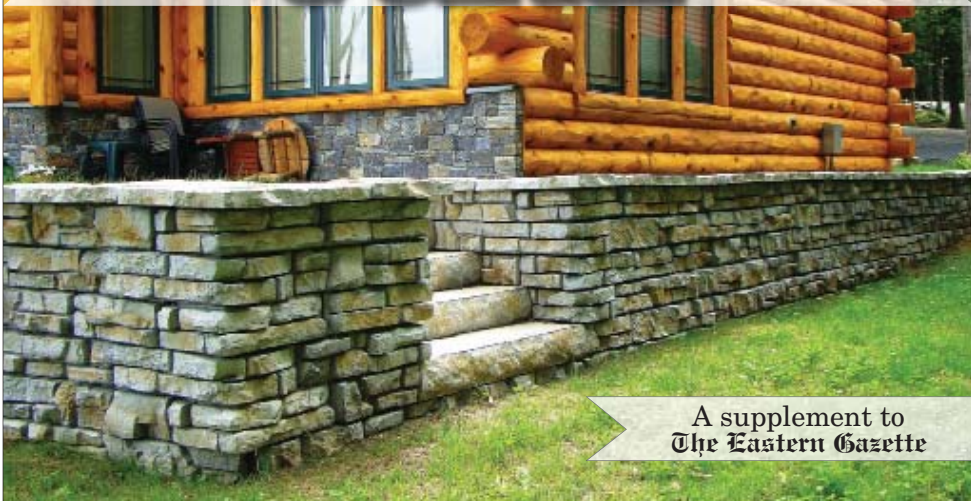


Home, Yard & Garden



A supplement to
The Eastern Gazette

SEASONAL BEAUTY – A Redi-Scapes wall surrounds this seasonal home in Greenville. (Contributed photo)

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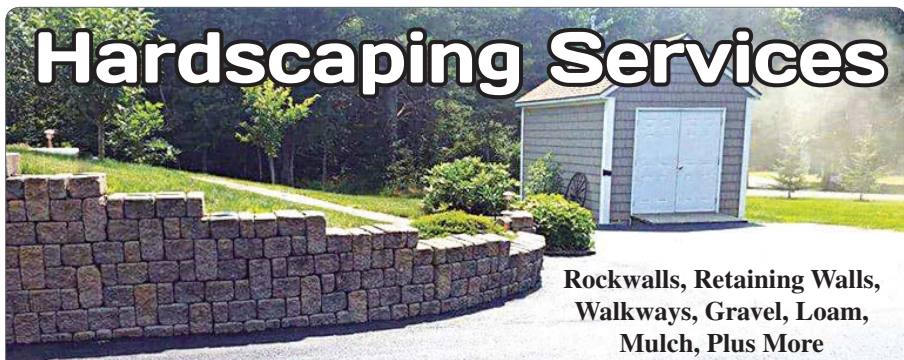


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Growing fruit trees in Maine requires the right soil, preparation and a little luck

by Mike Lange
DOVER-FOXCROFT
 While apple trees are commonplace in Maine, more and more backyard gardeners and farmers are experimenting with pear, plum and even peach trees.

Some are more successful than others, mainly because the climate in southern Maine is drastically different than the weather in Piscataquis or Aroostook counties.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Plant Hardiness Zone Map divides the country into zones according to the anticipated coldest winter temperature. For example, southern coastal Maine is in Zone 6 where temps may fall as low as minus 10 degrees.

On the other hand, Piscataquis County generally falls into Zone 4 where nighttime lows can drop to minus 30 in the winter. So the peach and plum trees that might thrive in Saco won't do as well in Sangerville.

Still, that doesn't mean that it's impossible to grow fruit outside of southern Maine. "Some plants that are rated for Zone 5 do very well locally," according to Pam Pultz, owner of Foxcroft Agway in Dover-Foxcroft. "But one mistake people make is planting too

early. We don't even stock fruit trees until the end of April and we recommend that they don't get planted until mid-May. We still get frost on May 25."

Pultz said that insects are also a problem with fruit trees, especially the apple borer. According to the UMaine Extension Service, apple borers lay their eggs on the lower part of the trunk. After they hatch, the larvae burrow into the tree. "The tunneling can kill the tree by structural damage to water-conducting tissues, and in severe cases by causing the trunk to break off completely," according to the "Growing Fruit Trees in Maine" publication.

