



HOMES & GARDEN 2017

Spring plant tips from Kahnke Brothers Farm

When the weather starts warming up after a long Minnesota winter, everyone is anxious to get outside and start cleaning up their yards and gardens.

Connie Kratzke, Nursery Coordinator at Kahnke Brothers Tree Farm in Plato gave us some helpful gardening and landscape tips.

- Everyone is anxious to play in the dirt, but it is important to remember that this is Minnesota and we often still have snow this time of year. We generally recommend planting after Mother's Day. Our last hard frost was actually a week after that last year. Woody plants that were over-winter outside can generally be planted quite a bit earlier. Perennials can be a bit more tender. Hostas are probably the most vulnerable to late frost damage.

- Spring is an excellent time to plant, because plants have a chance to root in before things heat up and dry out in summer. That said, it is important not to work the soil when it is too soggy or dry. The best time to plant is when the soil is moist enough to squeeze into a ball with your hand, but loose enough to be fragile. This helps prevent the soil from compacting and cracking, which can make watering more difficult later in the season.

- Spring is also a great time to divide most perennials. There are a couple of exceptions. Plants that bloom really early should be allowed to flower before you divide them. Irises can be divided right after flowering or in the fall. Peonies do best when they are divided and transplanted in autumn.



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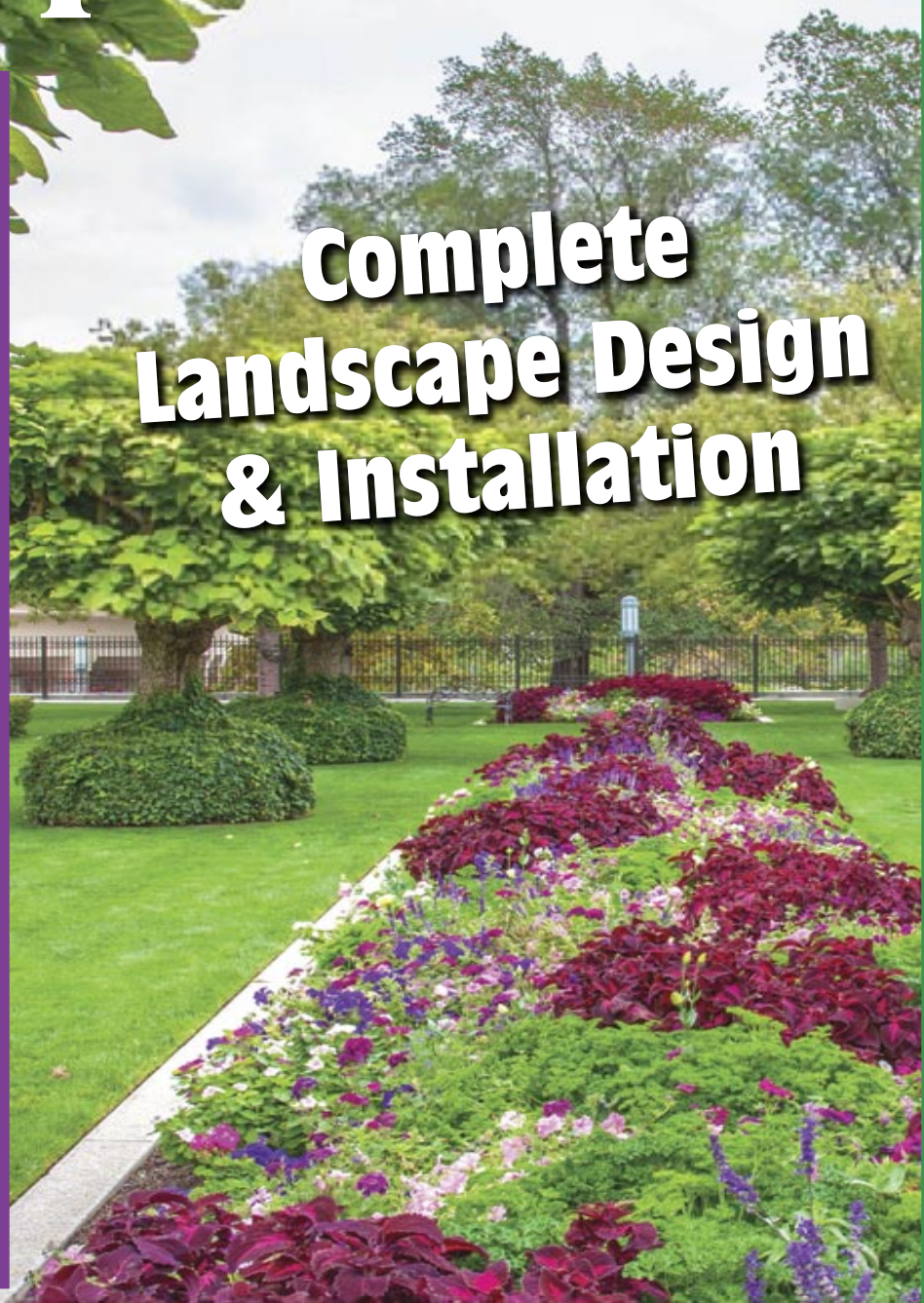
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• The best time to fertilize plants is after their leaves fully unfurl in spring and active growth begins. We recommend using a slow release product such as Osmocote, because it is easy to apply and you only have to do it once a year. These products are also very unlikely to "burn" or damage plants. It is important not to assume that plants need fertilizer though. Most of our local soils are very rich. Heavy clay soils actually hold nutrients very well, but sometimes they have a high pH that can make it difficult for plants to absorb those nutrients. Let your plants tell you what they need. If their color and growth rate are poor, they might need a little boost. Just keep in mind that newly transplanted specimens have to root into their new locations before they will be able to absorb the nutrients they find there

