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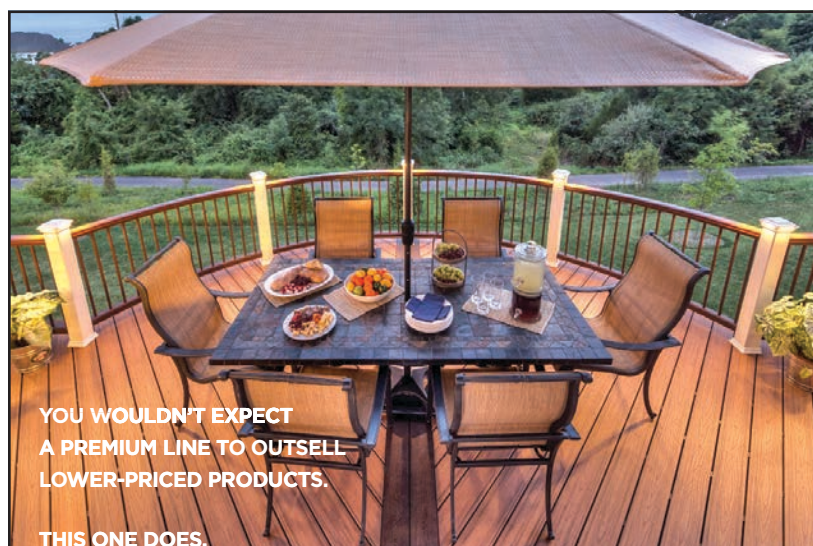
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# welcome!



Sue Rawlinson

**The tree was huge.** It was both my fortress and favorite secret hiding spot.

I'd fill a bowl with potato chips, skip my way to the front yard's tree, place the bowl between two branches and hop up to day-dream the spring days away—complete with floating breeze in the leaves, nearby scented Iris bed in bloom and the grass below in a deepening shade of green.

**And I'd eat my chips in peace.**

When I think of spring—and the month of April in particular—I think of my childhood's leafy palace. It was a peaceful escape and a perch on which the mind's creativity would entertain my soul.

**And there were no big brothers in sight. Cool.**

April also meant Easter was near—I'd wear a pretty dress, find Easter eggs, go to church as usual, and Mom would make the most delish, pretty cake I'd ever seen.

These are the memories that sparked some of the content within this beautiful issue of HOME. We show the gorgeous flowers in bloom during (or very near) April, we teach about irrigation systems to offer the greenest of grass—and we even share a recipe to make mom-worthy holiday cupcakes to pretty-up your Easter brunch table.

Too, we explore flooring options and share all about windows—to maximize the beauty of your views. We also introduce today's mudrooms. I think you'll like what you see.

May your month of April be filled with family gatherings, sunshine, opened windows—and some old-fashioned R&R—perhaps not up in a tree with a bowl of chips, but peaceful, nonetheless.

Enjoy this beautiful spring month... and thank you most sincerely for reading. 🏡

Sue

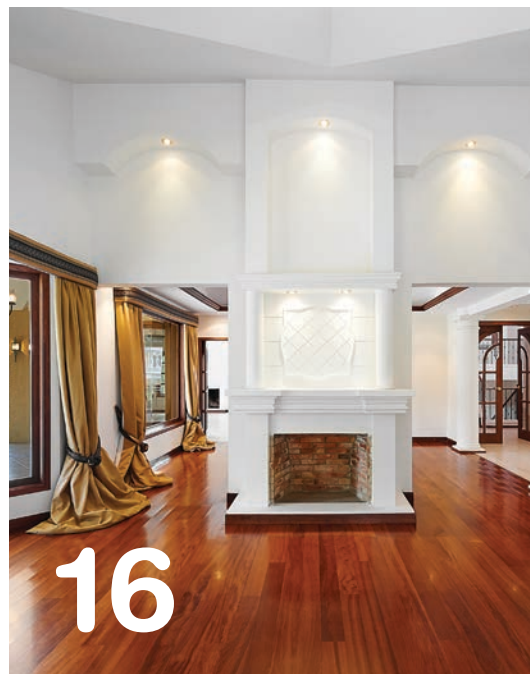




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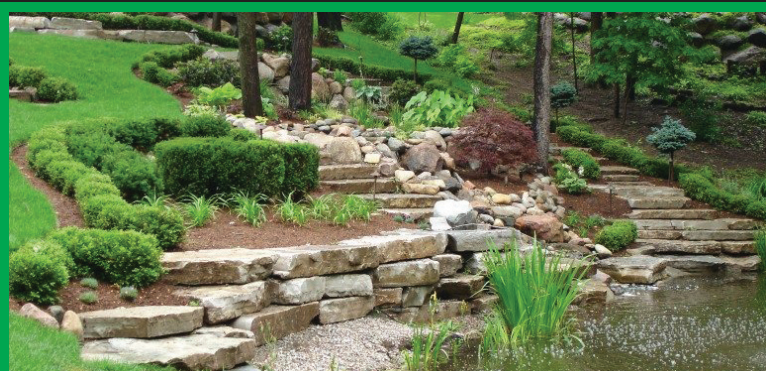
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# Bright Blooms Ahead

By **Sue Rawlinson**

They say April showers bring May flowers, but this exciting fourth month is also alive and energized with beautiful blooms. After a long winter and short, gray days, isn't it refreshing to celebrate all the beauty popping to life?

Enjoy a view of spring's beauty with these April bulbs and flowers, available at the many wonderful stores and nurseries who partner with HOME Living. 🏠



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*Iris*





Pansy



Daffodil



Peony



Hyacinth





By Erin Dozois

# Sweet On Sweet Peas



Ranked as Bath & Body Works' 6th most popular and best-selling scent, sweet pea is a timeless women's fragrance. Surprisingly, it smells fruitier than floral with notes of pear, loganberry and blackcurrant.

