

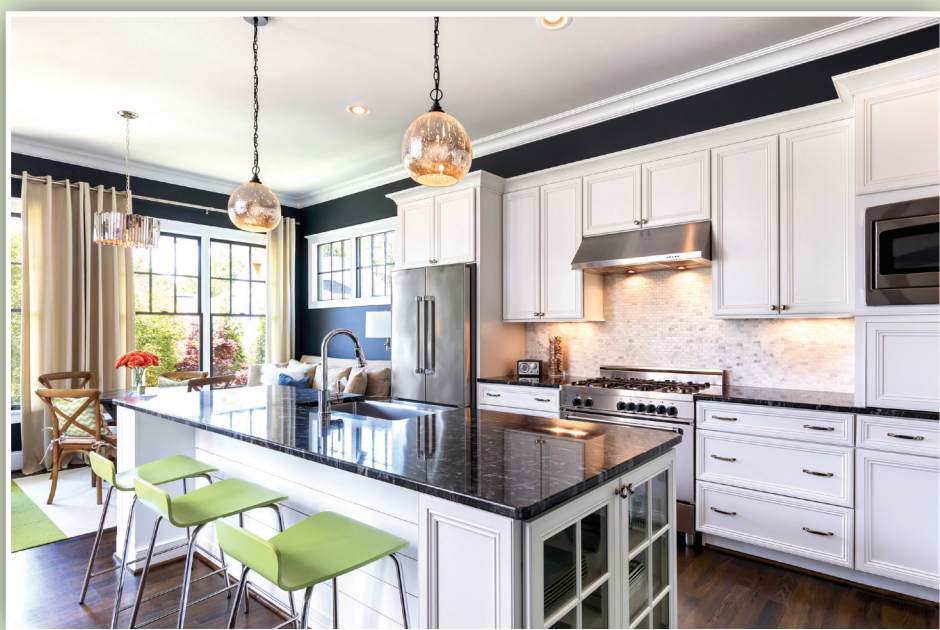
Spring

HOME & GARDEN

SECTION B
March 23, 2023



The Franklin Times



Popular trends in home exteriors

Certain homes have an undeniable wow factor. That instant appeal tends to be noticeable the moment visitors pull up to the curb, and it might be a byproduct of homeowners' willingness to embrace the latest exterior design trends.

Trends come and go, but recognition of the current fashions can help homeowners create that highly sought-after wow factor. The following are some recent trends in home exteriors that have helped homeowners set their properties apart.

Wood

Natural wood has undeniable appeal, and it hasn't only found newfound devotion among home interior decorators. Natural wood garage doors create a sense of warmth and can set a home apart from others with steel doors, which tend to be the most popular garage door material. In addition to the garage door, natural wood entry doors and wood decks are popular ways to impart this classical, warm look to a home's exterior.

Painted brick

Like natural wood, brick is a traditional material that's both sturdy and classical. But homeowners can add character to brick with a coat of paint, which has be-

come a popular trend in recent years. Light tones tend to be most popular when painting bricks. The experts at Better Homes & Gardens note that this could prove a long-term commitment if homeowners so desire, as a properly painted brick exterior could last as long as 20 years.

Hardscaping

Hardscaping isn't a new trend, but it has been trending in recent years. Hardscaping is an umbrella term that includes everything from outdoor living rooms to incorporating natural stone into a landscape. Outdoor living rooms are one hardscaping trend that has become increasingly popular of late. These spaces serve as an extension of indoor living spaces. The home improvement experts at HGTV note that recently homeowners have looked to create covered outdoor rooms that can be enjoyed more frequently than patios or decks that are not protected from the elements.

Outdoor lighting

It makes sense that individuals looking to spend more time enjoying their properties outdoors would want more lighting outside. Ambient outdoor lighting can be utilized throughout a property. Such light-

ing can light up walkways and driveways and be used to light up landscaping features like trees and gardens.

Home design trends tend to be fickle.

But recognition of the current trends in exterior home design can set homes apart and turn properties into awe-inspiring places to enjoy the great outdoors.



POPULAR PROJECT. Outdoor living spaces are one popular hardscaping trend that figures to remain sought-after for years to come.

The role of nature in home design in the years ahead



STAYCATION. Since the beginning of COVID-19, more people are opting to stay at home instead of taking trips. Improvements such as new patios, firepits and swimming pools are popular now.

Outdoor living spaces were prioritized during the early days of the COVID-19 pandemic, when public gatherings were greatly limited and individuals were urged to stay home as much as possible. Such demands have had a ripple effect on various industries, including home design. According to a survey conducted by the New Home Trends Institute in collaboration with Pro Builder, 58 percent of the more than 300 residential architects,



designers and design-minded builders who participated said connection to the outdoors/nature will be an important influence on their design choices in the years to come. In addition, 45 percent of respondents indicated increased attention will be afforded to outdoor entertaining spaces.

