

LEFT TO RIGHT:

Campania Faccia planter adds a playful dimension to foliage.

Earth-friendly fertilizers like Dynamite™ plant food are now becoming mainstream.

Baby Wing White Begonia from Simply Beautiful™ brings delicate color to small spaces.

Bahama Bay's Amazon Queen Hibiscus makes today's gardens hip.

Maracas Brazilian Fireworks from Simply Beautiful™ is a heat loving shade plant with brilliant red and purple flowers.



Outdoor Living

Takes a New Twist in 2007

content and photos courtesy of the Garden Media Group
excerpted from *Her Home* magazine

From dinner on city rooftop gardens to watching football in suburban outdoor living rooms, Americans have once again fallen in love with the great outdoors.

According to Susan McCoy, outdoor living trend spotter and president of the Garden Media Group, consumers have discovered that outdoor living is more than dressing up patios with a few containers. Instead, people are transforming their ordinary backyards into "specialty rooms" complete with kitchens, bars, TVs and even heaters for cool nights. Flowers, shrubs and trees are being used as accents, room dividers, carpets and curtains.

McCoy believes outdoor living has been fueled by three things: our obsession with living a healthier lifestyle, easier-to-grow plants for instant success and a vast array of stylish and affordable all-weather furnishings, fabrics and appliances.

"Today the average homeowner can walk into the home and garden department at any major store and find outdoor end tables, all-weather floor lamps, waterproof art and even affordable entertainment sets along with big and bold flowers and plants," says McCoy.



In outdoor living the “eco-chic” movement is one of the biggest new twists. According to a recent *Newsweek* article entitled “Going Green,” “environmentalism appears to be on the upswing” and is changing everything from the type of cars we drive to the food we eat and even the way we garden.

Bruce Butterfield, research director at the National Gardening Association, agrees, predicting that the demand for earth-friendly products could “quadruple in the next few years.”

To transform your backyard into an outdoor living area with eco-chic style, here are GMG’s 2007 outdoor living trends, presented to garden editors and writers at the 58th Annual GWA Symposium in Philadelphia.

Outdoor Living Is In. Indoor Living Is Out. “Outdoor living is no longer a noun. It’s a verb,” says McCoy. “We are entertaining in our outdoor living rooms, cooking in our outdoor kitchens, conducting business in our outdoor offices and even grooming in outdoor showers.” Thanks to new product offerings like weather-resistant appliances, furniture and electronics, there’s virtually nothing we aren’t doing outside we haven’t spent years doing inside the home, including watching TV.

Escape Gardens Are In. Everyday Gardens Are Out. Homeowners want creative ways to make their backyards personalized sanctuaries, so it’s no surprise people are borrowing ideas from their favorite vacation destinations. Thanks to advances in plant breeding, flowers and shrubs not typically inclined to do well in certain hardiness zones are being successfully grown around the country. Look for breakthroughs like the Bahama Bay™ Hibiscus collection (www.BahamaBay-Hibiscus.com) with 12 different colors that bloom from spring through fall.

Streamlined Gardens Are In. Shabby-Chic Gardens Are Out. As we continue to simplify our lives, consumers are opting for sleek but approachable contemporary designs. Savvy homeowners are turning in their former shabby-chic styles for more sophisticated, structured looks. Eric Liskey, editor of *Garden, Deck & Landscape* magazine, says the desire for well-defined design is extending outdoors and changing garden design. “Gardens with strong architecture are in,” says Liskey. “Bold lines, well-defined angles and colorful

foliage are becoming very stylish,” adds Liskey. “You’ll see mass plantings of Phormium in borders and hanging baskets filled with brightly-hued coleus.”

Eco-Chic Gardens Are In. Chemical Needy Gardens Are Out. Gardens in all shapes and sizes, grown with environmentally conscious techniques, are another manifestation of the green movement. Earth-friendly gardeners should look for products with earth-friendly ingredients, such as the certified-organic deer repellent Deer Stopper (www.MessinaWildlife.com) or LazyMan liquid soil amendment (www.OutsidePride.com), which naturally improves the health of soil to promote happier plants and greener lawns. Disease-resistant plants like the Knock Out® family of shrub roses are also making eco-chic gardening easier than ever before. New this season is AARS Winner Rainbow Knock Out®, which is even more floriferous than its famous predecessors and requires no harsh chemical spraying.

Small Space Gardens Are In. Colossal Landscapes Are Out. As lot sizes shrink and people downsize their homes, consumers are gardening more in less space, on patios and decks, on rooftops and, of course, in containers. Vertical gardening is in, growing either up or down from balconies or on patios. According to Raymond Evison, the leading breeder of clematis in the world, dwarf-sized annuals, perennials and shrubs are now specifically bred for small spaces. Baby Wing begonias, Sunblaze® roses, Bambino bougainvillea and Patio Clematis™ are all proportionate to the size of small gardens. Petite vegetables like Burpee’s Patio Princess tomatoes allow gardeners with the smallest plots to have home-grown favorites in containers or mini-beds.