"You should spray your fruit trees early in the season - late March or early April - to prevent infestation, fungus and disease," Pultz said. "We want people to enjoy their homegrown fruits for years. Your great-grandchildren should be able to enjoy apple pies with fruit picked from your front yard."

Soil preparation using lime and composted cow manure also helps new fruit trees get off to a good start, Pultz said. "Just be patient until the ground warms up," she advised.

So what about other fruits?

Asian pears, which are smaller than the standard fruit, can be grown in Zone 5, according to the Extension Service.

Asian plums such as Alderman, La Crescent and Pipestone can be grown in Zone 4, but the standard purple European plum is best suited for Zone 5 or warmer climates.

Sweet cherry trees can thrive in Zone 5, according to "Growing Fruit Trees in Maine," but they're also very fragile. "The buds become very tender in early spring as they resume growth, and are killed by early spring freezes nearly every year," according to the UM publication.

Apricots will do well in the southern part of Zone 4 and peaches and nectarines are best suited for Zone 6 because their tender buds aren't likely to survive temperatures lower than minus 15.

So with a combination of patience, preparation and cooperation from Mother Nature, you could be enjoying fresh fruit in your backyard someday.

More information is posted at www.extension.umaine.edu and brochures are available at the UM Extension office next to the county courthouse in Dover-Foxcroft.



PREVENTING DISEASE - Growing fruit trees in Maine can be a challenge, but using the right insecticide prevents pests like apple tree borers from destroying your crop. Foxcroft Agway owner Pam Pultz is holding a branch from an infected tree and a spray that prevents the disease. (Eastern Gazette photo - Mike Lange)

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Patience pays off when reseeded or caring for your lawn

by Mike Lange

CHARLESTON/DEXTER - With winter now in the rear-view mirror, homeowners are anxious to see more green than brown on their front lawns.

But local landscaper contractors say that being too anxious with your spring lawn care will probably be counterproductive. "Be patient when planting grass seed this time of year," said Robert Goodwin, owner of Blue Water Tree and Lawn Inc. in Charleston "If the ground is too cold, the seed is either going to rot or just sit there and not germinate."

Although Blue Water specializes in tree service, they also build and mow lawns. "The most important thing is to keep the soil moist and watered correctly," Goodwin said. "If you plant seed in the early spring, you may not need as much mulch as you would later in the year. But the birds might also get to it easier."

Before you do any lawn care, a thorough cleanup may be time-consuming but necessary. "Remove the leaves and debris," advises Goodwin. "Anything left on the lawn can smother the grass blades and block sunlight."

The healthier a lawn is, the better chance it will remain weed-free. But it's also wise to pull weeds early, so they don't "take root" in large numbers later in the season.

Goodwin said that the April windstorms kept his company busy with tree removal and maintenance - tasks that he recommends be left up to the professionals. "It's really a good idea to have a licensed arborist evaluate any damage," he said. "Every damaged tree doesn't have to be cut down. Sometimes they just need to be trimmed and pruned."

Steve Lawson of Lawson's Landscaping and Construction in Dexter said the soil temperature has to be "pretty warm for grass seed to germinate. We use composted loam right over the existing lawn. It works really well."

Lawson said that Cottage Mix and Conservation Mix seed works best in this part of the state. "We don't hydro-seed," he said. "We use hay mulch - the old-fashioned way. It's worked well for us and our customers are happy."

Lawson also said that cleaning the lawn thoroughly at the start of the season is one of the keys to keeping it green all summer. "You also need to water your lawn properly to keep the grass green," he explained. "People don't realize how much water the average lawn needs."

Finally, the UM Extension Service recommends having your soil tested if you're starting a lawn from scratch or doing a major rebuilding job. Test kits are available at local extension offices or the Maine Soil Testing Service.

Depending on the results, homeowners may want to add "compost or other organic matter to improve soil drainage and help the soil hold nutrients and water; lime, to raise the pH to an optimum level of 6.0 - 6.2, and fertilizer - potassium and phosphorus.