• My last tip is about water. Wet springs tend to stick in our brains like the mud that they make. Last year, I talked with a lot of people who were underwatering their plants in the summer because we had such a damp spring. Don't make that mistake. Plants are like pets and people. They need water consistently. If we have a dry spring, supplemental watering might be necessary. All plants can benefit from a drink during hot, dry weather. Trees, shrubs and most perennials are most likely to survive the winter when the soil is evenly moist when it freezes. Newly transplanted plants should get a good drink at least once a week for a whole season. It takes 1 inch of rain to saturate the top 6 inches of soil, so think about the depth of the root system when you water.

Kratzke didn't start out in horticultural. Not knowing what she wanted to do with her life, Kratzke received a degree in radio broadcasting, with additional studies in sales and marketing, wanting to get a degree in something.

After graduation, she worked in that field for a while and waitressed.

Growing up north of Detroit Lakes, she says she spent a lot of times outdoors and knew that is where she wanted to be.

She went through the Carver/Scott County Master Gardener program to start to build a horticultural resume.

Wanting to stay geographically close to her then boyfriend, now husband, she applied at Kahnke's former retail garden center in Victoria in 2002 and the rest is history, she says.

She later became a certified Garden Center Professional by the Minnesota Nursery and Landscape Association and still serves on the advisory board.

About the time Kahnke Brothers moved the farm to Plato, she and her husband, Barry, bought a house in Silver Lake where they still live with their two cats Houdini Mae and Fella Guy.

In her spare time she enjoys cooking, gardening, hiking, biking and canoeing.

She is always growing new ingredients to try in the kitchen and in her husbands brewing recipes.

About Kahnke Brothers Tree Farm
(www.kahnkefarm.com)

Kahnke Brothers Tree Farm was opened in 1993, to serve as a growing range for producing ball and burlap trees. These trees were originally installed on commercial job sites by Kahnke Brothers, Inc. They were also sold at their former retail location, Nature's Bounty Garden Center in Victoria. As time went on and the commercial division grew, it made sense to begin producing their own shrubs and perennials.

Before long, the farm had thousands of plants in production and it became necessary to consolidate and simplify the business. The retail store in Victoria was closed and the Saturday sales at the farm were started. Farm sales have gone so



Connie Kratzke

well, that trees and native wildflowers to have been added. In fact, the farm produces a large selection of shade and ornamental trees in nursery containers so that they are easier for customers to handle.

Spruce trees are a specialty and a significant quantity discounts on select varieties for windbreaks and privacy screens is offered.

ferred.

The farm is located between Glencoe and Plato and is open on Saturdays and by appointment.

Their annual spring tree auction will be held on Saturday, May 20.



