

AUGUST 2023

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How to keep your lawn looking green



METRO CREATIVE Homes & Design

Homeowners' fascination with a lush, green lawn is something that has developed over time and is still "growing" strong. According to a 2019 survey conducted on behalf of the National Association of Landscape Professionals, 81 percent of all Americans had lawns and 79 percent said a lawn is an important feature when buying or renting a property.

Even though lush lawns are still coveted, due to drought, the financial climate and even invading insect populations, many people are taking inventory of their landscapes and deciding if a lawn is a priority, even going so far as to reinvent their spaces with lawn alternatives. Still, there are ways to keep properties green no matter which route is taken. Here's a look at some environmentally friendly ways to address a landscape.

Irrigate from below

There are many ways to water landscapes, but homeowners may want to take their cues from the commercial farming industry. Drip irrigation systems utilize a network of valves, pipes and tubing close to the roots of plants or under the soil. Such systems are more efficient than surface irrigation options, helping to save water and nutrients in the soil.

Water early

Scotts Lawn Care suggests watering a lawn in the morning before 10 a.m. when it is cooler and winds tend to be calmer. This ensures water can be absorbed into the soil and grass roots before evaporation occurs. Watering midday may cause the water droplets on the lawn blades to heat up and

actually scorch the lawn.

Plant a new grass type

Homeowners can experiment with eco-friendly grass seed blends that mix native grasses and may not require as much water nor ideal growing conditions.

Utilize green alternatives

Rather than focusing solely on grass, some homeowners are turning to alternatives like clover and even moss, particularly if their landscapes do not have the most pristine growing conditions. This may reduce the need for chemical fertilizers and herbicides. The result is still a green, inviting yard.

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HOMES & DESIGN

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Tips to throw a



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memorable end-of-summer soirée

One last bash as summer winds down is a great way to send off a season that's synonymous with recreation and leisure. And end-of-summer soirée also provides an opportunity to get together with friends and family before a new school year begins and families' schedules fill up.

As August inches closer to September, hosts can consider these tips as they plan a memorable send-off to summer.

Avoid Labor Day weekend

Labor Day marks the unofficial end of summer in many places, but hosts may want to avoid choosing this popular three-day weekend for their end-of-summer soirée. A survey from the travel experts at The Vacationer found that roughly 137 million people had travel plans over Labor Day weekend in 2022. Travel is undeniably popular on Labor Day weekend, and hosts likely won't want to contend with guests' travel plans. The weekend before Labor Day may produce a greater turnout, which undoubtedly makes for a more enjoyable affair.

Pick a summer theme

An end-of-summer party should have a theme that evokes the season's special vibe. A beach theme with some sand in the backyard, some specialty cocktails served with mini beach umbrellas and, of course, some water play for adults and kids can help to establish a vibe that's synonymous with summer.

Serve traditional fare

Though hosts who already hosted a handful of backyard barbecues this summer might have had their fill of hamburgers and hot dogs, an end-of-summer party is the last time many people will eat such foods until next spring. So while it's alright to offer some alternatives, such as meat cooked on a smoker or grilled fish, be sure to offer the standard hamburgers and hot dogs as well.

Invite the neighbors

It's tempting to throw a season-ending bash that lasts into the wee hours, but that can be problematic for hosts whose neighbors are within arm's length. That

potentially sticky situation can be remedied by inviting the neighbors to the party. Neighbors won't be upset by a little extra nighttime noise if they're living it up as well. If that's not an option, hosts can just remember to turn the volume down a notch once the sun sets.

Create a contingency plan

August can be a bit on the rainy side in many areas, particularly those where hurricane season hits full swing as summer winds down. Though summer storms tend to come and go in the blink of an eye, it's best to have a contingency plan in place. If possible, ensure outdoor entertaining areas can provide some respite from the elements if need be. A well-placed pergola can keep guests and food safe from the rain and a retractable patio awning can provide an extra layer of protection. Hosts also can clear out part of their home interior and have some backup games at the ready to accommodate guests if the party has to move inside for a little while.

An end-of-summer soirée can be the perfect way to say so long to a beloved time of year.