Larger-than-Life Accents Are In. Peek-a-Boo Accessories Are Out. Garden trendsetters agree the larger-than-life look will dominate the garden this season. Because of the movement toward simplification, designers are creating the same amount of impact with larger plants and garden accessories rather than integrating several smaller-scaled elements into the design. “Gardeners are thinking big this season, growing super-sized plants like agaves, conifers and cannas,” says Doug Jimmerson, editor of *Better Homes & Gardens* special edition publications. “From extra-large perennials to gigantic-sized pots, this season, bigger is better.”



Foliage In Focus Is In. Flowers Only Are Out.

For that boom without bloom look, chic gardeners are using colorful foliage plants to add wow color in their landscapes and spice up containers. A wide range of new color options and sizes makes gardening with foliage more versatile than ever before. This season look for lots of elephant ears, ornamental grasses and iresine. Simply Beautiful™ (www.SimplyBeautifulGardens.com) will introduce Live Wire Isolepis cernua, with funky exploding leaf blades and Rose Iresine, with its iridescent ruby pink leaves and stems that seem to glow in the sunlight. Perfect for sun or shade.

Multi-tasking Gardens Are In. Time Consuming Gardens Are Out.

“The need to multi-task is so great homeowners now want multi-tasking plants,” says Ethne Clarke, garden editor at *Traditional Home* magazine. “Integrating ornamental and edible plants will be huge this season. People don’t want to just work in their gardens. They also want their gardens to work for them.” The new Red Romaine Lettuce from The Cook’s Garden (www.CooksGarden.com) is as tasty to eat as it is to look at and can be planted as a border in a perennial bed or along a kitchen path. New from Simply Beautiful™ is Maracas Brazilian Fireworks, a heat loving tropical shade plant with funky purple and red flowers. It works great in the garden or as a houseplant.

Fancy Plants Are In. Basic Plants Are Out.

Grace Romero, plant expert with Heronswood Nursery, says that upmarket plants of the rare and exotic type are exploding. “The new trend toward luxury plants,” she says, “seems to be following in the vein of collecting rare wine or fast cars.” Plant collectors are using rare and exotic plants to create their own paradise unlike the gardener next door. This season, keep an eye out for collectors plants like Deinanthe bifida Pink Kii, available via catalog or online at www.HeronsWood.com.

Designer Veggies Are In. Store Bought Veggies Are Out.

“Today’s home gardeners aren’t

looking for traditional-looking tomatoes,” says *Southern Living* Editor Charlie Thigpen. Instead, folks want new specialty vegetables that either look unusual or offer a distinct flavor. Keep an eye out for specialty varieties from W. Atlee Burpee like the Napa Tomato, the sweetest grape tomato for home gardens and the new Porterhouse Tomato, which sets the new standard for huge tomatoes. The mild flavored White Satin carrot from The Cook’s Garden will surprise even the most finicky eater.

Masses Of Any Color Are In. Colorless Masses Are Out.

Mass plantings of evergreen shrubs are being replaced with hydrangeas, landscape roses and other flowering shrubs offering loads of color and interest every season. Knock Out® shrub roses, for example, have become a landscape work horse, showing nonstop color from spring through fall with no maintenance. “But we are going way beyond the obvious,” says Steve Hutton, president of The Conard-Pyle Co. “We are seeing plants, such as the new Drift® series of shrub roses, planted in containers and then placed in a sea of Drift in the landscape. A mass of vertical and horizontal color is created, which is very interesting.” The new Easy Wave Beachcomber creates a stunning display of blue, coral and shell-pink masses. It can be planted in baskets and borders or used for a full carpet of color, like an Oriental rug.

24-Hour Gardens Are In. Day Only Gardens Are Out.

With outdoor living booming, we are spending more time than ever before in our backyards. “Outdoor spaces are now aesthetically pleasing and comfortable for both day and night,” says Joseph Cilio, president of Alfresco Home. Distinctive all-weather wicker and deep seating furnishings, like those from www.AlfrescoHome.com, can transform your backyard into a stylish outdoor space perfect for entertaining friends or just relaxing with a good book. From outdoor floor lamps to plants that glow in the moonlight, outdoor rooms provide 24 hours of comfort and enjoyment. ■■



CLOCK-WISE: Alfresco Home Blini Deep Seating Collection provides comfort, durability and style.

Hydrangea Angel Star lends masses of color to the garden.

A single branch of Albizia Jullibrissen in Summer Chocolate.

Raymond Evison’s Cezanne Patio Clematis offers big color in small spaces.