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+ April 23, 2015

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Stamped concrete is able to mock the chisel marks and give the appearance of individual slate bricks. A coloring agent was also added to the concrete, giving it the dark gray look of slate.

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When Twila Walker and her husband, Tom, added a sliding glass door and wooden deck to the south side of their home in rural Luverne, they were looking for something to tie the deck and the landscape together. That something turned out to be a poured concrete pad with a twist. Assisting with its completion was Dan Hamann Construction, who was experimenting with the technique five years ago. Dan Hamann's initial project has stood the test of





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... Try stamped concrete for creative living spaces



Mavis Fodness photo/0416 Home and Garden Concrete
Twila Walker says she enjoys her stamped concrete patio that provides a safe and eye-appealing pad for her and her family to enjoy the hot tub and portable fire pit.

time, and it’s an element that the Walkers enjoy.

“It adds a little more character while sitting on the patio,” Twila said.

The stamped concrete pad also provides a hassle-free and slip-free surface for the hot tub and portable fire pit.

Because it is a solid cement pad, no weeds penetrate to the patio’s surface. And with just the look of individual bricks, there is no maintenance of adding material between the joints to prevent gaps from forming.

The stamped concrete’s slate-stone pattern gives the appearance of chiseled stone with bumps and ridges providing a non-slick surface from the deck to the hot tub.

Besides a rough surface, coloring agents were added to the concrete’s surface and the Walkers’ chosen dark gray coloring accents the bumps and ridges created by the stamping. The tinted concrete also lessens the brightness of the concrete during sunny days.

Crushed red rock was added around the stamped concrete pad to add a color contrast and tie the patio into the lawn in an eye-pleasing manner.

“It makes it look more homey,” Twila said, “instead of just concrete.”

Hamann said creating a stamped concrete surface is a lot of work, from moving the patterned stamp around the concrete to create the impression, to adding color, to placing the sealcoat.

“It’s kind of back-breaking work,” he said.

And stamped concrete is more expensive because of the labor involved.

However, Hamann said he has done smaller projects such as landscape accents between stone outdoor pillars or as a solution for small areas that receive a lot of foot traffic. Each project provided an interesting landscape design that pleased the homeowners.

Photos and text
by Mavis Fodness

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“The garden is here for your enjoyment, so please be respectful of your neighbors and the resources available to you.”

— Guidelines for gardening, City of Luverne website

It takes a village

Community gardens do best when all gardeners work together

The Luverne Economic Development Authority has a link on its website through cityofluverne.org that provides details about community gardening.

“The garden is here for your enjoyment, so please be respectful of your neighbors and the resources available to you,” it states.

The guidelines described

below govern the garden and are enforced by the Community Garden Committee.

Plot rental fees (\$15) must be paid by all gardeners. Costs covered by the fee include, but are not limited to, water usage, tilling, fencing, hose, garden shed, tools, etc.

Basic gardening tools will be supplied and secured in the garden shed located near the

animal impound. The shed will be secured with a combination lock.

You are free to use these tools on the honor system at the community garden. Please promptly return tools to the storage area when you are through using them so that other gardeners may enjoy the convenience and benefit of these tools as well. You are free

to store additional tools and supplies in the shed at your own risk.

Plots must be maintained and kept in useful condition throughout the growing season. The garden coordinator will periodically inspect the gardens and impartially decide which ones need attention. Those who neglect their garden or let it become overrun with weeds will be notified.

If the plot is not kept in useful condition or maintained, the plot will be returned to the community garden organizers for other members' use and the gardener will be ineligible for a plot the following year.

Walkways and paths must be kept clear, level, and free of all obstructions. Carpet pieces are allowed on the walkways.

Non-organic fertilizers, pesticides or herbicides are NOT to be used within the developed community garden.

Compost soil, manure, etc. are permitted.

Water usage will be recorded by a water meter. Watering should be done on an “as needed” basis and only allowed during low water evaporative times (evening and morning). Water usage must be monitored – do not leave a sprinkler on. Additional water charges will be divisible by all members.

If a gardener expects an extended absence, proper arrangements must be made to have plot tended to.

Pets are not allowed within the fenced-in area of the garden.

Please comply with the city ordinance by keeping your pet on a leash and cleaning up after your animal.

