



Minnesota Nursery & Landscape Association

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Monthly Article Suggestions

Minnesota Nursery & Landscape Association

January

Business, Agriculture

Trade Show Season: As a leading producer of nursery stock, distributor of hardscaping materials, and equipment sales, Minnesota companies aggressively market their materials around the country. January is the primary month when Minnesota nursery growers and wholesalers exhibit at trade shows nationwide to sell their high quality products to buyers in different states and foreign countries. The largest regional trade show is the 2006 Minnesota Green Expo which will take place Jan. 4-6, at the Minneapolis Convention Center. The show includes 90 educational seminars and over 900 trade show booths and exhibits. Visit www.minnesotagreenexpo.com for further information.

Education, Environment, Lifestyle

Scholarships: Each January, the MNLA Foundation awards college scholarships worth over \$20,000 to promising young people planning a career in horticulture or landscaping. It's just one of the many ways the industry contributes to Minnesota's future and the next generation of green industry leaders.

February

Business, Agriculture

Home & Garden Shows: Many MNLA members take the months of February and March to participate in home and garden shows throughout the region showcasing and selling their products and services to consumers. Landscaping companies and garden centers often spend days ahead of these shows constructing spectacular indoor display gardens and landscapes.

Business, Agriculture

Greenhouse Production Gears Up: Though the weather often suggests otherwise, Minnesota nurseries and greenhouses are getting ready for spring. That means annuals, perennials, trees, shrubs and a whole lot more. Local garden centers will soon have the newest varieties and ideas for homeowners.

March

Gardening, Environment, Lifestyle

Water Garden Spring Cleaning: With spring on the way and summer not far behind, it's time for water gardens to reemerge as refreshing focal points. Wake up your water feature by removing decomposed debris, give walls a quick rinse leaving most of the algae to ensure a healthy pond environment, and refill the pond. Control water clarity by adding plants. Regular plant pruning enhances the ponds appearance and controls algae. Keeping water gardens clean is a matter of preventative maintenance so start early!

April

Education, Environment, Lifestyle

Arbor Day: The last Friday in April mark's the Minnesota Arbor Day celebration, which focuses on the benefits of trees. The Minnesota Nursery & Landscape Association and the National Arbor Day Foundation will again join forces to promote the importance of planting and caring for trees by inviting all fifth-grade students in Minnesota to showcase their artistic talents by creating posters reflecting the theme, "Trees are terrific...in All Shapes and Sizes!" Curriculum guides are sent

to elementary schools throughout Minnesota to help the fifth-grade students learn about and appreciate the environment. The MNLA will conduct an official tree-planting ceremony at the school of the state winner during Arbor Day week.

Business, Real Estate

Landscaping & Home Improvement: Smart homeowners know that a dollar invested wisely in landscape improvements can yield significant returns when it comes time to sell – and immeasurable satisfaction in the meantime. What landscaping trends are hot this year?

Education, Environment, Lifestyle

National Lawn & Garden Month: The beginning of spring means warmer weather and a greater opportunity to refresh your lawn and garden. Report on simple lawn care tips such as fertilizing, raking, or hiring a landscape management company.

May

Education, Environment, Lifestyle

GardenMinnesota.com: For gardening tips throughout the year visit Minnesota's online gardening resource. The website was spearheaded by the Minnesota Nursery & Landscape Association. Program partners are the University of Minnesota Extension Service and the Minnesota Grown program. The website contains the following features: Locate an expert, award-winning landscapes, gardening calendar, plant of the month, and ask a certified professional.

General Consumer, Gardening, Lifestyle

Visit your Local Garden Center: As the weather heats up, your yard and garden is ready for some extra attention. Look to your local, independent garden center for an assurance of quality and integrity. Local garden centers have horticulture specialists who can help you choose plant material that will thrive in Minnesota. Plant material availability varies seasonally and by region. National magazines feature appealing gardens, but you should only purchase plants that will survive the unique Minnesota climate. Consult with the garden center experts for winning choices and the newest trends.

