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for your garden



How to grow a nut tree







4 edging materials

Borders help define the different parts of your landscape and simplify maintenance. Here are four edging materials to make your yard look great.

1. Aluminum edging is sleek, durable and flexible. Moreover, it can withstand the changing of the seasons without warping.

2. Concrete edging is available in a variety of styles and sizes. You can also choose from several shades to perfectly match your landscape. Although durable, concrete borders are semipermanent, making it difficult to change the shape of your flowerbeds on a whim.

3. Plastic edging is affordable and can be made into virtually any shape. However, it's not as durable as other edging options and may need to be readjusted from one season to another. Additionally, some plastic borders can't survive the winter and must be replaced every year.

4. Wood edging is timeless and easy to install. If you want to change the look of your landscape without moving anything, you can easily repaint wood borders. Don't hesitate to contact a landscaping professional for expert advice and installation.

Fruits and veggies aren't the only things you can grow at home. For example, you can grow one or more protein-packed nut trees in your yard.

Type of tree

There are several things to consider to help you determine which type of nut tree to grow in your yard. The first is the tree's hardiness. In other words, how well it acclimatizes to the weather in your area. The tree's hardiness depends on where its seeds were grown and indicates whether it will thrive on your land. The next consideration is the species of tree. For instance, your yard must have the right type of soil for the tree to thrive. Moreover, some trees remain relatively small, while others can reach several feet in height and width. Therefore, look for a variety that's a suitable size for your location.

Harvesting

You can maximize your chances of producing a good crop by ensuring your tree is located near pollinators like bees. You can harvest the nuts in early autumn by collecting those that have fallen to the ground and drying them out before storing them. Visit your local nursery or garden center to purchase your nut tree.



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Garden shed considerations

Do you need storage space for your barbecue, patio set and gardening accessories? If so, it's time to get a shed. There are many prefabricated models made of synthetic materials, metal and wood. Here are a few tips for making the right choice.



Synthetic materials

Plastic, vinyl and PVC sheds are resistant to water and insect damage. Moreover, they require very little maintenance. Although available in a wide variety of designs, they tend to have a commercial look that may not suit everyone.

Metal

Metal sheds are lightweight, affordable and easy to assemble. If made from aluminum, the shed won't rust. However, metal sheds are easy to dent and come in fewer designs than those made of synthetic materials.

Wood

Wooden sheds are sturdy and can complement the outside of your home.

However, they require considerable maintenance and are more vulnerable to insects and rot than metal and synthetic sheds.

If you're handy, you can design and build your own shed. This way, you can choose its size and appearance. Furthermore, you can insulate the walls to create a workshop. But keep a close eye on your budget. This type of project can easily cost several thousand dollars.

Whether you choose to buy a prefabricated shed or build your own, make sure it's strong enough to withstand inclement weather. Finally, check the laws and regulations in your area for building this type of structure.



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4 annuals that will add height to your flowerbeds

Annuals often feature abundant blooms that are positively eye-catching. While it's relatively easy to find low, mediumsized flowers, it can be difficult to get your hands on large, majestic ones. Here are four annuals that stand tall and proud.

1. Dahlia Some varieties of this beautiful flower can grow up to over six feet in height. However, it's best to stick to a single color and find a type that doesn't grow taller than five feet.

2. Cosmos This thin and delicate flower is available in beautiful pastels like white and pink. It'll wow your neighbors and attract butterflies and birds to your yard.

3. Cleome This beautiful ballshaped flower is often overlooked at greenhouses and nurseries

because it rarely blooms at the start of spring. Give it a chance — you won't regret it.

4. Canna This bulbous plant tends to bloom late in the season. Therefore, it's best to plant it indoors four to six weeks before the last frost. Better yet, you can buy dwarf varieties that fill out quickly.

Horticulturists and landscapers generally recommend limiting yourself to two or three colors and three or four species to maximize their visual impact.

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When to prune your trees and shrubs

Although trees and shrubs can grow very well without intervention, occasional pruning helps promote optimal health. Here's what you need to know.



Flowering

Shrubs like rhododendrons and lilacs bloom from last year's stems, whereas others, like roses and hydrangeas, bloom from new growth. It's best to prune shrubs that flower from old wood immediately after blooming. However, shrubs that bloom on new growth should be trimmed in the spring.

Dormancy

In general, shrubs and trees go dormant in the spring before their buds open. This is the best time for pruning because the plants heal faster. Late fall is also appropriate. However, pruning in the winter should be avoided.