Garden waste, spent crops, and any other debris is to be removed or composted at season end – **end of second week in October.**

Structures and supports for planting are to be removed at the season's end, which is the **end of second week in October.**

Please make sure the water hydrant is turned OFF (not just the hose nozzle) and the tools are securely LOCKED in the shed when you leave the garden, regardless of the time of day.

Plot rental fees for returning gardeners are due by January 31.

Returning gardeners will have the right to reserve their same plot for the following year at the end of each gardening season.

New gardeners' plot rental fees are due by Feb 28.

If there are any questions, concerns, or problems associated with the garden, please contact:

Lynette Jauert: ljauert@knology.net or 507-283-8539
Holly Sammons: hsammons@cityofluverne.org or 507-449-5033

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Have a green thumb? Short on yard space?

Community gardens offer new possibilities

By Lori Sorenson

Forty-eight new community garden plots are tilled up, fenced in and ready for the 2015 growing season.

The community garden moved last fall from the city's wastewater treatment area to city-owned land on East Dodge Street (across the road southwest of the apartments).

That decision was made after June flooding washed away the existing plots, leaving gardeners like Ruth Stoakes without their usual summer produce.

"We plant tomatoes, beans, peas, cucumbers, squash, lettuce — we had just picked some lettuce — and poof, it was gone overnight," said Stoakes, one of more than a dozen Luverne residents who grow produce in the community gardens.

She and her husband, Al, agreed to be interviewed for an Oct. 16 Star Herald feature about the gardens.

Ruth said she's glad to have a new location for this year's garden.

"It looks to me like it will be a good spot," she said. "We're hoping it will be a non-flooding area."

For three years the Stoakes have taken advantage of the city's community gardens, funded partially by a grant through the Statewide Community Health Improvement Program (SHIP).

"We've enjoyed being out there and enjoyed being outdoors," Ruth said.

Master Gardener Lynette Jauert has been instrumental in organizing the gardens and serving as a liaison between gardeners and resources.

"I am crazy excited about the new gardens and all the possibilities it has in store for the future," Jauert said.

"We have been working hard to make this a better experience for the gardeners,



Luverne's community gardens were relocated last fall to the former city dump at the east end of Dodge Street. Ten more plots were added, and the site includes running water, fences and a tool shed stocked with basic necessities.

and we think we have found an exciting new location that has a lot of room to grow in future years."

She said this sort of activity has required a great deal of community involvement.

For example, the Master Gardeners are planning on having Community Education classes on gardening in this new garden.

"Tim Olsen, our new Master Gardening intern, has already had a couple of Community Education classes on Gardening in Small spaces and is going to do an ongoing

training at the gardens," Jauert said.

"He also plans to start a garden blog about our gardens and timely tips for all gardeners to read. It will be

a great addition not only for the renters of these plots but for gardeners in our Community."

The healthy activity and the resulting healthy food are

among reasons the city agreed to provide a public area for interested gardeners.

Community gardens/
continued on page 19

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Former farmer finds new career in home inspection

Luverne's Gregg Oehlerts has the inside track on secrets that are hidden from a homeowner or homebuyer. As a home inspector since 2001, his eyes are trained to notice flaws in houses that aren't readily noticeable by others. "I'm not an electrician or a plumber, but I know enough to know when to call one," Oehlerts said. "A home inspection is simply a top-to-bottom look at a house. If something looks suspicious, we call professionals." Outside he checks the roof, siding, foundation, drainage, garage and driveway, decks and patio, gutters and downspouts.

Photos and text by
Lori Sorenson

Inside he checks heating and air conditioning, electrical system, windows, doors, appliances, ceilings, walls and floors, fireplaces and combustible gas leaks. Oehlerts, a former farmer, got involved with home inspections through his father-in-law and sister-in-law who are Realtors in Sioux Falls. "They were talking about home inspections, so I thought that might be something I could do," Oehlerts said. "As a farmer, you do all your own work, so I thought I could do this, too." So he trained to become a home inspector and has been certified and busy at the job since 2001.

"Once you're self-employed, you kind of like to stay that way," he said about his former work as a farmer. "And you get to work with all kinds of different homes and all kinds of different people. Sometimes you have people upset with you because of what you find, but it's always enjoy-



Oehlerts home inspection/
continued on page 10

Radon testing and installing radon mitigation systems is an important part of Gregg Oehlerts' business, HomeSpect.

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Produce stand becomes go-to spot for local shoppers



For nearly 20 years Bert Verhey has stocked a produce stand at the end of his driveway on north Highway 75 in Luverne. The stand takes a beating by the wind, but it will be repaired in time for summer produce.