But sweet peas are also a favorite annual among gardeners. They are relatively easy to grow and make perfect gardening projects for kids and grown-ups alike. Most selections are vines that can climb up to 8 feet in a single season. They run the gamut of hues between deep shades and pastels.

**Name:** Sweet pea (Fabaceae family)

**Fun Fact:** Do not mistake sweet peas for green peas. If eaten in quantity, sweet pea seeds are toxic and can cause symptoms similar to scurvy.

**Known For:** Fragrant blooms in a bright, pink-to-purple spectrum

**Why We Love It:** Sweet peas aren't just pretty to look at. Their scent is iconic in women's fragrances and brings cheer to the home in the form of candles and air fresheners.

## Selecting and Planting

1. Because sweet peas thrive in cooler temperatures, it's important to begin planting them in early spring, even if it seems too cold.
2. Sweet peas grow better when their seed coat is broken open. Either soak the seeds overnight to soften them or clip each seed with a pair of nail clippers.
3. To get the most out of your sweet pea plants, start by keeping them indoors and planting their seeds in biodegradable cowpots. They can then be directly transplanted into the ground. Sweet peas are especially sensitive to root disturbance, and this method will sidestep unnecessary stress on the plant.
4. Prepare a trellis. It's ideal to cover it with trellis netting so the plant can grab on and climb more easily.
5. Plant your sweet peas 1 inch deep and 6 to 8 inches apart in well-drained soil. Plants should have access to light, but be sheltered by the harsh, midday sun.
6. Add mulch around the base of each plant to keep roots cool.

## After the Bloom

- Water if it hasn't rained enough. Take care not to over water.
- Sweet peas are vigorous climbers and require a lot of food to grow tall and strong. Fertilize twice a month with liquid fertilizer.
- Prune away spent leaves and blooms to encourage growth.
- Protect plants from pests like slugs, snails, aphids, thrips and birds by spraying plants with water, covering with netting or using blue sticky traps. Avoid insecticidal soaps as they will damage the petals. 🌱



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# A Beautiful New View

*By Deborah C. Gerbers*

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*Windows are most certainly the eyes to a home. They provide light, ambiance and fresh air during nicer weather months. You might not normally give much thought to these seemingly basic architectural features, but read on for a few new trends and popular style options to look for in windows.*

## **Neutral Hues Steal the Show:**

Contemporary color combinations like dark brown and black against white steal the spotlight. Darker colors on both the exterior and the interior are a recent trend, including the special order of black sashes. When combined with white or natural trim, dark browns and blacks can be subtle and create a modern, farmhouse-style look. A popular selection by today's homeowners is a dark espresso window for an industrial look.



---

## **Resources:**

**Pella Window & Door Showroom**, Fort Wayne, 800.684.0034,  
[pellanorthernin.com](http://pellanorthernin.com)

**Windows, Doors & More**, Fort Wayne, 260.399.6043, [wdmfactorystore.com](http://wdmfactorystore.com)

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### Cleaner Lines for Big Visual Impact:

Most consumers are opting for the industrial look for their homes with concrete flooring and exposed, Edison-style light fixtures. Local experts agree they are seeing more people choosing casement units over double-hung windows, giving a more distinct visual line.

### New, Innovative Expansive Glass Options:

The established border between indoor and outdoor living minimizes each day. While once a custom-designed luxury, indoor/outdoor windows and walls are now available in mainstream models from most manufacturers. Styles can range in size from six panel windows to full-wall windows and sliding doors over 20 feet wide. Another option for homes without these types of windows or doors can be to create pass-throughs from an interior room to the exterior. A popular choice might be linking the kitchen to an outdoor deck or patio.



### Boosted Energy Efficiency:

Energy-efficient windows are a popular choice for most consumers, and are now even considered an expectation and requirement in many cases. What's the hype all about? Energy-efficient windows typically have multiple coatings of low-energy glass that actually reflects heat back into the home during the winter and it blocks 95 percent of UV rays. This prevents fading of carpet and drapes. 🏠

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# Mudrooms + Laundry



- Homeowners are adding half-bath or sinks to laundry space and mudrooms.
- Laundry rooms are often expanded to include countertops and storage.

By Sue Rawlinson

No longer are they tucked-away spaces, hidden from view. Now one of the organizational centers of the home—and designed to be in clear view—today's mudrooms are more than the place to kick off shoes and throw laundry in piles.

They're as integral a part of today's home as a beautifully designed home office or bright and organized walk-in pantry.

For a fresh, clean view of today's mudrooms, see what Windsor Homes built for various clients.



# Laundry Rooms

- When building laundry and mud-rooms, homeowners are choosing premium flooring and finishes to match the rest of the house.

- Custom built-in storage and locker space are common in today's homes.



- Space-saving, stackable options are popular today, even with a standard-sized washer and dryer.



- Windows providing natural lighting in laundry space are becoming more common.



- Mud and Laundry areas are no longer just tucked away spaces.



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# Flooring Options that Work for You

*By Shannon Rooney*

*Durability and style are two of the most important factors in home flooring. You want your floors to look good and to last—and that means choosing colors and materials that will suit your home for years to come. Luckily, options are endless and inspiration is everywhere, from HGTV to your local flooring store. Local experts, like F&M Tile and Terrazzo Company in Fort Wayne, Van's Home Center in Auburn and Sanborn's for Your Home in Angola, can help you design a look that works for your lifestyle. Check out the trends below to get started.*



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## Get Luxe with Vinyl

Yes, you read that right. Vinyl in its previous iterations is often ripped out at the beginning of home renovation shows. But this manmade material has been updated for the 21st century. "These products are either glued down or they can be clicked together as a floating floor," explained Sandy Sanborn, owner (with his wife Jenny) of Sanborn's for Your Home. "Some have sound absorbing backings. For the most part they are impervious to water and staining."