So what might the outdoor spaces of homes built in the not-so-distant future look like? Respondents to the survey anticipated a growing demand for various built-in outdoor features, including:

- Firepits or fireplaces
- Outdoor kitchens
- Gazebos or pergolas
- Pools
- Spas or hot tubs

Though trends and consumer demands are ever-shifting, architects and designers are anticipating that future homeowners will want more developed outdoor living spaces and greater access to nature, which is something current homeowners can keep in mind when renovating their properties.

Tips to pick the right plants for your landscape

Each year, gardening enthusiasts anxiously await the arrival of spring. Spring is a great season to plant new flowers, plants, grasses, and trees, making it a popular time of year to spend sunny days out in the yard.

Veteran gardeners may know their landscapes well and be able to pick the right

plants on their own. Novices may need a little help as they look to give their landscapes a whole new look. The following are some helpful tips to help homeowners pick the right plants for their landscapes.

- Conduct a site evaluation. A colorful landscape featuring an array of plants and

flowers can be eye-catching and add curb appeal to a property. However, where plants will be planted is a significant variable that must be considered before homeowners choose what to plant. The Center for Agriculture, Food, and the Environment at the University of Massachusetts Amherst notes that site evaluation is the first step when picking plants. A number of factors must be evaluated, including light availability; water availability; exposure to the elements, including wind and extreme temperatures; and competition from existing vegetation, among other things. Document these variables prior to picking plants. For example, take note of the area you plan to plant to see if

it is full sun or partial shade, and then pick plants whose growing conditions align with those you observe.

- Look at more than looks. Aesthetic appeal might be what homeowners most desire from their landscapes, but that appeal is only achieved when the right plants are chosen for a space. If the wrong plants are chosen, they're unlikely to thrive or they could threaten existing vegetation, thus compromising the overall appeal of the property. Native plants can often handle local weather conditions, so prioritize natives over more exotic plants whose key attribute is aesthetic appeal. If jaw-dropping aesthetic appeal is your top priority, speak with a local landscap-

ing professional about which natives can provide that without compromising surrounding vegetation.

- Consider maintenance prior to planting. Maintenance is another variable gardeners must consider. Newly planted trees may require substantial watering until they've fully established their roots, and some homeowners may not have time for that. In addition, certain plants may require a considerable amount of pruning in order to create and maintain the look homeowners desire. Individuals must be willing to invest the time and effort necessary to maintain new plantings that require such diligence. If not, look for plants that don't require much maintenance

while keeping in mind that even low-maintenance plants still require some effort and attention.

- Consider local wildlife. If your lawn is routinely visited by local wildlife, then look for plants that won't look like a meal to these welcome, if uninvited, guests. For example, if you routinely see deer lounging around in your backyard, look for deer-resistant plants. This is a good way to protect your investment, of both time and money, and ensure minimal wildlife traffic through your newly landscaped yard.

Spring gardens are awe-inspiring, especially when homeowners embrace various strategies for successful planting.



CHOOSE YOUR PLANTS WISELY. The maintenance required to keep a plant healthy and looking good is a key consideration when designing a landscape.

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Spring cleaning tips and tricks

Spring is a time of year when change is in the air. Trees are budding, plants are flowering, and homes laden with dark or heavy fabrics and clutter could use some lightening up.

Spring cleaning projects are popular this time of year as residents take inventory of their living spaces and aim to declutter, clean and increase efficiency. Some people find the prospect of getting organized overwhelming. Here are some tips that can help anyone master spring cleaning.

- Create a plan. Make a checklist and establish a cleaning plan of attack. Focus



SPRING CLEANING TIME. Anyone can master spring cleaning, it just takes organization and a plan.

experts, carpets help filter indoor air by trapping debris and allergens. By deep cleaning carpets, homeowners can improve the indoor air quality of their homes. Use a carpet cleaner on a warm, dry day so that windows can be opened and cross breezes will help dry the damp rug.

- Clean windows. Wash windows inside and out and utilize their screens to help brighten indoors spaces.
- Deep clean the kitchen. Clean out and disinfect the refrigerator by wiping it down with warm water and baking soda or a vinegar-and-water solution. While in the kitchen, set the oven to the self-clean function so it becomes cleaner as well.

Homeowners also can focus on cleaning curtains (including shower curtains), steam-cleaning upholstery, removing clutter from closets, cleaning out the dryer vent and duct tubing, wiping inside kitchen drawers, and vacuuming under beds and other furniture.