Photos and text by Mavis Fodness

Bert Verhey’s roadside produce stand near the corner of James Street and U.S. Highway 75 is looking a little tattered by the recent breezy days in northern Luverne.

However, by the time Verhey’s garden produce is ripe later this summer, the stand will be repaired and open for business again.

For almost two decades Verhey has sold produce to the public using the honor system. Signs stipulate the price, and a locked cash box allows customers to slip the correct amount through the slot.

“Luverne is pretty honest,” he said. “You might not find that in a larger city.”

A larger city such as Sioux Falls, South Dakota, where Verhey said he attended a farmer’s market where customers regularly haggled over prices he already thought were fair, giving in because he didn’t like

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Verhey produce sales outgrew back of pickup

to argue.

The produce stand originally started out with Verhey parking a small wagon at the end of his driveway because attending the local farmer's market was impossible due to his full-time job.

Because of its popularity of selling from the small wagon, he constructed the covered wooden stand to hold more produce and to protect it from the weather.

Allowing customers to serve themselves freed up more time for Verhey to tend his gardens.

For Verhey, gardening is an extension of the area's ag industry.

"Working around agriculture all the time, I enjoy it," he said

Gardening provides a quiet solitude and slower work pace when compared to his full-time job at New Vision Co-Op's grain division in Beaver Creek.

A native of Beaver Creek, Verhey said he remembers from his youth his father, Cornie, working a small garden. The experience influenced Verhey in starting his own plot almost 20 years ago.

"It just started out as a small little garden," he said. "Now it's a little bigger."

His garden is now more than five times bigger than the quarter acre Verhey first tended. He now grows vegetables and fruits on 5 to 6 acres at three different garden locations.

Helping tend to the estimated 2,500 onion sets, 400 tomato plants and enough vines to generate 1,000 pumpkins are Verhey's father and brother Cornell. Together they harvest the estimated 4,000 pounds of potatoes and 1.5 acres of sweet corn.

"I constantly try different seeds," Verhey said, "especially different pumpkins seeds."

While he buys some started plants, Verhey looks to one commercial dealer's cata-

log, Seedway out of Elizabethtown, Pennsylvania, for new ideas in seed varieties. Orders are completed at the beginning of each year and are planted once the weather permits.

Verhey rotates the growing locations of his produce each year and tries new growing techniques such as last year's use of a corn by-product

from the local ethanol plant as fertilizer.

"It looked like it was going to be real good but then (the garden) got flooded out," Verhey said.

He will try again because Verhey, 56, sees gardening as a lifelong activity. "I can't wait until I retire," he said. "I would have more time."

"It just started out as a small little garden. ... Now it's a little bigger."

— Bert Verhey, gardener

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Oehlerts home inspection/continued from page 6

able when you're working with those first-time homebuyers who are excited about their new house."

An important part of Oehlerts' work centers on radon detection and radon mitigation — installing radon systems.

"At least three-quarters of the homes in this area have elevated radon," Oehlerts said. "And most people are unaware of it."

Radon is an odorless, tasteless and invisible gas produced by the decay of naturally occurring uranium in soil and water.

According to the EPA, radon is a form of ionizing radiation and a proven carcinogen. Lung cancer is the only known effect on human health from exposure to radon in air.

The EPA recommends radon levels in homes don't reach more than 4 pCi/L (picocuries per liter), but Oehlerts said it is not unusual to find homes with levels around 20 to 30.

"There was one in Sioux Falls at 90, and in Heron Lake I measured one at 120," he said.

If Oehlerts measures elevated radon in a home he inspects, he recommends — and often installs, a radon mitigation system.

He said it's rewarding to know that his work is helping to improve people's health and prevent cancer.

"If you're in a home with a high reading, the more you're exposed, the greater your risk for developing lung cancer," Oehlerts said.

To schedule an inspection, he can be reached at 605-940-3225 or gko@oehlerts.com.

Gregg Oehlerts reads a pressure monitor on a radon system he recently installed.

