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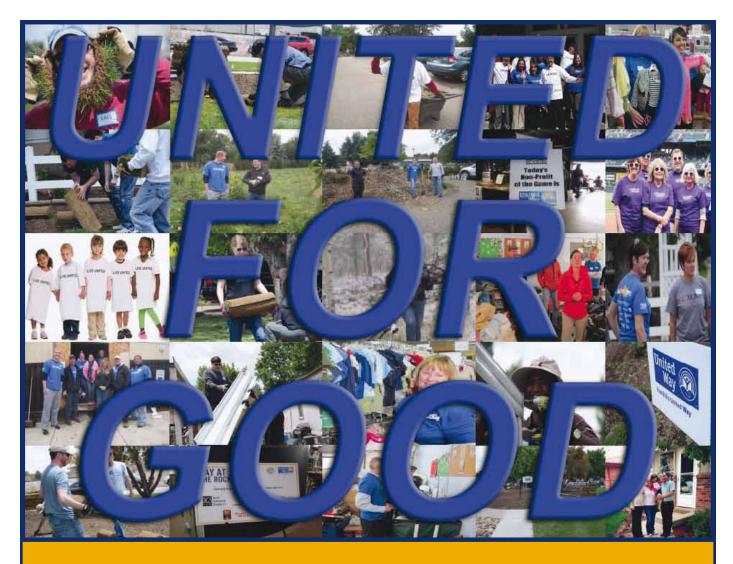
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Only 10 minutes from Boulder or Longmont, Niwot is the close-by escape from your every day. Learn more at NIWOT.COM When mass shootings grab headlines every day, it's easy to become suspicious and fearful. It's easy to think that arming yourself is the only way to greet violence head-on. It's easy to shed tears and say prayers and go on with our lives.

What's not so easy is doing what all memorable leaders—Gandhi, Jesus, Buddha, the Dalai Lama, Mother Teresa, Pope Francis, Martin Luther King Jr. and many others—have preached: to live compassionately.

But what does that mean, and how do we do it? I'm not sure, but for me I think it means living from the heart and knowing we all share dreams, hopes, sorrows and pain. We are all the same, no matter our station in this life, our skin color, our religion, our age.

I think the place to start to live compassionately is in our own community, by helping others, by volunteering, by strengthening the bonds that foster kinship. Knowing who we really are and the contents of our own hearts makes it easier for us to feel compassion toward others, especially those who might be different from us, with different beliefs and cultural systems. Bettering oneself is the one struggle we should all seek.

And though this magazine's contribution to that quest is tiny, and perhaps insignificant, we strive to bring you tools in every issue to make your life and our community better.

In this issue, for example, we highlight front-yard food gardens, plants for detoxing interior air, places to see amazing wildlife, and tips to create a spiritual garden.

A story that truly touches upon the compassion of our community is the Feature Home story. It's about Ben Rickard and Shannon Rood, a Niwot couple who lost all their belongings,



TOM BROCK

their truck and their home in the 2013 flood. Through the kindness and generosity of friends and strangers, and their own resilient spirits, Ben and Shannon gained back everything they'd lost—and more, as they watched the community and themselves pull together to build a new home for them, and their many pets, to live in.

We hope you enjoy reading about your neighbors and your community in the pages of this magazine. We always want to hear from you, so please drop us a line if you have a home or a garden we should feature, a story we should cover, or any thoughts you might have about the betterment of this magazine.

Go in peace and live compassionately this new year and beyond.

Enjoy the winter, and hope to see you again in spring.

Carol S. Brock

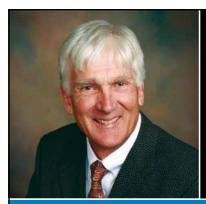
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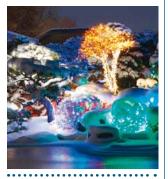
WHERE TO GO | WHO TO KNOW

The winter season offers sparkling, twinkling lights and more. Check out these events for pleasant diversions.

THROUGH JAN. 1

Blossoms of Light More than a million lights

twinkle at night at Denver Botanic Gardens, and some actually "dance" to the festive holiday music. There's also live entertainment and hot chocolate on select nights. From 5:30-9:30 p.m. at 1007 York St., Denver. Call 720-865-3500 or visit www.botanicgardens.org. SCOTT DRESSEL-MARTIN



FIRST MONDAYS **Permie Potlucks**

Monthly potluck dinners hosted by the Boulder Permaculture Guild feature permaculture practitioners discussing their latest projects and sharing expertise for those who would like to get started. Potluck hours are 7-8 p.m. at the Integral Center, 2805 Broadway in Boulder. Bring a healthy dish to share. Visit www.integralcenter.org.

JAN. 15

Growing Gardens Registration

The CSA program and the community garden plots at Growing Gardens always sell out quickly, so mark these dates: Community garden registration for new gardeners opens Jan. 15 at 9 a.m. (If you're renewing an existing garden, you have until Feb. 5.) CSA registration also begins in January; check online for updates. The gardens are at 1630 Hawthorn Ave. in Boulder. Visit www.growinggardens.org. COURTESY GROWING GARDENS



THROUGH JAN. 1

Trail of Lights

Denver Botanic Gardens at Chatfield offers a beautiful stroll during the holiday season, with thousands of twinkling lights illuminating a winding path through the garden countryside. The lights sparkle from 5:30-9:30 p.m. at 8500 W. Deer Creek Canyon Road, Littleton. Call 720-865-4336 or visit www.botanicgardens.org. SCOTT DRESSEL-MARTIN

THROUGH JAN. 3

Zoo Lights

The Denver Zoo's annual holiday light safari has nearly doubled in size this year to more than 70 acres. The festive lights complement the animated animal sculptures that swing through trees, hide in bushes and appear

where you don't expect them. You'll also find nocturnal animals prowling their pens and other activities like fire dancers, ice carving, warming stations and food vendors. Hours are 5:30-9 p.m. each night at 2300 Steele St. in Denver. Call 303-376-4800 or visit www.denverzoo.org. COURTESY DENVER ZOO



THROUGH JAN. 10 **Living Lights**

On selected evenings during the holiday season, you can stroll through the Butterfly Pavilion's tropical rain forest and gardens surrounded by twinkling, glowing lights that capture the magic of the season. The Pavilion is at 6252 W. 104th Ave. in Westminster. Visit www.butterflies.org.



Lafayette Quaker Oatmeal Festival & Health Fair

Participate in the 5k walk/run, then refuel with a healthy breakfast of oatmeal and all the best toppings. There's also an extensive health fair with screenings and other activities at the Bob L. Burger Recreation Center. See the schedule at www.lafayettecolorado. chambermaster.com. VLADISLAV NOSIK



JAN. 9-24

Coors Western Art Exhibit and Sale

Held in conjunction with the National Western Stock Show, this popular annual event features a mix of art styles from established artists and new talent. On the third level of the Expo Hall at the National Western Complex, 4655 Humboldt St. in Denver. Visit www.coorswesternart.com. TERRANCE EMERSON



"Houseplants 101" Class

This free class, beginning at 10 a.m., covers basic houseplant care including plant selection, pest identification and repotting. The instructor will also answer your specific questions. At Sturtz and Copeland, 2851 Valmont. Visit www.sturtzandcopeland.com. VLADIMIRA



JAN. 16, 23 **Foodies Taste Test** Bonanza

This "gourmet examination of 20 foods" is a two-day culinary event in Boulder that includes a unique round-table tasting and discussion with world traveler and chef Chevne Keith. Find more details and register at www.bvsd.org/LLL.



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JAN. 21-23

Cheesemaking Boot Camp

Attend one, two or all three days of this boot camp, which gives participants hands-on experience and the tools and techniques needed to make nine different cheeses. At Haystack Mountain Goat Cheese Creamery, 505 Weaver Park Road in Longmont; visit www.haystackgoatcheese.com. The Art of Cheese also has a full calendar of spring cheesemaking classes at www.theartofcheese.com.

FEB. 13 & MARCH 24 "Starting Your Garden from Seed"

Learn how to produce all the transplants you could possibly need for the upcoming growing season (and go home with your own seed trays) with one of these classes at Denver Botanic Gardens, 1007 York St. in Denver. Other spring classes include "Advanced Vegetable Gardening" (Jan. 23) and "Berries and Grapes for the Front Range" (Feb. 20). Register at www.botanicgardens.org.



Interfaith Quilters Show & Sale

Now in its 30th year, this big annual show and sale offers hundreds of volunteer-made quilts for sale. Some of the proceeds benefit Safe Shelter of St. Vrain Valley and Longmont's OUR Center. At First Lutheran Church, 803 Third Ave. in Longmont. Visit www.interfaithquilters.com. LEENA ROBINSON

WHERE TO GO | WHO TO KNOW

JAN. 25

Herbal Love Potions and Poppets

This workshop at Three Leaf Farm explores the way herbs can enhance your love life, both medicinally and magically, just in time for Valentine's Day. Other upcoming classes include "Making Spirit Shrines" (Feb. 29) and "Herbs and Animals" (March 28). A six-week introduction to herbalism begins April 11. The farm is at 445 S. 112th St. in Lafayette. Register at www.threeleaffarm.com.



Chocolate Lovers' Fling This annual benefit for the Safehouse

Progressive Alliance for Nonviolence (SPAN) features all things chocolate, like a signature chocolate cocktail and decadent desserts, plus a full-course dinner, dancing, wine, and live and silent auctions. Find venue and ticket information at www.safehousealliance.org. COURTESY SPAN

STAF

FEB. 13-21 Colorado Garden & Home Show

This annual nine-day event offers ideas for landscaping, gardening and home improvements, as well as professionally landscaped display gardens. At the Colorado Convention Center in Denver; take a free shuttle from Coors Field. Visit www.coloradogardenfoundation.org.

MARCH 18-20

Denver Home Show

Get advice, marvel at products and find great deals for all your remodeling and home-improvement projects. At the National Western Complex, 4655 Humboldt St. in Denver. www. homeshowdenver.com.



Northern Colorado Home & Remodeling Show

Browse vendor booths pertaining to home projects; there's also a marketplace for local vendors, garden displays and educational sessions. At the Larimer County Fairgrounds and Events Complex in the First National Bank Exhibit Hall, just off I-25 in Loveland. Visit www. **nocohba.com**. MARIUS SZCZYGIEL



Empty Bowls Dinner

Help feed the hungry in Longmont, and choose a hand-painted ceramic bowl to take home; proceeds benefit the OUR Center. You can also donate a bowl for the event by purchasing and painting one at local ceramics studios from January through early March. Visit **www.ourcenter.org**. NATHAN PULLEY PHOTOGRAPHY, COURTESY OUR CENTER

FEB. 2, 13 Lafayette's Community Garden

The Wilson Community Garden, at 500 S. Miller Ave. in Lafayette, offers garden plots on a first-come, first-served basis. Reservations for Lafayette residents open Feb. 2; if you're a nonresident, you can submit a request beginning Feb. 13. Visit www.cityoflafayette.com.



Let's Wine About Winter Niwot's store-to-store tasting event helps raise funds for improvements to the town's parks. Purchase your mug online and then, with mug in hand, follow the map to participating merchants and taste beer and wine at each locale. Hours are 1-4 p.m.; find out more at www.niwot.com.

MARCH 3-6 Boulder International Film Festival

STAFF PICK

This year, the film festival expands its fantastic offerings to locations in Longmont and Broomfield. So get ready to enjoy the hoopla, filmmakers, films and more. For a schedule, visit www.biff1.com.

APRIL 1-3

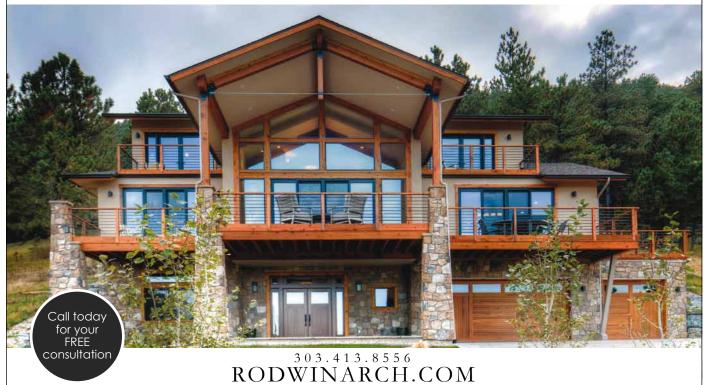
Boulder County Home and Outdoor Living Show

This three-day event showcases remodeling and renovation products, energy efficiency, landscaping, interior décor and garden design. Hours are noon-6 p.m. Friday, 10 a.m.-6 p.m. Saturday, and 11 a.m.-4 p.m. Sunday at Boulder County Fairgrounds, 9595 Nelson Road in Longmont. For details, visit www. greatwesternproductions.com.