Spring cleaning can bring the revitalizing nature of this beloved time of year into your home.

on areas that are not regularly cleaned, as they probably need a little attention.

- Assemble your cleaning kit. Spring cleaning can be slowed down considerably if you don't have all of your equipment at the ready. Items to have on hand include an all-purpose cleaner, concentrated cleaner, microfiber cloths, paper towels, mop, vacuum, dusters, and a squeegee. Adjust your equipment based on

the task at hand.

- Curate your cleaning playlist. Create a playlist with songs that will get you moving and motivated to clean.
- Work from top to bottom. Work efficiently by cleaning shelves, ceiling fans and other elevated items first, as dust and debris will trickle down and need to be cleaned next.
- Purchase or rent a carpet cleaner. According to the



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Five signs it's time to renovate

Homeowners renovate their homes for a variety of reasons. Renovations can increase the value of a property and make homes safer and more comfortable for their occupants. Improvements also can be made to stay current with the times or to give a home a new vibe.

Statista projects \$510 billion will be spent on home improvements in 2024. The home improvement market is generating significant revenue. In fact, nearly a quarter of Americans opting to renovate their homes will spend an average of \$10,000 on their projects. According to a Home Stars Renovation report, 8 percent of Canadian homeowners who have renovated have spent more than \$20,000 on a home improvement project.

Kitchens and bathrooms often get the most attention when it comes to home improvement. However, every room and space in a home may need a renovation at some point, and the follow-



GET ORGANIZED. When it's time to renovate, have a good plan and don't be afraid to ask for help.

- ing are five signs it's time to renovate.
- 1. Age**
The National Association of Home Builders states that 50 percent of U.S. homes are over the age of 40. That means that age alone could dictate a need to renovate, particularly if some materials are original to the home. For example, asphalt roofs typically last 25 to 30 years, while window frames can last 20 to 50 years depending on how well they
 - 2. Inconvenient layout**
Some homeowners scratch their heads when faced with awkward floor plan layouts. While one may live with the inconvenience for some time, typically a floor plan that isn't working for the homeowner is a major driver of renovations.
 - 3. Outdated looks**
A home can look dated even if it is a relatively recent build. That's because

trends change quickly. For example, dark, cherry cabinets that were popular just a little while ago have now been replaced by lighter color palettes. Homeowners whose homes do not match the looks emulated in design magazines may consider a change, particularly if they're planning to sell soon.

4. Deterioration
Signs of water, storm or structural damage should be addressed as soon as possible. Any deterioration should be a strong indicator that it's time to renovate.

5. Efficiency
Escalating utility bills could be indicative of an inefficient home. Homeowners can conduct energy audits and then improve the areas where energy loss may be occurring, such as windows, doors, siding, and insulation. Homeowners can renovate their homes when they see fit, but various signs may warn that it's time consider updating or remodeling a home.

Exterior renovations that boast the best ROI

Remodeling with a return on investment in mind can be a smart strategy for homeowners, whether one is thinking about moving in the next few months or further down the road. Though this approach is an inexact science, in many instances, it's savvy for homeowners to consider what buyers may want when planning home improvements.

Homeowners may be surprised to learn which renovations garner the best ROI at resale. The home loan and refinancing company RenoFi indicates that overall home improvement projects provide a 70 percent ROI on average. Many high-ROI projects add functional space and improvement. The following are some exterior renovations that help homeowners recoup the most money at resale, according to Remodeling magazine's "2022 Cost vs. Value Report."

1. Garage Door Replacement: 93.3 percent recouped of \$4,041 cost
2. Manufactured Stone Veneer: 91.4 percent recouped of \$11,066 cost
3. Siding replacement (Fiber Cement): 68.3 percent recouped of \$22,093 cost
4. Window replacement (Vinyl): 67.5 percent recouped of \$20,482 cost
5. Siding replacement (Vinyl): 67.2 percent recouped of \$18,662 cost
6. Window replacement (Wood): 66.3 percent recouped of \$24,388 cost
7. Deck addition (Wood): 64.8 percent recouped of \$19,248 cost
8. Entry Door Replacement (Steel): 63.8 percent recouped of \$2,206 cost

The majority of renovations on Remodeling magazine's list of the best investments are exterior renovations, making this area of a home a particular point of interest for homeowners. The only interior project that cracked the Top 10 ROI for projects was a minor mid-range kitchen remodel.