Lori Sorenson photo/0423 oehlerts home inspection



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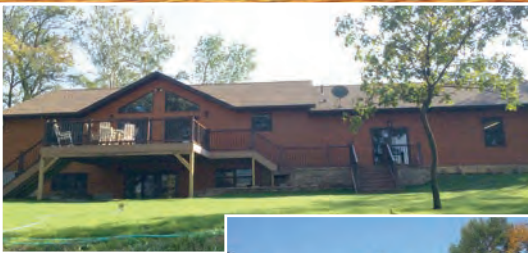
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Farmers Market is as close to mom's garden as it gets

By George Bonnema
Luverne horticulturalist

Growing up on a family farm, I took so many things for granted. Finding things to do was never a problem and I soon learned that saying I was “bored” would get a quick fix from a parent.

Imagination was inspiration and there were things to do things with. That was how we often learned engineering; it was pretty basic but yet understandable.



When I talk about taking my setting for granted, almost everyone I knew had their own garden, large or small.

They raised their own animals for meat and eggs, and often had their own cow for dairy products.

Sustainable agriculture just happened ... and no, I’m not 150 years old. But in just a couple of generations, the general population has moved so far from that concept that we are reinventing it ... well, somewhat.

On March 26 I hosted a seminar for the Spring Loaded weekend about the difference between organic, heirloom, hybrid and GMO food products.

In Mom’s garden, we were not so concerned about a tomato with the perfect color or shape. Its flavor was the characteristic that determined its value.

We understood the work it took to produce the products, so they had a much higher value than products produced elsewhere by someone we don’t know and who doesn’t know us.

When I was a kid, peaches tasted like a peach should taste. They came in a wooden crate and were individually wrapped in a square of pink or white tissue. They bruised easily and that tissue helped cushion them and also enabled them to ripen in transit.

This is 2015 and life is what it is. Time is what it is ... you don’t have time for gardening or the space to do it.

For the most part, the foods you purchase to feed your family have been grown anywhere but locally.

Depending on the product, it could be imported from anywhere in the world. That grower is primarily concerned about getting maximum production of produce that “looks” like what the consumer expects; the flavor is not so much of an issue as is the necessity of that product to retain its viability during shipping and handling.

Growers for the wholesale markets are generally crop specific and they grow it in quantity.

In Mom’s garden, we were not so concerned about a tomato with the perfect color or shape. Its flavor was the characteristic that determined its value. We understood the work it took to produce the products, so they had a much higher value than products produced elsewhere by someone we don’t know and who doesn’t know us.

The same crop on the same parcel of land, year after year. The absence of crop rotation can quickly result in problems from insects or disease, which can only be controlled by chemicals.

Government regulations are necessary to try to protect the consumer ... the grower’s primary concern is getting a “good-looking” product to market and doing whatever necessary to accomplish that.

That is where the Farmers Market concept is a totally different option.

The vendors are local. They are very conscious about the safety, freshness, and quality of the products they are offering for sale. They interact with the customers to know what you want and give advice on how to use the products they are producing.

Many growers use organic production concepts even if

they don’t have the certification documents ... they just do their best to give you food that is fresh, safe and nutritious.

Luverne is fortunate to have an excellent and viable market with a wonderful variety of products from vendors who care.

The market runs from 4 to 7 p.m. on Thursdays from June through October on the Red-bird Field parking lot just off East Main Street.

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From Left to Right: Sam Berghorst (owner), Tom Martius, Mike Mead (manager), Anitra Overgaard, Cody Gehrke and Nick Mead.

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Considering new trees in your yard? Wally's recommends autumn blaze maple



By Glenda McGaffee

Wally's Nursery and Landscaping, a business run by Robert and Delwyn Walraven, has been in operation since 1967. It began by selling bedding plants, and then the business expanded to include shrubs, trees and landscaping in 1970. Robert shared his expertise in planting trees and was asked, "What are the most popular trees planted in our area?" Walraven said, "The autumn blaze maple is the most popular tree to plant in our area."

He said the autumn blaze maple is a rapidly growing shade tree. Once mature, the tree can reach a height of up to 60 feet with a 40-foot spread. Like other maples, the autumn blaze is known for its fall colors.

For wet and lower-lying areas Walraven recommends maple and linden trees. In drier areas the bur oak and hackberry are recommended. Walraven commented on the ash borer disease. "A lot of trees come from Asia. These trees have a built-

in resistance to insects and diseases in Asia and survive there," he said.

"The selections of trees that come to the United States are not resistant to this disease, so the disease comes with them."

For example, 10 years ago

in China during the Olympics the U.S. planted ash trees, which came from the United States.

"The trees died because they did not have this resistance," Walraven said. "The trees build up their resistance to whatever climate they are accustomed to."