Pictures courtesy of Kahnke Brothers Tree Farm

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3 tips to prepare to sell your home

Metro Creative Connection

According to Realtor.com, spring is the busiest and best season to sell a home. While a good home can find a buyer any time of year, homeowners might find the buyers' pool is strongest in spring and into summer. The reasons for that are many, ranging from parents wanting to move when their children are not in school to buyers wanting to move when the weather is most accommodating.

Because spring is such a popular time to sell a home, homeowners who want to put their homes on the market should use winter as an opportunity to prepare their homes for the prying eyes of prospective buyers. The following tips can help homeowners during the pre-selling preparation process.

1. Address the exterior of the home.

Winter can be harsh on a home's exterior, so as winter winds down, homeowners who want to sell their homes should make an effort to address anything that might negatively affect their homes' curb appeal. A study of homes in Greenville, S.C., from researchers at Clemson University found that the value of homes with landscapes that were upgraded from "good" to "excellent" increased by 6 to 7 percent. If it's in the budget, hire professional landscapers to fix any problematic landscaping or address any issues that arose during the winter. Homeowners with green thumbs can tackle such projects on their own, but hiring professionals is akin to staging inside the home.

2. Conquer interior clutter.

Clutter has a way of accumulating over the winter, when people tend to spend more time indoors than they do throughout the rest of the year. Homeowners who want to put their homes on the market in spring won't have the luxury of waiting until spring to do their "spring" cleaning, so start clearing any clutter out in winter, even resolving to make an effort to prevent its accumulation throughout win-



Eliminating bad odors, including those associated with pets, can help homeowners prepare their homes for prospective buyers.

ter. Just like buyers are impressed by curb appeal, they are turned off by clutter. The Appraisal Institute suggests homeowners clear clutter out of their homes before appraisers visit, and the same approach can be applied to open houses. Buyers, like appraisers, see cluttered homes as less valuable. In addition, a home full of clutter might give buyers the impression, true or not, that the home was not well maintained.

3. Eliminate odors.

A home's inhabitants grow accustomed to odors that might be circulating throughout the house. Pet odor, for instance, might not be as strong to a home's residents as it is to guests and prospective buyers. Because windows tend to stay closed throughout the winter, interior odors

can be even stronger come late-winter than they are during the rest of the year. A thorough cleaning of the house, including vacuuming and removal of any pet hair that accumulated over the winter, can help to remove odor. In the weeks leading up to the open house, bathe pets more frequently, using a shampoo that promotes healthy skin so pet dander is not as prevalent. Open windows when the weather allows so more fresh air comes into the home.

Spring is a popular and potentially lucrative time to sell a home, and homeowners who spend winter preparing their homes for the market may reap even greater rewards.

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How building permits protect homeowners



Obtain the proper permits before beginning construction.

Metro Creative Connection

You are thinking of making a major renovation to your home. Perhaps it's time to create that master bedroom suite you long have admired or install that wrap-around porch? What is the first thing that should be done before getting down to business?

The correct way to begin a home remodeling project is to obtain the necessary permits for the job. Many municipalities request individuals obtain permits for a range of work on homes or other structures, such as office buildings. Permits are generally required for all new construction as well as specific modifications that will affect structural, plumbing, mechanical, and electrical systems. It's important to check with the local building office prior to beginning work to see which permits you will need before the project can begin. Permits are necessary whether a homeowner is doing the work or hiring an outside contractor.

Due to the cost and time involved with securing permits, some homeowners skip this step so they can begin a project promptly. However, this can end up being a costly mistake. Permits might seem like a nuisance, but they actually protect homeowners in various ways.

Permits ensure safe workmanship

Permits provide a blueprint by which contractors and do-it-yourselfers must complete renovations. Because inspections will take place, there is no wiggle room. Shortcuts often translate into subpar work that may lead to malfunction and injury in the long run. Safeguarding against poor workmanship means homeowners can feel confident in the work being done.

Permits reduce the likelihood of costly mistakes

As inspectors go through their checklists, they may notice things that were done incorrectly and will offer advice about how to mend the problem before it becomes a larger headache. If left unchecked, an electrical error could lead to a fire or another dangerous situation. Repairs that

are not structurally sound may pose problems or deteriorate more quickly than structures that are constructed correctly. Furthermore, catching improper technique early on eliminates having to tear down and redo work, which can be a costly and time-consuming endeavor.