"If nitrogen is recommended, apply it at seeding or after seed germination; incorporating it leads to leaching. After evenly spreading all the soil amendments, rototill them into the top 6-inches of soil. Avoid rototilling close to trees. Instead, mulch widely or plant other groundcovers around the trees, and establish the lawn further away from them."



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Essential spring home improvement projects

(BPT) - The arrival of spring means new beginnings and a fresh chance to tackle those home improvement projects you've been putting off for the last several months. Get your home ready for summer and make it more beautiful, efficient and functional than ever with these five seasonal projects.

Keep, donate or trash.

Your first step is to declutter the home. Separate items into three categories: keep, donate or trash. Here's a tip: if you haven't used something in the last year, chances are you can get rid of it. Items such as unwanted electronics, housewares and gently used clothing can be donated to charity. For everything else, check with your local recycling program before putting anything in the garbage.

Get serious about spring cleaning.

Give your home a fresh start by wiping down windows, countertops, electronics, appliances, doorknobs, furniture, light fixtures and ceiling fans. Also, be sure to mop floors and vacuum carpet. Never cleaned windows before? Find out how with our free guide.

Bring your deck back to life.

We think winter is hard on us, but just imagine how hard it is on our decks, which weather the bitter cold temperatures, snow and ice all season long. Take a close look at your deck and check for warped, loose or splintered boards. Sweep away anything that may have fallen between the cracks, make any needed repairs, scrub or power wash, and restain if necessary.

Do a color refresh.

Whether you're adding a fresh coat of paint to your interior or exterior walls, or completely changing the colors of your home, spring is the perfect time to renew your home's look. One 2016 color trend: bold entry doors like those from Pella. Learn more and pick out your new, colorful front door.

Bloom where you are planted.

Whether you are a homeowner, renter or sublessee, celebrate the end of winter by creating spaces for bright flowers and making the most of your garden. Apartment dwellers, bring the outdoors in with hanging baskets, potted plants or herbs.



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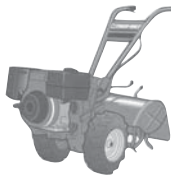
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Premium exterior paint is easier to apply, lasts longer

by Mike Lange
DOVER-FOXCROFT - Although last winter wasn't as harsh as the two previous seasons, snow and ice usually inflict enough damage for the homeowner to consider repainting in the spring.

Since it's a job you don't want to do every few years, investing a few extra dollars per gallon in premium exterior paint may be a wise move.

At Dover True Value Hardware, Weatherall Extreme is a top choice for several reasons, according to Ashley Robinson. "It's a combination of paint and primer and that automatically saves time," she said. "It can also be applied in chilly weather. It's rated from 35 to 90 degrees."

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Weatherall also makes paints for masonry, stucco, aluminum and vinyl siding in a rainbow of colors and every selection is mildew and mold resistant.

If your deck needs a new coat this year, check out Dover True Value's Woodsman line. The acrylic water repellent stain works equally well on new wood as existing structures and comes in solid colors as well as semi-transparent stain.

"The best way to prep an exterior surface is by power-washing," said Robinson. "Getting rid of all the dirt, grime and mildew is important so the paint will adhere."

Professional painters also caution against applying paint or stain in direct sunlight. If fresh paint dries too quickly, it won't adhere well and blister prematurely. So the best method is to paint in the shade or on an overcast day.



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BIG SELECTION - Ashley Robinson is pictured with Dover True Value Hardware's exterior paint and stain selection. (Eastern Gazette photo - Mike Lange)

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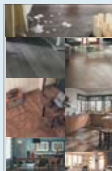
Meet Gregg

Gregg Buzzelli joined the Dave's World team in 2015, bringing over 30 years of cabinet experience with him. In fact, before the age of ten he was often found building cabinets with his dad in the garage of his Cedar Grove, New Jersey home. From that point his training expanded into areas such as design, installation, and professional finish-work.

While living in New Jersey, Gregg managed an elite, award-winning kitchen and bath design center, designed and installed beautiful custom kitchens, bathrooms, libraries, and more; completing small and large-scale projects from renovations to home additions and new construction. There, he specialized in unique designs, stunning finishes, and completed projects that were nothing less than picture-perfect. After moving to Maine in 2006 to further his education, he continued his design career as the Project Specialist for Interiors at Lowe's Home Improvement before joining the Dave's World Team.