Walraven reminded everyone to be sure to call 811 before digging for spring yard work. "Digging without calling can disrupt service to an entire neighborhood, harm you and those around you and potentially result in fines and repair costs," he said. Calling 811 before digging gets underground utility lines marked for free and helps prevent undesired consequences.

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Luverne man stays connected to construction industry through new venture as home inspector

By Lori Sorenson

Tim Christensen is new to the home inspection scene, but already he knows he's in the right business.

"I've enjoyed just about everything about it," he said, "from becoming certified, to completing visual and written reports for home inspections and getting to know the customers."

Christensen became certified last year through the International Association of Certified Home Inspectors.

His home inspections include indoor and outdoor inspections, from roofs, siding and foundations to plumbing, electrical and appliances. He also tests for radon gas, which is a known problem in Rock County.

Christensen's full-time job is in the Adrian School District where he serves as high school principal, but he said he's always been drawn to the construction business.

"I have enjoyed working construction throughout the course of my life," he said.

"I have had the opportunity to be involved in helping my brother-in-law build houses from the ground up," Christensen said.

"I have worked with other construction businesses on renovations and remodels, and I have done a lot of remodeling/renovations to our own residence in Luverne."

He said home inspection is another way to stay connected to that line of work. At the same time, his construction experience is helpful with his home inspections.

"With my enjoyment and

"I've enjoyed just about everything about it, from becoming certified, to completing visual and written reports for home inspections and getting to know the customers."

knowledge of construction, I was fortunate enough to get involved in the construction business from another angle by becoming a certified home inspector," he said.
Christensen can be contacted for home inspection at 507-227-7678.



Lori Sorenson photo/0423 hyg christensen tim
Luverne's Tim Christensen, who is also the high school principal in Adrian, inspects the electrical box in a home near Luverne Friday afternoon, April 17. He said home inspection is another way to stay connected to the construction business, which he enjoys.

Bridal Shower?
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A small black and white photograph of a bride and groom. The bride is wearing a white dress and holding a bouquet, and the groom is in a suit.

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A photograph of three people standing in a grocery store aisle. From left to right: Jeff Hamilton, Jean Blomgren, and Wes Fuerstenburg. They are all wearing Glen's Food Center uniforms (white shirts and red aprons/caps).

Jeff Hamilton, Jean Blomgren, Wes Fuerstenburg
Not pictured: Nick Den Herder, Kermit Limesand

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Dreaming of a home in 2015? There's a lot to

By Cox Realty and Land Services professionals

Even though most people start their New Year's resolutions on Jan. 1, some people add resolutions as the year progresses.

For some, that goal is realizing the dream of homeownership. Beginning the process of buying a home can be daunting, but it is easy enough to begin working on the first step – saving for a down payment.

According to the National Association of Realtors, 65 percent of homebuyers utilize their savings account for a down payment; however, buyers find many other ways to finance a down payment, including selling stocks or bonds, relying on gifts from friends or relatives, retirement funds or using the proceeds from another home sale.

Beginning to build savings should be a priority for poten-



Alan Cox, Broker,
507-360-7500



Cindy Cox, Realtor,
507-360-0537



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tial buyers because it can take some time. According to NAR's report, it took half of buyers a year or less to save for a down payment, while another 19 percent said it took between one and two years to build their savings account. Additionally, 29 percent said they needed more than two years to save. Whatever it is, there is no time like the present to begin.

If you are like most homeowners in this area, you may

need the proceeds from your current home to purchase your next home. So where do you begin? My advice to you would be start cleaning and decluttering.

Each spring, after the snow melts and cool, rainy days turn into warm, sunny ones, people begin the daunting task of reorganizing and scrubbing the home in preparation for the spring season.

It seems a bit strange to so diligently clean your home for

a season in which people often spend a lot of time out and about or on vacation.

"My advice is to start with spring cleaning the entire inside of your home during those colder months and when the warmer months comes along, begin with outdoor cleaning. I have personally done this for years, because who doesn't want to be outside enjoying the weather when it's nice out?" said Cindy Cox.

Now, it's time to get that home ready for market. Sellers can get creative when trying to attract prospective buyers to their homes — filling them with warm scents, providing the perfect lighting or playing up fun and interesting features. Believe it or not, it usually works.