16 HOME&GARDEN



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WHERE TO GO | WHO TO KNOW



JUNE 4

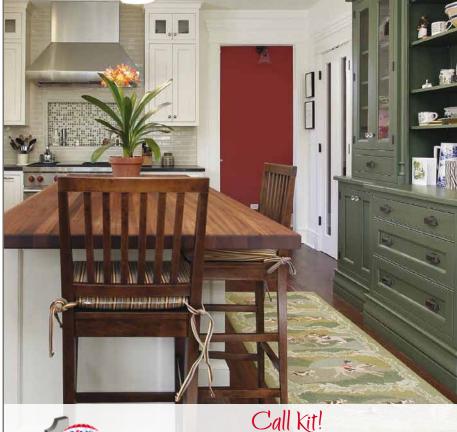
Boulder Home & Garden Fair

Find everything cool for your home and inspiration for your garden at this open-air fair that features more than 60 vendor booths at Twenty Ninth Street Retail District. You'll also find giveaways, massages, children's activities, food trucks, live music and an exotic pack of live alpacas to pet. Hours are 10 a.m.-4 p.m. To register for a booth or for info, visit www.BoulderHG.com.



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WHO TO KNOW



A New "S*PARK" for Boulder

Congrats to Boulder's Sopher Sparn Architects for providing the "sparkling" design that integrates affordable housing, commercial and retail space, open space and parks, and energy efficiency.

In September, Boulder's city planning board approved a new modern urban village, said to be the first of its kind in the county. S*PARK, short for Sutherland Park—because it's on the site of the former Sutherlands Lumber Company—will be a mixed-use community with 20 buildings totaling more than 540,000 square feet spread over 7 acres.

S*PARK will include a community-oriented nonprofit space that will be the home of Community Cycles and 32 affordable rental flats; a commercial building with retail, commercial, office and restaurant spaces; and 12 mixedresidential buildings with both market-rate and affordable townhouses.

The neighborhood is committed to being Colorado's first LEED-Neighborhood-Development Platinum Neighborhood, and will also boast 120,000 square feet of parks and other open space. Sopher Sparn designed 14 of the site's 20 structures. Visit www. sophersparn.com.



The Essential Source

Longmont-based ExtractCraft recently unveiled its new Source, a small countertop appliance that lets users create essential oils and concentrates for alternative medicine, cooking, cocktails, brewing, winemaking, aromatherapy and more.

The Source uses vacuum and gentle warming techniques to extract and concentrate the oils. Most Source parts are dishwasher-safe. The company is taking preorders now, and shipping begins in March on a rolling basis. Visit www.extractcraft.com for details.

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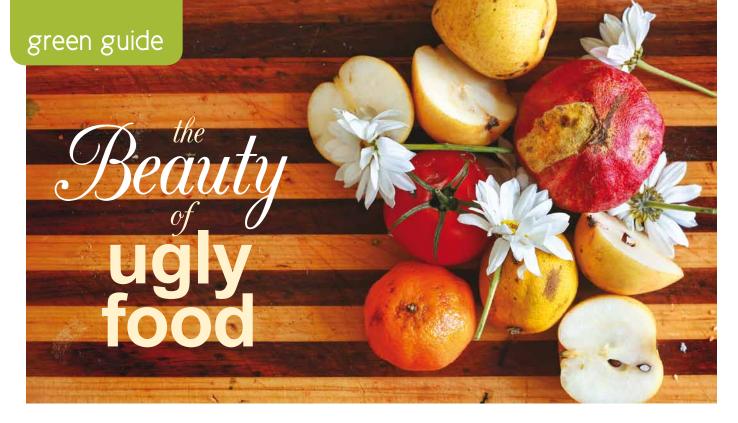
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Why imperfect food should find its way to our tables instead of the trash.

BY ELI WALLACE

Imagine you spend enormous quantities of time and resources making something. You do it well—so well that everyone you know eagerly waits for the things you make. You ship your things around the world. Far-flung friends and strangers want your product.

Would it surprise you, then, if 40 percent of what you made ended up in the trash?

Welcome to the modern agricultural system. "We put an enormous amount of resources into food, which is why minimizing food waste is so important," says Hana Dansky of Boulder Food Rescue (BFR), a nonprofit devoted to placing perishables in hungry bellies. "Fifty percent of our land use and 80 percent of our freshwater resources go to agriculture. Then we throw 40 percent of it out, sometimes before it even reaches anyone's home."

Use less-than-perfect vegetables in soups and stews—no one will know how much you had to trim them. If they're really homely, puree the soup, or throw your carrot nubs, half-onions, parsley stems, withered mushrooms and limp celery stalks into the stockpot. Just don't use anything moldy. BFR is currently working with the city of Boulder to audit food waste in the city, but Dansky sees food waste as a national, systemic problem more than a local one. She says, "A lot of it comes from the perception of abundance that we have in our country. It's a perception of perfection. We'll always have stacks and stacks of apples in every grocery store, no matter what season it is. Each apple not only has to have the perfect shape, but also *be* perfect: no bruises, no brown spots. Then the produce is expected to last for the longest amount of time once it's bought."

In the agricultural chain, the biggest wasters are actually farms, which recognize that imperfect produce won't sell to grocery stores. Farmers compensate for their losses by overproducing food and leaving the unsellable, ugly fruits and vegetables on the ground.



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Moldy berries taste awful, so pick them over carefully. Trim salvageable berries, discard any leaves, and use them fresh or frozen in smoothies and other foods where perfection doesn't matter. Citrus fruits that look bad outside can stay juicy inside for weeks; squeeze them and freeze the juice for marinades and other uses.

Then there are the shipping losses. A truckload of perfect avocados may leave the farm, but by the time it travels across the country, many of the fruits end up nicked, bruised or overripe. Those will be culled from the group; then buyers will carefully scrutinize the ones that make it to the store shelf. "At grocery stores, they have to overstock. They cull the produce three times per day and throw out good food that isn't pretty enough," Dansky explains. "Stores always keep things overstocked, because people are more likely to buy something if there's more of it on the shelf, rather than if there's only one or two items left."

Spoiled Rotten

Even if they make it to your fridge, perishables may not make it to your mouth. A 2015 study by the American Chemistry Council reported that the average American dumps \$640 worth of food per year (the U.S. government estimates the cost per household per year to be around \$900). And sell-by dates encourage people to toss what's often still perfectly good—especially when it comes to eggs, dairy products and meats.

If the waste of resources and money isn't enough, there's also pollution. As food decomposes in landfills (35 million tons in 2012, according to the Environmental Protection Agency), it creates methane, a greenhouse gas. And that adds up to trouble.

So what can we do to ameliorate a system that leaves people hungry, food uneaten, resources wasted, money lost, and global climate change accelerating? Enter "Inglorious Foods."

In 2014, the European Year Against Food Waste was in full swing. Intermarché, France's third-largest grocery chain, launched a campaign called "*les fruits et légumes moches*," or in English, inglorious fruits and vegetables. The grocery bought lumpy lemons, bruised apples, deformed carrots and gnarly potatoes, and sold them in stores for 30 percent of the price of their picture-perfect counterparts.

In addition to the produce, stores sold fruit juices and vegetable soups made from inglorious produce to show consumers that these products tasted as beautiful on the inside as their ingredients were ugly on the outside.

The result? Sold-out stores, a rush of media attention, and according to the retailer, an average of 1.2 tons of ugly produce sold per store in the first two days. Some U.S. grocers have followed suit, including the new nonprofit discount retailer The Daily Table in Dorchester, Mass., founded by Doug Rauch.

The former president of Trader Joe's, Rauch cited the food waste he saw at that chain and the country's incredible amount of food insecurity—meaning you're not sure when or where your next meal will come—as motivators for creating the store. BFR's Dansky cites figures that show one out of six adults and one out of five children in America are food insecure.

"While homelessness is an issue in Boulder, there's much more to it than that," Dansky says. "I'm talking families with young kids who have more mouths than they can feed and are living in

PHOTOS: SHUTTERSTOCK.CON

Collect "inglorious" apples for a batch of delicious, ridiculously easy homemade applesauce. Dried-out as it looks, the apple on the left might still work fine for that purpose, while the spotted one only needs a little trimming. If you like pink applesauce, use as much of the red peel as possible.

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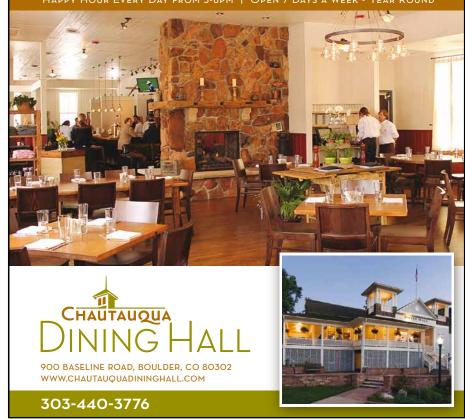
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a cycle of poverty. The flip side is the senior population, which is complicated by mobility issues and a lack of income."

Ways to Pitch In

Unless you're the owner of a national grocery store, it's hard to know how individuals can reduce food waste in meaningful ways.

"The first step is awareness," Dansky says. "Awareness had to grow in Europe before the grocery stores responded." That can mean posting on social media or asking grocery stores that don't work with food redistributors about their food waste.

According to Dansky, Safeway, King Soopers and Trader Joe's do not work with BFR to redistribute last-minute perishable items. However, Safeway donates nonperishables locally through food banks like Louisville's Community Food Share (CFS). King Soopers confirmed that it supplies items to Boulder's Emergency Family Assistance Association (EFAA) and recently instituted a company-wide composting program. Whole Foods, which works with BFR, also repurposes bruised produce in its prepared-foods section—as juices and salads, for example. Trader Joe's declined to comment.

Individuals can donate extra food, including excess garden produce, to food pantries or call BFR at 720-445-5237 for assistance. Dansky also recommends visiting www.lovefoodhatewaste.com for storage tips, last-minute recipes and planning ideas to reduce personal food waste.

Finally, volunteering with food pantries and redistribution organizations like BFR, EFAA and CFS is a hands-on way to tackle food waste. Assisting them financially is also a huge boon to getting nutrients into hungry mouths.

So perhaps it's time to get over our perception of perfection and start welcoming ugly food to the table. Our wallets, climate and communities will be fuller and better for it.

Aging bananas can go on to glory in breads, cakes and smoothies. If you can't use them soon enough, peel and freeze them, and compost the skins.





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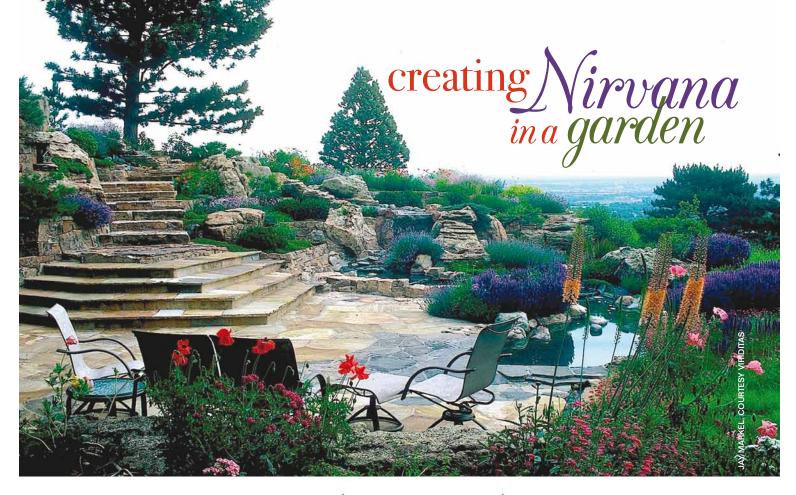
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These tips can help generate a spiritual essence in your garden.

BY TORI PEGLAR

The ancient Chinese philosopher and poet Lao Tzu once wrote, "A journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step." And so it may be said that the path to creating a spiritual garden begins with a single idea.

"Find out what brings you joy and then have a heart-to-heart with yourself," says Lauren Richardson, greenhouse manager at Growing Gardens, a Boulder nonprofit organization. "Some people find joy in order and some people tend toward chaos, or what I like to think of as 'whimsical.""