Permits protect against fines

Sometimes work goes as planned even for homeowners who did not obtain the necessary permits. However, years later, when other work needs to be done, inspectors may discover homeowners never secured proper permits and inspections years earlier, leading to fines.

Furthermore, if work is done without a permit and an accident occurs, any damages or injuries may not be covered by a homeowner's insurance policy.

Permits are an important part of the home improvement process.

Homeowners should not skirt the responsibility because the permit and inspection process is in place to provide protection to occupants.

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Whether your plan is construction, remodeling or a just a simple change in decor, **Tools of the Trade** lets you know who to call for that special project.

Tools of the Trade
 A weekly section of the
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The dos and don'ts of backyard fire pits

Metro Creative Connection

Once a rarity, fire pits have grown increasingly popular in recent years, as more and more homeowners turn their homes into private oases. Fire pits run the gamut from the very simple to the more elaborate, and the fire pits homeowners choose often depend on the space they have available as well as their budgets.

But even homeowners without any space or budget constraints should give careful consideration to which fire pit they ultimately install, especially if they plan to make that installation themselves. The following are some dos and don'ts of fire pits for those homeowners about to add this relaxing and popular accessory to their backyards.

DO confirm you can legally build a fire pit in your yard. Fire pits have become so commonplace that homeowners may think there are no regulations governing their construction. However, it's still best to confirm with your local government planning or zoning offices if you can build a fire pit and if any restrictions apply.

DON'T proceed with the project until you have been granted official approval. Assuming you have the go-ahead to build a fire pit is not the same thing as knowing you have been approved. Starting early could result in fines if it turns out you aren't allowed to have a fire pit. But you may also begin building a bigger fire pit than the local government allows, and that could be money down the drain later. Wait until you get official word before you proceed with the project.

DO build on flat ground. The fire pit should be built on flat ground to reduce risk of accident and/or injury. A fire pit built on flat ground also means everyone can enjoy it comfortably and equally once the project is finished. If the ground around the pit is not flat, some people may be forced to sit crooked or lean forward just to enjoy the pit.



DON'T build near flammable structures. Build the fire pit far enough away from existing structures, such as your home, garage or shed, so flickering flames do not catch some wind and lead to disaster. Before building in a given spot, monitor the wind patterns for a few days by sitting in a lawn chair at the spot you ultimately want the fire pit to be. If you notice the wind is blowing toward your house, you will want to choose another area for the pit so smoke from the fire will not be blowing into your home every night.

DO choose the right size. The size of your fire pit will depend on the space you have available, but even if you have a vast swath of space, keep in mind that professional contractors typically recommend building a fire pit no bigger than 44 inches wide. Anything larger can be un-

sightly and may not appeal to prospective buyers down the road. In addition, an especially large fire pit may result in potentially unruly flames that can present a fire hazard.

DON'T go it alone if your DIY skills are suspect. Installing a fire pit is a relatively inexpensive DIY job, but that does not mean anyone can do it. Ground needs to be excavated and the slope of the yard must be measured so the fire pit is safe and functional for years to come. If your DIY skills are not up to snuff, hire a professional contractor so your backyard oasis does not become a costly headache.

A fire pit can turn a boring backyard into a relaxing retreat. But homeowners must adhere to the dos and don'ts of fire pits to ensure their retreat is something they can enjoy for years to come.

You MUST obtain a burning permit before you burn.

TO OBTAIN A PERMIT TO BURN

- Speak to your township board representative. This individual has the ability to issue you a permit.
- If you live within the city limits of a municipality, contact your city hall for burning restrictions.

BEFORE BURNING

- Contact the McLeod County Sheriff's Office prior to burning at 1-888-440-3134 or (320) 864-3134.
- When you call, the Sheriff's Office will advise you if there is a McLeod County burning ban in effect. The local media (TV, newspapers, and radio) will also be notified of all County burning bans.
- The Sheriff's Office will ask for your name, your phone number, the address of the burning location and the time you plan to start burning.
- You must monitor the fire at all times and keep it under control.
- If the fire gets out of control, call 911.