(METRO CREATIVE)



METRO CREATIVE Homes & Design

Simple landscaping strategies that can transform a home's exterior

The interior of a home may be where homeowners and their families spend the majority of their time, and there's no denying that a well-planned interior goes a long way toward making a house a home. However, the exterior of a home, including its landscaping, can serve as a source of pride and catch the eye of prospective buyers when the home hits the market.

It's easy to walk past a home with an eye-catching exterior and assume the homeowner has a green thumb or has spent lots of time and money working on the landscaping. Though that may be true, oftentimes it's the simplest strategies that make all the difference. Homeowners can keep these strategies in mind as they look to transform the exterior of their homes.

Dress up the walkway

A longer walkway can give guests a strong first impression of a home and won't break the bank. Create new planting beds and plant bright plants and flowers along

each side of the walkway. If it's necessary and within budget, lengthen the walkway to create the feel of a more grandiose entryway.

Make things more symmetrical

A messy landscape can give a poor first impression, even if the area features some beautiful plants. In such instances, a little effort to make things more symmetrical, with equal parts grass and vegetation, can create a cleaner, more inviting look.

Mulch your flower and tree beds

Mulch is a relatively inexpensive but effective way to add aesthetic appeal to a landscape. Freshly mulched beds beneath trees and flowers creates a clean and organized look, and the mulch also serves a practical purpose, as it reduces weed growth and helps the soil retain moisture so plants stay healthy and look better throughout the warmer months when

rainfall may not be steady or significant.

Plant shade trees

Shade trees can be especially useful when selling a home. The shade provided by trees can shield grass from blistering summer sun, potentially helping it stay green. A lush green lawn appeals to buyers and gives the impression the home has been well maintained. In addition, shade trees can be used to create the look of a backyard oasis. A well-placed bench beneath a large shade tree can entice buyers who want a relaxing spot to enjoy warm summer days outdoors without getting a sunburn.

Consider maintenance

The more exotic an exterior landscape is, the more maintenance it's likely to require. Lawn and garden enthusiasts may not be turned off by landscape features that require steady maintenance, but homeowners who

• CONTINUED ON PAGE 12



METRO CREATIVE Homes & Design

Must-haves when hosting **GAME NIGHT** *at* **HOME**

Game night makes for a fun way to get together with friends. Competitive fire may not disappear on game night, but the atmosphere is generally more laid back. Indeed, a great game night is less about the games and more about the laughs and fun to be had.

Game night hosts can focus on fun as they prepare to welcome friends and family into their homes. The following are some must-haves for a fun and memorable game night.

Food

Game night participants are not expecting a meal. Game nights typically begin after dinnertime, so hosts need not feel responsible for preparing or catering a meal. However, snacks typically are made available during game night. Charcuterie boards, cheese, chips, pretzels, and even some healthy fare like vegetables and hummus can be offered so no one goes hungry during game night.

Beverages

Simplicity also reigns supreme when

picking which drinks to serve during game night. Formal dinner parties may call for specialty cocktails and a carefully curated wine list, but game night does not require that same level of planning. Non-alcoholic drinks like water, soda, lemonade, and iced tea should be readily available. Beer and wine can be offered to guests who want a drink, but hosts must be sure to avoid overserving guests. Hosts can request that some guests serve as designated drivers and hosts should be ready to perform that duty as well.

Games

Of course, hosts will need to pick games for the party as well. It's best to avoid complicated games so no time is wasted explaining the rules to novices. Many adults are familiar with the rules of poker, so keep some decks of cards and chips on hand in the event guests want to play a round. Additional games that do not require too great a familiarity with the rulebook include Scrabble and Monopoly. Hosts also can consider something a little more sinister like Cards Against Humanity

if the crowd is willing to play.

Music

Some music playing in the background can loosen things up and help to establish a relaxed atmosphere. Hosts should keep in mind that it's best to avoid turning the television on, as a game or movie playing in the background can distract guests from the games and lead to less mingling.