The good news is creating a spiritual garden can be fun and relatively simple, and the best part is you don't need a large space or a huge budget. Think of your small garden as a beautifully made dress or an elaborately crafted wooden cabinet, says Jay Markel, founder and lead designer at Viriditas, a high-end garden design and landscape company in Boulder. "Fundamentally, a garden is an individual's opportunity to experience nature in an intimate way," Markel says. "What we have in gardens is a convenient way to literally cultivate the earth and have a spiritual connection to the earth."

Here are tips to help you create nirvana in your yard.

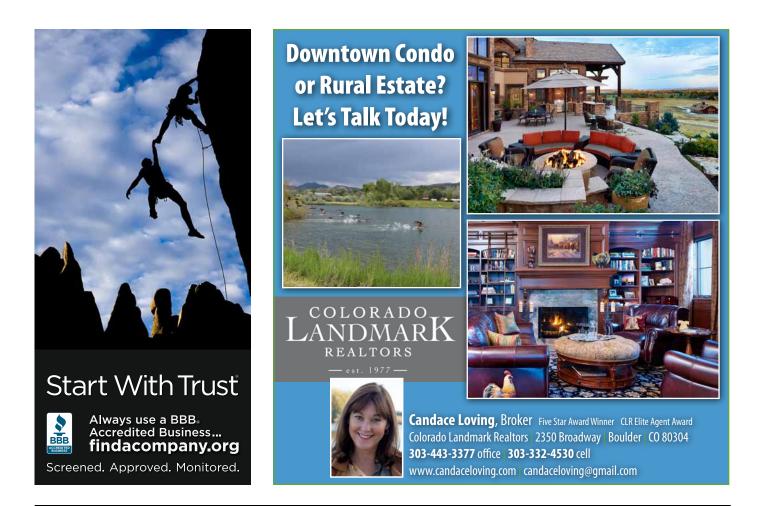
Create a Destination

Landscapers often refer to the "rooms" that make up exterior spaces. In the same way that your house is divided into rooms with different purposes, so should your yard. First, think about the types of things you need in your yard, in addition to your spiritual space. Do you need a fenced area for your dogs? A place for a rose garden? A tool shed? Answering these questions can help you decide where to put your spiritual garden.

"We love creating outdoor rooms," says Bill Melvin, owner and managing director of Ecoscape Environmental Design in Boulder. "The farther we get

Water is an important aspect of a spiritual garden, particularly in these landscape designs by Viriditas (top) and Ecoscape Environmental Design (bottom).





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Clockwise from left: Meandering paths, large boulders and labyrinths are features that help define these spiritual gardens, designed by Ecoscape Environmental Design, Viriditas and Native Edge Landscapes.

away from our homes, the more our minds can wander, even if it's 20 feet away rather than sitting on the patio right beside the house."

But how do you fashion an outdoor room?

Start by making it a destination in your yard. Perhaps you create a meandering path of stones that leads to the space. At the entrance, consider placing an arch, an arbor, a gate, large boulders or even tall grasses on either side of the entrance to make yourself and visitors feel like they're entering a private space.

Next, define your room. A trellis covered with clematis, trumpet vines or honeysuckle can provide a privacy screen to block unwanted views.

Plants and trees also help define your room, if you layer them. Use different-sized plants, starting with ground-cover plants on the edges, moving to medium-sized shrubs, grasses and flowers, and then to trees, space permitting. Doing this not only defines your space by creating a sense of depth and dimension, it also lets you enjoy light at different times of the day.

"The layering of plants offers a distinct sense of light, because plants diffuse light in different ways," Melvin explains. "In Colorado, we have such intense sunshine. When you have

larger canopy trees, like maples, they can create dense shade, whereas locust trees can create beautiful dappled shade that has a really interesting quality."

Give yourself a place to sit to observe the light, whether it's a bench, a boulder or a log.

Fragrant & Medicinal

Choosing the plants to grow in your spiritual garden is the fun part. Scent can be very powerful, and also therapeutic, Richardson says. She says tricolor sage and lavender are good choices for a spiritual garden, as is the vigorous nutmeg thyme that sprouts mauve-pink flowers in early summer. Thyme is great for planting in between cracks on stone paths. Mint varieties are aromatic, but be aware—they spread quickly.

Richardson also likes agastache (also known as hyssop), a beautiful fragrant perennial that blooms all summer and comes in an array of pinks, blues, oranges and lavender. Agastache's leaves can flavor drinks, and the flowers are great hummingbird and butterfly attractants. Goldfinches love to munch on agastache seeds, she says.

Medicinal plants can also enhance your space with their healing qualities and fragrant blossoms. Echinacea, evening primrose, roses, wild licorice,

yarrow and hyssop all have medicinal qualities. The elderberry shrub's berries 🛱 are strong antioxidants. Be sure to plant it in an accessible space to harvest the berries, Melvin says.

Borrow the Views

Looking at the world around you is important as you plan your spiritual 🖁 garden. The Chinese and Japanese have incorporated the landscapes around $\sum_{i=1}^{\infty}$ them in their gardens for thousands g of years.

According to the 17th-century Chinese garden treatise, Yuan Ye, written 🖉 during the Ming Dynasty, incorporating "borrowed views" is critical in garden design. Also referred to as "borrowing landscapes" and "borrowed gardens." [≥] landscapes" and "borrowed gardens," incorporating borrowed views means you consider your surroundings and $\overline{\Box}$ incorporate aspects of it into your garden.

Markel says he often uses the bor- $\bar{\underline{a}}$ rowed-garden concept. He points to one of his projects, Le Jardin de Mon Coeur, French for "The Garden of My Heart."

Before he started work on the steep, ල් sloped mountain site, he noticed the property had magnificent Flatirons 👳 views but the existing garden separated $\stackrel{\mathrm{O}}{\circ}$ the patio and the home's interior from the incredible views. Large shrubs empha- \tilde{b} sized this visual disconnect. To remedy $\frac{H}{E}$



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this he used the borrowed-garden concept to incorporate the mountain backdrop, which involved building a structural steel and concrete foundation that connected his rock work, walls, water features and the patio.

"The healing aspect of the garden is this connection to nature," Markel says. "That's how gardens serve people."

The borrowing concept doesn't need to involve a lot of construction or money. If large branches block your view, trim them to let your borrowed view become part of your garden. Simply adding a large boulder and some native plantings can help connect your garden to the natural landscape.

Essential H₂O

Water's healing properties make it a popular element in spiritual gardens. "People think watching their water feature is calming, be it a pool, a fountain or a creek, but it's the sound that really creates the healing effect," Melvin says.

Placing a water feature upwind from an open bedroom or office window allows the calming sound and humidity to be carried inside, he says.

Water features also benefit birds, bees, butterflies, moths and other pollinators. Whether you buy a birdbath or work with a landscaper to create a koi pond, water's life-giving properties positively impact the local ecology.



A spiritual garden connects and blends with nature in these landscapes designed by Viriditas (upper and lower left) and Ecoscape Environmental Design (above).

Go Zen

If creating a garden brimming with plants seems daunting, consider a Zen garden. Buddhist monks originally created Zen gardens more than 1,200 years ago as places to meditate. Today, Zen gardens remain peaceful places that are extremely low maintenance. For the most basic Zen garden, all you need are edging materials, sand, rocks and just a few well-placed plants, small trees or statues.

To define your Zen garden, dig about 4 inches of earth out of your garden, using a level to make sure the area is flat. Create a border with edging material or railroad ties anchored securely into the ground. Next, partially bury your rocks, place your plant(s) and pour sand into the space. Use a shovel and rake to spread the sand. Add a statue or two, if you want. Then, rake down about 3 inches in the sand to mimic ripples of water.

Whatever route you take to create a spiritual garden, be sure to enjoy the process as much as the result.

"It's so important to be able to appreciate nature," Melvin says, "because so much of the world around us is loud and fast-moving."

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FLOOR-FINDER GUIDE

Flooring runs from classic favorites, like hardwood, to technologically inspired products. Here's a look at what's underfoot these days.

BY ELI WALLACE

When it comes to giving your home a makeover, there's nothing quite like getting to the bottom of the matter—floors. Though we often overlook the styles underfoot, flooring sets the tone for an entire room and can drastically affect the experience of a space.

But the sheer number of flooring materials, styles and options can be overwhelming. "From a practical standpoint, there are several things to consider," advises Scott Humphrey, CEO of the World Floor Covering Association. He recommends considering how long you plan on living in the home, how often you entertain, and whether you have children and pets.

Also consider how much aesthetics, functionality, durability and price matter to you. The answers will direct you toward the best flooring for your home and lifestyle.



Here's a guide to some of today's options, including classic treatments and new technologies (prices do not include installation costs).

Hip Hardwoods

Always popular, solid-wood floors add warmth to any room. Hardwoods include oak, birch, maple, fir, cherry and pine, to name just a few, and different stains and finishes make hardwood a handsome choice for most rooms.

The best thing about hardwood is likely its look. Neutral wood tones complement practically every furniture style, from antique credenzas to minimalist couches. Plus, hardwood floors last for generations, are easy to clean and add great value to a home. Rustic looks in oak and hickory are especially popular and plentiful, as are distressed hardwoods and textured wire-brushed planks.

However, this classic style has a few downsides. The first is price, as planks can run around \$5-13 per square foot. Hardwood floors also wear in high-traffic areas, and may need waxing and sanding and refinishing over time. They're also loud and not terribly petfiendly; paws will clack and slip on this floor.



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substances like acrylic to make them less susceptible to denting. Since wood is also vulnerable to water, it's not the best choice for mudrooms, laundry rooms, bathrooms or kitchens.

Lovely Laminates

Laminate flooring addresses the weaknesses of hardwood flooring while providing the same classic look. The smaller price tag—50 cents to \$5 per square foot—is only one reason why laminate is wildly popular and likely to stay that way.

"Laminate flooring has benefited enormously through the use of highdefinition printing, allowing the finished product to be nearly impossible to differentiate from the real thing," Humphrey says.

Laminate flooring is made of multiple layers of synthetic-flooring products fused together through a lamination process. Laminates of yesteryear often looked fake, but advanced printing technologies now allow manufacturers to create a variety of laminates that look virtually identical to the products they mimic. Laminate flooring can simulate wood, but also tile, stone or slate.

Most laminates have a click-andlock design, which connects boards like



(below left). For those who prefer real wood, some manufacturers infuse products with acrylic to resist dents, like Armstrong's Performance Plus flooring pictured here.

puzzle pieces and doesn't require glue or nails. An enterprising DIYer could install it, provided he or she is comfortable using a saw. A rule of thumb is to allow one weekend per 300 square feet for installation, especially if you're working solo.

But the money you save installing your own floor "often comes at the expense of headaches down the road," Humphrey says. "If you hire a professional installer, it will be done quicker, likely better, and is often warranted for a period of time up to the life of the product."

Laminates don't dent like wood, and they resist moisture and stains, so they work well in places like kitchens, where hardwoods might buckle or warp.

As strides in laminate technology increase, the cons are becoming fewer. However, laminate doesn't feel quite the same as real-deal wood, and it's a little harder and more slippery than other flooring. Also, laminate won't give your home the resale value that hardwood will. The biggest downside is laminate can't be sanded and refinished. If it does get scratched, it has to be replaced.

Wooed by Engineered Wood

For those who object to laminate because it isn't real wood, another alternative is engineered wood flooring. This flooring type has the appearance of wood and costs roughly

the same—\$3-19 per square foot, depending on layer thickness and quality.

"Engineered flooring is a half-inch of plywood with real wood glued on to it. There's been a huge increase in the number of selections and the number of engineered-wood manufacturers recently," says Jeff Hindman, owner of Cottonwood Custom Builders in Boulder.

Because it's a newer technology, $\overset{\text{\tiny H}}{\to}$ engineered flooring has yet to reach the $\frac{d}{d}$ popularity of laminate and hardwood, $\frac{1}{2}$ but Hindman says it's becoming more 🛱 common in Boulder County, and for ₹ good reason.

"Engineered flooring is much better δ over radiant-heat systems, and it doesn't 💆 have the expansion issue that hardwood 🛱 does. Also, it's pretty 'green,' because 🖉 instead of having a three-quarter-inch \ge piece of solid wood from trees that have [§] to be processed, engineered flooring uses $\frac{90}{10}$ a third of that wood."

Many engineered hardwoods are 🖁 made in the U.S., which reduces their 🖔 carbon footprint, compared to sustain- $\frac{d}{dt}$ able but far-flung materials like bamboo, 💆 he adds.