Following is just a portion of a list that we give out to our clients of things they can do when selling their property. We also offer advice on stag-

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consider, from finances to cleaning and staging

ing your home, but when it comes down to it, it is up to the homeowner as much as they are willing to do.

Interior

Vacuuming dryer vents to help prevent fires, disinfecting garbage cans to help keep germs away, cleaning entryways to keep from tracking in outside muck and cleaning ceiling fan blades to keep everyone breathing easy, de-clutter, toss it, donate it, sell it or put in storage so the house seems more spacious, refrigerator magnets and notes need to be removed.

Exterior

Check out the curb appeal, lawn needs to be mowed, trim fertilize, water or rake fallen leaves, add seasonal plants or flowers near front door and porch area, consider power washing deck area and repainting if worn out.

Staging

To set eye appeal, display fresh flowers or bowl of fruit. Bake a batch of cookies for a homey smell. Open the drapes, keep pets out of sight, clean out fireplace and consider lighting it up during colder months. Hang new or clean towels in the bathroom and make sure all beds are made.


All these steps make it a little easier to get that home you're dreaming of.

At Cox Realty & Land Services LLC we continue to provide clients with an honest approach to purchasing or selling their property, based on trust, shared goals and understanding.

We strive to continually improve to do this by listening and taking your needs and wants into consideration. Whatever your background, we hope you'll consider Cox Realty & Land Services, LLC to help you navigate your next real estate purchase or sale. Call us today to learn more about how we can help you buy or sell your land or home. We look forward to hearing from you.



Display fresh flowers or bowl of fruit. Bake a batch of cookies for a homey smell. Open the drapes, keep pets out of sight, clean out fireplace and consider lighting it up during colder months. Hang new or clean towels in the bathroom and make sure all beds are made. All these steps make it a little easier to getting that home your dreaming of.



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Redesigning your landscape? Don't be afraid to do it yourself

By Deb Aanenson,
Real Estate Retrievers

Going with a pro for landscaping work can get expensive. But you can also plan a yard makeover yourself. Here are some tips the pros use to incorporate into your garden planning.

Tools: If you don't have the garden tools to get started, either borrow them from a neighbor or friend, or rent larger tools from a garden or home center.

Design: Putting a few plants in the ground is a start, but if you want impact, you'll have to think bigger. Enlarge garden areas to expand away from your home and accent areas like bay windows, the front door, large trees with statement, plants that have height, color or an interesting shape. Mulch the area after planting for a clean, uniform look that helps retain moisture for plants.

Out with the old: Just because it's been in your yard forever doesn't mean it needs to stay there. Old, tired, overgrown and/or dying trees, shrubs and plants should be removed and replaced with fresh greenery. Many plants



Deb Aanenson,
Real Estate Retrievers

do have life cycles and fizzle out after harsh weather or simply time.

Think groupings: If you like a single plant at the nursery, think how stunning multiples of them would look. If you have the budget, buy three or five or seven (odd numbers are best) of the same plant and group them together for more impact.

Investment: The addition and care of the plants you install will pay you back at home sale time. Mature trees, well-tended landscaping and interesting, colorful plants will attract homebuyers.



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Community gardens growing in popularity in Luverne/continued from page 5

The SHIP grant, \$4,000 of it, covers costs incurred for physical improvements, such as fencing, a garden shed and water access.

Holly Sammons, director of Luverne's Economic Development Authority, explained how it works.

"Community gardens are a great way to offer healthy activity and healthy food for many people in the community who may not otherwise have that opportunity," Sammons said.

She said SHIP funding has allowed for a third garden, increasing the number of plots from 32 to 48. All of this year's garden plots are now spoken for.

"But with the recent flooding at the old location, we weren't sure we wanted to stay there," Sammons said.

The new location is on a buried landfill, so there would be no other development use for the lot. It was most recently used for alfalfa, so Sammons said the soil should be nutrient-rich and appropriate for gardens.

Jauert said this sort of public involvement has contributed to the success of the gardens in Luverne.

"I cannot thank Holly enough for all the work she has



The city of Luverne contributed to the community gardens by providing the land and a water source for the new plots.

done for the Gardens," Jauert said.

"Her search for a new location (which most of the gardeners agreed that they would not return to the old location) was an exhibit of a City employee going way beyond her job duties."

There are three gardens, with 16 plots — 10 feet by 10 feet each — in each garden. Rental fees are \$15 per plot.

Community gardens/
continued on page 20



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Economic Development Director

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*Some restrictions apply.