Atmosphere

The atmosphere should be warm and inviting so everyone feels right at home upon arriving. Make sure there's ample lighting available in the game room but don't make things too bright. Slightly dimmed lights can set a welcoming tone and create a relaxed vibe. Comfortable seating also helps to create a pleasant atmosphere that can make guests feel right at home.

Some simple game night essentials can ensure hosts and guests have a fun and relaxing night with friends and family.

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Labor Day weekend travel tips



METRO CREATIVE Homes & Design

Labor Day is celebrated on the same day in the United States and Canada each year. An annual holiday to celebrate the achievements of workers, Labor Day (known as Labour Day in Canada), occurs on the first Monday of September each year.

Though its status as the end of summer is not technically accurate, Labor Day marks the unofficial end to the season of fun in the sun for millions of people across both the U.S. and Canada. That makes the weekend preceding Labor Day one of the most popular times to travel. Indeed, data from the Transportation Security Administration indicates that the Friday before Labor Day 2022 was the second busiest travel day at U.S. airports that summer. Travel was equally popular on Labour Day weekend 2022 in Canada, where the online booking platform Kayak reports searches for international flights had increased by 104 percent compared to the year prior.

Labor Day weekend travel figures to be just as popular this year, so travelers can keep these tips in mind as they plan one last summer getaway.



Book as early as possible

With so many people interested in traveling on Labor Day weekend, it behooves all travelers to plan ahead. Competition for hotel rooms and other lodging might be steep, and individuals who plan to fly might have trouble finding seats on flights that leave during peak travel hours the longer they delay.

Consider traveling by car

Air travel aficionados had some good news and bad news as the summer travel season began in 2023. Data from FlightAware indicated that flight cancellations were down in 2023 compared to 2022. However, FlightAware data also indicated there were an average of 7,000 to 9,000 flight delays per day in the U.S. in the first half of 2023. No one wants to send off the last weekend of summer with a lengthy flight delay, so travelers who want to spend as much time as possible celebrating may want to drive rather than fly to their destinations.

Drive during off-peak hours

Air travelers must cede some control over when to depart, but drivers can pick their own time to

hit the road. Starting a trip during off-peak hours, such as early in the morning or even after rush hour on Thursday night, may enable drivers to avoid traffic.

Travel light

Warm weather tends to linger into Labor Day weekend, so there's no need to pack heavy. That's especially noteworthy for air travelers. The lighter travelers can pack for a flight, the less likely they will need to check a bag. That decreases the likelihood bags will be lost if a flight is delayed or canceled, and it also allows travelers to deplane and leave the airport without having to wait around to claim their bags.

Extend the trip

An extra day at the end of the trip can help travelers avoid the crowds on the way home. Parents may need to travel on Labor Day if school is already in session or starting on Tuesday. But travelers who have no reason to rush home can get an extra day of fun in the sun and travel home on a day that tends to be less hectic. Labor Day weekend marks the unofficial end of summer. Travelers can keep various strategies in mind to get the most out of summer's swan song.

(METRO CREATIVE)

Give your home a new look with these **SHUTTER STYLES**

Homeowners have many options at their disposal if they want to improve their homes. A focus on the exterior can be a promising and rewarding way to direct renovation dollars.

Curb appeal has a significant impact on how a home is viewed. Manicured landscapes, updated windows and doors and well-lit landscapes can improve the value of a home and ensure it sells quickly and above market rate.

When homeowners assess items they may want to change, shutters can be an area of consideration. Shutters can help windows look a little less plain. In most modern residential properties, shutters are purely decorative. However, their roots lie in home protection. Originally, shutters were used in lieu of windows so they were the only way to safeguard a home's interior from the elements. Some shutters still offer that protection, but those typically are installed on homes in hurricane-prone areas. Window shutters lend a finished and distinctive look to a home. When shopping for shutters, individuals can choose among various styles.

Louvered

A louvered shutter features several wood slats that overlap each other on the same frame. A typical louvered shutter features two sets of slats separated by a center rail. Some functional louvered shutters are operational, meaning the slats can be tilted to allow air to flow through. But this is something typically reserved for indoor shutters. Decorative ones have fixed slats.