However, the real-wood top layer can still dent, and wears more easily 🖗 than laminate. And it may warp with $\frac{5}{2}$ moisture. Also, the glue used in engineered wood flooring's construction § can release harmful chemicals into the air, especially during and directly after installation.



Timeless Tile

While printing technology has greatly improved laminate tiles, real tile still holds its own in both price (\$1-21 per square foot) and flexibility, as tiles can be ceramic, porcelain, stone, quarry or marble, offering a wide range of colors, textures and finishes.

"The great thing about tile is there are so many new looks, like the new porcelains that look like real stone. There are endless varieties, and they're reasonably priced. That never used to be the case," Hindman says.

Tile will likely always be a popular choice, especially in water-prone areas like mudrooms, kitchens and bathrooms. Because it lasts for decades when properly treated, tile increases a home's resale value. If you have radiant-floor heating, tile will work wonderfully; if you don't, winter mornings will probably require slippers.

But tile's strengths can be weaknesses in the wrong room. It won't absorb sound, which can make large rooms or spaces with high ceilings feel cold and clinical. Plus, installation isn't easy and requires the use of specialized saws to cut tiles in place, creating dust in the process. And though tile floors withstand foot traffic very well, they can chip or crack under centralized pressure, such as dropping a heavy object on one corner. If tiles do break, there's little to be done beyond ripping them up and replacing.

Vinyl Victories

Probably the cheapest form of flooring, vinyl has come a long way from the ugly yellowing patterns found in



like kitchens, entries and baths.

many a grandmother's kitchen. Per square foot, vinyl runs about 80 cents to \$6, depending on type and quality. These days, self-adhesive vinyl tiles make installation fast and easy, as the tiles stick straight to the subfloor. Like laminate, vinyl has benefited greatly from advances in printing technology, though some would say it has room to improve when viewed up close.

Durable and waterproof, vinyl is often the best choice for cracked or settling subfloors. But the range in quality varies widely. Sheet vinyl is cheaper, but it also feels cheaper, and it's difficult to install. On the other hand, luxury vinyl tile (LVT) is more functional, waterproof, easier to install, better looking and priced about the same as laminate.

In fact, LVT seeks to become a major laminate competitor, and there are now wood, tile, slate and stone styles of LVT widely available at home-improvement stores. The biggest difference between the two materials stems from their construction: LVT is made of plastic, which feels softer underfoot, while laminate is more rigid.

Carpet Comeback?

When talking about flooring, it's impossible to ignore carpet. Yet carpeting's popularity has dropped in recent years, possibly due to concerns about allergies and harmful volatile organic compounds, or the material's short, roughly 10-year life span.

"We rarely see carpet these days," Hindman says. "Thirty percent of the homes we work on have no carpet at all. That's a good trend, I think. Carpet wears out and has to go to the landfill. Hard surfaces are greener, because they last longer and can be reused, so they're much less wasteful." With less-ecofriendly products, he says, "If you tear out tile, it's a trash-can's worth; if you tear out carpet, it's a truckload."

But you won't hear that viewpoint from everyone, and few other flooring options offer the same color and texture variety at a cost of \$2-13 per square foot. $\overline{2}$ Plus, carpet helps absorb sound and z insulates the home. The greener move Ĕ toward carpet tiles may reduce waste, and recent strides in the feel of synthetics, like softer nylons and polyesters, ≶ and greener choices like cotton, wool $\frac{90}{5}$ and recycled pop-bottle carpeting, may ਰੁੱ boost a carpet comeback.

No matter which flooring you choose, Ö first consider the room's purpose. Make a list of needs—must be kid-friendly, 🖉 waterproof, cost-effective, attractive, etc.—to help you narrow your choices. 🗄 Although new technologies have drastically widened the playing field, today's 答 plethora of flooring material just means you have more options to pick the perfect base for every space. 👔



Urban vegetable gardens are springing up everywhere, including front yards around the county.

BY LISA TRUESDALE

Who says a vegetable garden has to be in the backyard?

the Front

For whatever reason, that's the traditional way to do it, though a variety of factors might lead a gardener to choose the front instead.

For Bev Snyder of Louisville, the shade in her backyard made the decision easy. "It's just not sunny enough for a garden," she says, "and I wanted to get rid of the grass in the front anyway." She likes to mix in flowers for aesthetics, and thinks many veggies are just as pretty as flowers, like her squash blossoms. The garden attracts pollinators, too, along with a "resident toad."

"I love when people think outside the traditional standard of having a vegetable garden only in the backyard; personally, I don't see why there should be that separation of land use," says Carol O'Meara, horticulture extension agent with CSU Extension. "Vegetables are lovely plants...with shapes, textures and colors that can be part of a beautiful garden display; think about the spiky texture of leek or garlic leaves, or the beauty of a glossy purple eggplant or red Mirasol chiles. They hold their fruit above the foliage, so you get the groovy effect of red popping above the deep-green leaves."

Doreen Smith says a front-yard veggie garden means there's no "out-of-sight, out-of-mind" mentality. "You pull into the driveway and your garden is staring right at you, begging to be weeded and watered," Smith says. She's planning to install a front-yard garden at her Longmont home next summer. Her kitchen is also at the front of the house, so grabbing dinner fixings will be easier.

Whatever the reasons, edible landscaping in the front yard is catching on in Boulder County. Here are stories of three Boulder-area families who found that the decision of where to grow their veggies was easy.



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All You Need Is a Library Card

When Amy Benson May and her family moved into their new home in 2014, they knew they wanted "a big garden to grow massive amounts of food," even though she and her husband didn't have any experience with gardening.

But they did know the conditions in their backyard weren't right for a vegetable garden. The numerous mature trees made it way too shady for vegetables. Benson May and her husband also wanted to be sure there was as much space as possible back there for their kids, ages 4 and 1, to play without worrying about trampling anything important.

Once they got to work on their sunny "front-yard farm," as they call it, the couple realized something else: The concept of a traditional green lawn seemed strange in a semiarid place like Colorado, so they decided to turn the whole front yard into a vegetable garden instead.

"It makes sense to grow grass in a place with lots of natural water, like England or the northeast," Benson May says, "but we thought a vegetable garden in our front yard would be a much smarter, more sustainable use of that space."

Because they were landscaping novices, they checked out 40 books from the library. The books helped her husband learn to build 20 4-by-4-foot raised beds that he arranged in a grid pattern.



He also rigged up drip irrigation for the beds, which produce copious amounts of food. "You don't really need to know anything to have a front-yard garden," Benson May says. "You just need a library card."

The couple planted a number of vegetables and fruits, including tomatoes, sugar snap peas, eggplant, carrots, onions, blueberries and strawberries.

Although gardens require water just like lawns do, Benson May feels



Nick Stong designed and built his front-yard garden (above and opposite page) to keep the veggies in and the critters out. Amy Benson May's front-yard garden (below left) fills her entire front yard. Her husband learned how to build and irrigate the many raised beds by reading library books.

better knowing the water is being used to grow food. "You can't get more local than outside your own front door."

The front-yard garden is also a great family experience. "Our daughter loves to help us harvest the veggies and spread the compost, and we love how she 'rediscovers' the garden on a daily basis. She helps pull weeds, searches for ladybugs and delights at the volunteer sunflowers that must have sprouted up when a seed was accidentally dropped." She also helps her mother cook meals with garden produce and is learning the concept of sustainability, her mom says.

Being out front all the time has helped them feel more connected to the neighborhood, too. People frequently stop to ask questions, share experiences and talk about their plans to make front-yard gardens.

"Our daughter feels so much pride showing visitors around our garden," Benson May says. "She especially loves picking out a tomato or sugar snap pea for them to sample."



Lawn Gone

For several years, Nick Stong had "one of the greenest yards on the block," and he was pretty proud of it. "But it cost me a hefty watering bill to keep it that way," he says.

One fall, about five years ago, he winterized his sprinkler system as usual, thinking he wouldn't need it again until spring. But Mother Nature had other ideas: "It was one of the driest winters ever, with a lot of strong Chinook winds. The dry, brittle grass completely blew away with the winds."

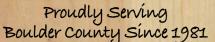
When spring came, he was too discouraged to start all over again with the time, effort and cost of establishing a lawn. "I finally figured, 'Hey, if we're going to spend time and money watering, we might as well eat what we grow.'"

On the garden's perimeter he installed upright trunk slabs to keep out rabbits and enclosed the growing area with wire to keep out deer. The wire also makes it easy to attach shade and hail cloths when needed.

Stong and his wife, Lisa, now want to learn about permaculture, and are considering adding berry bushes and fruit trees.

"Our neighbors often come over and ask what we're doing when we're









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EnergySmart services are available to homes and businesses in all Boulder County communities. EnergySmart is funded by Boulder County, the City of Boulder Climate Action Plan (CAP) tax and the City of Longmont. EnergySmart residential services are administered by CLEAResult.







Clockwise from left: Andrea Dazzi and Dale Johns' garden takes up unused space in their driveway. Even a small area can become a vegetable garden, like this homeowner's strip of zucchini along the sidewalk. Bev Snyder's front-yard garden mixes flowers and food both for aesthetics and to attract pollinators.

out front," Lisa says, "and we're happy to share our story, and our veggies, with them.

"We find that there's a tomato missing now and then, but we don't mind."

Spilling Over

For Andrea Dazzi and Dale Johns, the problem wasn't that they couldn't have a garden in the back; it was the opposite. Their backyard garden was already huge, with nowhere else to expand, so they eventually spilled out into the front yard.

"At first, I wanted the front to be for my perennials, since my backyard was full of veggies," Dazzi explains. So Johns pulled out a big tree stump to make room, and then they planted a variety of flowers, grasses and ground covers.

"But after we amended the soil with our own compost, we were shocked when four different varieties of volunteer squashes started popping up. And they were tastier than the squash we had planted from seed in the backyard." Excited about the idea of expanding their garden into the front, Johns built a series of planters to line the concrete driveway. Dazzi expected a few 1½-by-6-foot planters, but Johns ended up with six planters, each 4-by-4 feet.

"He then planted so much in each." Dazzi says. "Like cauliflower, corn, beans, peas, basil, cucumbers and tons of varieties of peppers. The corn was 10 feet tall and the basil leaves were as big as my hand."

Dazzi and Johns enjoy the experience of growing things, creating beauty and sharing (and eating) their bounty.

"People love the garden and think it's unique and amazing," Dazzi says. "We just like to see folks stop and look, and we enjoy their expressions."

Give It a Go

If you want to plant a front-yard garden, there are a few things to consider. First, check with your city code and HOA covenants, if you have any. Some cities have regulations regarding the height of structures in the front, like trellises and fences, especially if visibility at an intersection is impacted.

Many HOAs dictate what percentage of a front yard needs to be grass, and HOA covenants supersede city code. "Many HOA codes forbid non-approved plantings," O'Meara says. "This has forced a few people to guerrilla garden by quietly mixing veggies into the approved plants out front."

O'Meara also advises careful design. For instance, you don't want your veggies right next to the sidewalk where dogs and road deicers may contaminate them. Keeping the garden closer to the house might reduce pilfering, too, O'Meara says.

"I've heard about the pilfering of frontyard veggies—pumpkins and tomatoes, mostly. But nobody steals zucchini!"

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A trunk injection may be the best way to treat a sick tree, and the kindest treatment for the environment.

BY MARY LYNN BRUNY

It's been a tough year for trees in Boulder County. November's early deep freeze stressed trees, while a wet spring encouraged insects, fungi and bacteria to take hold. Not to mention the ongoing invasion by emerald ash borers.

If you have a cherished tree that's sick, maybe you haven't called a treecare professional because you don't want toxic substances sprayed about your yard or poured into the soil. But trunk injections are a less environmentally invasive method that can cure many tree issues.

Trunk injections are like a pressurized IV for a tree. Instead of a liquid material (like a fungicide, pesticide or fertilizer) sprayed on a tree or poured into the soil,



Jim Rome of Healthy Trees sets up injection plugs at a tree's base, allowing medications to enter the tree's vascular system through a pressurized application. The tree grows over the plugs (pictured at right) and there is no long-term harm to the tree.



a trunk injection puts that substance straight into the tree's vascular system.

The process takes less than an hour, during which small holes are drilled around a tree's base to insert plugs. Tubes are attached to the plugs and the injected material is pushed into the tree via air pressure. The tree's vascular system pulls the liquid up through the process of transpiration.

