

2025

# SPRING HOME & GARDEN

*Spirit of Bainbridge*



## Sand and Compost and Worms, Oh My!

By Anne E. North

Oh, it feels delightful to get our hands in the dirt!

We have cautiously done our garden and yard clean-up. I say "cautiously" as we have tried to make use of the warm days while not disturbing places where critters may have over-wintered. But we've witnessed several bees and similar pollinators and that makes our efforts worthwhile. It's a balancing act, folks!

We trenched our garden and placed sand, perlite and compost in the trench, then covered it and bought worms to do the work. After waiting a couple of weeks, we turned the soil again and it stands at the ready to receive our vegetable plants. My "gardening manicure" of dirt under my fingernails reminds me to be diligent in wearing my garden gloves.

Slowly the trellises and containers come out of the garage, and are placed strategically for optimum sunshine.

We saved our potting soil over the winter in a clean 45-gallon trash bin. We added perlite and fertilizer and some new potting soil to get the most for our hard-earned dollars. And we started flowers from seed this year, as the cost for planting eight hanging baskets and several containers became a bit much. Fingers crossed they do well!

Our chives, gifted by a sweet friend, survived the winter and are flourishing. Our lavender plant, too, is greening near the patio as a bug repellent plant. We've added several marigolds in a container, again as a bug repellent.

Tender shoots have been spotted on the rose bush and are lovely! Green buds and then blossoms have appeared on our apple tree, lilac bushes, as well as our European Larch Tree, a deciduous evergreen. (See more on this on page 23!) Tiny buds have appeared on the hydrangeas, and our serviceberry tree, but my favorite is the delicate pink of the peach tree! I sometimes think of the line from the movie "Steel Magnolias" about Julia Roberts's wedding colors — not simply pink but "blush and bashful." Tiny purple hyacinths, yellow and purple tulips as well as bright green Creeping Jenny add to the kaleidoscope of color! Each new bud is a thrill and testament to warmer temps.

Indoors, our seedlings are a daily amazement. Just four days after planting, the bok choy sprouted, followed by onions, tomatoes and cucumbers! A neighbor gave us a German Chamomile plant, directing us to wait for the flowers and then dry them and use for a relaxing tea. Our experiment with "kitchen scraps gardening" is a wonder — celery and red onion are doing well. The jury is still out on the romaine lettuce. Our spider plant has produced many "babies" and our cactus is now officially a Thanksgiving/Christmas/Easter cactus, as it has bloomed thrice since last fall!

While we tap our feet, impatiently waiting for the last frost date to pass before planting, there are a dozen small projects to keep us occupied. Putting the rain gauge in place and recording, hopefully, one inch per week during the growing season. Fixing a fence and stabilizing it, repairing a stone border wall, cleaning out front flower

beds and trimming back Dracaena spikes, mixing the container potting soil, filling window boxes, tending indoor seedlings and planting more at two week intervals. Whew! Gardening and simple yard chores find us mumbling, "I wish I was 20 years younger!" But the beauty of nature and the anticipation of home-grown vegetables keeps us moving forward, folks!

During my 35 years of gardening — which coincidentally parallels the 35 years of this newspaper! — I have been challenged by my children to try one new plant each year. And, oh, how I've tried to meet that challenge! This year, we are trying potatoes! I found an interesting way to utilize a couple of plastic laundry baskets with broken handles, layering straw, soil/compost, then seed potatoes (planted with the eyes pointing upward). We'll see if the effort matches the cost of buying potatoes at the grocery!

And while we're busily looking down at the earth and flowers and plants, we remind ourselves to look up at the sky, especially for those mesmerizing sunsets. The salmon-colored underbellies of the deep purple clouds are a wonder!

Breathe in the beauty and wonder of this season, folks!

***"To plant a garden is to believe in tomorrow."***

***Audrey Hepburn***

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*Scraplog*

Slightly East of Eden

By Mary C. Ryan

This is my year. I just know it. No more disappointments. No more hand wringing. No more sleepless nights wondering what could possibly have gone wrong. I'm heading for glory this time. Watch my smoke!

Yes, indeed. It's gardening time. We're getting more daytime and I haven't seen any snow for a couple of weeks. The window sill over my kitchen sink is covered with little flats containing numerous green sprouts of this and that, soaking up whatever sunshine manages to get through the clouds on any given day and reminding me to water their little roots as I do the dishes. And they are doing well, thanks for asking.

