiple options for consumers looking to renovate or build.

Good Housekeeping, around the same time Transparency Market Research released its findings, reported there are two main types of hardwood flooring – solid wood flooring and engineered wood

flooring.

Solid wood flooring, according to the report, consists of one solid piece of while and engineered wood flooring consists of a thin veneer of real wood bonded to layers of structural plywood.

"Both types come in up to 50 species, with some of the most popular options being oak, ash, maple and walnut," Good Housekeeping stated.

Hardwood flooring carries an enduring appeal, according Good Housekeeping, adding this option can undergo multiple rounds of sanding as well as refinishing. Consumers who maintain their hardwood floors can see the surface last decades.

Although consumers can maintain hardwood flooring, the surface comes at a cost, Good Housekeeping states.

"It's also subject to dents and scratches,

• CONTINUED ON PAGE 14

Hardwood floors are growing in popularity for rooms throughout the home, including kitchens and dining rooms.

STOCK PHOTO *Homes & Design*

Fireplace trends *help create attractive, comfortable rooms*

Fireplaces are useful features in a home. Fireplaces are sources of ambient heat and also add style to indoor spaces.

Fireplaces can complement just about any interior style. Fireplaces can be traditional and burn wood or connect to a home's natural gas supply for on-demand ambiance.

What's more, fireplaces may come in vented or ventless varieties, depending on homeowners' preferences and what is allowed by community building codes. That means a chimney or flue may not be needed. Expanding the list of rooms where a fireplace can be installed.

Certain trends have emerged among fireplace fans in recent years. Here's a look at what's getting consumers fired up about these home decor elements.

Minimalist style

Many fireplaces are designed in neutral colors with minimal trim that directs focus on the fire and not the appliance. When the fireplace is not in use, it blends in with surroundings and will not compete for attention with other design elements.

Convertible fireplaces

Homeowners can choose between open or sealed fireplaces. A convertible fireplace enables homeowners to have the best features of these options. A convertible fireplace can be converted to wood from gas, or the opposite, in as little as 30 minutes.

Nature-inspired materials

Natural stone continues to be a material of choice in

fireplace surrounds. Light colors work well for a fireplace, and also fit with today's lighter color interior design preferences. Natural stone also works perfectly with both contemporary and rustic decor.

Vintage fireplaces

Vintage continues to be a buzzword in 2022, and the choice to go vintage also applies to fireplace styles. A room decorated in vintage elements can be complemented with a vintage fireplace or one designed to look vintage.

Integrate into wall décor

Fireplaces that are built right into a wall save space. One can have a television and a fireplace on the same wall. These types of fireplaces work well in modern home designs. Other fireplaces may be built into bookshelves or other wall features.

(METRO CREATIVE)



Fireplaces can improve the appeal of a home. Various trends are popular this year, making fireplaces highly coveted features.

STOCK PHOTO Homes & Design

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- 424 S Summit St \$ 169,900

Genoa City

- W991 Green Rd \$ 125,000

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Delavan

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- 114 Eagle Pointe Dr C..... \$ 300,000
- 2229 Landings Ln..... \$ 410,000

Elkhorn

- 210 Remer Rd 206..... \$ 183,000
- 833 Sweetbriar Dr \$ 290,000

Lake Geneva

- 644 Geneva National Ave N \$ 237,500
- 1066 Lakeland Way 9-54.. \$ 250,000
- 1557 Woodland Dr 12-83 . \$ 290,000
- 1488 Highland Dr 08-31 ... \$ 300,000
- 847 Kendall Ln 6B..... \$ 300,000
- 1150 Park Dr 902 \$ 325,000

Genoa City

- 301 Parkview Blvd C \$ 225,000

Fontana

- 30 Abbey Villa Cir A..... \$ 440,000
- 18 Abbey Villa Cir C \$ 525,000

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Delavan

- Lt10 Kenosha Rd Lt11..... \$ 32,500
- Lt2 Island Rd \$ 155,000

Lake Geneva

- 1120 S Lake Shore Dr 28-31 \$ 275,000
- Lt18 1st Ave..... \$ 60,000
- Lt28 2nd Ave \$ 60,000

Walworth

- Lt0 Linn Walworth Rd..... \$ 110,000

Fontana

- 569 Mill St \$ 400,000
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- 981 Stratford Ct 202 \$ 255,000
- 4247 S Circle Dr..... \$ 401,000

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- 520 Trailview Crossing..... \$ 399,511
- 522 Trailview Crossing..... \$ 427,323