"Afterward, the plug stays in forever," explains Craig Hayes, owner of Healthy Trees LLC in Boulder. "The tree grows over this wound and it seals off. There's no long-term harm to the tree."

Trees should be at least 4 inches in diameter, and trunk injections work best if trees are well watered beforehand. Hayes points to a recent procedure in which he treated 102 trees, but they failed to respond. "We had the people flood the area around these trees. Then it just went beautifully." Tree injections work best, he adds, when the tree is in leaf and it's not a hot day.

While trunk injections have been around for years, they've become more sophisticated. "I've been an arborist for 20 years in Boulder, and trunk injections weren't as great an option as they are now," says Dustin Brown, co-owner of Blue River Forestry & Tree Care in Boulder and an ISA (International Society of Arboriculture)-certified arborist. "Now you have so many different types of injection systems from different companies, and there are more options for more varieties of pests."

That includes safer options. "There of are products that are environmentally friendly that pose next to no threat to the environment," says Fred Berkelhammer, president of Berkelhammer Tree Experts Inc. in Boulder and an ISAcertified arborist.

Sometimes products can be combined, which is especially effective of for a tree with overall compromised health. For instance, a pesticide can be combined with a fertilizer or other health-boosting product.

"I feel pretty good about trunk injections, because arborists can time them specifically to where they don't affect a tree's flowering stages so bees aren't as affected," says Boulder resident Kim Keech, who decided to use injections for her large elm and ash trees. "Spraying can kill a lot of beneficial insects along with the horrible ones."

Depending on the product, trunk injections last from one to three years, if and weather won't affect their efficacy. They're especially good for scale

Clockwise from top left: European elm scale; emerald ash borer: elm leaf miner: elm leaf beetles.



Let's talk about the birds and the bees (and your trees)

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insects, which are difficult to control. "Scale insects have a shell that protects them," Hayes explains. "You have a two-week period in the whole year to get them when they're in their crawler stage, out from underneath the protective shell. With spraying, it sometimes felt like hit or miss. Injections are far more effective."

Perhaps no issue has brought local tree care to the forefront like the emerald ash borer invasion. This destructive pest has killed thousands of trees, but it doesn't have to be an automatic death sentence, says Josh Morin, co-owner and general manager of Taddiken Tree Company in Boulder and an ISAcertified master arborist. "In research trials the TREE-age trunk injection for emerald ash borer resulted in a 99-percent reduction of the emerald ash borer larvae compared to control trees," he says. "So it's an incredibly effective treatment." If you have an ash tree within 10 to 15 miles of an affected tree and want to save it, he advises treating it preventively with a trunk injection.

Berkelhammer exclusively uses Tree-Azin—a neem-seed-derived product—to treat emerald ash borers, elm leaf beetles, elm leaf miners and European elm scale. "It's completely nontoxic to honeybees and other pollinators," he says.

Tree injections can also address mismatches between trees and soil. "Our soils have high pH, and people love trees with brilliant fall colors, like Autumn Blaze maples," Morin says. "But they really require a lower soil pH for them to absorb nutrients properly. So Clockwise from top left: sunscald; locust borer; iron deficiency; horse chestnut leaf miner; trunk damage.

we do a lot of injections to maples and oaks to provide them with two major micronutrients—iron and manganese." Fall is the best time to administer that injection, he says.

Weigh the Risks

Despite the benefits of trunk injections, they don't work in every situation, especially when trees have physical wounds or sunscald damage to their trunks. "You don't get even uptake to the crown of the tree," Morin explains. "And if stems are choked or they've been damaged in the past, an injection may not be effective."

In some instances, spraying or ground injection *is* the better option. "If you're trying to do a preventive treatment, like a repellent, then spraying is the best choice," Morin says. "It repels the insect before it does any damage to the tree. Whereas with most injections, the insect has to feed on the tissue of the tree."

And sometimes the best decision is to do nothing. "In general, with lesser pests, it's just not worth spraying the tree. The environmental risk is greater than the benefit," Morin says. For example, aphids generally won't kill a tree and can be sprayed off with a hose. Balancing environmental risks versus benefits is a discussion to have with your tree-care professional.

You should also discuss the recommended products, as opinions vary on the best option for specific conditions.

Berkelhammer says homeowners should also understand the long-term consequences of products they're considering. "With any tree that flowers, you don't want to use any lethal product that lasts over a year," he believes, "because it will be there in the flowers next year. It will be in the falling leaves. And it will be in the tiny beads of water that leaves expire, which insects then ingest."

The cost of trunk injections is based on the diameter of the tree and how many injections are needed. "People in Colorado recognize that trees are an asset," Morin says. "They're also aware that this is a very harsh environment



Boulder resident Kim Keech chose trunk injections for her ailing ash trees because they don't harm beneficial insects, like honeybees.

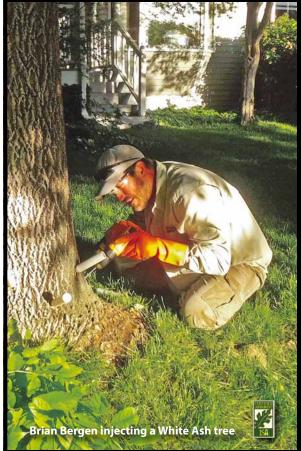
to grow trees in, so pretty much any tree planted here is going to need some type of care throughout its life, whether that's irrigation, fertilization, pruning or a protective treatment."

Keech recognizes that, and factors tree care into the budget. "Our big trees are more important than our house," she says. "They define our lot, they provide privacy, and they cool our hot little house, so they mean everything. Tree care is now just part of our budget."

Signs that your tree could need care include foliage discoloration, significant branches that lose leaves or needles, or leaves that come out much later in spring or drop much earlier in fall than in previous years.

But by the time you see the symptoms, sadly the issue is very far along. For that reason, tree-care professionals recommend an annual walk and review of your property, which most offer at no charge. It allows you to head off problems before they become serious or terminal, and to set priorities. "We're injecting our big important trees, but we have one ash tree we're just going to let go," Keech says. "It's little and misshaped, and when it dies we'll replace it with a different type."

If you do need tree care, hire a certified arborist who is a licensed applicator through the Colorado Department of Agriculture. And ask for references, Morin suggests. "With the outbreak of emerald ash borer, we're seeing people coming out of the woodwork who are suddenly tree experts. We see all kinds of goofy stuff done to trees that causes a lot of damage down the road."



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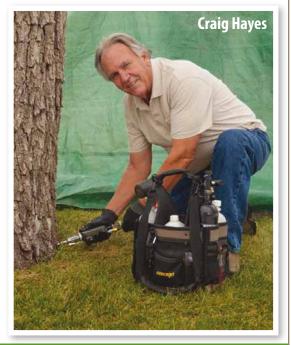
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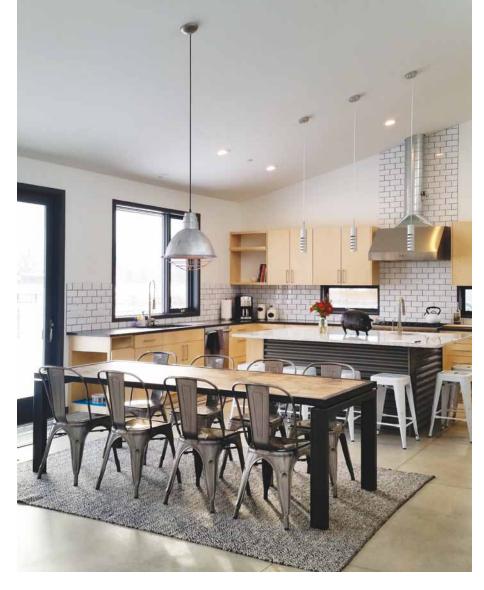
A couple who lost everything in the 2013 flood gained it back through the charity of friends and strangers, and their own resilient spirits.











PHOTOS COURTESY SHANNON ROOD & BEN RICKARD

BY LISA MARSHALL

At 4:50 a.m. on Sept. 12, 2013, a ringing phone jolted Ben Rickard awake: School was canceled for his 17-year-old daughter, due to *rain*. Annoyed, he rolled over to go back to sleep. "I thought, 'I guess they're just canceling school for anything these days," he recalls. But once his wife, Shannon Rood, tried to step outside, reality struck.

Foot-deep water pushed against their front door and brown waves crashed across their flat, typically arid 7-acre property in Niwot. The split-rail fences they'd spent years installing—to keep their pig, goat, 10 chickens and three dogs from roaming—floated by, alongside massive cottonwood branches and uprooted fruit trees they'd planted.

Left Hand Creek had breached its banks amid the heaviest rainfall in

Boulder County's history. Their dream property was directly in its new path, and as the sun came up, the water was rising fast. "I said, 'Shannon, we've got to go NOW,'" Ben recalls. They grabbed one Tupperware box of important documents, dropped off their 150-pound pig, Geraldine, at the fenced higher-ground Niwot Cemetery across the street, and bade a sad farewell to their missing goat, Barry. Then they drove away. "We had just lost everything," Ben says.

Or so it seemed.

Fast-forward two years and thanks to the generosity of a long list of strangers, and heaping amounts of their own sweat equity, the couple and their menagerie of animals are back at home in a sleek and modern new house, with one hell of a story to tell. "They say tragedy brings out the best and the worst in people," Shannon says. "We've seen the best."





(Don't) Ask and You Shall Receive

The couple met at the Humane Society of Boulder Valley in 2001, drawn together by a mutual love of animals and a similar dream of owning a big property where they could have lots of them someday. They got married and started a Boulder business, the Dog Spot Dog Daycare and Boarding, in 2004.

Four years later, they sank their savings into a funky fixer-upper on a sprawling property with sweeping views of the Front Range. By the eve of the flood, they'd installed a new sprinkler system, built a fence and a barn for the animals, and turned the large cinder-block outbuilding into a Top: After the water receded, tons of mud was left. When they deconstructed the ruined house, the couple kept the massive stone chimney as a powerful memento of their ordeal.

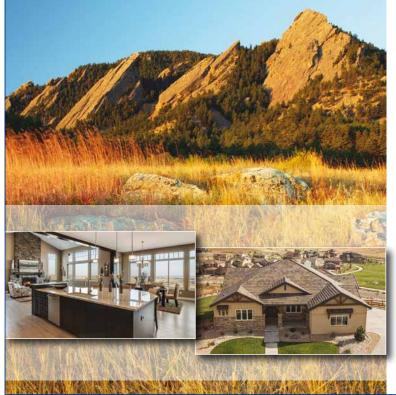
Middle: The airy, open feel of the new home is complemented by clerestory windows, high ceilings and concrete floors.

Bottom: When you have three dogs, a tub to wash them in is a prudent addition to a new home.

hangout where Ben could play guitar with friends and his band. A brand-new Toyota 4Runner sat in the driveway.

Post-flood, the 4Runner was totaled, all their photos and personal belongings were gone, and their home, while still standing, was uninhabitable. For weeks, the two slept on the floor of their business and bathed in the dog-grooming tub.

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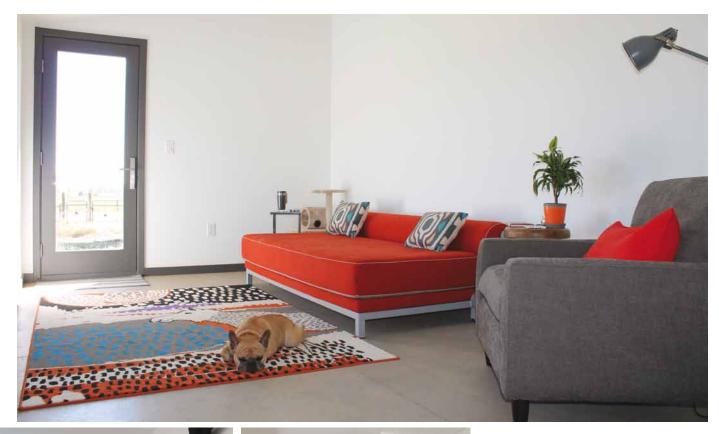
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Clockwise from top: Color offsets the gray concrete floors, and the dogs always find the softest spot for dozing. Red lockers in the front entry hold leashes and other essentials. Sliding wood doors hide the laundry room and dog-washing tub.



At first, they were hopeful they could save their house. With the help of volunteers, including cyclists and motorists who often stopped to help when they passed by and saw the devastation, the couple ripped out the carpet and drywall and shoveled out tons of mud. At one point, they hired a mold-mitigation company. But when a concerned construction-savvy neighbor saw that company's truck outside, he stormed over and threw the workers out, fearing the couple was being taken advantage of. "He told this dude, 'You shut this operation down now and stop charging these people," Ben recalls. In reality, the house was a total loss.