Luxury vinyl comes in a wide variety of "stains," which will give your floor a wood look without the maintenance of natural hardwoods. Ashy gray is a popular choice, as are deeper oak and walnut colors.

## Walk the Wide Plank

Wood flooring remains a popular choice but this material is trending wider—up to 12 inches and more. Wide planks mean fewer seams and boards run longer. This look, available in many stains, brings a real wow factor, with the ability to complement a traditional, historic or contemporary look depending on the color.

"We're seeing a lot of natural finishes, the flat finish in more natural wood colors," said Sanborn of his customers' color choices.

## Play with Pattern and Color

Ceramic and glass tile allow homeowners to play with the fun elements of flooring design. Patterned ceramic tiles are a continuing trend—the bolder the better. Think large, recurring geometrics and patterns that span two to four tiles rather than just one.

Glass tiles allow for a variety of looks achieved with color and glaze. Popular choices for bathrooms are classic black and white or seaside colors of aqua and turquoise. Part of the fun is the variation in tile finish, which gives flooring a cohesive, but less uniform look.

## Be Bold with Texture

Terra cotta, bamboo and cork have popped up in 2018 flooring trends. Each lends a different look to a room with the overall goal of adding texture. Terra cotta brings immediate warmth to a room and can complement an eclectic or Bohemian look. It's a popular choice for kitchens and mudrooms.

Bamboo is another easy-maintenance option.

With the durability of a typical hardwood, you'll have to watch out for dents and scrapes, but this material rates high on heat and sound insulation. It's perfect for anywhere you would normally install a hardwood, including the bathroom.

A popular material in the '70s, cork has a whole new look fit for bedrooms, living rooms and even kitchens. Choose from penny mosaics with dark washes, marbled tiles or large tiles in deep browns and contemporary light grays, each with different striations for a different texture. Your feet will enjoy the extra cushioning too. 🏠

## Resources:

**F & M Tile & Terrazzo Company**, Fort Wayne, 260.483.6389, [fandmtile.com](http://fandmtile.com)

**K & N Carpet**, Fort Wayne, 260.639.3591, [kncarpet.com](http://kncarpet.com)

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# April Showers Reign

***By Courtney Rawlinson***

*High-tech shower time is at its finest in 2018. Whether you're building a new home or maybe it's just time to get the showerheads replaced, like anything else in your home, it's important to research the various options available when selecting the perfect showerhead. Of course, this may be easier said than done. Why? One showerhead does not trump all others. Here are a few suggested factors to pay attention to when selecting a showerhead: pricing, size of shower space, water usage, high-tech features and functionality.*





## Pricing

The first question to consider, of course, is 'how much should I plan to spend?' Purchasing a showerhead can range on a broad scale from as low as \$10 to as expensive as \$500 or more. Be aware of your budget but also consider the perks of the added features with the more expensive end of the scale.

## Size of Shower Space

Some shower options such as the top-mount showerheads, also known as rain showerheads, require more space than does your average old-school showerhead. This has more commonly become a modern and trendy way to dress up your bathroom, but be sure there is enough space if this is an addition you would like to make!

## Water Usage

Wasting water is never a good thing and it can be expensive. Consider purchasing a low-flow showerhead. Low flows help cut the price and some of these showerheads can change the water to a higher pressure without having to use more water.

## High-Tech Features

Technology changes in our lives every day; even in our bathrooms! The LED showerhead offers the cool feature option of selecting any color of the rainbow for your lighting inside your shower. A similar version of the LED showerhead is the Bluetooth variety. Change up your shower experience by charging up your showerhead and enjoy features such as music and flashing LED lights.

## Functionality

For some homeowners a simple wall-mounted showerhead, handheld showerhead or a dual showerhead may be simply all that is desired to enjoy shower time. Others may need body sprays. Body sprays offer a massage type experience—installed in the walls of your shower to aim in common trouble areas such as the back, hips or knees.

For many, the days of picking out a simple showerhead to mount on the wall may be over. With all the modern and high-tech features available to us now, there is a plethora of options to choose from. Consider the different factors and features above before making this change of shower reign in your bathroom. 🏠

## Resources:

**Trinity Kitchen, Bath & Lighting**, New Haven, 260.493.2574, [kitchenbathlighting.com](http://kitchenbathlighting.com)

**Wayne Kitchen & Bath**, Fort Wayne, 260.423.9577, [waynepipe.com](http://waynepipe.com)

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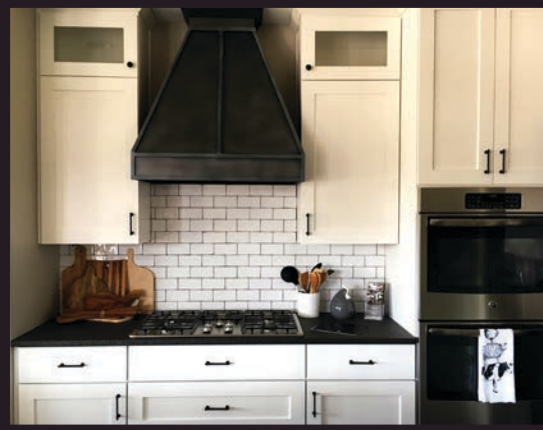
  
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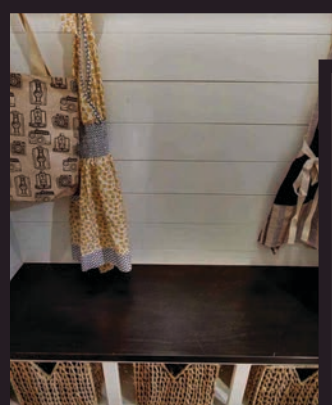
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A sliding barn door and rustic vent hood create two, show-stopping centerpieces in the kitchen. Stainless steel appliances compliment, with a gas cooktop featuring top controls, giving ample room to show off the subway tile backsplash.