Gregg's E-mail: KITCHENS & BATHS.gregg.buzzelli@davesworld.com

FLOORING



Meet Matt

Matthew Spooner joined the Dave's World team in 2012 as a flooring specialist and was soon promoted to Sales Manager. Matt follows in the footsteps of his father, who has been part of the flooring world for close to fifty years. Though Matt holds a Bachelor's degree in Marketing from Husson University, he has been fully immersed in the flooring industry since 1998, and is known as "the flooring guru" in Dover-Foxcroft. Matt has established strong, successful relationships with leading carpet and flooring manufacturers. He is a master at finding the best product for each client, having experience in every facet of the business, from measuring to installation. This expertise, coupled with the no-nonsense, client-centered sales model you will only find at Dave's World, means the customer will receive the highest quality product for the best value, income-parallel service, and complete customer satisfaction.

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Locally made landscaping products add beauty, stability

by Mike Lange
SANGERVILLE – Two of the fastest-growing products from Haley Construction Company are Redi-Rock retaining wall blocks and Redi-Scapes landscaping products that add beauty and stability to any type of property.

While Redi-Rock and Redi-Scapes have been installed on

commercial properties from Bangor to Cape Elizabeth and beyond, more and more homeowners are starting to realize the value of the products, according to sales and marketing manager Carl Jordan.

"Redi-Rock is an international franchise, but our products are made right at the Haley plant

in Sangerville," Jordan said. "Redi-Rock has been around since about 2000 and Redi-Scapes got off the ground in 2010."

While large-block rock retaining walls may all look the same to the untrained eye, Jordan said that most of them are traditionally made with a

Continued on Page 13



ALFOND CENTER – Redi-Rock and Redi-Scapes were used extensively during the construction of the Alfond Center for Health at MaineGeneral Medical Center in Augusta. (Contributed photo)

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Tilson True Value Garden Center ready to bloom

by Mike Lange
DEXTER – Tilson True Value has carried a full line of lawn and garden supplies for decades. But for the most part, it's been stacked in a storage area in the back of the store or in the rear parking lot.

"A lot of people in town still don't realize how much we have," said owner Tom Tilson. "I guess it's like the old saying: Out of sight, out

of mind." But that's about to change.

A new garden center and greenhouse are under construction in the lot next to the Main Street store and spring inventory is coming in almost daily. "The greenhouse will be filled with annuals, perennials, vegetable flats and hanging baskets by Mother's Day," Tilson said. "We've carried

plants for years. But if you have a couple of days of rain and bring them inside, you've got problems. So this is a welcome addition."

Visibility will also help. "When you stop at the light at Main and Church streets, you can see us right out front," Tilson added.

For updates and current specials visit tilsontruevalue.com

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Locally made from Page 11

dry-cast system. "That's a fairly efficient way to do it, but it's not as durable as our wet cast blocks," he explained.

Each Redi-Rock block weighs between 1,300 and 2,400 pounds and manufactured with a minimum of 3,000 PSI.

Another advantage is that the large, wet-cast blocks are easier to install "because you can use machinery – like an excavator – to move them. You can also build it a lot higher than the dry-cast system."

Redi-Rock was approved by the Maine Department of Transportation for roadside projects throughout the state, so Haley Construction builds the blocks "to the state's quality-control standards," Jordan said.

One advantage of rock retaining walls and small-block landscaping is that you only have to do it once, he added. "The key is to make sure it's installed properly," Jordan said.

Redi-Scapes, for example, are designed to look like a natural, hand-fitted product. They come in single-side and double-sided blocks for above-ground applications and you can also get capstones and corner piles to finish off the job. "An experienced do-it-yourselfer can do the job," Jordan said. "We work with installers all the time to make sure they're able to do it properly."

The most important part of the job is the preparation of the ground and backfill, Jordan said. "The primary goal is to allow water to be removed from behind the wall to improve stability," he explained. "An experienced landscaper understands these concepts very well. But a first-time user may not."

So if you're looking for a way to add a unique look and value to your property, Haley Construction has the Redi-Rock and Redi-Scape products to make it happen.