June

Gardening, Environment, Lifestyle

Kid-friendly Landscapes: It's time for you and your family to get out into the yard and garden. Just because you have children doesn't mean sacrificing grown-up pleasures like entertaining areas or peaceful respites. If you have very young children it may take flexibility and patience, but the careful forethought and planning of a Minnesota Nursery & Landscape Association professional can help you create an outdoor environment both you and your children can enjoy. Incorporate a gazebo or closed benches to store toys, tall grasses and trees for games of hide-and-seek, water features for splashing, and a sandbox for hours of entertainment.

July

Education, Environment, Lifestyle

Water and the Landscape: Drought and population growth have stressed water resources to the limit, so many city governments enforce water bans during July and August in Minnesota. However, the very plants and trees damaged or destroyed by watering bans moderate the effects of harsh climatic conditions: Trees absorb as much as 85 percent of the sun's direct heat, grassy areas are about 25 percent cooler than around dead grass or concrete, and a healthy lawn cools a building at the same rate as a one-ton air conditioner. If you're tired of hauling hoses and sprinklers around and trying to water on the appropriate day of the week, consider a professionally designed and installed landscape irrigation system that will regulate the schedule and water amount for you with the touch of a button.

August

Education, Environment, Lifestyle

Minnesota State Fair Exhibit: Each year MNLA builds a garden in the Agriculture/Horticulture building at the Minnesota State Fair in August. The fair attracts over 100,000 consumers daily who have the opportunity to pick up a free copy of the MNLA consumer directory. Education is the focus of the MNLA booth teaching consumers about the lifecycle of a tree, shrub or perennial from seed to a residential yard.

September

Business, Agriculture

Minnesota Statistics: Minnesota's nursery and landscape industry is generating a lot of "green" – annuals, perennials, trees, shrubs, lawns, and dollars. The state's nursery and landscape companies generate yearly sales of more than \$2.1 billion. There are approximately 3,000 family-owned companies in Minnesota that comprise the professional nursery and landscape industry. Minnesota's nursery and landscape exports total \$100 million, with much of that being tree and shrub sales across the nation and to Canada, as well as sales of landscape services in neighboring states.

Gardening, Lifestyle

Fall is for Planting: Fall planting gives new plants a chance to establish a strong root system. Plants entering dormancy are not under pressure to produce top growth and blooms. Most perennials flower in the spring or early summer, but if planted during these seasons may not have adequate time to bloom. If you enjoy the fragrance and look of tulips, daffodils, and other spring blooming bulbs, fall is the perfect planting time.

October

Gardening, Lifestyle

Winter Preparation: Use the following tips from the Minnesota Nursery & Landscape Association to get your landscape ready for the approaching Minnesota winter:

- Clean garden beds and work compost into soil for spring plantings.
- Remove dead annuals and add them to compost.
- Cover tender roses before temperatures dip below 25 degrees.
- Rake and recycle leaves for better air circulation and lawn-disease control.
- Mow lawn until frost stops growth – tall, matted grass encourages snow mold.
- Wrap young and thin-barked trees to protect against sunscald and animals.
- Remove garden debris after the first frost to help minimize soil diseases and insects.

November

General Consumer, Business, Agriculture

Happy Holidays: Thanksgiving plants, fall color arrangements and outdoor decorations are fashionable again as this food-dominated holiday reinvents itself each year. The big news in the nursery and landscaping industry is harvesting and shipping poinsettias, holly, wreaths, and Christmas trees in time for the December rush at local garden centers.

December

General Consumer, Business, Agriculture

All Decked Out: From poinsettias to Christmas trees and wreaths this is a month when MNLA shines. The MNLA along with the Minnesota Christmas Tree Association donates Christmas trees, wreaths, and poinsettias to families of National Guard members overseas at a local armory. The MNLA is also responsible for decorating the Rotunda of the Minnesota State Capitol with holiday cheer.