Panel

Panel shutters come in different styles. Raised panel shutters present a boxed design where rectangular features will stand out from the rest of the frame. Flat panel shutters (sometimes referred to as shaker) have the boxed design, but those rectangles are not raised. Recessed panels are the opposite of raised panels. As their name suggests, recessed panels are set back from the rest of the frame.

Board and batten

Board and batten shutters are formed from grouped single boards joined together with shorter crosspieces of wood called battens. Battens are positioned horizontally or at an angle. These shutters have a more informal, rural feel.



METRO CREATIVE Homes & Design

Bahama/Bermuda

These tropical-inspired shutters are of the louvered variety, but they're installed from the top of the window rather than on the sides.

Scandinavian

Scandinavian series shutters are very decorative board and batten shutters. They feature a series of cutouts and designs.

Combination

Some shutters offer the best of both worlds, with louvered on top and a solid panel on the bottom, or vice versa. This

gives homeowners infinite options. Shutters are available in various materials. The most common include wood, vinyl and composite. Cedar, mahogany and pine are commonly used woods for exterior shutters. Vinyl is more economical and lightweight, but they can be challenging to clean and do not offer the longevity of other materials. Composite shutters are durable and cost less than wood in most cases. Color is another consideration when replacing shutters. Shutters can stand out or blend in with the siding and other architectural accents. Shutters also can flank a front door to fully complete an exterior look.

(METRO CREATIVE)

On the garden path

Plant now for a bountiful fall harvest

Boost your fall garden harvest with some midsummer plantings. Fill vacant spaces left in the vegetable garden after harvesting lettuce, spinach, and other early maturing crops. Expand your edible plantings to other vacant spots in flowerbeds, mixed borders, and containers.



By **MELINDA MYERS**
Contributor

Sow seeds of beans, cucumbers, carrots, beets, and other vegetables that will have time to reach maturity before the end of your growing season. Simply count the number of days from planting to the average first fall frost in your area. You'll find frost dates for your location on the internet, extension publications and other gardening resources. Next, check the back of the seed packet for the number of days needed from planting until harvest. As long as you have enough time for the seeds to sprout, grow and produce before the first frost, they can be added to the garden.

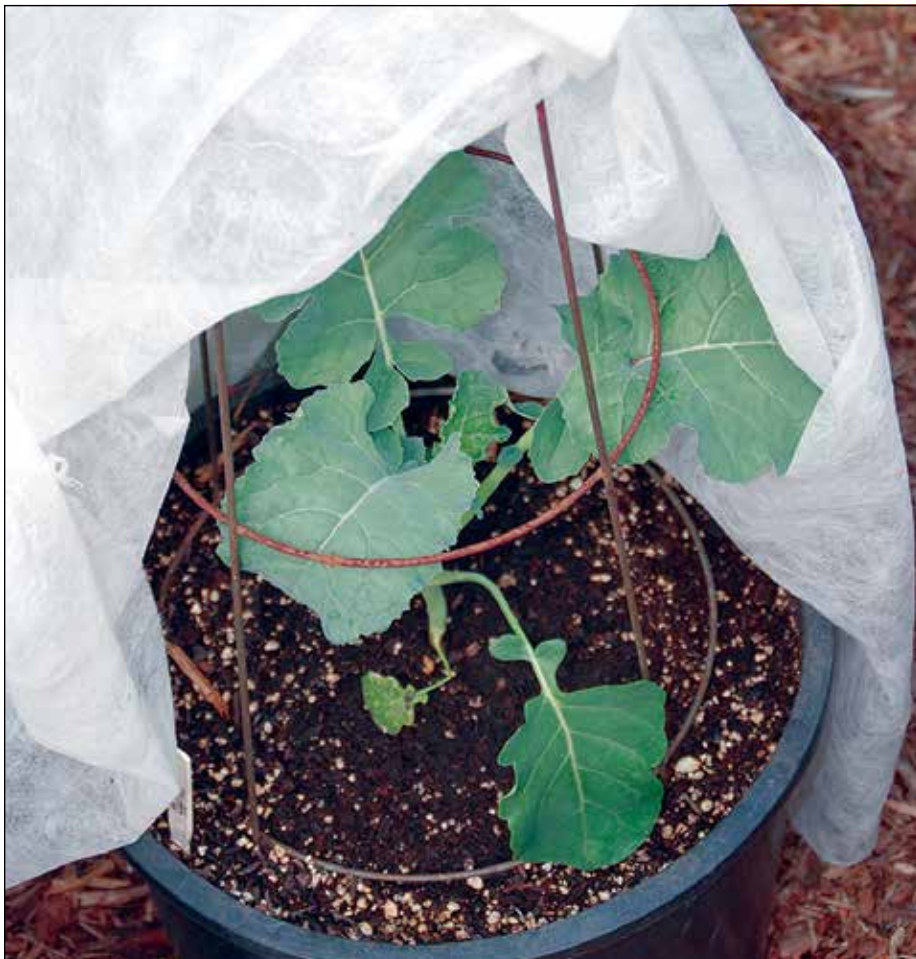
Some plants like collards, kale and broccoli tolerate, and even taste better, after a light freeze. This makes them great choices for a fall-harvested garden. Some garden centers sell transplants of these and other vegetables suitable for summer planting. Check the plant tags for the number of days needed for transplants to grow and start producing.