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Heat pumps offer affordable, year-round comfort

by Mike Lange
DOVER-FOXCROFT – Imagine a heat pump with a single compressor powering up to eight interior units where you can control the temperature as easily as flicking a light switch.

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Best of all, the Mitsubishi Electric M-Series multi-zone system requires minimal maintenance and is sold, installed and serviced by Dave's World in Dover-Foxcroft, Maine's leading heat pump dealer.

"Mitsubishi Electric's technology has advanced

tremendously in the last couple of year," said Matthew Scott, the company's energy solutions specialist. "We installed 600 Mitsubishi Electric units last year plus 850 Fujitsu heat pumps. We're the only dealer in Maine that carries both brands."

Mitsubishi Electric, however, has been on the forefront of heat pump technology for years, Scott said. "Think of Fujitsu as a Toyota and Mitsubishi Electric as a Lexus," he explained. "They're both great cars, but one is better than the other."

The growth in heat pump sales over the past few years has prompted Dave's World to open a store in Windham in October 2014 and a ribbon-cutting at their newest location Scarborough is scheduled to take place around May 15. "We're also looking at opening another store in the Ellsworth area this fall," Scott said. "The

growth has been phenomenal." One of the major advantages of heat pumps is their simplicity. "They're like a bicycle: they only have a few moving parts, so they're basically trouble-free," Scott said.

A heat pump moves warm air from one place to another, to where it's needed – or not needed – depending on the weather conditions and owner's preference.

Scott points out that even ground that's frozen solid has heat energy that can be extracted. "The pumps move heat from one place to another instead of generating it," he said. "That's what makes them more energy efficient."

Even though fuel oil prices dropped considerably last winter, there was no slowdown in heat pump sales at Dave's World, Stone said. "Realistically, oil prices probably won't remain low for an indefinite period of time," he said. "Heat pumps are a long-term investment."

This is also the ideal time of year for heat pump installation as temperatures moderate and homeowners start thinking about long-term improvement projects.

Appointments can be made for in-home estimates on Mitsubishi Electric and Fujitsu heat pumps by visiting www.davesworld.com and clicking on the "Request a Free Estimate" link on the toolbar.

Scott said his company anticipates a very busy season. "We'll probably install 2,000 units this year, which will be a new milestone," he said. "We have a loyal customer base and it continues to grow."

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MITSUBISHI ELECTRIC SETS THE STANDARD – Matt Scott of Dave's World in Dover-Foxcroft show off the new Mitsubishi Electric M-Series multi-zone system. (Eastern Gazette photo – Mike Lange)

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thecraftyspace14@gmail.com

Perkco Supply, Inc.

1326 Exeter Road, Exeter, ME 04435

Gardeners' Specials

- Potting Soil
- Composted Manure
- Top Soil
- Lime
- Mulches
- Fertilizer
- Dehydrated Manure
- Garden Tools
- Seed Starter Trays
- Peat Moss
- Pro-Mix
- Vegetable & Flower Seeds (packaged or bulk)

5 or more bags
Peat Moss \$10⁶⁵ ea. reg \$11.10

5 or more bags • 3.8 cu. ft.
Pro Mix \$26⁷⁷ ea. bag reg \$27.89

- Hay
- Shavings
- Fence Supplies
- Straw
- Gates
- Round Pens
- Hardware
- Grain

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Service Agreements

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DELUXE "PLUS"

1. Annual Tune and Service
2. Labor
3. Deluxe "Plus"

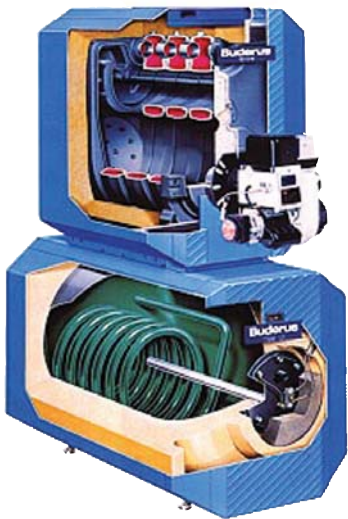
(Deluxe "Plus" Plan covers all parts and labor; see McKusick Petroleum for details)

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(See McKusick Petroleum for complete details)

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