BURNING BAN

- You will be told if the County is under a burning ban. You

must not burn when the County is under a burning ban. It is a crime punishable by law. (Statute #88.171 (9) states - Burning during a burning ban is a misdemeanor crime)

- Please notify the McLeod County Sheriff's Office after the controlled burn is completely out. The Sheriff's Office will ask for your name and the address where you burned.

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TIPS TO HELP YOU BURN MORE SAFELY

You must have a burn permit. (Statute #88.16(1) - Failure

to obtain a permit before burning is a misdemeanor) You must have your burn permit on your person while burning. (Statute #88.17 - Failure to do so is a misdemeanor)

Do not burn on a windy day.

Even though a burning ban is not in effect and the ground appears dry, it is best not to burn.

Do not burn illegal materials. (Statute #88.171 - Burning of prohibited materials is a misdemeanor and Statute #7005.7025 - Burning of tires is a misdemeanor)

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Create drama with bold paint colors



Metro Creative Connection

Painting is one of the easiest and least expensive ways to transform the look of a space. Paint colors can dramatically change the mood and the design of a home. And depending on a homeowner's goals, paint can make a statement or blend into the background.

Many people are now looking to bold colors to make spaces stand out. But choosing a paint color can be challenging. Homeowners looking to update walls and complement decor may want to look at some of the more impactful colors that Pantone indicates will be popular for the 2017 season. Primrose Yellow, Lapis Blue, Flame, Pink Yarrow, and Greenery are some of the more eye-catching selections. Once colors are selected, consider these guidelines for using bolder colors in room designs.

- **Decide how big an impact you want to make.** Are you looking for color overload or just a small focal point of vivid color? Remember, using bold color doesn't mean every wall must be lathered in that hue. Instead, select one wall to serve as an accent point and use that spot as your bold color display. Otherwise, rely on bold colors to dress up otherwise mundane areas, such as the back wall of a cupboard or moldings and trim.

- **Try bold in a small space.** Many people are surprised at how well bold colors work in small spaces. Powder rooms can be an ideal spot to experiment with paint colors. Try deep colors that can make the area seem intimate and even exotic. Dark, bold hues can be toned down by

different accents, such as neutral colored fixtures and towels.

- **Go bold in the kitchen.** Incorporate a splash of color in the kitchen without going overboard. Try an appliance or design fixture in a bright shade. Or paint the inside of the cabinets in your favorite color and install glass inserts in the cabinet doors so that everyone gets a peek of the color beyond. A neutral kitchen also can be brightened up with the use of silverware, dishes, pots and pans, and other kitchen items featured in bold hues.

- **Stick to boldness on interchangeable items.** Those who like to experiment with color may find that they like to switch out the colors now and again. Instead of having to repaint every few months, use decorative items in bright shades to make swapping out color that much easier. For example, replace area rugs, throw pillows and draperies. Paint over terra cotta flower pots when the mood strikes.

- **Establish balance.** Rely on neutral furniture, rugs, moldings and baseboards if you decide to take bold colors up a notch. This will help create a sense of balance in the room.

Painting is a fun way to experiment with color. Many homeowners are not hesitant to use bold shades of color when they learn the right techniques. And because paint is an inexpensive option for making over a room, homeowners who find they do not like a particular color can easily paint over it with a new color.

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*\$0 down, 0% A.P.R. financing for up to 48 months on purchases of new Kubota 2400/Kommander-Pro Series equipment is available to qualified purchasers from participating dealers in-stock inventory through 5/31/2017. Example: A 48-month monthly installment payment term at 0% A.P.R. requires 48 payments of \$20.83 per \$1,000 financed. 0% A.P.R. interest is available to customers if no dealer documentation preparation fee is charged. Dealer charge for document preparation fee shall be in accordance with state laws. Inclusion of ineligible equipment may result in a higher blended A.P.R. 0% A.P.R. and low-rate financing may not be available with customer instant rebate offers. Financing is available through Kubota Credit Corporation, U.S.A., 1000 Kubota Drive, Grapevine, TX 76051; subject to credit approval. Some exceptions apply. Offer expires 5/31/2017. See us for details on these and other low-rate options or go to www.kubota.com for more information. Optional equipment may be shown.

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