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# Preparing your April yard for spring beauty

By Barb Sieminski

*Make 2018 the year to outdo neighbors on both sides with a vibrant vegetable garden and beautiful landscaping. We'll help with tips for both.*

A note from a HOME expert: Deb Zumbrun of Arbor Farms Nursery cautioned that we should remember that no matter how warm it gets, it is still April and we may still get frost and/or snow before our frost date of May 15.

## LANDSCAPING:

- Remove winter mulch from perennials and roses and cut dead stems back to a height of 3-4 inches for spring.
- A walk-through survey of your yard can display areas that need new plantings or replacement of dead plants.
- Begin mowing as needed making sure your blades are sharp and never cut more than one-third of the leaf blade off in one cutting. Leave grass at 2.5"-3.5" for good lawn health.
- Apply an herbicide such as Preen and replenish mulch as needed to stave off weeds throughout the year.
- Divide and transplant perennials such as hostas, daylilies, etc. before they grow 3-4 inches tall.
- Weed—while they are at a minimum and still easy to pull from the ground.
- Apply Systemic Insect Control to roses in April to prevent insect leaf damage later in the season.
- Tuck forced bulbs in an outdoor planter; you can buy forced bulbs at supermarkets and garden centers. Daffodils, tulips and hyacinths are colorful choices, and fragrant besides.



## VEGETABLE GARDENING:

- Turn and aerate compost piles; screen any compost you'll be applying in the near future so it will be ready when needed.
- Sow early spring greens: leaf lettuce, asparagus crowns and spinach.
- Death to grubs, Japanese beetles, webworms, mole crickets and other lawn pests! Arm yourself with ready-to-spray grub killer or one of the other effective treatments and zap these critters in their immature larval stages.
- Spring pruning of fruit trees is effective if done early. Spray trees with a horticultural oil, one that degrades quickly in the environment.
- If you're planning on strawberries, grapes or raspberries, buy them in containers; watering them and exposing them to increasing sunlight indoors first before putting them in the ground.
- Certain crops love warm soil (60° F) so wait to plant seeds of melons, corn, green beans and cucumbers or start them indoors; soil is warm enough if you can walk barefoot on it.
- Stop weeds by adding a pre-emergent weed killer in April.
- Fertilize fall-planted garlic with a high-nitrogen source like blood meal or bat guano.
- Sprout seed potatoes by moving them from cold storage into room temperature. 🏠

## Resources:

**Arbor Farms Nursery**, Fort Wayne, 260.637.5816, [arborfarmsnursery.com](http://arborfarmsnursery.com)  
**E & R Seed LLC**, Monroe, 260.692.6827

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# Watered Down: Irrigation Systems

By Haiden Steingass

*If you're hoping to ditch the watering can this spring, there are plenty of options to keep your lawn and landscape looking better than your neighbor's. But, before you invest in an irrigation system, there are some important factors to consider.*

At-home sprinkler systems range from soaker hoses to drip irrigation and in-ground systems. Whichever system you choose, you will no longer have to worry about leaving the water on for too long or forgetting to turn it on in the first place. No more lugging around the heavy green hose or messing with the finicky, adjustable nozzle. With an irrigation system, all you have to do? Set a timer.

## What are you trying to accomplish?

This question will help determine which kind of irrigation system to invest in. If you have a container garden, you'll want to opt for drip irrigation. Small tubes are run into each container, releasing water right into the soil. However, if you're planning to cover an entire lawn, an in-ground spray system will be the best option. For flower beds, trees, bushes and shrubbery, a soaker hose will dispense water into the soil and keep your plants lush and healthy.

## Is the install company reputable?

Anyone can sell you anything, so it is important to find a company that has experience with these installations, as well as one that will help educate you and will maintain or repair the system as needed.

"Knowledge is your best friend," said Jim Brubaker from Jim Brubaker Designs. "You know a company is reputable if you've gotten a referral from another customer."

## What is your budget?

There are a number of ways to stay within your budget. If you live in the city, it is better to have a separate meter, so you don't have to run the water through the city sewage. It costs a little more to install, but it will save you money in the long run.

Also consider that the system doesn't all have to be installed at the same time. Maybe your property is large, or you are working within a certain price range. In these cases, you can do the first phase, which may only be the front yard. Once it's installed, you can always tap into it to go to the back and finish the job.

## What is the maintenance like?

As for maintenance, you won't have to do much once it's installed. Each year, they'll come out once in the spring to turn the water on, test the system, make sure there aren't any leaks, and work on any necessary repairs. Then, they'll come back in the fall to shut off the water.

"For the best possible outcome, gain as much knowledge about the system and the company that will be installing it," Brubaker said. "Interview them and have them come out to see the site. Let them know exactly what you are after; maybe you just want the turf to be watered, and that's it. Give them as much information as you can as a client or customer to ensure you're getting what you want." 🏠

## Resources:

**Jim Brubaker Designs Inc.**, Fort Wayne, 260.436.3639,  
[jimbrubakerdesigns.com](http://jimbrubakerdesigns.com)







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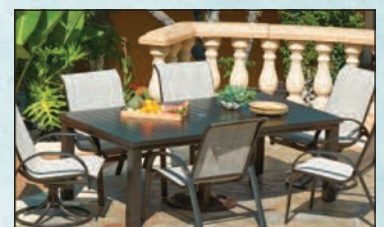
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# Spring Cleaning Checklist



By Barb Sieminski

*The birds are praising the skies with song, the gullies are greening and the creeks—having broken the last of the winter ice—are gleefully rushing over rocks in noisy celebration of spring. And we mere mortals are heeding the call to throw open the windows and welcome fragrant breezes inside as we trade seasons.*