Extend the harvest season by providing frost protection in the fall. Cold frames and cloches that act like mini greenhouses for individual plants protect the plants from frost. Vent them on warm sunny days and close the lids when frost is in the forecast.

Use floating row cover fabrics for an even lower maintenance option. They are designed to let air, light, and water through to the plants while protecting them from frost. You will find row covers available in various weights that provide different levels of cold weather protection. Select the one best suited to your climate and the vegetables you are growing.

Loosely cover the plants with the fabric and anchor the edges with stones, boards, or landscape pins. Just lift the row cover to harvest, recover, and leave it in place until the harvest is complete, or the temperatures drop below what the row cover and plants can handle.

Wait for the soil to cool before planting lettuce, spinach, and other vegetable seeds that require cooler temperatures to



Floating row cover fabrics are a lower maintenance option, protecting plants from frost while letting air, light, and water through.

PHOTO COURTESY MELINDAMYERS.COM *Homes & Design*

germinate. Increase germination success by planting the seeds as directed, watering them in, and covering the row with a wooden lath to keep the soil cooler. Remove the lath as soon as the seeds sprout. Or start the plants indoors and move them into the garden as transplants. Then help keep the soil cool throughout the remainder of summer by mulching with leaves, evergreen needles, or other organic mulch.

Increase the health and productivity of your second planting by preparing the soil before planting seeds and transplants. Mix an inch of quality compost into the top six inches of soil or fertilize with organically rich low-nitrogen fertilizer.

Once your seeds and transplants are in the ground, be sure to water them properly. Keep the seedbed and roots of transplants moist for the first few weeks. Gradually reduce the watering frequency as seedlings sprout and grow, and transplants become established. Most plants need about an

inch of water each week. Water thoroughly whenever the top few inches of soil are crumbly and slightly moist. Adjust your watering schedule based on your weekly rainfall, soil type, and air temperatures.

Harvest vegetables when they are at their peak of ripeness and early in the morning after the dew dries whenever possible. Regular picking avoids waste and results in a bigger harvest of flavorful and nutritious vegetables to enjoy throughout the fall.

*Melinda Myers has written more than 20 gardening books, including the recently released *Midwest Gardener's Handbook, 2nd Edition*, and *Small Space Gardening*. She hosts *The Great Courses "How to Grow Anything"* instant video and DVD series and the nationally syndicated *Melinda's Garden Moment TV & radio program*. Myers is a columnist and contributing editor for *Birds & Blooms* magazine and her website is www.MelindaMyers.com.*



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SIMPLE LANDSCAPING

• CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6

don't have much time for such work should keep things simple. A poorly maintained landscape, even if it includes exotic plants and elaborate designs, will adversely affect curb appeal. Another feather in the cap of low-maintenance landscape features is they could prove more appealing to prospective buyers, who may view elaborate, exotic landscaping as a lot of extra work they won't want to do.