With no flood insurance, meager FEMA assistance, and no way of qualifying for a second high-interest mortgage, they toyed briefly with the idea of letting their property go into foreclosure and filing for bankruptcy. But it didn't feel right. When a client's parents offered them a place to stay for several months, they almost turned it down. "We don't ask people for help. That's just not our thing," Ben says.

But the help came anyway. A neighbor, Left Hand Excavating owner Doug Lyle, showed up with a backhoe to help them tear down the old house. The Small Business Administration gave them a very low-interest loan to help them rebuild. A man from Left Hand Water District knocked on the door and handed them a \$500 check "no questions asked." A friend set up a GoFundMe page for them, and strangers sprang to their aid. "A little girl insisted on giving us money from her piggy bank, and a woman appeared at our door with a pizza and a hundred bucks," Ben says.

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encouragement, you have lifted us up, refusing to allow us to stay down," Ben wrote on their GoFundMe page.

A highly coveted general contractor, Tom Stanko, offered to waive the fee for his time. And then his subcontractors started showing up at the jobsite with free insulation, windows and solid 9-foot doors. "When I first met Ben and Shannon, I was truly overwhelmed," recalls Stanko, cofounder of Harrington Stanko Construction in Longmont. "You have two people who were dealt a disastrous blow and instead of complaining, their attitude was, 'We are going to move ahead as positively as we possibly can.' We tried to help in any way we could, and we took away far more from the experience than we gave."

Framing the Issue

The couple hired David Barrett, of Boulder's Barrett Studio Architects, after getting a recommendation from an acquaintance who had lost her house in a fire and hired him to design the new one. Barrett is known for clean, modern layouts that take advantage of a property's surroundings, and he knew how to work within their tight budget.

"They aren't attached to material things as much as just the space," Barrett says. He suggested they rebuild farther away from the road in a spot that took Top: Harrington Stanko Construction lent the couple a helping hand and provided their services for free. Ben and Shannon (at right) did much of the work themselves.

Bottom: The new kitchen has plenty of space for making merry.

better advantage of their views of the Flatirons and Longs Peak. And he kept it simple, using a 2,000-square-foot L-shaped design, shed roof, and utilitarian materials like corrugated metal and painted HardiePanel siding.

To save on labor, Shannon and Ben built much of the house with their own hands. He would come home after a 13-hour-day at their business to





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pound nails with the lone framer helping them build their walls. She spent her days off operating a backhoe and a crane. "At the time it felt so exhausting," Shannon says. "But now we look back on it and say, 'Look what we did!' It was just awesome."

"We always had a great relationship, but we never had anything that really challenged us," Ben adds. "It's a powerful thing to know that even when you are knocked flat, that person is going to be right there beside you."

Happy Ending for All

Today, life is starting to feel normal again, they say, as they tour a visitor around a modestly sized home that feels bigger than it is. High ceilings with a clerestory and glass walls on the southwest lend a spacious, cheery feel. The concrete floors are easy to keep clean, despite the many muddy paws that tread on them.

Friends often gather in the central great room, where Ben—the chef in the family—can easily visit with Above: After a hard day of play, it's nice to chew on a bone and soak in the stupendous views from the 7-acre property.

Left: Shannon (kneeling) and Ben (left) celebrate their pets and their employees during a holiday get-together at their new home.

them from across the granite island in the roomy new kitchen. Nearby is a dog-washing room, complete with a vintage galvanized steel tub. Cheerful red lockers by the front door keep leashes and other necessities out of view, while the bedrooms are tucked away in quiet corners.

In the pasture just south of the house roam their dogs, cat, chickens, pig and even that presumably lost goat, Barry. (He miraculously turned up in the cemetery 36 hours post-flood, thanks to a neighbor who placed him there after he found Barry breathing through an air hole amid floodwaters filling a stall.) On another corner of the property, where their first house once stood, towers their old stone chimney a powerful memento of all that they've been through.

"The worst of humanity often gets the headlines," Ben says, his voice catching as he looks out on that chimney. "But the bottom line is: People are awesome."

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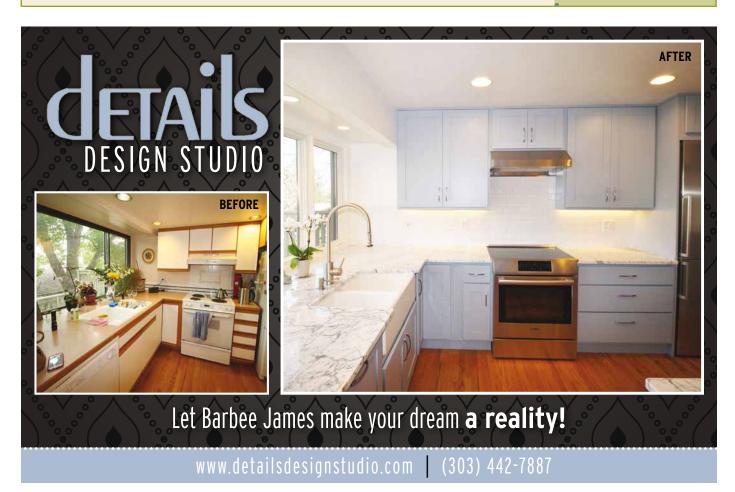
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breathe easy

These houseplants can eliminate

stale air and toxic pollutants inside your home.

BY ELI WALLACE

There's nothing quite like a nice breeze through an open window to freshen up a stuffy room. But unless you're ready for an arctic blast, you'll have to come up with another option for clearing the air during blustery winter months.

Though it's often overlooked, cleaning the indoor air is immensely important; the Environmental Protection Agency ranks indoor pollution in the top five environmental risks to public health. In fact, EPA studies found that, on average, indoor pollutant levels may be two to five times higher than outdoor pollutant levels.

Pollutants can be toxins, allergens or carcinogens, and often come from household chemical products like solvents and cleansers, as well as carpeting, vinyl flooring, wood finishes, mattresses, secondhand smoke, mold, dust, pests and poorly vented furnaces. Formaldehyde is the most common household pollutant, stemming from its wide commercial use in adhesives. Particle-wood products, new carpeting and new wood furniture can bring formaldehyde and other VOCs (volatile organic compounds) into a home.

Fortunately, a variety of widely available houseplants act as filters against these common toxins through a process called phytoremediation. NASA's Clean Air Study, which was performed in 1989 to find new ways to clean the air in space stations, compiled the first list of effective plants.

Although all plants turn carbon dioxide into oxygen, which will help freshen up any room, the plants listed here actually help diffuse chemicals that are harmful to humans. According to their findings, researchers recommend having one plant for every 100 square feet of living space.

(continued on page 59)

Go in Peace

Peace lilies (Spathiphyllum) were found to be one of the best cleaners of all, as the plants effectively reduced all six chemicals studied: benzene, formaldehyde, trichloroethylene, ammonia, xylene and

toluene. Place the plant near a north- or west-facing window, out of direct sunlight.

"Peace lilies are one of the best at cleaning air. They're really easy to grow, as long as you keep them moist," says Corinna Bozella, houseplant specialist at Longmont's The Flower Bin.



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Snake Your Wa

Even easier to grow is the snake plant (Sansevieria), which removes five of the six chemicals studied: benzene, formaldehyde, trichloroethylene, xylene and toluene. Also called motherin-law's tongue, this succulent is extremely hardy. Place it in a sunny window and water sparingly, every few weeks.

Short on sun? Give snake plant a try anyway-it's known to thrive even in less-than-ideal conditions. "The dark-green one works just as well as the variegated one when it comes to cleansing the air," Bozella notes. "They're great because you don't have to baby them."

Fantastic Filters

Ficus (Ficus benjamina) is an elegant, easy-to-grow plant that filters formaldehyde, xylene and toluene from the air. Also known as the weeping fig, this staple of office parks and low-light homes tolerates limited sun and iffy watering, as long as temperatures remain roughly the same. To keep the plant healthy, place your ficus away from the door in as much light as your house allows, and trim off dead leaves.

"All ficus plants are good at cleaning the air, especially the rubber plant," Bozella says, referring to Ficus robusta. "Rubberleaf ficus are especially good, because they put a lot of oxygen back into the air."

The rubber plant thrives in dim rooms and removes formaldehyde at a higher rate than any other plant studied. "They vary in

> size and can get nice and big. If you keep them pruned, they stay nicely shaped." The downside? The leaves are toxic if ingested, and can be especially dangerous to house cats and puppies. If you have pets, be sure to place this plant out of reach.

Wild One

Add heightened interest to your home with red-edged dracaena (Dracaena marginata). Dracaena grows slowly, but can eventually reach up to 15 feet if conditions allow. Put dracaena in a taller room with bright filtered light, and water it when the soil is dry. These succulent shrubs tolerate shade and dry air, and they're equal to snake plant at removing benzene, formaldehyde, trichloroethylene, xylene and toluene.

But they're not for everyone: "They can get a wild growth pattern. They kind of remind me of Dr. Seuss," Bozella says. "If you want something uniform, you don't want



Pots of Power

The cheerful exterior of potted chrysanthemums belies their cleaning power. These flowers remove benzene, formaldehyde, ammonia, trichloroethylene, xylene and toluene, and have the added bonus of making great gifts during the holidays. However, potted mums are a floral variety that's different than the mums widely available for planting outdoors. Potted mums generally won't last as indoor plants beyond a few weeks. Plenty of light and water will increase their longevity.



PHOTOS: SHUTTERSTOCK.COM

The most effective way to reduce indoor air pollution is to get rid of the source, so buy a test kit to check indoor air quality, air out new carpeting and mattresses, buy formaldehyde-free furniture, and make sure you have proper air ventilation and an efficient furnace, and that you change the filters regularly.

Filling a home with the natural cleaning power of plants will accomplish two things: You'll beat the winter blues and breathe a little easier through the winter months and beyond.

Wandering Wonder

Building on NASA's findings, a 2009 University of Georgia study identified several additional ornamentals that remove contaminants. One of the prettier ornamentals is purpleheart plant (*Tradescantia pallida*, also called wandering Jew), which adds splashes of bright purple color.

"Purple-heart plant is good indoors and does great outdoors as an annual," Bozella says. "They propagate really easily; if you stick cuttings in water, they'll root." Purple-heart plant does well in hanging containers or pots, and produces small lavender blooms in spring. Give this plant bright filtered light, and water when dry.

PHOTOS: SHUTTERSTOCK.(

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STONE

This garden was carved out of a hillside and "set" in amazing stonework.

BY LISA TRUESDALE

To a kid, a steeply sloped yard is a dream come true—for rolling down in the summer or sledding down in the snow. But for a gardener, it poses numerous problems and rarely succeeds without some help.

feature garden

George Emmons is the founder and owner of Boulder's popular Into the Wind kite store, and an architect by trade. In 1990, he designed his home in west Boulder that he shares with Scott Shevlin. To make the most of the terrain, the house is cut right into the hillside.

But when it came time to landscape, Emmons recalls being a little frustrated with the wildly steep, 5,532-squarefoot rocky acreage that's crammed against the foothills and shares space with an irrigation ditch.

At first, he planted minimally, sticking with natives that he was sure

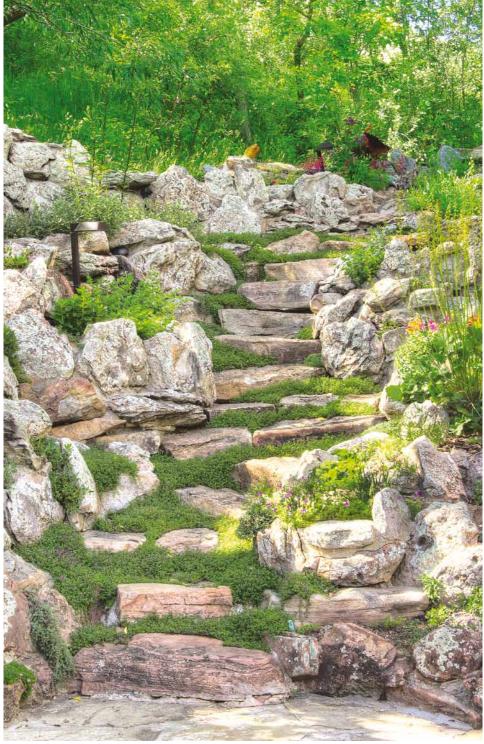
would thrive. And they would have made it, he says, had they not kept washing away down the hillside.