**Here are a few things to keep you busy on those gloriously warm spring days of sunshine and blue skies:**

- ☐ While you're working, hang the just-washed laundry outside in the breeze for that wonderfully fresh scent. (Be sure to toss bed pillows and bath mats into the washing machine, too.)
- ☐ Vacuum or wash curtains and draperies. Clean the window blinds or use a handy microfiber mini-window blind duster from Walmart (\$4-6); dust the inner window frame from top to bottom and dust ceiling fans and lamps.
- ☐ Crown molding and baseboards need to be dusted; polish wood furniture. Deep-clean hardwood, tile, linoleum and carpet flooring; vacuum and wash lamp shades and remove stains from upholstered furniture.
- ☐ Shampoo carpet. Hire a professional or do it yourself. Use the vacuum crevice tool to clean around the edges of your room and obliterate those pesky dust bunnies under furniture (yes, we know you hate to clean under the couch or china cabinet).
- ☐ Clean air vents, dryer vents, and clean inside washing machines and reseal tile grout in laundry room or bathroom.
- ☐ Replace batteries in smoke detector and in carbon monoxide detector; light fixtures and light globes need their annual washing, and definitely deep-clean your fridge and freezer, tossing out that venison or perch from 3 years ago (ick).
- ☐ Clean mirror, shower caddy, showerhead, curtain, liner and shower glass (check out Rain-X for hard-to-remove soap scum buildup on glass shower doors; water should just bead away when finished).
- ☐ Tighten toilet seat hinges.
- ☐ Toss expired make-up and beauty products not used over the past year as well as out-of-date pills in the medicine cabinet.
- ☐ Mop and hand-scrub bathroom floors, especially grout lines, corners and moldings.
- ☐ Clean scuff marks off doors.
- ☐ Dust ceiling corners.
- ☐ Touch up paint.
- ☐ Clean windows, inside and out.
- ☐ Clean the microwave, dishwasher and disinfect garbage disposal.
- ☐ Scrub the garbage can inside and out and deodorize the inside before lining it with a fresh kitchen bag.
- ☐ Clean pet feeding and watering bowls.
- ☐ Re-organize and de-clutter kitchen drawers and cabinets and hall closet or mudroom.
- ☐ Box all the clothes and toys your family no longer needs for a trip to the Salvation Army or Goodwill.

And don't forget to collect the fragrant laundry from the clothesline, inhaling the scent of freshness as you gather and sort the clothes. 🏠



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# Dainty Delight

April brings about the coming of Easter brunch and spring family gatherings. Why not make a dessert that's as festive and pretty as it is delicious? Give this recipe from [foodnetwork.com](http://foodnetwork.com) a try. It'll both add a little elegance to your table and spread smiles from the favorite some-bunnies in your spring world.



## Ingredients:

- 1 Vanilla Cupcake, recipe follows
- 2-4 tablespoons White Fluff Frosting, recipe follows
- Pink and yellow sanding sugar
- 5 pink candied Jordan almonds
- 1 red jujube
- 1 piece green fruit-by-the-foot

## Vanilla Cupcakes

- 2 2/3 cups sugar
- 1 cup (2 sticks) unsalted butter, cut into 1-inch pieces
- 2 large eggs
- 2 large egg yolks
- 2/3 cup milk
- 2/3 cup water
- 2 1/2 teaspoons pure vanilla extract
- 2 2/3 cups all-purpose flour
- 1 1/3 cups cake flour
- 4 teaspoons baking powder
- 1/2 teaspoon fine salt

## Fluff Frosting

- 1/4 cup whole milk
- 2 teaspoons pure vanilla extract
- 10 tablespoons unsalted butter, softened
- 5 cups confectioners' sugar
- 1/2 cup marshmallow fluff
- Pinch fine salt

## Directions

### Vanilla Cupcakes:

Preheat oven to 350 degrees F. Line two 12-cup cupcake tins with paper liners. (To avoid cupcakes sticking if they overflow slightly, lightly spray the tops of the pans.) Put tins on a baking sheet. Set aside.

Process sugar and butter in a food processor until very creamy, scraping sides as needed, 1 to 2 minutes. Add the eggs and yolks, one at a time, pulsing after each addition. Add the milk, water and vanilla and process to blend.

Whisk both flours, baking powder, and salt in a medium bowl. Add the dry ingredients in 3 batches to the wet, pulsing, and then scraping batter off the sides of the processor as needed after each addition. Process until the batter is very smooth and pourable like pancake batter, about 2 minutes.

Evenly pour the batter into the prepared cups, filling them 3/4 of the way full. Bake until the cakes are just firm and spring back when gently pressed, and the tops are golden, 18 to 25 minutes. Cool slightly in tin, and turn out of tin when cool enough to handle. Cool cupcakes completely on a rack before frosting.

### Fluff Frosting:

Whisk the milk and vanilla extract together in a small bowl.

Slowly beat the butter and sugar, in another medium bowl, with an electric mixer until incorporated. Raise the speed to high and mix until light and fluffy, about 5 to 7 minutes. Add the fluff and salt and reduce the speed to low. Add the milk and vanilla mixture, scrape the bowl down, and mix until fully incorporated. Raise the mixer to high and beat briefly until fluffy, about 1 to 2 minutes. Frost cupcake immediately.

### To Decorate:

Frost the cupcake. Top with pink sanding sugar. Place Jordan almonds on top in a flower petal pattern. Press a jujube candy in the center of the flower. Cut the fruit-by-the-foot to make the flower stem, press onto the cake. 🏠



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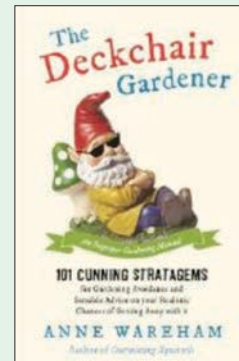


# April Books

By Steve Penhollow

To quote one or more aphorists: "April showers bring May flowers."

Here are two books to read as the rain falls on your roof. They both take a light-humored approach to spring chores, indoors and outdoors.