Community gardens growing in popularity in Luverne/continued from page 19



Community gardeners Ruth and Al Stoakes are pictured in October by the plots after they were relocated to East Dodge Street in Laverne.

Lori Sorenson file photo

The plot fee covers water usage, tilling, fencing, plot markers, hoses and other expenses.

Guidelines are in place for community gardeners, such as keeping plots weeded and in useful condition (see related story on page 4).

Water use is metered and monitored, with watering allowed only during mornings and evenings.

Only organic fertilizers and herbicides are allowed — no chemicals.

Garden waste is to be removed and composted at the end of the season.

Call Jauert, 283-8539,
with questions.

"The Community Garden has been an extremely positive thing for me in the past and I just hope we can make it an even better experience in the future for gardeners," she said.

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- 12 - Pheasant Drive Lots.....For Sale
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- 105 Indiana Ave – Adrian.....NEW LISTING
- 104 Kelsey Lane Townhome – Slayto..... For Sale
- 222 Central Ave – Kenneth.....NEW LISTING
- 120 N Thompson – Rushmore.....For Sale
- 507 E Dodge St – Luverne.....NEW LISTING
- 102 W. Elm St – Luverne.....For Sale
- 616 N Freeman Ave – Luverne.....For Sale
- 321 E. Luverne St – Magnolia.....SOLD
- 113 N 4th Ave - Wilmont.....Sale Pending
- 114 S Spring ST – Luverne.....NEW LISTING
- 312 2nd St – AdrianFor Sale
- 205 1ST St – Rushmore.....SOLD
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Inspectors on scene after a natural gas emergency hear it often: “I noticed a strange smell but didn’t know what it was so I didn’t do anything.”

That rotten-egg smell could mean there is a natural gas leak — and it could be deadly.

The best way to avoid an emergency or unintentionally striking an underground facility is to call 811 before you dig.

April is Safe Digging Month in Minnesota.

As winter-weary homeowners get ready to enjoy the warm weather and tackle their spring yard projects, the Minnesota Department of Public Safety Office of Pipeline Safety (MNOPS) reminds Minnesotans to call before they dig.

“When you’re planning your spring project, do not forget to call 811 at least two business days prior to digging,” State Fire Marshal and MNOPS Director Bruce West said.

“It’s a free service in place to protect you, your family and your community.”

Building a deck, planting a tree or replacing your mailbox can be dangerous if people don’t know what’s below before they start digging.

Buried underground facilities — including electric and natural gas lines — can run inches from the surface and be easily damaged with household tools.

State law requires anyone

excavating to notify Gopher State One Call (GSOC) at least two days before beginning a project so utility companies can mark the approximate location of potentially hazardous underground facilities.

Digging without knowing the location of underground utilities increases the likelihood of unintentional damage, which can cause serious injuries, service disruptions and repair costs.

Call 811 first so you don’t have to call 911 later.

Or go to the GSOC website and request underground utilities near the area you’re digging be marked.

Signs there may be a gas leak:

- A rotten-egg smell
- Dirt or dust blowing from a hole in the ground
- Blowing or hissing sounds
- Dead vegetation

If you suspect a natural gas leak:

- Stop digging and ensure everyone clears the area.
- Do not use electrical devices like light switches, phones or garage door openers.
- Call 911 from a safe location and alert your neighbors.
- Do not try to locate the source of the leak or shut off any natural gas valves.

Keep the benefits of trees in rural landscapes

By Gary Wyatt, agroforestry educator,
University of Minnesota Extension

If you traveled through rural Minnesota last winter, you probably realized some of the benefits of windbreaks and living snow fences.

In addition to protecting roadways and farms from drifting snow in winter, farmers and other rural residents know the value of properly placed trees and shrubs to save energy (heating and cooling), protect from the wind, protect soil and water, increase wildlife habitat, and beautify the land.

Arbor Day is celebrated every year on the last Friday in April, and May is Arbor Month.

This is the time of year soil and water conservation districts are working with rural residents in planting trees and shrubs to enhance their way of life. University of Minnesota Extension can help you decide what kind of trees to plant. Extension’s forestry website at www.extension.umn.edu/go/1027 is a helpful place to identify trees suitable for your location.

Minnesota residents must consider planting shade trees other than ash, since emerald ash borer (EAB) was found in the state last May.