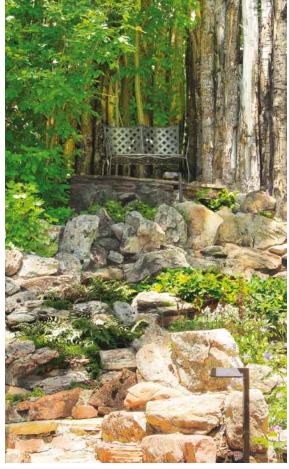
Then, about 10 years ago, Emmons decided to install a hot tub, but it required a sturdy rock base behind the house to put it on. So he enlisted the help of Marco Viera, who owns an "artscaping" company in Boulder called Handy Latin.

Viera made a stone base that was both decorative and functional and

Working with "artscaper" Marco Viera, George Emmons and Scott Shevlin made their steep, rocky lot into a perfect place to garden, relax and entertain. The imposing stone arch the focal point of the front yard—was added after a huge cottonwood fell and crushed its metal predecessor.

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The Cottonwood Incident

But Viera's work wasn't over. Emmons clearly remembers the morning about five years ago when he heard an earthshattering boom outside the front door. A massive cottonwood had plunged off the steep hillside abutting his lot and crashed into the front yard. Miraculously, it missed the power lines and the house, but it "beheaded" the chair he usually sat in on the patio.

The next day, city workers removed the tree, which they estimated weighed a whopping 27,000 pounds. They used a huge chain saw to chop it into big sections and a crane to remove them.

"When they cut it up, thousands of gallons of water came gushing out of the trunk," Emmons says.

Once the cottonwood was gone, the couple discovered there was much more damage to repair than just Emmons' favorite chair. They called in Viera to completely rebuild the patio, which ended up being slightly larger than before. He also redesigned and repaired several terraced sections below it, and then crafted a gorgeous stone archway—now the focal point in

Lush ground covers and hidden terraces soften the rocky terrain and draw the eye upward. then, borrowing techniques learned in his native Ecuador, he completely terraced the yard, creating breathtaking stonework planting beds and meandering pathways that perfectly blend with the rocky terrain. He also created an elevated stone patio on the west side, snugged against the hillside with water from the ditch streaming peacefully by. "We call it our 'balcony,'" Emmons says of the patio, "because we have a great people-watching view of the street down below us."



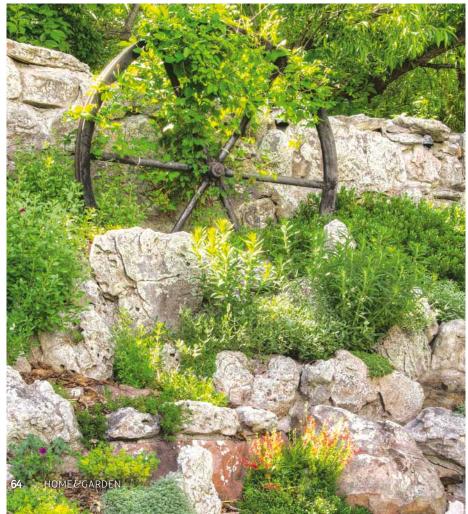
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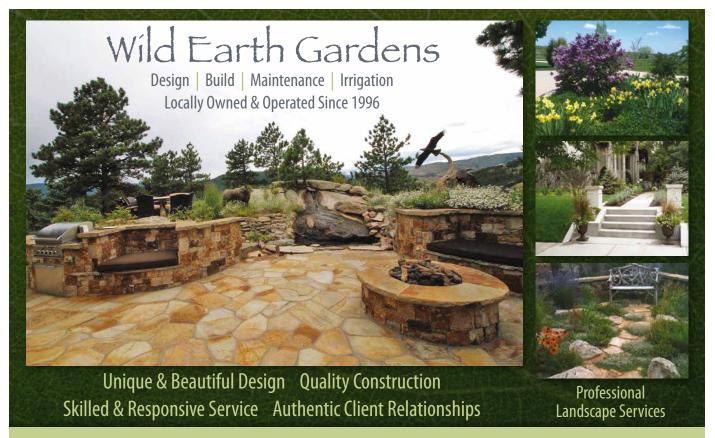
The raised stone patio behind the house is the homeowners' "balcony," affording them a peoplewatching view of the street below as the Farmers Ditch flows by. The water sometimes flows over the stone steps along the ditch, so Scott and George have to splish-splash over them.

the front yard—to replace a metal one that was crushed under the tree's massive weight.

Like before, Emmons says, "I would say what I wanted, and Marco would do it. Sometimes he wouldn't do it quite the way I thought, but I would end up liking it even more."

"It's a great collaboration," Viera agrees. "We both have an open mind and we've learned how to make our separate ideas come together into one."

For several years, Emmons and Shevlin spent every minute of their free time maintaining the expansive garden that wraps in a U-shape all the way around their house. When Shevlin retired a few years ago, he took over the seasonal gardening chores, which opened up the



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The couple used to spend every free minute maintaining the garden that wraps around their house. Nowadays they've scaled back a bit, but George (above, in blue) still does much of the planting, while Scott (in orange) does the weeding and trains the clematis vines. couple's weekends for soaking in the scenery, relaxing by the water, walking the stone paths and hosting parties up on the "balcony."

Shevlin does all of the weeding and also likes to train clematis vines up the wooden trellises. Emmons still does much of the planting, like the stunning impatiens he starts from seed under grow lights every spring.

The garden also features a variety of other plants, like cyclamen, kinnikinnick, hepatica, penstemon and primroses. Japanese painted ferns—"the secret fern that people in Colorado don't know about," Emmons says—peek out here and there, while trunks of different sizes stand upright to create unique fencing and secluded sitting areas along the pathway. "I think of the wet, muddy hillside as our giant evaporative cooler," says Emmons, noting it allows him to grow thirstier plants and keeps the garden lush and green throughout the growing season.

For his part, Viera is proud he helped the couple create a space they enjoy: "My goal in life is to make people happy with what they have."



THINKING OUTSIDE THE BOX

Mailboxes throughout the county give a nod to fun, funky and other styles.



BY CAROL BROCK

When I was a kid, children had pen pals and handwrote letters to relatives and friends. The daily mail was a much-anticipated event, and the surprise of finding a letter addressed to you was a thrill.

With the advent of email, texting, Facebook and Instagram, the poor old mailbox doesn't get much love these days. But did you know a whole week and a whole month of each year are dedicated to celebrating mailboxes and their contents?

Yep, the month of April is the designated "National Card and Letter Writing Month." The U.S. Postal Service launched the campaign in 2015 to promote the slogan, "It's a Delight to Write!"

"National Mailbox Improvement Week" follows close on its heels, with the days of May 21-27 dedicated to sprucing up your box. "Neat, attractive mailboxes make a significant contribution to the appearance of the countryside and streets

U.S. MAL



in suburban areas," the USPS says on its website.

We agree, so we went prowling for unique mailboxes and found that homeowners in Boulder County have mailboxes that run from contemporary, fun and funky to whimsical, artistic and wacky. Here are a few of the boxes we found (thanks to all the homeowners for letting us share them with you).

< BOX OF STONE

This stoic box appeals in a solid, masculine way, with hard, stacked stone shrouding a tall black box set into the earth and encircled by stones. It says, "Deliver the mail—and don't mess with me."

COCK-A-DOODLE-DOO **>**

The farm features of this quaint box include a shingled roof with a cock on top, rosebushes below and a basket of blooms out back. Makes you want to pour a cup of tea, put rashers in the pan, and fry a couple of sunny side ups. Oh, and clip roses for the vase while you're at it.





LEAPING LIZARDS 🗛

Lizards get about as much love as mailboxes these days, but this homeowner decided to celebrate slithering creatures (although I'd be wary of smooth-talking geckos). Hand-hewed lizards in all makes and materials completely cover this box on all sides—hope the mail carrier's a fan!



GONE FISHIN' 💙

"Little Man" has a full wardrobe of outfits and decorations for every season and holiday. He decided to go fishing last summer, say his owners, who took Little Man with them when they moved from Longmont to Louisville. A neighbor who was a metal worker made Little Man for them more than 15 years ago.



< SLEEK-SIDED

This thoroughly modern mailbox is handsome and sophisticated. Made of sandstone and stainless steel, the box's natural materials command attention, saying "Look at me" in a big way. Très chic!



DOE A DEER

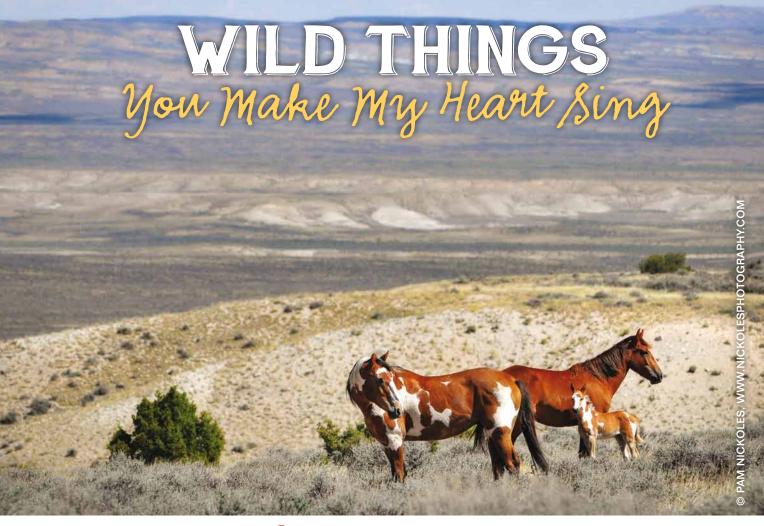
This back-to-nature box has serene beauty, with fawncolored stonework and a doe statue peacefully grazing atop. Encircled by a wooded lot, this box blends into its surroundings much like a deer in the landscape.

You might think this homeowner is a railroad enthusiast, but no. "I work at a desk all day, so I need something creative to do," she says. She swaps out train decorations with the seasons, adorning the box with hay and pumpkins in fall, flowers in spring and summer, and Christmas decorations over the holidays to create a choo-choo with class.



This fish has been through at least three homeowners, says the current resident, and it's been featured on scavenger hunts as well as hit by cars a few times—"it still has a small piece of someone's reflector embedded in it," he says. The homeowner's wife is Hawaiian, so if the bass ever gives up the ghost, "she says we should replace it with a humuhumunukunukuapua'a [Hawaii's state fish]. Luckily, I don't think they make one of those."





Our county and state offer amazing wildlife watching. Visit these places at the appropriate times and you're sure to see spectacular things.

BY RUTHANNE JOHNSON

Watching wildlife is exhilarating—so much so that people pay big bucks to see nature's amazing spectacles, like thousands of wildebeests thundering across the Serengeti or grizzlies catching salmon in Alaska.

Boulder County is blessed with free wildlife viewing, from hummingbirds and foxes to eagles and mule deer. But the rest of the state also offers extraordinary wildlife watching, including the nine spots listed here. Take binoculars and a camera to document it, so friends will believe your wild tales. What: WILD MUSTANGS

Where: Sand Wash Basin, Craig When: Spring through fall *Tip:* The best times to see mustangs are early morning and dusk, when they gather at watering holes.

At first glance, the basin looks harsh and uninviting. But a drive through the nearly 158,000 acres of Bureau of Land Management land in northwest Colorado reveals abundant foxes, coyotes, jackrabbits and hawks. However, it's the 500 or so wild mustangs that make this place shine.

Remnants from Spanish settlement and pioneer days, the mustangs roam in bands. Larger bands usually consist of a stallion, his mares and their foals. Smaller bands are often bachelor groups of young stallions not yet mature enough for their own harem, or older males who lost their bands to other stallions.

The mustangs are robust and colorful, like one brown-and-white paint Picasso (left) has roamed Sand Wash Basin for nearly 30 years. The paint stallion is pictured with his mare, Robin, and colt, Van Gogh. The mustangs have a following on their Sand Wash Basin Facebook page.

named Picasso who still roams the basin at nearly 30 years old. The mustangs are accustomed to people, so it's easy to get close, says Wendy Reynolds, field manager of the BLM office in Craig. But these horses are wild, so keep at least 100 yards distance for safety.