## The Deckchair Gardener: 101 Cunning Stratagems for Gardening Avoidance and Sensible Advice on Your Realistic Chances of Getting Away with It.

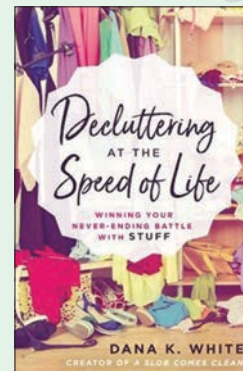
By Anne Wareham

Michael O'Mara \$14.95

ISBN-10: 1782436421;

ISBN-13: 978-1782436423

Anne Wareham has a reputation for offering a cheeky perspective on gardening. And that's putting it mildly. In her native England, Wareham is known as a gardening contrarian. Her new book, "The Deckchair Gardener: 101 Cunning Stratagems for Gardening Avoidance and Sensible Advice on Your Realistic Chances of Getting Away with It," is for people who are interested in gardening but may be a little intimidated by it at the same time. Wareham is not afraid to challenge the conventional wisdom and flout the experts. She believes it is possible to be irreverent about gardening while still producing a wonderful, satisfying (yet not overtaxing) garden.



## Decluttering at the Speed of Life: Winning Your Never-Ending Battle with Stuff

By Dana K. White

Thomas Nelson \$11.59

ISBN-10: 0718080602;

ISBN-13: 978-07180806001

Decluttering books are a dime a dozen.

If only a person could actually buy a dozen decluttering books for a dime. That would be quite a bargain, but it would also add significantly to your clutter.

At any rate, Dana K. White's new book has (against all the odds) been making a mark in a crowded field. White is the author of a popular blog called "A Slob Comes Clean," which should give an idea about her unique perspective on cleaning and organization. Where many organization experts assume their readers already possess a certain natural capacity for organization, White is more down to earth. She admits that she is a reformed slob who backslides regularly. Her advice is simple, nonjudgmental and funny. 🏠

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# April Calendar

By Ray Balogh

## 1 DECATUR: Flea Market

Nearly 100 indoor vendors, hot food available. Sponsored by the Adams County Coin Club. 8 a.m.-3 p.m. Sunday, Riverside Center, 231 E. Monroe St. (Highway 224 East). Contact Carla at 260.517.8182

[facebook.com/decaturingianafleamarket](https://facebook.com/decaturingianafleamarket).

## 1-8 FORT WAYNE: "Fairy Tales" Winter Garden Exhibit

Adults \$5, children (3-17) \$3, children (2 and under) free. 10 a.m.-5 p.m. Tuesday through Saturday (until 8 p.m. Thursday), noon-4 p.m. Sunday, Botanical Conservatory, 1100 S. Calhoun St. 260.427.6440

[botanicalconservatory.org](http://botanicalconservatory.org).

## 1-30 FORT WAYNE: Traveling Exhibitions

- American Brilliant Cut Glass: New World Innovation from 1876-1917 (ongoing)
- 2018 Scholastic Art and Writing Award Winners (through April 8)
- This Marvelous and Turbulent World by Andrew Schoultz (through May 27)

Adults \$7, students (pre-K through college) \$5, seniors (65 and older) \$5, families \$20, free general admission 5 p.m.-8 p.m. Thursday, \$1 last Saturday of each month. 10 a.m.-6 p.m. Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday, Saturday; 10 a.m.-8 p.m. Thursday; noon-5 p.m. Sunday (closed Mondays), Fort Wayne Museum of Art, 311 E. Main St. 260.422.6467

[fwmoa.org](http://fwmoa.org).

## 2-6 FORT WAYNE: Spring Break Camp 2018

Choose from daily camps. Campers supply their own lunch. For children 5-11.

- Monday, Jurassic Adventure
- Tuesday, Seussian Science
- Wednesday, Out of This World!
- Thursday, Wild Things
- Friday, Medieval Marvels

\$30 for nonmembers, \$25 for deluxe members. Registration deadline 10 a.m. one week before each camp. 8:30 a.m. check-in, 9 a.m.-4 p.m. program, Science Central, 1950 N. Clinton St. 260.424.2400

[sciencecentral.org](http://sciencecentral.org).

## 3, 10, 17, 24 FORT WAYNE: Little River Ramblers

Hike and explore the interesting plants and wildlife of Eagle Marsh. Sponsored by Little River Wetlands Project. Free admission. 9 a.m.-11 a.m. Tuesday, Eagle Marsh barn, 6801 Engle Road. 260.478.2515

[info@lrwp.org](http://info@lrwp.org), [lrwp.org](http://lrwp.org).

## 3-5 WABASH: Spring Break Bash

Free activities at Honeywell Foundation properties.

- Art activities, 9:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. Tuesday through Thursday, Honeywell Center and 10:30 a.m. and 1:30 p.m. Tuesday through Thursday, Charley Creek Gardens
- Roller skating, 11:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m. and 2:30 p.m.-3:30 p.m. Tuesday through Thursday, Honeywell Skating Rink
- Movies, 1 p.m. and 7 p.m. Tuesday through Thursday, Honeywell Center Ford Theater
- Tours, 1 p.m.-3 p.m. Thursday, Dr. Ford Historic Home

260.563.1102

[honeywellcenter.org](http://honeywellcenter.org).

## 5 WABASH: Ron "Tater Salad" White

Blue Collar Comedy funnyman relates humorous tales from his real life. For mature audiences. \$125/\$69/\$49/\$35. 7:30 p.m. Thursday, Legacy Hall, Honeywell Center, 275 W. Market St., Wabash. 260.563.1102

[honeywellcenter.org](http://honeywellcenter.org).

## 6 AUBURN: First Friday

Late night shopping, live entertainment, local culinary delights, locally crafted beverages, more. Free admission. 5 p.m.-8 p.m. Friday, downtown. 260.333.0883.