Exterior renovations perhaps add the most bang for your buck because they're

not only functional, but also because they add immediate curb appeal. Much in the way it has been said people eat with their eyes first — which is why chefs spend so much time on elaborate plating — buyers will judge a property by how it looks when they arrive, even before they've stepped inside a home. In essence, home buyers often judge a book by its cover. A worn exterior may

indicate to potential buyers that the home was not maintained, however false that assumption may be.

It's important for homeowners to consider all factors before beginning a renovation. Certain projects offer a stronger return on investment than others, and that's a significant consideration for homeowners thinking of selling their homes.



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Plants are investments

Though plants might not seem like the first thing individuals think of when they ponder long-term investments, perennials can be just that. The home and garden experts at HGTV note that some perennials can live for a very long time. For example, according to HGTV, the colorful flowering plant peony, despite a blooming season that usually lasts just seven to 10 days, has been known to survive for 70 to 100 years. Hostas are another popular perennial because they require little maintenance, and that extra free time can add up over the course of the hosta's life, which can exceed 15 years. Long-living perennials are not necessarily unusual, but gardeners should know that many perennials, and particularly those characterized as "short-lived," tend to live around three years.

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Simple landscaping strategies that can transform your home

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 bet-

ter 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 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.



CURB APPEAL. Dressing up your walkway with new plants and mulch is a great way to improve the look of your yard.

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

Winter injury damage on evergreen plants

If some of the evergreens in your yard have an orange or bronze appearance it isn't necessarily cause for alarm. The plants could have been moderately injured from severe cold temperatures during the winter. Throughout the winter months wind forces moisture out of plant leaves. Sometimes this process is so fast that the plant can't replace the moisture that is lost quick enough and the green chlorophyll within the leaf dies. The orange color then shows through. This is the same carotenoid orange color we see during autumn in deciduous trees and shrubs but it is masked by the green chlorophyll. Frozen soil will also prevent roots from taking up water and has the same effect on plant leaves. Having a mulch layer around your evergreen shrubs in winter can reduce the amount of time the soil surrounding the plant is frozen. Winter burn or injury is particularly noticeable on boxwoods. It is also noticeable on eastern red cedar as well. Creating a windbreak


Colby Griffin

NC Cooperative Extension Horticulture Agent



for evergreen plants during the winter can help reduce this damage to these plants. There isn't anything you can do to reverse this damage. The plants appearance will begin to improve once new growth emerges to mask the damage.

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The problem with fire blight

Fire blight can be a devastating disease on trees and shrubs within the Roseaceae (Rose) family. This includes plants such as quince, cherry, pear, apple, and roses. All of these are susceptible to the bacterium *Erwinia amylovora* or fire blight. Fire blight attacks the blossoms, leaves, shoots, branches, fruits, and roots of plants. One of the first noticeable symptoms is during spring when blossoms become wilted and turn black. During the growing season, you will see the growing tips of shoots and twigs begin to wilt and form what looks like a shepherd's crook. Eventually an entire limb will give the appearance that it's been burned with a blow torch; hence the name given to this disease. The bark at the base of infected branches become water-soaked, sunken, and eventually dry out. Cracks will also develop along the edges of the canker. Fruit remaining on infected branches will ooze a milky substance and

fertilizer as this encourages succulent growth which is most susceptible to infection. There are also chemical copper and bactericides available for use as well. For additional horticulture information, please contact Colby Griffin, colby_griffin@ncsu.edu. 919-496-3344.



Fire blight damage

eventually shrivel and mummify and remain attached to the branch. During hot & humid conditions branches will begin to ooze this substance as well. This ooze contains the bacteria of the disease. The bacteria over winter in cankers on infected trees. The bacteria are then transported by rain, wind, & insects to other parts of the plant. The disease enters the tree through natural openings, wounds, and flowers. The bacteria can survive through the winter in sunken cankers on infected branches. It is recommended to prune out diseased limbs at least 6-8 inches below the site of infection. Also, make sure to sterilize your pruners after each cut with a 1:10 Clorox solution. If you know fire blight is present limit application of nitrogen

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Native bees buzzing around in the landscape

There are many important native pollinators within your home landscape. One you may not be familiar with is the mason bee.



Mason bee

The mason bee is one of over 4000 species of native bees in the United States. Unlike the more well-known honeybee, mason bees are more efficient pollinators. They are active in pollinating plants even during cool and wet conditions. The honeybee is most active during dry conditions and when temperatures exceed 50 degrees. Plus, mason bees and other native pollinators will visit certain plants that honeybees don't forage. Other examples of native pollinators are the digger bee, leafcutter bee, squash bee, sweat bee, and of course the bumblebee. The mason bee differs from a honeybee in that it carries pollen on its back rather than on its hind legs. Mason bees are solitary, cavity-dwelling bees meaning they do not live in hives. All female mason bees are solitary queens. Each female performs all of the duties that an entire honeybee hive might undertake such as gathering pollen and nectar and laying eggs. She lays her eggs in reeds and natural holes they find in the landscape. The queen mason bee ensures that her eggs are protected by sealing the entrance hole with mud. Mason bees build their nests near one another; however, there is no sharing of nests. These bees do not forage for miles like honeybees; mason bees only travel about 300 feet from their nest to gather pollen and nectar.