Union Grove

- 1715 State St 40 \$ 209,900

Burlington

- 405 Falcon Ridge Dr 30 ... \$ 427,000

VACANT LAND

Racine

- 1511 Willmor St..... \$ 8,000
- 54 Steeplechase Dr..... \$ 28,000

Waterford

- 7125 S Loomis Rd..... \$ 64,450

Kansasville

- 24006 Lakeshore Dr..... \$ 58,000

Union Grove

- Lt2 Yorkville Meadows Ct.. \$ 180,000

Wind Point

- 334 Deepwood Dr Lt4 \$ 134,900

Franksville

- Lt1 50th Rd..... \$ 250,000

KENOSHA COUNTY

SINGLE-FAMILY HOMES

Kenosha

- 4606 25th Ave \$ 165,000
- 4036 29th Ave \$ 175,000
- 3022 23rd Ave \$ 175,000
- 6711 30th Ave \$ 182,000
- 7716 29th Ave \$ 180,000
- 7846 38th Ave \$ 180,000
- 9049 29th Ave \$ 190,000
- 4701 21st Ave..... \$ 170,000
- 5409 37th Ave \$ 199,500
- 3715 17th Ave \$ 192,000
- 6407 23rd Ave \$ 200,000
- 931 44th St..... \$ 214,000
- 7613 17th Ave \$ 205,000
- 7308 31st Ave..... \$ 198,000
- 5619 88th Ave \$ 205,000



home and property sales

Here is a listing of recent single-family home, condominium and vacant land sales in Kenosha, Racine and Walworth counties. The information is provided through the Multiple Listing Service.

- 7016 27th Ave \$ 204,900
- 8530 19th Ave \$ 215,000
- 6517 48th Ave \$ 200,000
- 2314 79th St..... \$ 200,000
- 7318 32nd Ave \$ 198,000
- 7726 38th Ave \$ 220,000
- 1917 28th St..... \$ 210,000
- 3802 21st Ave..... \$ 199,500
- 5522 51st Ave..... \$ 216,000
- 7823 35th Ave \$ 215,000
- 6400 50th Ave \$ 165,000
- 4729 57th St..... \$ 206,000
- 5313 61st St..... \$ 225,000
- 5217 42nd Ave \$ 211,000
- 2748 83rd Pl..... \$ 225,000
- 4202 Harding Rd \$ 219,500
- 8060 Lexington Pl 3..... \$ 192,000
- 4724 N Cottage Ln \$ 555,000

Kenosha

- 1280 Village Centre Dr 5.. \$ 208,900
- 4126 81st St 35C \$ 205,000
- 316 56th St 211 \$ 232,000
- 3413 13th St..... \$ 248,500
- 2824 55th Ave 52 \$ 268,000
- 3116 86th St 101 \$ 283,000
- 425 56th St..... \$ 317,000
- 329 54th St..... \$ 346,050

Salem

- 25111 87th St 9-6..... \$ 174,900

Twin Lakes

- 627 Tindalls Nest..... \$ 370,000

VACANT LAND

Pleasant Prairie

- Lt13 93rd Ct \$ 113,900

Kenosha

- Lt1 25th Ave \$ 215,000

Salem

- 29916 60th St..... \$ 746,868.72

Salem

- 6210 242nd Ave \$ 180,000
- 6519 248th Ave \$ 173,000

Silver Lake

- 116 E Wisconsin Ave..... \$ 135,000

Twin Lakes

- 821 Legion Dr..... \$ 180,000

CONDOS

Pleasant Prairie

- 10010 66th Ave 5-5 \$ 174,000



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Other Real Estate

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WOOD FLOORS • CONTINUED FROM PAGE 11

plus solid flooring in particular will expand and contract with changes in humidity levels, leading to cracks, splinters and squeaky boards.”

Engineered flooring, unlike solid wood flooring, typically can withstand moisture and is more favorable for kitchens and basements.

Good Housekeeping, meanwhile, noted laminate flooring, an engineered product, and luxury vinyl flooring are two other options

Laminate flooring is similar to engineered flooring, however, uses a photo of wood instead of a veneer on top with a protective plastic coating.

“The plastic topcoat is extremely resistant to scratches and dents, making laminate one of the most durable flooring options,” Good Housekeeping stated. “It’s also among the least expensive and it often comes as DIY-friendly ‘floating’ floor system, with planks that snap together, instead of having to be nailed or glue

down.”

Consumers can easily identify laminate flooring.

“Laminate can never be refinished, so it’s not a forever floor,” the Good Housekeeping report stated, adding formaldehyde and other chemicals used in the manufacturing process presents a less healthy option for consumers.

Vinyl flooring is known as resilient flooring, according to the Good Housekeeping report, which noted this segment is the fastest growing category of flooring.

Good Housekeeping attributes cost-effectiveness, ease of installation and durability as some of the primary drivers for the rapid growth.

“All vinyl resists stains, scratches and dents, plus its waterproofs, making it safe for basements and bathrooms,” Good Housekeeping states. “Installation is easy, particularly for adhesive tiles and floating planks.”

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