## 11 FORT WAYNE: Short Hikes for Short Legs: Pond Dipping

Learn about swimmers, wigglers and things that go hop in the water. Boots recommended. Free admission, open to children 3-5 accompanied by responsible adult. 9 a.m.-10 a.m. Wednesday, Eagle Marsh barn, 6801 Engle Road. 260.478.2515

[info@lrwp.org](mailto:info@lrwp.org), [lrwp.org](http://lrwp.org).

## 11 FORT WAYNE: Buddy — The Buddy Holly Story

Musical telling the story of Buddy Holly's brief but spectacular career. Includes such classics as "That'll Be the Day," "Oh, Boy," "La Bamba" and "Chantilly Lace." \$55/\$40/\$25. 7:30 p.m. Wednesday, Fort Wayne Embassy Theatre, 125 W. Jefferson Blvd. 800.745.3000

[fwembassytheatre.org](http://fwembassytheatre.org).

## 11-15 FORT WAYNE: Vera Bradley Outlet Sale

Amazing deals on retired and overstock items, great product selection. Multiple ticketed sessions Wednesday through Friday; open free to public Saturday and Sunday. \$5 per person. Parking \$5 main lot, \$8 preferred lot. 7:30 a.m.-8:30 p.m. Wednesday through Friday, 8 a.m.-8 p.m. Saturday, 10 a.m.-5 p.m. Sunday, Allen County War Memorial Coliseum, 4000 Parnell Ave. 260.482.9502

[memorialcoliseum.com](http://memorialcoliseum.com).

## 12 FORT WAYNE: Breakfast on the Marsh: Bird Counting

Ed and Cynthia Powers of the Audubon Society will discuss the results from bird monitoring at Eagle Marsh, share why counting the birds is important, reveal the methodology and talk about upcoming bird counting events. Call to preregister. Free admission. 8:30 a.m.-9:45 a.m. Thursday, Indiana Wesleyan Education & Conference Center, Room 102/104, 8211 W. Jefferson Blvd. 260.478.2515

[info@lrwp.org](mailto:info@lrwp.org), [lrwp.org](http://lrwp.org).

## 14 Auburn: Spring Fest-Craft Beer & Rosé Tasting Event

Unlimited local craft beer & rosé sampling! Dive into a fun and elegant environment and indulge in a local food truck favorite. \$30 general admission. Must be 21. Auburn Cord Duesenberg Automobile Museum, 1600 S. Wayne St. 260-925-1444

[automobilemuseum.org](http://automobilemuseum.org).



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## 14 DECATUR: Artisan Craft Market

Craft vendors and direct sellers of handmade crafts, jewelry, candles, soaps, baked goods, home decor, clothing and accessories, wood and metal items. Breakfast and lunch available. Free admission. 9 a.m.-1 p.m. Saturday, Riverside Center, 231 E. Monroe St. 260.223.7828.

## 18 WABASH: Aaron Lewis

Singer-songwriter presenting new take on classic sound of outlaw country legends like Waylon Jennings, Merle Haggard, Willie Nelson and Hank Williams. \$75/\$45/\$30. 7:30 p.m. Wednesday, Honeywell Center, 275 W. Market St. 260.563.1102

[honeywellcenter.org](http://honeywellcenter.org).

## 21-22 FORT WAYNE: Northern Indiana Pet Expo

Free education sessions, dog park, kid's activity zone, balloon animals. Microchipping available for \$15. Adults \$5, seniors 60 and over and children 6-12 \$3; children 5 and under free, dogs and cats \$1. Parking \$5 main lot, \$8 preferred lot. 11 a.m.-4 p.m. Saturday and Sunday, Allen County War Memorial Coliseum, 4000 Parnell Ave. 260.482.9502

[memorialcoliseum.com](http://memorialcoliseum.com).



## 22 FORT WAYNE: Earth Day

Earth Day activities, displays and speakers; food trucks, farmer's market. Free admission. 1 p.m.-5 p.m. Tuesday, Eagle Marsh, 6801 Engle Road. 260.478.2515

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## 28-29, May 6-7 FORT WAYNE: Spring Town & Country Tour

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[hometour.fortwayne.com](http://hometour.fortwayne.com). (Active April 16)

## 27 FORT WAYNE: Tapestry: A Day for You

A full day of inspiration, renewal and education for women in all stages of life. Keynote speaker Jane Seymour. Proceeds go to scholarships for IPFW health and human services students. **Sold Out Show**. Allen County War Memorial Coliseum, 4000 Parnell Ave. 260.482.9502

## 27 FORT WAYNE: Frogs

Russ Voorhees leads an evening hike to learn about the variety of frogs populating the marsh. 6:30 p.m.-8 p.m. Friday, Eagle Marsh, 6801 Engle Road. 260.478.2515

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# Spring Town & Country Home Tour

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By Barb Sieminski

*One of the first signs of spring in our little corner of northeast Indiana is the annual Spring Town & Country New Home & Specialty Retail Tour sponsored by Home Builders Association (hbaforftwayne.com) of Fort Wayne Inc.*

The 2018 event themed Dream it! Build it! Live it! will appear on the weekends of April 28-29 and May 5-6 and will host a smorgasbord of area builders displaying their talents. The program includes 34 homes, 13 maintenance-free villaminiums, 2 home building sites and 29 in-home vendors, scattered throughout Fort Wayne, Auburn, Grabill, New Haven and Leo. An extensive range of floor plans in all price categories are available.

Featured builders include Bob Buescher Homes, Lancia Homes, Star Homes by Delagrang & Richhart Inc., Granite Ridge Builders, Hickory Creek Builders, Carriage Place Homes Inc., Heller Homes, Foster & Park Homes, Majestic Homes, Preston Allen Homes LLC, Quality Crafted Homes, Timberlin Homes LLC, Wannemacher Design Build, Westport Homes and Carriage Place Homes Inc. Subdivision developers include Performance Property Group and Sturges Development Group.