Colby Griffin

NC Cooperative Extension Horticulture Agent



Another native pollinator is the carpenter bee. If you have any type of wood around your home then you've probably noticed the carpenter bee searching for a place to make their nests. This becomes an issue when they choose your house or other wood structure on your property. Carpenter bees are solitary bees and are not aggressive. The males can't sting and the females may only sting if handled. They emerge in April and May with the males usually the first to appear. Males can be distinguished from females by a whitish spot on the front of their face.

However, folks find them intimidating because of their large size and loud buzzing. Carpenter bees usually won't cause serious damage but



Carpenter bee

yearly infestations can weaken wood structures and make them unsightly. The galleries typically run six to seven inches but may exceed one foot. Occasionally, several bees use the same entrance hole, but they have individual galleries branching off of the main tunnel. If the same entrance hole is used for several years, tunnels may extend several feet in the wood. The female collects pollen which she mixes with nectar to form a ball that will serve as food for her offspring. She deposits an egg near this pollen ball and then

seals off this section of tunnel with a partition made of chewed wood. She constructs additional cells in this manner until the tunnel is completely filled, usually with six to seven cells. These adult bees die in a matter of weeks. The eggs hatch in a few days and the offspring complete their development in about 5 to 7 weeks. The new generation of adult bees begin to emerge in later

summer. Although the bees remain active, feeding on pollen in the general area, they do not construct new tunnels, but may be seen cleaning out old tunnels which they will use as overwintering sites when the weather turns cold. They are attracted to unpainted and weathered wood and prefer cypress or pine. Painted and pressure treated woods aren't as likely to become a host for

the bees. The adults will overwinter in the wood inside the old nest tunnels. They emerge in spring to mate and make new tunnels to lay eggs. The longer the bees are allowed to colonize an area the more damage that will be done to the wood. Keep in mind that carpenter bees are a beneficial insect in that they are excellent at pollinating. However, if you must control them paint

or stain any exposed wood to try and deter activity. If they are still an issue, spray an insecticide like carbaryl (Sevin) or bifenthrin (Talstar) into the holes and close them with putty. You may need to treat several times to get an infestation under control. Also, when using pesticides be sure to follow the manufacturers label in mixing and applying the product.