Some simple landscaping strategies can help homeowners transform their home exteriors without requiring a significant investment of time or money.

(METRO CREATIVE)



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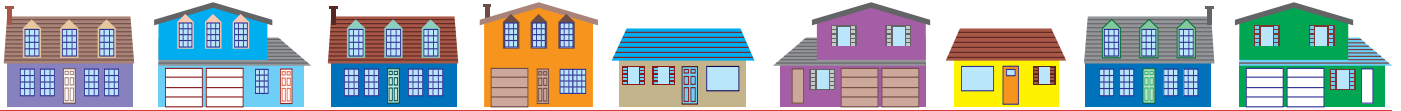
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home and property sales

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.

WALWORTH COUNTY

SINGLE-FAMILY HOMES

Lake Geneva

- N2619 Central Dr \$ 306,000
- N1654 N Geneva Ave..... \$ 390,000
- 481 Sue Ann Dr..... \$ 575,000
- 1600 Monte Vista Dr..... \$ 570,000
- 720 High St \$ 849,000
- W3890 S Shore Dr \$ 1,019,875

Whitewater

- N7602 E Lakeshore Dr..... \$ 300,000
- 452 W Main St..... \$ 280,000

Genoa City

- N1191 Pine Rd..... \$ 143,000
- W1146 Poinsetta Rd..... \$ 139,900
- N1304 Catalpa Rd..... \$ 200,000

Delavan

- 611 Collie St..... \$ 230,000
- 2808 Jones St \$ 233,000
- 2916 King St..... \$ 257,900
- 1019 E Wisconsin St \$ 287,500
- 3247 Chicago Club Dr..... \$ 420,000
- 2502 Manor Ln \$ 750,000
- 4116 Spruce St \$ 255,000

Elkhorn

- 827 N Sandy Ln \$ 375,000
- 1001 E Pinecrest Ln..... \$ 375,000
- 847 Chelsea Dr \$ 402,000

East Troy

- 2741 Oakmont Dr..... \$ 439,900
- 2716 Red Oak Ln \$ 523,900

Williams Bay

- 470 Circle Dr \$ 450,299.98
- 387 Hawthorne Dr \$ 511,000
- 528 Woodlawn Dr \$ 570,000

Fontana

- 778 Indian Hills Rd \$ 545,000
- N2021 N Lakeshore Dr..... \$ 615,000

Lyons

- 1475 Creek Side Dr \$ 415,000

Mukwonago

- 1430 Applewood Cir \$ 615,000

CONDOS

Lake Geneva

- 83 Red Chimney Rd 04..... \$ 203,000
- 10 Zurich Ct 10-05 \$ 220,000
- 715 S Lake Shore Dr 7F.... \$ 251,000
- 1783 Woodland Cir 12-11.. \$ 265,000
- 320 Foxwood Trl \$ 725,000
- 1481 Waterview Way \$ 917,000

Fontana

- 820 Aspen Dr A3..... \$ 533,000
- 935 Duck Pond Rd \$ 740,000
- 602 Abbey Ridge Ct \$ 795,000

VACANT LAND

Lake Geneva

- Lt22 Birch Dr \$ 280,000
- Lt0 Maclean Rd..... \$ 450,000
- Jute..... \$ 48,500

Williams Bay

- 109 Constance Blvd \$ 3,250,000

KENOSHA COUNTY

SINGLE-FAMILY HOMES

Kenosha

- 1310 25th Ave \$ 260,000
- 7511 20th Ave \$ 219,900
- 4353 24th St..... \$ 250,000
- 6912 30th Ave \$ 218,000
- 7832 29th Ave \$ 222,000
- 2114 32nd St..... \$ 245,500
- 7015 32nd Ave \$ 236,000
- 5126 62nd St..... \$ 260,000
- 5616 44th Ave \$ 221,000
- 8242 23rd Ave \$ 232,500
- 8623 21st Ave..... \$ 225,000
- 7723 37th Ave \$ 250,000
- 1918 12th Pl \$ 415,000
- 2313 16th Pl \$ 419,000
- 6413 94th Ave \$ 430,000
- 8224 66th St..... \$ 465,000