Lastly, mid-summer is ideal for pruning trees that produce a lot of sap in the spring, like maple, birch and willow. Pruning large trees and fruit trees should be left to the experts. For the best results, contact a professional tree pruner in your area.

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Do you work from home? Whether you want to escape distractions or enjoy some fresh air, moving your office outside could boost creativity and productivity.



Bring your office to the backyard

Depending on your needs and the available space, you can create an open office by installing an overhang on your deck to protect you from the weather and the sun's powerful rays. This option is ideal for summer. However, it may not work when making calls in the middle of a rainstorm. Therefore, you may want to build a complete room, similar to a converted shed, which can be used year-round.

Things to remember

Above all, your workspace must be functional to ensure you're as productive as you usually are in a traditional office setting. You must also have access to electricity and a stable internet connection. You may also need to consider investing in an air conditioning, ventilation or heating unit.

If a backyard office appeals to you, work with local businesses and contractors to make it happen.

5 benefits of raised garden beds

Raised gardening is the practice of growing plants above ground level. Here are five reasons why this method is becoming increasingly popular among gardeners.



I. Easy access. You can design your raised garden bed so you can till the soil, pull weeds and pick vegetables from a comfortable standing position.

2. Reduced predators. Walled garden beds limit access to many unwanted visitors. Moreover, raised gardens allow less weed intrusion than ground gardens, making them easy to maintain.

3. Better soil control. Raised garden beds give you better control over variables that can affect the growth of your plants, like drainage, water retention, soil aeration and PH levels.

4. More abundant harvests. Many gardeners with raised beds report more bountiful fruit and vegetable yields than traditional ground gardens.

5. An asset to your decor. When it comes to outdoor design, raised garden beds give your yard a finished and tailored look.

Whether you build it yourself or purchase a ready-made raised garden bed, your new growing space will require an initial investment. However, you'll be quickly won over by its numerous advantages.







6 tips for growing rhubarb

Here are six tips for growing rhubarb in your backyard.

I. Choose a sunny location with rich, relatively moist soil. Ideally, pick somewhere other than your vegetable garden. Rhubarb takes up a lot of space and can cover up smaller plants.

2. Allow at least three feet between your rhubarb and other plants. This ensures it has plenty of room to spread out. **3.** Apply compost and all-purpose organic fertilizer annually. Make sure to read the package instructions for the proper application.

4. Remove weeds at the base of the rhubarb plant to avoid attracting pests like weevils. Make sure to regularly remove wilted stems to promote growth.

5. During dry spells and intense heat, water your plant in the evening to prevent shock. Avoid getting the leaves wet, and don't oversaturate the soil.



6. Don't pick any rhubarb the first year. Wait until the third year to harvest heavily. However, never pick all the stems because this can weaken the plant. Talk to your local garden center staff for more tips and advice.

Building a treehouse with your child: an exciting project

A beautiful wooden treehouse instantly adds whimsy and fun to your backyard. While you can purchase many pre-made models, most people will agree that nothing beats a treehouse built by your own hands.

An activity that brings people together

Instead of assembling a mass-produced treehouse in a few minutes, you can invest many hours with your child. You won't regret this opportunity to spend quality time together.

A learning opportunity

You can make your treehouse look like a cozy cabin or a tiny replica of your home. No matter what style you decide to build, you can teach your child about tools, technology and the construction process. They'll also learn how to plan and execute a project, providing them with valuable life lessons.

A great environmental option

Your custom-built treehouse will easily outperform its commercial rivals if you choose the right materials. Whether you buy wood at a hardware store or gather it in a nearby forest, your treehouse will be unique and ecologically sustainable.

A pleasure to rediscover

If your child is usually glued to their video games, it may take some effort to convince them to get their hands dirty building a treehouse. You may be able to persuade them to participate by implementing screenfree days or rewarding them with small prizes for spending time outside.

Building a treehouse is a satisfying project that could turn into one of your child's fondest memories.



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If you don't have the time or energy to cut your grass or trim your shrubs, you may want to consider hiring a lawn maintenance company. Here are four advantages to hiring professionals to keep your yard tidy.





1. They have the right equipment. If you hire a pro, you don't need to buy or rent expensive pieces of machinery like a tractor, mower, hedge trimmer, fertilizer spreader and more. You don't have to lose time and money on maintenance either.

2. They use effective products. Professional lawn companies use high quality, specialized fertilizers, pest treatments and weed control solutions to keep your lawn lush, green and healthy.

3. They know precisely what your lawn needs. Depending on the condition of your yard

and the time of year, you can count on the professionals to dethatch, aerate or fertilize your lawn to keep it looking its best.