North Carolina Vegetable Planting Guide

VEGETABLE SEED OR PLANT	AMOUNT FOR 100 FT. ROW	RECOMMENDED VARIETIES	PLANTING TIMES FOR N. C. PIEDMONT*	DEPTH TO PLANT (INCHES)	DISTANCE BETWEEN PLANTS	DISTANCE BETWEEN ROWS	BEST SOIL pH	DAYS TO MATURITY
ASPARAGUS (roots)	85 roots	Jersey Knight	Nov. 15 - Apr. 15	2 - 6	18 in.	3 ft.	6.0 - 7.0	2 years
BEANS, Bush Snap	1 pound	Tenderette, Contender, Blue Lake Bush	Apr. 15 - July 15	1 - 2	4-6 in.	18 - 30 in.	6.0 - 6.5	50 - 55
BEANS, Pole Snap	½ pound	Kentucky Wonder, Blue Lake	Apr. 15 - July 1	1 - 2	6 in.	3 - 4 ft.	6.0 - 6.5	65 - 70
BEANS, Bush Lima	½ pound	Early Thorogreen, Eastland, Fordhook 242, Henderson Bush	May 1 - July 1	1 - 2	6 in.	24 - 30 in.	5.5 - 6.5	65 - 80
BEANS, Pole Lima	½ pound	Carolina Sieva	May 1 - June 15	1 - 2	6 in.	30 - 36 in.	5.5 - 6.5	75 - 95
BEET	1 oz.	Detroit Dark Red	Feb. 15 - Apr. 1; Aug. 1 - Sept. 1	½ - 1	2 in.	12 - 18 in.	6.0 - 6.5	55 - 60
BROCCOLI (plants)	65 plants	Italian Green Sprouting, Premium Crop	Feb. 15 - Mar. 15; July 15 - Aug. 15	1 - 2	18 in.	24 - 30 in.	6.0 - 6.5	70 - 80
BROCCOLI (seeds)	½ oz.	Italian Green Sprouting, Salad, Premium Crop	Dec. 1 - Mar. 15; July 1 - Sept. 1	½	18 in.	24 - 30 in.	6.0 - 6.5	80 - 85
BRUSSEL SPROUTS	½ oz.	Long Island Improved	July 15 - Aug. 1	½	14 - 18 in.	24 - 30 in.	6.0 - 7.0	90 - 100
CABBAGE (plants)	100 plants	Early Jersey Wakefield, Stonehead Hybrid, All Seasons	Feb. 1 - April 1; Aug. 1 - Sept. 1	2 - 4	12 in.	24 - 30 in.	6.0 - 6.5	63 - 75
CABBAGE (seeds)	½ oz.	Early Jersey Wakefield, Stonehead Hybrid, All Seasons	Dec. 1 - Mar. 15; July 1 - Sept. 1	½	12 in.	24 - 30 in.	6.0 - 6.5	90 - 120
CANTALOUPE	½ oz.	Edisto 47, Burpee Hybrid, Hales Jumbo	Apr. 20 - June 10	½ - 1	2 ft.	4 - 6 ft.	6.0 - 6.5	85 - 90
CARROT	½ oz.	Danvers Half Long, Imperator	Feb. 1 - Mar. 1; July 15 - Aug. 15	½	2 in.	14 - 24 in.	6.0 - 6.5	75 - 80
CAULIFLOWER (plants)	65 plants	Snowball	Mar. 1 - Mar. 15; July 1 - Aug. 15	1 - 2	18 in.	30 - 36 in.	5.8 - 6.5	55 - 65
CAULIFLOWER (seeds)	½ oz.	Snowball	Feb. 1 - Mar. 1; June 1 - July 1	½	18 in.	30 - 36 in.	5.8 - 6.5	85 - 95
COLLARDS	½ oz.	Vates, Morris Improved Heading, Georgia	July 15 - Aug. 15	¾	18 in.	24 - 30 in.	6.0 - 6.5	90 - 120
CORN, Sweet	4 oz.	Silver Queen (white), Kandy Korn (yellow), Golden Queen (yellow)	Apr. 15 - June 1	1 - 2	12 in.	30 - 36 in.	5.5 - 6.5	85 - 90
CHINESE CABBAGE	½ oz.	Michihli	Aug. 15 - Sept. 1	½	12 in.	18 - 24 in.	6.0 - 7.0	75 - 85
CUCUMBER, Slicing	½ oz.	Ashley, Poinsett 76, Hybrid Sweet-Slice	Apr. 20 - May 15	1	12 in.	4 - 6 ft.	6.0 - 6.5	60 - 65
CUCUMBER, Pickling	½ oz.	Early Green Cluster, National Pickling	Apr. 20 - May 15	1	12 in.	4 - 6 ft.	6.0 - 6.5	56 - 60
EGGPLANT	85 plants	Black Beauty	May 1 - June 30	¾	18 in.	3 ft.	6.0 - 7.0	80 - 85
ENDIVE	1 oz.	Green Curled	Feb. 1 - Mar. 15; Aug. 15 - Sept. 15	½	12 in.	12 - 24 in.	6.0 - 7.0	80 - 90
KALE	½ oz.	Dwarf Curled Scotch, Early Siberian	Feb. 15 - Apr. 1; Aug. 15 - Sept. 15	½	2 in.	18 - 24 in.	6.0 - 7.0	50 - 60