The past two years have been fraught with disappointment. The same window, the same little flats, but oh such different results! Seeds would sprout and then, like a car with a dying battery, just grind to a halt. It mattered not what kind of soil I used, how frequently I hydrated them, how much sunshine came through the window. It was just plain sad.

But things are looking up. I am now seeing not only second leaves, but thirds! The potting soil I purchased seems to be more conducive to growth. So instead of looking at disaster, I am actually planning to move my treasures outside.

I have developed a little different strategy for 2025 because I think those previous sprouts may have been put off a little due to my overly ambitious plans. It's hard to rise to the status worthy of a botanical garden when all you want to be is a pretty little nasturtium. Here's what I'm thinking:

- I have added a bag of compost to my table top garden and mixed it in well.
- I bought a waist-high planter so I can eliminate the need for a collection of different size containers. I liked the look of that but it just took too much energy.
- Three or four tomato plants will suffice.
- I am not planting zucchini. I had a jungle last year, half expecting Tarzan to come swinging through the stalks.
- I have decided that I'm no longer Ms. Nice Guy. It once seemed cruel to plant all those seeds and then yank more than half of them up just when they were starting to grow. One year I had a raft of oregano that nearly rivaled the Garbage Patch in the Pacific Ocean. I need to develop a thicker skin.
- I have purchased netting and am determined to keep those pesky little rodents at bay.
- Six small gladiolus bulbs are going into a large pot. I bought them at the dollar store so it's not a big investment loss if they don't survive. I plan on being surprised.
- My faithful garlic is already up a foot or so. It never disappoints.

And that's it. If I'm successful, however, don't look for me at the Geauga Fresh Air Market in a month or so. Baby steps.

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Steven Smylie, President of Smylie One says, "I can honestly tell you that the question I hear most often is, 'Do I really need yearly maintenance on my cooling system?' Ever since I was a little guy going to work with my dad on Saturdays, the importance of regular air conditioning maintenance has been imbedded into my soul. In fact, my father constantly would tell me, with a broad smirk across his face, that if it weren't for the constant influx of repairs due to the lack of maintenance, he wouldn't be able to pay the bills. I understood, from that moment on, the benefits of a properly tuned up and inspected cooling system, as well as the consequences of not having one!"

All air conditioning manufacturers recommend that annual inspections and maintenance be performed by a factory authorized company. At Smylie One all of our technicians are NATE Certified and we are a Bryant Factory Authorized Dealer. This simply means that we are qualified to work on any and all systems that are installed and that we have the required number of staff that has passed NATE Certification testing. These same manufacturers also have language in their warranties that say that any damage to their units due to improper or negligent maintenance is not covered under their warranty. So, if nothing else, please be aware of this stipulation! It does not necessarily mean that the manufacturer will not honor a warranty or that your warranty will be voided if you neglect maintenance, but why risk it?

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You can find more information about Smylie One at [www.smylieone.com](http://www.smylieone.com) or give them a call at 440.449.HEAT (4328).

Our next issue will be delivered May 23, and will include our fifth *Spring Home & Garden Guide*, our *Summer Pet Guide* and our *Summer Fun Guide*.  
 Editorial Deadline is April 18. Advertising Deadline is April 23.  
 For more information, email us at [spiritofbainbridge@gmail.com](mailto:spiritofbainbridge@gmail.com).

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*Delight Your Senses this Summer!  
CV Herb Society Sale May 17-18*

The Chagrin Valley Herb Society will be having their annual Herb and Plant sale on Friday May 17 from 1-3 p.m. and Saturday May 18 from 9 a.m. - 3 p.m. at the Bainbridge Library. There will be herbs from local growers and a wide array of herbs and plants from members' gardens. This sale helps to rebuild and maintain the herb gardens and tea house at the library.

Are you looking forward to making pesto this summer? There will be several different varieties of basil, as well as curly and flat leaf parsley, both of which make a great substitute for basil! Other offerings include varieties of tarragon, sage and thyme - all of these herbs pair well with poultry and fish. If you want more color in your garden, nasturtiums and calendula are perfect choices.

For a complete listing of the herbs for sale and recipes visit the CVHS website: [chagrinvalleyherbsociety.org](http://chagrinvalleyherbsociety.org).

Please stop in and see everything the sale has to offer, including advice from gardening experts!

CVHS appreciates donations of any amount in order to support our mission of education and beautification of the library gardens. The club will soon be adding flooring and benches to the Tea House as funding permits. Upon completion, the garden area will be the perfect place to read a book while relaxing in the Tea House, or meandering through the themed gardens.