Off-road driving is not permitted, but visitors can primitive camp anywhere in the basin, except near watering holes. "Eons ago, the land here was under water," Reynolds says, so observant hikers can see unusual treasures like tiger chert and even turtle fossils. You can also visit nearby Brown's Park and Dinosaur National Monument. For information and a map that includes a horse-viewing loop, stop by the BLM office in Craig.



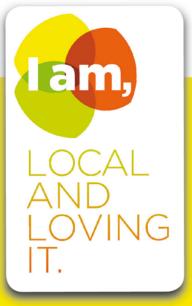
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What: **MOUNTAIN GOATS** Where: Blue Lakes, White River National Forest When: Spring through fall

Tipe: The trailhead to Quandary Peak is near Blue Lakes. Weekday visits are advised if you want to miss the weekend 14er crowd.

Blue Lakes just south of Breckenridge practically guarantees an up-close experience with mountain goats. Located at the top of Blue Lakes Road off Colorado Highway 9, the lake is basically a reservoir that collects snowmelt from the surrounding 14ers, Quandary Peak and Mount Lincoln. About 50 mountain goats live there year-round, and it's not unusual to see goats on the road and in the upper parking lot below the dam.

Their shaggy white coats are sleek and full until the end of June. In fall, their coats thicken up again for winter. But even at their scraggliest, the white goats stand out against the granite backdrop and deep blues and greens of the mountains.

In spring, nannies and their kids stake out the reservoir, licking minerals from the parking lot and roads, and sometimes from beneath cars. There are usually a few juveniles in the mix, along with one or two older bucks. Don't let their calm demeanor fool you; give them room or you might have a run-in with a set of very sharp horns.



Where: Orient Mine, San Luis Valley Where: Mid-June through early September Type: Lodging and camping are available at the adjacent Valley View Hot Springs, a clothing-optional hot springs, but book well in advance. Lodging is also available in nearby Crestone.

Every summer around mid-June, hundreds of thousands of bats start arriving at the Orient Mine. Their journey starts in wintering grounds in Mexico or as far away as South America. Once they've all arrived, their population tops a whopping 250,000.

The colony of mostly male Mexican free-tailed bats comes to feast on the bounty of insects in the San Luis Valley, a predominantly agricultural community. They roost in the mine by day and forage at night.

Orient Land Trust, a nonprofit conservation group, owns the mine and 2,200-acre surrounding property. It offers free dusk tours throughout summer to watch the bats emerge. The tour includes a 1.7 mile (one-way) guided hike and about an hour to watch the bats fly out. "The bats typically start with this serpentine column that rises from the mine and snakes onto the horizon," says bat specialist Kirk Navo. Quite often, great horned owls and other predators gather nearby to try and snatch a mid-flight meal.

What: ELK

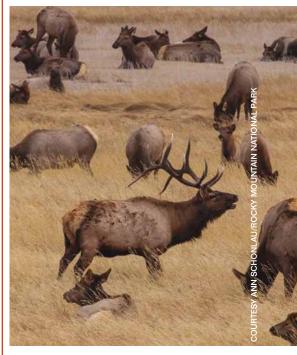
Where: Rocky Mountain National Park When: Early September to mid-October *Tip:* Turn off your car after you've found a viewing spot so you don't disturb other viewers.

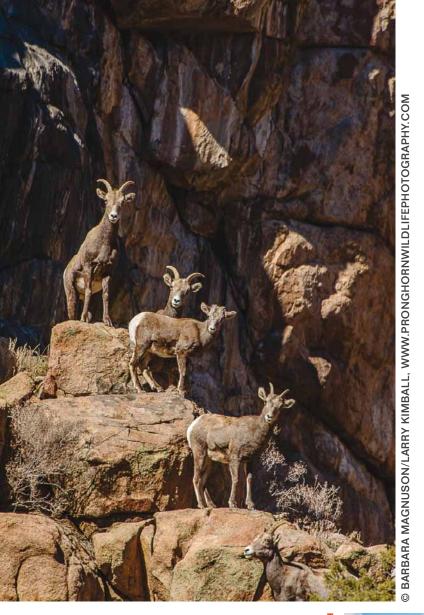
A massive bull elk stands amid tall meadow grasses as the setting sun lights up his 12-point rack like candles. He suddenly stretches his neck and lets out a long, high-pitched bugle. Another bugle

answers from the distance. Then another. This scene is common during the fall elk rut. "It's really majestic," says Kyle Patterson, spokesperson for Rocky Mountain National Park. "The bugling attracts cows and intimidates other bulls." The elk's call rises over three octaves, she says, and "if you're there at dawn or dusk, you can see their breath in the air as they bugle."

Some 600 elk winter in the park, and it's not uncommon to see 50 or more in larger, open meadows like Horseshoe Park, Upper Beaver Meadows and Moraine Meadows on the east side, and Harbison Meadow and throughout Kawuneeche Valley on the west side.

The town of Estes Park holds an annual elk festival in early October, with free elk lectures, bugling contests, and arts and crafts booths. RMNP offers nightly elk presentations, with maps available online or at the visitor centers.





What: SANDHILL CRANES

Where: Monte Vista National Wildlife Refuge, San Luis Valley

When: Mid-March and mid-September through October fip: For the most dramatic viewing, park on a shoulder pullout right outside the refuge just before dawn.

It's a twice-a-year phenomenon, when 20,000 or more greater sandhill cranes descend on wetlands in Monte Vista National Wildlife Refuge to rest and refuel during spring and fall migrations.

After overwintering in New Mexico's Bosque del Apache National Wildlife Refuge, the cranes head to San Luis Valley, where they mass in the 5,000-acre wetland refuge. "It's pretty incredible," says refuge biologist Scott Miller. "We can have anywhere from 24,000 to 26,000 cranes almost completely concentrated on the refuge." Their rattling calls can be deafening, he notes, "and when they lift off from the water at first light, you can hear their wings and a rushing of wind."

Spring is when you'll see their courting dances. "They jump up and down, flapping their wings and moving their necks," Miller says. "They're these big, lanky birds but incredibly graceful." Adjacent barley fields—owned by the refuge to feed the cranes—on the refuge's southern edge off County Road 8 South are a good place to spot courting birds.

In fall, the cranes return from their summer nesting grounds in the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem. They aren't as concentrated, because water and food sources are more scattered, Miller says. But you can still see some 5,000 to 6,000 cranes at the refuge. The San Luis Valley Crane Festival is usually in mid-March.

What: **BIGHORN SHEEP**

Where: Bighorn Sheep Canyon, Cotapaxi When: Mid-October through December *Tipe*: Because of their color, bighorn sheep blend right into the steep, rocky terrain, so look closely.

Bighorn sheep routinely scale the canyons on the Arkansas River from Parkdale to Coaldale along U.S. Route 50. About 300 or so bighorns live in the canyon year-round. In summer, you can go river rafting through the canyon, but seeing sheep is hit or miss, as they're typically higher up the canyons and more difficult to spot.

Fall is when you'll really get a show, says wildlife photographer Larry Kimball (www. pronghornwildlifephotography.com), who took the photo above. That's when males congregate in open areas and cliff ledges to compete for ewes. "I've seen them butt heads and knock one another off fairly steep terrain," he says. Fortunately, these sure-footed animals can spin in midair and regain their footing.





What: OSPREY, BALD EAGLES and **GREAT HORNED OWLS**

Where: Sawhill Ponds, Boulder County When: Year-round *Tipe:* Take a nature hike with the park naturalist in each season to see migrating wildlife and pond inhabitants.



Winter full-moon hikes are spectacular, Sutherland says, when the owls are hooting, PHOTOS: WENDY MARIE



What: MOOSE

Where: State Forest State Park, Jackson County When: Winter and spring

Tup: Moose may seem approachable, but these large beasts can run fast and charge suddenly, especially mothers with calves. Always leash your dog. ~~

West of Fort Collins, this park was ground zero for Colorado's moose reintroduction in 1978. Since then the population has swelled to about 600.

The tall, lanky animals typically hang out in the park's willow bottoms and associated uplands, especially around Cameron Pass and throughout the southern third of the park. "They aren't heat tolerant and are best seen in the early morning and at dusk," says Colorado Parks and Wildlife district wildlife manager Josh Dilley.

Peak calving season is late March to early June. That's when you'll likely get to see their still velvetcovered antlers. Last August, the park's visitor's center held its first annual moose festival.





What: BISON, BURROWING OWLS and **BALD EAGLES**

Where: Rocky Mountain Arsenal National Wildlife Refuge, Commerce City

When: Year-round

Tip: You can drive the wildlife-viewing loop, but the trails are where you'll really get away from crowds.

This 15,000-acre refuge in the Denver metro area is home to about 330 wildlife species, from eagles and bison to prairie dogs, burrowing owls and meadowlarks. This year, the refuge reintroduced 30 endangered black-footed ferrets and opened a ferret exhibit.

"In winter, it's amazing to see the bison with snow on them," says Cindy Sauter of the refuge's visitor programs. Spring is when birds migrate through and you'll see prairie dog pups and bison calves.

"The calves are a spectacular cinnamon color," Sauter says. "There are so many places here where you feel like you're in the country, even though you're a stone's throw from the city." 👔



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As winter closes in, there's nothing nicer than a warm fire in a cozy cabin with a good dog and a good book.

PHOTOS © CHERYL KORALIK

BY DALE MULFINGER

Leaving the city and arriving at the beautiful stillness of nature—water, rocks, trees and sky—is the reason many people love having a cabin.

Life is simple at a cabin—the mudroom is entry enough for all and burning wood is done for more than just the charm of it.

I searched across North America for new and old projects that demonstrate the breadth of ideas unique to cabins. Some of these themes are tried and true, and natural extensions of the traditions of cabin building. Others are fresh, new and test the boundaries of what it means "to cabin."

SING ALONG

Mary and Jim Krook bought this Wisconsin property (below) from the Scalise family, who had enjoyed the home for nearly 50 years. Rather than raze it and start anew, the Krooks decided to renovate and preserve the building after receiving a letter from a builder of the original cabin. The renovation retained the old entry.

With the cabin now used in all seasons, space was created at the entry (right) for coat and boot storage, as well as a convenient built-in seat for taking shoes off.





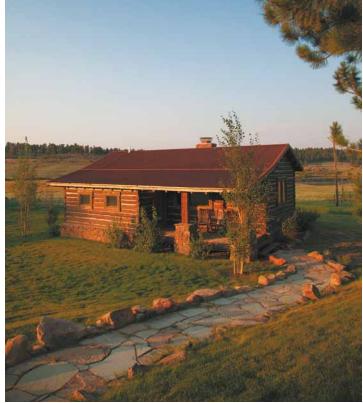


OLD GLORY

Rancher and logger John Hardin built this cabin (left) near Red Feather Lakes, Colo., in 1874. Alex and Ana Bogusky purchased it in 2007 and set about refurbishing the more than century-old living space, one of the oldest log cabins in northern Colorado.

The Bogusky cabin (below left) is surrounded by 800,000 acres of Roosevelt National Forest. The porch is positioned to catch the sun setting over the Rocky Mountains.

New cabinets (below) were made to look timeless, and add a sparkle of color to the living space.





SUBTRACT AND ADD

Cabin owner Marlene decided to renovate and make additions to this Minnesota cabin (right). The new porch makes an evening in the fresh lake air most enjoyable with the bugs screened out.







PARKS AND REC REDO

Dick and Diane Beattie wanted their Montana "Soddy" (far left) to sit along the bank of a trout pond and look much like the old stone pump house Diana had seen in *Park and Recreation Structures*, a 1938 book by Albert Good. The stone path and dock anchor the structure to the setting and the water.

The cabin is but a single small room (above) where fishermen can take a break from the cold stream or a wet day, to relax and tell a tall fish tale. Twig furniture was selected to stay in tune with the timeless nature of the stone structure.

A warm fireplace (left) takes the chill off the stone walls of The Soddy as well the bones of a fisherman. The stone is from a defunct gold mine nearby.





INSTANT CABIN

Scott and Lisa McGlasson wanted "just a wee little house" when they bought lakefront property in Minnesota. Their "weeHouse" (above left) arrived at the site as two boxes, one the single-story portion of the cabin, the other the second-story portion.

Scott McGlasson designs and builds furniture, including the wheelbarrow table (above right). The living room is made to feel larger by the double opening onto the lake-facing deck. \bigcirc

BACK TO THE CABIN



Minnesota architect and renowned "cabinologist" Dale Mulfinger has designed cabins all over North America and is the author of four books. This article is excerpted from his book *Back to the Cabin*, published by The Taunton Press in 2013.



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