4. They get the job done fast. Lawn maintenance experts are committed to building customer loyalty. Therefore, they'll do everything they can to meet or exceed your expectations.

You have everything to gain by doing business with pros! Contact a lawn maintenance company in your area to learn about its many services.

4 ways to create shade in your yard

Here are four ways to create a cool, shaded area in your yard to help you survive the hot, sun-drenched days of summer.

1. A canopy is an esthetically pleasing option that provides shade and, depending on the model, can protect from UV rays. Remember to choose a triangular or rectangular canopy that's light in color to avoid attracting more heat.

2. An umbrella is ideal for creating a shaded area exactly where you want it. Depending on where the sun shines during the day, you can



move it around or adjust the angle. Moreover, choose a large enough model that has a stand to meet your needs.

3. A pergola is made of wooden slats or lattice and can be fixed or mobile. It has the advantage of being more durable than a canopy or umbrella. Additionally, you can install curtains or arrange climbing plants for more privacy.



4. Trees add coolness to your yard and are an excellent long-term solution. You can use a temporary shade source until the trees grow to sufficient size. Contact a landscaping specialist to find the best option for your situation.

How to choose a fertilizer

Fertilizer is a gardening essential. It feeds the soil and gives your plants the nutrients they need to grow and produce good yields. However, there are several elements to consider when choosing the right one.

Fertilizer type

Organic and mineral fertilizers come in both liquid and solid forms. The type of fertilizer you choose affects how quickly it works, how easy it is to use, the number of applications needed and how it should be stored.

Specialized fertilizer

You shouldn't use the same fertilizer for all your plants and flowers. Every plant has different nutrition needs, which can vary according to its growth period.

Water and substrate

The quality of the water you use (its pH and supply source) can react positively or negatively with your fertilizer. Moreover, the content of your substrate can influence the type and dose of fertilizer you should use. Test your substrate regularly to find out how well your plants and flowers are absorbing nutrients.

Visit your local garden store for advice and carefully check the fertilizer labels before buying.







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Tips for mowing your lawn



How to choose the right fertilizer for your lawn

Every lawn requires its own unique blend of nutrients to thrive. This fact is reflected by the many varieties of fertilizer on the market. If you want healthy grass, it's important that you choose the type of fertilizer best suited to your particular lawn.

Understanding fertilizer labels

The key information on a unit of fertilizer is contained in a chain of three numbers separated by dashes. These numbers, often referred to as an NPK ratio, typically appear on the front packaging. Fertilizer numbers indicate the percentage of nitrogen, phosphorus and potassium the fertilizer contains — in that order! These are the main nutrients your lawn needs and they perform different functions.

When mowing your lawn, never cut more than one-third of the length of the grass. During the spring and fall months, keep the grass between 2–3 inches tall. During the hot summer months, the grass can be a bit longer, between 2.5–3.5 inches. This will help prevent the lawn from drying out, reduce the need for watering and reduce the likelihood of infestation of insects, weeds or illnesses. Before the onset of winter, gradually lower the height of the grass to 2 inches to discourage rodents from eating it.

If the residues from the mown lawn are short, they can be left in place. They will fertilize the grass with nutrients such as nitrogen, phosphorus, and potassium. On the other hand, if the ends of grass are too long, it's better to remove them. Otherwise they will only become a heavy layer that will suffocate the grass and turn it yellow. What's more, an accumulation of dried grass will prevent air, water and other nutrients from penetrating the soil.

Alternatively, mulching mowers create usable residues. Always ensure that the lawnmower's blade is sharp; blades usually become dull after about 10 mows. Dull blades can damage the lawn and make it more susceptible to illness and dryness. Always clean the bottom of the lawnmower to prevent dry grass from building up and give it an annual check-up and regular maintenance.

When buying a new lawnmower, focus on quality, durability, warranty and after-sale service. Choose the right sized lawnmower for your lawn; the narrower it is, the easier it will be to maneuver, but it will take longer to finish the job.

Nitrogen promotes plant growth and makes your grass greener; phosphorus promotes root growth and potassium builds strong cells within the plant tissue.

Selecting your fertilizer

The fertilizer you add to your lawn should supplement what's lacking in the soil. For instance, if your soil lacks nitrogen, has ample phosphorus and almost enough potassium, you might choose a fertilizer marked 34-0-4.

To find out what nutrients your lawn needs, pick up an inexpensive soil test kit at a garden center. If you want a more detailed evaluation, get a lawn care professional to perform one.