Salem

- 9009 277th Ave \$ 180,000
- 8215 235th Ave \$ 271,000
- 6044 243rd Ct \$ 330,000

Trevor

- 23320 112th St..... \$ 439,000
- 27069 101st St \$ 760,000

Pleasant Prairie

- 7728 105th Ave \$ 435,000
- 10851 35th Ave \$ 480,000

Twin Lakes

- 814 Elm St..... \$ 269,900
- 551 Short St..... \$ 303,500

Genoa City

- 39237 92nd Pl \$ 340,000
- 40502 81st St \$ 620,700

CONDOS

Kenosha

- 8006 41st Ave..... \$ 180,000
- 1425 30th Ave 1 \$ 185,000
- 7305 98th Ave D..... \$ 200,000
- 807 82nd St 19 \$ 230,000
- 7311 98th Ave C..... \$ 297,000

VACANT LAND

Kenosha

- 7314 25th Ave \$ 25,000
- Lt2 18th St..... \$ 95,000

Randall

- Lt33 390th Ct..... \$ 30,000

Twin Lakes

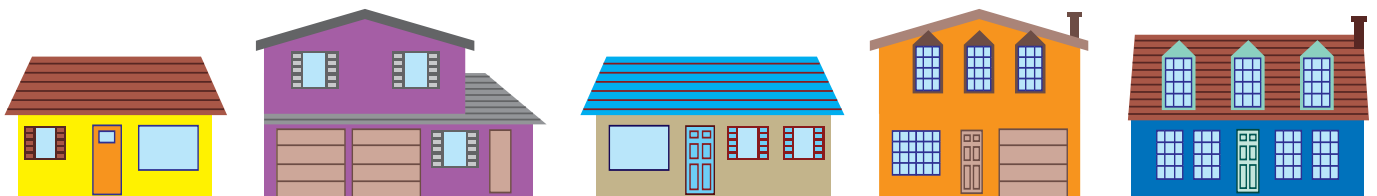
- Lt31 Dietrich Dr \$ 40,000

RACINE COUNTY

SINGLE-FAMILY HOMES

Racine

- 2060 Quincy Ave \$ 165,500
- 4224 Olive St..... \$ 150,000
- 1838 Shoop St \$ 145,000





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.

Wind Lake

- 26861 Oak Ridge Dr \$ 732,000

CONDOS

Racine

- 3603 St Andrews Ct 208 \$ 68,000
- 111 11th St 5CS \$ 129,000

Mount Pleasant

- 5736 Cambridge Cir 4U \$ 142,000
- 6551 Mariner Dr 10 \$ 150,000
- 1635 Summerset Dr 4 \$ 215,000
- 1085 Hastings Ct 101 \$ 226,800

Burlington

- 253 Oak Hill Cir \$ 490,000

VACANT LAND

Racine

- 312 Mertens Ave \$ 9,000
- Lt0 4 Mile Rd \$ 112,000

Waterford

- 1700 Dover Ridge Dr \$ 1,490,000

Caledonia

- 3301 W 7 Mile Rd \$ 620,000

Burlington

- Pcl2 Walton Rd \$ 300,000
- 7201 Wheatland Rd \$ 342,500

Muskego

- 22637 8 Mile Rd W \$ 155,400



METRO CREATIVE Homes & Design

LAWN LOOKING GREEN • CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

Watch the lawn height

Mowing too frequently or at too low a height may compromise the lawn's ability to thrive. Grass cut to the proper height develops a deep root system to better locate water and nutrients in the soil. That means homeowners may not have to water as much or as frequently. Taller lawns also shade the soil and the roots, reducing some evaporation.

Compost

Leave the clippings on the lawn to break

down and further feed nutrients to the lawn, helping it look greener and thrive. Furthermore, rely on supplementation with compost to reinforce the nutrient profile in the soil. The National Resources Defense Council says composting is the natural process of recycling organic matter, such as leaves and food scraps, into a valuable fertilizer. It doesn't take much to nurture compost in a yard.

Green landscapes are possible with a few tips that help conserve water and maximize natural resources.

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