"As home building in the community has continued to grow in the last few years, one particular market has also grown; you'll notice that more than 25 percent of the homes available to view in this spring's tour are villas," said Tyler Kees, vice-president of HBA.

"The lifestyle offered through villa living is one many can relate to as ease of maintenance continues to be attractive to homeowners of varying age brackets. The floor plans of homes today versus what was even being built 10 years ago continue to redefine what 'open concept' is in what seems like a yearly cycle. Outdoor living spaces have taken on a 'must-have' on many buyers' checklists. You'll really see the outdoor lifestyle shine in this year's show."

The fact that we have four distinct seasons in northeast Indiana, said Kees, is why, "we at Quality Crafted Homes try to design plans that offer open concept living with natural light and outdoor living spaces that give our customers an opportunity to take advantage of the beautiful sights each season has to offer."

Admission is free to the public and homes will be open from noon to 5 p.m. each weekend. The guide will be available in the Fort Wayne Newspapers on Sunday, April 22 and in rack distributions at Scott's, Kroger and Save-a-Lot grocers and at sponsor locations.

For additional information on this year's event contact the Home Builders Association of Fort Wayne Inc. at 260.420.2020 or visit the Town & Country New Home Tour at [hometour.fortwayne.com](http://hometour.fortwayne.com).

Presented by the HBA of Fort Wayne and sponsored by Fort Wayne Newspapers, Miller Heating & Air Conditioning, 3 Rivers, Ruoff Home Mortgage, ProFed Federal Credit Union 97.3WMEE and WQHK 105. The website is sponsored by Menards. 🏠

## Resources:

**Home Builders Association of Fort Wayne Inc.**, Fort Wayne, 260.420.2020, [hbaforftwayne.com](http://hbaforftwayne.com)



# TOWN & COUNTRY NEW HOME & Specialty Retail T • O • U • R

**April 28 & 29 May 5 & 6**

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# Plant Center

By Lauren Caggiano

Photo by Courtney Rawlinson

*The Plant Center is a testament to the Straessle family's fruits of labor — literally.*

"Our father (Ron Straessle) started in the fruit business, and in 1962 a salesman persuaded him to try selling plants for the storefront for additional income," said Tony Straessle.

The business evolved with changing times. According to Tony, over time the fruit became too perishable and nursery sales were on the rise. They had found their niche. "By 1972 the fruit fair division became nonexistent and Plant Center was born, offering a large selection of plants and hardgood supplies," he said.

Today, they specialize in bringing the retail public only the highest quality in landscape materials: annuals, perennials, trees, shrubs, planters, hanging baskets, mulch, soil and much more.

While the product mix has changed over the years, their values have not. Tony said it's important that the company maintain high ethical standards and provide the highest quality product at a fair price, while always exceeding expectations.

For example, customer service is always at front and center.

"Every customer is important, no matter if they make a purchase or not," he said. "We rely on the fact that they will be back. We provide an enormous amount of variety you can't find elsewhere. If we don't have it, we will do all that we can to find it for you."

There's also an element of consultative sales. Tony said customers come to his team for professional opinions in order to enhance curb appeal, or "to be the envy of the neighborhood." That means maintaining an open mind while listening to the customer's wants and needs so they can guide them in the right direction.

"We provide in-store service where we can suggest plant variety, location, hardiness all while making sure they have seasonal color for year-around enjoyment," he said.

In other words, they are the go-to place when it's time to give your exterior a facelift. All of this would not be possible if it weren't for the vision of their father, Ron. He brought Tony and his family up in the business and provided them with the opportunity to continue to build the business through hard work and achieving long-term goals.



*Pictured, left to right: brothers Steven (president) and Tony (vice president) Straessle*

The teamwork element is not to be discounted either. "We also have to mention that it's with the help of a great group of employees that give 110 percent all the time to their overbearing workload to produce great sales results. We can't forget the fact that a lot of our success comes from all the loyal customers over the years; without that base we wouldn't be where we are today."

Looking to the future, Tony said they don't have plans to slow down anytime soon. In fact, he's thinking long-term. "We will continue to build and expand the business to provide a future for the next generation, while adding to our inventory to accommodate our customers' future needs," he said.

He also welcomes people from the community to connect if they haven't already.

"Stop by to visit our newly remodeled showroom that offers an easier shopping experience with more variety of gift items, garden products, wind chimes, memorial stones, statuary and newly updated product variety." 🏡

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These are forget-me-not tips and tricks to get your humble abode truly ready for sale. They say success is all in the details; take heed and we think you'll receive more enthusiastic responses—and perhaps even an offer sooner rather than later.

- **Clean, and then clean a little more.**  
Don't miss a single nook or cranny. Clean top to bottom, from light fixtures to the floor in the closet. If it isn't clean, prospective buyers will notice.

- **Sniff.** And not with nostalgic wistfulness. Sniff to smell the air. Use plug-in air fresheners, scented candles—and even bake cookies prior to a showing. Scents tie closely with emotions.
- **Clutter be gone.** Declutter every room and every closet. Less is truly more.
- **Lighten up.** Open the shades and blinds and let the sunshine in. Too, be sure to turn on all lights (yes, even lamps) for showings.
- **Don't get personal.** When the house goes up for sale, it's time to remove the multiple family pics and personal items. Prospective buyers need to envision their family in your home.
- **TMI.** So, too much information won't really be told, but make bathrooms look as sterile and unused as possible. Remove shampoo bottles, loofahs and soap from the shower. Too, remove toilet paper from the rolls and lower the toilet seats. Sounds trivial, but it makes a difference. 🏠



*\*rates effective as of April 2018 issue publishing deadline date*

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reminder of how  
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can be."*

**—Unknown**





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