VEGETABLE SEED OR PLANT	AMOUNT FOR 100 FT. ROW	RECOMMENDED VARIETIES	PLANTING TIMES FOR N. C. PIEDMONT*	DEPTH TO PLANT (INCHES)	DISTANCE BETWEEN PLANTS	DISTANCE BETWEEN ROWS	BEST SOIL pH	DAYS TO MATURITY
KOHLRABI	½ oz.	White Vienna	Feb. 15 - Apr. 15; Aug. 1 - Sept. 15	½	4 in.	18 - 24 in.	6.0 - 7.0	55 - 60
LEEK	1 oz.	Large Flag	Sept. 1 - Sept. 30	½	4 in.	12 - 18 in.	6.0 - 7.0	120 - 150
LETTUCE, Leaf	½ oz.	Salad Bowl, Buttercrunch, Black Seeded Simpson	Feb. 15 - Apr. 1; Aug. 15 - Sept. 15	¼ - ½	4 in.	12 - 18 in.	6.0 - 6.7	45 - 50
LETTUCE, Head	½ oz.	Great Lakes, Iceberg	Feb. 15 - Mar. 15	¼ - ½	12 in.	18 - 24 in.	6.0 - 6.7	75 - 85
MUSTARD	½ oz.	Southern Giant Curled, Tendergreen, Florida Broadleaf, Old Fashion	Feb. 1 - Apr. 1; Aug. 1 - Sept. 15	½	2 in.	12 - 18 in.	6.0 - 7.0	30 - 40
OKRA	2 oz.	Clemson Spineless, Perkins Long Pod	May 1 - June 1	1	12 in.	28 - 36 in.	5.5 - 6.5	50 - 60
ONION (sets)	1 quart	Silver Skin, Yellow Danvers	Feb. 1 - Mar. 15; Sept. 1 - Oct. 15	1 - 2	4 in.	12 - 24 in.	6.0 - 6.5	60 - 80
PEAS, Garden	1 pound	Super Sugar Snap (edible pod), Early Alaska, Wando, Laxton's Progress, Green Arrow	Feb. 1 - Mar. 1	2	2 - 3 in.	18 - 30 in.	6.0 - 6.5	65 - 70
PEAS, Field (cowpeas)	½ pound	Dixielee, Mississippi Silver, Queen Anne, Browneye Six Week, Pinkeye Purple Hull	Apr. 15 - July 1	1 - 2	4 in.	36 - 42 in.	5.5 - 6.5	55 - 65
PEPPER, Sweet	65 plants	California Wonder, Banana, Keystone Gl.	May 1 - May 30	½	18 in.	3 ft.	6.0 - 6.5	75 - 80
PEPPER, Hot	65 plants	Long Red Cayenne, Jalapeno M	May 1 - May 30	½	18 in.	3 ft.	6.0 - 6.5	75 - 80
POTATO, Irish	120 plants	Kennebec, Pontiac	Mar. 1 - May 15	4 - 6	10 in.	36 - 42 in.	4.8 - 5.4	100 - 120
POTATO, Sweet	100 plants	Puerto Rico, Centennial Jewel	May 15 - June 15	3 - 6	12 in.	36 - 42 in.	5.4 - 6.0	105 - 135
PUMPKIN	½ oz.	Mammoth Gold, Sugar or Pie, Big Max	June 15 - July 15	1 - 2	4 ft.	6 - 10 ft.	6.0 - 6.5	115 - 120
RADISH	1 oz.	Early Scarlet Globe, Cherry Belle, White Egg	Feb. 1 - Apr. 15; Aug. 1 - Sept. 15	½	1 in.	6 - 12 in.	6.0 - 7.0	20 - 25
RUTABAGA	½ oz.	American Purple Top	Feb. 1 - Apr. 1; Aug. 1 - Aug. 15	½	4 in.	18 - 24 in.	6.0 - 7.0	90
SPINACH	1 oz.	Dark Green Bloomsdale, Hybrid 7	Feb. 1 - Mar. 15; Aug. 1 - Sept. 1	½	4 in.	12 - 14 in.	5.6 - 6.0	45 - 50
SPINACH, New Zealand	1 oz.	New Zealand	Mar. 15 - Apr. 30	1	12 in.	24 in.	6.0 - 6.5	55 - 60
SQUASH, Summer	½ oz.	Early Summer Crookneck, Goldbar, Zucchini, Early Prolific Straightneck	Apr. 15 - May 15	1	2 ft.	3 - 5 ft.	5.5 - 6.5	50 - 60
SQUASH, Winter	½ oz.	Waltham Butternut	Apr. 15 - May 15	1	4 ft.	8 - 10 ft.	6.0 - 6.5	85 - 95
TOMATO	50 plants	Homestead, Marion, Better Boy, Big Beef	Apr. 10 - July 15	¼ - ½	2 ft.	3 - 5 ft.	6.0 - 6.5	75 - 85
TURNIP	½ oz.	Purple Top White Globe, Seven Top (greens only), Just Right Hybrid	Feb. 1 - Apr. 15; Aug. 1 - Sept. 15	½	2 in.	15 - 18 in.	6.0 - 7.0	55 - 60
WATERMELON	1 oz.	Congo, Charleston Gray #133, Crimson Sweet, Jubilee	Apr. 15 - June 1	1	3 ft.	5 - 8 ft.	5.8 - 6.2	90 - 100

*In Mountain areas, delay spring planting date 2-3 weeks; plant 2-3 weeks earlier in Fall. In the lower Coastal Plain, plant 2-3 weeks earlier in Spring and delay Fall planting 2-3 weeks. In Virginia, delay spring planting date 2-3 weeks; plant 2-3 weeks earlier in Fall. In South Carolina, plant 2-3 weeks earlier in Spring and delay Fall planting 2-3 weeks.