Contact CVHS at [chagrinvalleyherbsociety@gmail.com](mailto:chagrinvalleyherbsociety@gmail.com), or on Facebook and Instagram.

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## Spring Plumbing Tips to Protect Your Home and Wallet

As winter thaws into spring, your home's plumbing system needs some extra attention to prevent costly repairs and ensure smooth operation throughout the warmer months. Here are essential plumbing maintenance tips every homeowner should follow this spring.

### Check for Silent Leaks

Start by inspecting visible pipes, faucets, and fixtures for drips or moisture. Even small leaks can waste hundreds of gallons of water and spike your utility bills. A simple way to detect hidden leaks is to check your water meter, avoid using water for two hours, then recheck the meter – if it moved, you likely have a leak. If you have well water, don't use water and listen to see if the water pump kicks on.

### Clear Those Gutters and Downspouts

April showers bring...potential foundation damage if your gutters aren't properly maintained. Remove leaves, twigs, and debris from gutters and downspouts to ensure proper drainage. This prevents water from seeping into your basement or damaging your home's foundation.

### Inspect Your Sump Pump

Spring's heavy rains can overwhelm basement drainage systems. Test your sump pump by pouring a bucket of water into the sump pit – the pump should activate automatically and drain the water. Consider installing a battery backup system if you haven't already.

### Examine Outdoor Faucets and Sprinklers

Winter can be harsh on outdoor plumbing. Turn on each outdoor faucet to check for freeze damage and proper flow. While the water's running, listen for unusual sounds and look for leaks where the pipe enters your house. Don't forget to inspect sprinkler heads for damage or clogs.

### Give Your Water Heater Some Love

Flush your water heater to remove sediment buildup that reduces efficiency and shortens its lifespan. Check the temperature setting (120°F is optimal) and inspect for rust or corrosion.

By following these simple maintenance steps, you'll help prevent plumbing emergencies and extend the life of your home's plumbing system. If you spot anything concerning during your inspection, don't hesitate to contact a licensed plumber. Addressing small issues now can prevent major headaches later.

*This article was prepared for the Spirit by the Bohinc family, residents of Bainbridge and owners of Norhio Plumbing, Inc. Norhio is a company specializing in plumbing and drain cleaning services for our neighbors and friends.*

## Are You an Agent of Discovery?

*New spring "mission" at The West Woods!*

"Welcome, Agent! Your mission today is to discover new and exciting facts about our natural world around The West Woods! As you walk down the trails, you'll see eight total challenges appear on your Mission Map. Once you're close enough, tap them to play. (Remember to create an account and play logged-in so that you can keep track of your challenges and win prizes!) GPD-Spring Part 1: The West Woods Discovery runs April through mid-May. Are you ready? Let's go!"

And with that, you'll embark on a fun, exploratory-based learning experience using the free location-based app Agents of Discovery, with new "missions" available every month and a half. To get started, just download the app and create an account, then open it while standing in front of the nature center and search available missions to play. Anyone who finishes the new mission can then head to the nature center front desk (open daily 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.) to choose a treat from our 2025 Rewards Grab-Bag. Rewards include an exclusive button, zipper pull or pin to commemorate your special Agents of Discovery adventure, or a Geauga Park District frisbee, plastic cup or a flashlight whistle keychain! Every season you complete earns you another visit to the bag; can you collect everything you want before year's end?

For a QR code to download the app, a getting-started video tutorial with Naturalist Trevor, and announcements about each new mission, visit [www.geaugaparkdistrict.org](http://www.geaugaparkdistrict.org) and click Activities, then select Geocaching & Location-Based Games.

For more on Geauga Park District offerings, please call 440-286-9516 between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m. or visit Geauga Park District online via [www.geaugaparkdistrict.org](http://www.geaugaparkdistrict.org), Facebook, X, Instagram or YouTube.

## Water Resources Rate Reduction Program

Do you qualify for Geauga County Water Resources Reduction Program? Geauga County Seniors, age 60 years of age and older, can apply for assistance with their water or sewer bill. Seniors who qualify must have an income of 175% Federal Poverty Level or less and receive a bill from the Geauga County Department of Water Resources (GCDWR) for water or sewer. Call the Geauga County Dept. on Aging, at (440) 279-2130, for additional details and/or to determine if you're eligible. The application period runs from April 1 through May 30, 2025.

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