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How a fence can increase the value of your property



ENCING TIPS Make sure you purchase fence materials that are of high quality and attractive. For example, wood, vinyl and ornamental iron fences are more beautiful than chain-link fences. However, keep in mind that they're more expensive and require more maintenance

4 reasons to hire a professional fence contractor

If you're planning on getting a new fence, you may be tempted to install it yourself. However, there are many advantages to hiring a professional fence contractor. Here are four reasons to call a fence installation specialist.

1. They'll get the job done right. Professional fence contractors have the knowledge, tools and experience to build your fence right the first time. Moreover, contractors typically use surveyors to ensure they install the fence within your property line. In addition, most reputable contractors guarantee their work so you can have peace of mind.

2. They'll save you money. Although you may think that DIY fencing is less expensive than hiring a contractor, the tools required to build a fence can be costly to buy or rent. Furthermore, building a fence yourself increases the risk of construction mistakes and future repairs.

FENCEDEAS to boost curb appeal





When building a new fence, you must pick high-quality, durable materials to ensure it lasts for years to come. Choosing poor materials can lead to an ugly, sagging fence that'll be expensive to repair. Here are some of the most durable fencing materials on the market.

1. Wrought iron. Ornamental iron fences can last hundreds of years if regularly maintained. In fact, some of the wrought-iron latticework found in the French Quarter of New Orleans dates back to the 1700s. However, iron is prone to rust and must be regularly repainted.

2. Brick or masonry. Fences built from brick or concrete can withstand the test of time. However, these materials are pricey and must be installed by professional masons.

3. Aluminum. Lightweight, rustresistant and easy to install, aluminum fences are a sure bet for any climate. Aluminum requires little to no

maintenance and can be painted to match your home's exterior.

4. Vinyl. A relative newcomer in fencing material, vinyl can be designed to resemble wood and metal. It doesn't rot or rust and is resistant to pests. All you need to do is wash it down once a year to keep dirt and debris at bay.

5. Pressure-treated wood. Wood fences are timeless. Fortunately, pressure-treated wood can last many decades with annual upkeep, such as painting and staining.

Consult a fence professional to discuss what type of fencing material is best for your property.



Installing a new fence around your home has many benefits, including increasing the value of your property and making it more attractive to future buyers. Here's why.

It delineates your property. A fence visually outlines your property to give potential buyers an exact idea of the size of your yard. Remember to always double-check your property lines before installing a fence.

It increases curb appeal. You can increase your home's curb appeal by installing a decorative wooden or wrought-iron fence. A well-placed fence can also block unsightly views.

It adds privacy. If you want to create a visual barrier around your home, a fence is a great way to shield your yard from the gaze of strangers.

It improves security and safety.

Installing a fence keeps would-be thieves and vandals out of your yard and home. Enclosing your yard with a fence can also help keep young children and pets from escaping into the street. Safety and security are significant features when selling a home.

Lastly, always opt for professional installation to avoid future problems and hassles. Additionally, invest in regular maintenance and repairs to ensure your fence looks and performs its best for years to come.

3. They'll save you time. A fence

contractor will put all their resources into completing your project quickly and efficiently so you can enjoy your yard all summer long. This way, you don't have to spend your weekends lifting, hammering and sweating over your fence project.

4. They'll follow bylaws and

regulations. Many communities have strict rules about fence heights, distance from the street or sidewalk and suitable materials. If you break these bylaws, you may be forced to tear down your fence and start again. Fortunately, fence contractors are familiar with local bylaws and fencing regulations and can help you prevent any complications.



Do your research and hire a contractor with experience and a proven track record. Additionally, ensure they use only the highest-quality materials.

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GREENIDEAS

5 ecological construction materials

Are you planning on renovating your home or building a new abode? If so, have you considered the environmental impact of the construction materials? Here are five building materials you may want to consider to reduce your ecological footprint.

1. Wood is ideal for home construction because it's weather-resistant, recyclable, renewable and an excellent insulator. In addition, it's readily available and easy to maintain.

2. Straw is an inexpensive insulator. In fact, it can stay in peak condition for several hundred years if kept dry. However, you must include fire protection as part of the installation.

3. Cork is a lightweight, waterrepellent and rot-proof material that's great for insulating and soundproofing your home. It's also resistant to insects and fungi. The only disadvantage is that it tends to be pricey.

4. Bamboo is a fast-growing grass that reaches maturity in four years.



It's a versatile material that's suitable for flooring, furniture, insulation and soundproofing. Inevitably, insects will nibble on your plants.

5. Steel is a great building material. You don't need to use very much to reach the same structural stability as wood. It's even more environmentally friendly when composed of recycled resources.



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