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Small renovations that make a big impact

Home renovations provide a host of benefits. Such projects can increase resale value and improve on the safety, aesthetics and functionality of a home.

Some homeowners may employ the mantra “go big or go home” when they embark on home improvements, thinking that only the largest renovations produce noticeable change. But that’s not the case. Various smaller renovations can provide a lot of bang for homeowners’ bucks as well.

•**Countertops (and hardware):** A complete kitchen overhaul may stretch some homeowners’ budgets. However, changing an older countertop for a new material can provide the facelift a kitchen needs. And while changing the cabinets may be homeowners’ ultimate goal, swapping hardware in dated finishes for newer handles and pulls can provide low-cost appeal.

•**Paint:** Painting a space is an inexpensive improvement that adds maximum impact. Paint can transform dark and drab rooms into bright and airy oases. Paint also can be used to create an accent wall or cozy nooks. Homeowners also can showcase their personalities with their choice of paint colors.

•**Lighting:** Homeowners should not underestimate what a change in lighting can do. When rooms or exterior spaces are illuminated, they take on entirely new looks. It’s worth it to invest in new lighting, whether it’s a dramatic hanging light over the dining room table or task lighting in dim spaces.

•**Weatherproofing:** Improving windows, doors, weatherstripping, and insulation in a home can offer visual appeal and help homeowners save money. The initial investment may be significant, but those costs will pay off in energy savings. According to One Main Financial, space heating is the largest energy expense the average American homeowner has, accounting for around 45 percent of all energy costs.

•**Mudroom:** Turn an entryway into a more functional space with the addition of cabinets, benches or custom-designed storage options that perfectly fit the area. Cubbies and cabinets can corral shoes, umbrellas, hats, bags, and much more.

•**Accent updates:** Any space, whether it’s inside or outside a home, can get a fresh look with new decorative accents. Invest in new throw pillows and even slipcovers for living room sofas. Use new tile or paint the brick on a fireplace in a den, then update the mantel with decorative displays. Purchase wall art that can bring different colors into a room. Change the cushions on deck furniture and buy color-coordinated planters.

These subtle changes will not cost as much as full-scale renovations, but they can still help homeowners transform their homes.

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The basics of fertilizing a lawn

Spring marks the return of lawn and garden season. Lawns often bear the brunt of winter’s wrath, so spring is a great time to nurse them back to health, and fertilizing can be an essential component of that process.

Fertilizing a lawn can be intimidating. An array of fertilizers, with each seemingly designed to address a different issue, can make homeowners’ heads spin when visiting their local lawn and garden center. However, fertilizing is a very simple task that any homeowner can tackle. In fact, fears about fertilizing are often unfounded and can be overcome with some basic knowledge of the process.

•**Identify** which type of grass is in the yard. The home improvement experts at HGTV note that turfgrass is divided into two categories: cool-season grass and warm-season grass. A local lawn and garden center can help homeowners identify which type of grass is in the yard, and this often depends on location. Fescue, bluegrass

and perennial ryegrass are some examples of cool-season grasses, while Bermuda, bahia, St. Augustine, and zoysia are considered warm-season grasses. Identifying which type of grass is in the lawn is important because that will indicate when to fertilize. Cool-season grasses are typically best fertilized in early spring, while warm-season lawns can benefit from an application just before especially warm temperatures arrive.

•**Survey** the lawn to identify which spreader to use. A small yard or a thriving lawn with only a few bald or unsightly patches may not need a full application of fertilizer. In such instances, a hand spreader can suffice. For larger lawns and areas, a broadcast spreader is the ideal option. Spreaders have multiple settings, and the fertilizer package will indicate which setting to utilize when using the product.

•**Test** the soil prior to purchasing fertilizer. The lawn experts at Pennington® note that a simple soil test can re-



FEED YOUR LAWN. Fears about fertilizing are often unfounded and can be overcome with some basic knowledge of the process.

veal soil pH and phosphorous and potassium levels. Soil tests can be purchased at most home improvement stores and lawn and garden centers, and they can help homeowners determine which fertilizer will most benefit their lawns.

•**Water** the lawn prior to fertilizing. The experts at Scotts® recommend a good watering a few days prior to fertilizing a lawn. Such an approach ensures the soil is ready to accept the fertilizer once it’s applied.

•**Follow** the instructions

carefully. Detailed instructions are typically provided on fertilizer product packaging. Once homeowners have identified and purchased the product they need, they can simply follow the instructions on the packaging, including how and when to water after application, which can make fertilizing less intimidating.

Fertilizing in spring can help a lawn recover from the previous summer and winter, ensuring it’s lush and green when summer entertaining season arrives.

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