In most rural areas there is an abundance of green ash trees. EAB can attack and kill any species of ash trees in the state. Visit Extension’s emerald ash borer website at www.extension.umn.edu/issues/eab to learn more about EAB and alternative shade trees.

University of Minnesota Extension can help you decide what kind of trees to plant. Extension’s forestry website at www.extension.umn.edu/go/1027 is a helpful place to identify trees suitable for your location.

Shade tree species to consider in rural areas include ginkgo, hackberry, American linden or basswood, sugar maple (Fall Fiesta), Freeman maple (Sienna Glen, Autumn Blaze), red maple (Northwood), and Discovery and Princeton, both disease-resistant elms.

Trees that produce nuts include Ohio buckeye (Autumn Splendor), shagbark hickory, bitternut hickory, bur oak, white oak, bicolor or swamp white oak, and black walnut (can inhibit some plants from growing near it).

Trees that produce pods are northern catalpa, Kentucky coffeetree, honeylocust (podless cultivars are Shademaster and Sunburst).

Remember landscape diversity this Arbor Day and Arbor Month by planting several different species of trees, shrubs and plants in your landscape. No one species should represent more than 15 percent of your landscape. Make it a family activity to plant trees or shrubs this year. You can pass on the benefits of trees when you explain them to your children or other children in your community.

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When you call in a locate be sure to tell the operator exactly what you are doing and the specific location work will be done. It also helps to mark the excavation area with white paint or flags. This way the utility personnel will only mark the underground facilities where needed.



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Prepare for summer months; keep hot out and cool in

Before you know it, Minnesotans will want to turn on the air conditioning to escape the summer heat. Spring has sprung and that means it is the perfect time to plan for the summer months ahead.

The Minnesota Department of Commerce is urging people to do necessary maintenance on air conditioning units now so they can be ready when hot weather arrives.

“Before the 90-degree days hit, it’s a good idea to make sure your AC system is

working well, and to consider ways to keep the cool air in your home,” said Commerce Commissioner Mike Rothman.

“Keeping our homes comfortable in the summer months is just as important as in the winter. As hot days near, health and safety issues for the elderly and those with health conditions make home cooling especially important.”

The Home Cooling section of Commerce’s new Home Energy Guide is a good

“Keeping our homes comfortable in the summer months is just as important as in the winter. As hot days near, health and safety issues for the elderly and those with health conditions make home cooling especially important.”

— Commerce Commissioner Mike Rothman.

resource to keep homes cool. The guide explains how AC systems work, the importance of maintaining those systems, and the energy- and cost-saving benefits of high efficiency AC units.

It also offers a range of ideas to reduce heat and humidity in your home and lower the demand on your AC system.

AC maintenance, repair

AC systems should be inspected annually. Contractors will be very busy in the summer months, so book AC inspections in the spring before you actually need air conditioning.

Proper maintenance of your AC system will improve its safety and performance, reduce energy use and electric costs, and prolong the life of your system.

You can find some “do-it-yourself” tips on AC maintenance in the guide.

Ways to keep the heat out

The same strategies that keep our homes warm in the winter work to keep heat out in the summer.

Air-sealing gaps around attic vents and weather-stripping doors and windows will reduce airflow into the home and keep heat out.

Adequate insulation also reduces the flow of heat into the home in summer. If it’s warmer outside than inside, close all windows and doors to reduce heat gain.

Reduce solar heat gain

There are several things that can be done to minimize the summer sun’s heating effects on your house, including the installation of window awnings over the south-facing windows, or mounting sunscreens over windows to decrease heat gain.

Reduce indoor heat

A few changes in our indoor activities can reduce the heat and humidity levels, adding to comfort and saving on air conditioning.

Use appliances such as ovens, clothes dryers, and dishwashers in the evening, when it is cooler. Turning off unneeded electronic devices and lighting will also reduce the heat indoors.

For those who don’t have air conditioning, let cooler air in during the cool evenings by opening a lower-level window and open a window at a higher level to let heated air escape.

Fans are one of the most economical ways to cool the most important thing in the home: you.

Just as with wind chill in the winter, moving air will reduce our skin temperature, especially when evaporation of perspiration is included. Cooling our bodies with a fan means we can turn up the temperature for the AC and save energy overall.

Check with your utility for cooling tips and ways to save on your electric bill. Some utilities offer energy-saver programs with lower rates for off-peak use of air conditioners. Many utilities will offer rebates for installing new high efficiency AC systems.



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