

# final thoughts...

Loving the outdoors is a passion, a passion that we want to share with others. We want to help more people take the plunge into creating their own personal Escape. We hope you enjoyed our inaugural edition of the Urban Edition.



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- Creating Curb Appeal
- Landscape furnishing
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- Ask The Experts



Issue ONE

Set up an appointment to discuss ways in which we can create a Landscape that you can enjoy and fall in love with. Our design team will spend time with you to fully understand your wants and needs and learn how you are going to use the space. From there we create a design with you as the homeowner incorporated into the landscape project. We strive to make every design unique and we are always looking for ways to develop new and creative ideas that have never been done before.

Urban escapes also has a full maintenance crew. We can take care of any of your landscaping needs. Sometimes yard and garden maintenance can exceed what you believe you can handle yourself. Whether it be lawn mowing or garden maintenance, even refreshing your mulch, we have crews who will professionally take care of your project. We can even set up a yearly maintenance plan so that everything is done as it is needed. This gives us a chance to plan ahead and make sure everything is done in a timely manner. You don't need to lift a finger.

Contact us at **612.964.4283**

[www.urbanescapesmn.com](http://www.urbanescapesmn.com)  
[urbanescapes@gmail.com](mailto:urbanescapes@gmail.com)

## coming soon >>>

### In The Next Issue

- Phasing A Landscape Project
- Vegetable Gardening Trends
- Outdoor Structures
- Changing Needs of your Landscape

A Monthly Insight Into Landscape And Maintenance

# Urban Edition



## Lots of Pots...Spring

Heavenly spring weather is a great incentive to spend time out on the patio. Pick up a few fragrant hyacinth or showy ranunculus in early spring. Plant them with ruffled violas or pretty small grasses. Water when dry, protect from very cool weather and you will be able to enjoy these colorful pots for several weeks. The sunny combos will make your time in the garden even more pleasant.

## Creating Curb Appeal

*Making a good first impression counts!*

We have all heard of the new term "curb appeal", but what is it really? Curb appeal refers to how your home looks from the street. Ever driven by a house and said "Wow" or "I want my house to look like that"? Obviously those houses have a great curb appeal, meaning the way they look appeals to you. Some homes rely on the actual house being unique to create this appeal, but more times than not our homes look very similar to most of the other homes in our neighborhood. We need to find ways to make our house stick out from all the rest. Take a walk across the street and make a list of what you like and dislike about your home. Does it feel inviting, is it well kept, does it feel safe at night, is the yard functional, and mostly would I want to invite my friends over?

There are a few simple steps to creating curb appeal. Plant shrubs that really don't need much maintenance. If you have to trim your shrubs all the time, it's maybe not going to get done enough and then they are going to look messy and that wrecks curb appeal. Create a focal point. Maybe you pick a unique bold color to paint your front door. This focal point now draws the attention away from other things that may not be perfect to this fun color. Landscape lighting makes almost any home feel so much safer in the evening. Being able to see what is going on in your yard or just where you are walking up to the front door is very reassuring to your safety senses. You can also use lighting to highlight landscape that you have. An up light on even the most ordinary tree makes it special. Sometimes taking a tree or large shrub out actually makes the most difference to a home. If your house is beautiful, show it off.



787 Manomin Ave.  
St Paul, MN 55107

set the stage >>>

## Making Your Landscape Comfortable By Furnishing It!

Nothing makes a landscape more functional than having furniture that accommodates your needs and makes it just as enjoyable outside as your comfy living room couch is.



### Umbrellas

One of the best new outdoor products is the cantilevered umbrella. The pole is out of the way and the umbrella can adjust to just about any position you want it to be in!

### Patio Furniture

Perhaps the most important thing when choosing your patio furniture is to make sure that it is weather resistant. The covers on the cushions should be water proof so when it rains the water just runs off. No more wet butts when you stand up. Make sure that the furniture itself does not rust, leaving rust marks on your patio. Using throw pillows is an easy way to add pops of color to your seating area. You can use any of the new decorative outdoor storage bins to keep pillows and other accessories clean and dry between uses.



### Dining Areas

When it comes to outdoor dining you have to make sure that it doesn't take much work to prepare the space. If you have to go out and get the table ready every time you want to use it, you will probably decide that it is just easier to eat inside. Buy a simple cover for the table so it's always clean. Also remember, plastic glasses for your patio parties! We don't need any glass on the dance floor!

## The Accidental Gardener

Hints and tips from someone who is really happy when her fingernails are dirty!

I've often been asked how it was that I ended up a gardener and every time I tell them that it happened by "accident".

I started out like most everyone does. I bought some plants and planted them. Some lived, some died. Some got really huge and took over. Some were eaten by deer or bunnies or in my case pulled up whole by woodchucks who carried them back to feed to their baby woodchucks. Why they were only interested in the expensive plants I will never understand.

In the course of the last 20 years I have dug up and moved most every plant and bush in this yard. There are still a few trees that have remained in the same place but only because I was pregnant when I decided they were in the wrong place and I couldn't dig them up then.

I have learned to be flexible and changeable in my gardening. When oak wilt hit and my mostly shady backyard became a sunny yard I had to move plants and give plants away. When my kids were little and played ball in the street, I had a patio put in at the front of my house, my version of a front porch. We spent many hours there chatting with neighbors, all of us watching our little kids. I planted rose shrubs and lilacs around the patio, whose scent rewarded those who stopped to visit. As the kids grew they moved out of the street and into the backyard.

The roses were munched away by the deer so I pulled those out. The perennials that I had planted started to be trampled by the ballgames now happening in the backyard. I had berms built and put the perennials in there, leaving the middle of the yard for games involving bats and balls.

Now that two of my kids are adults and the other two are teenagers I wanted places for them to sit with their friends (and sometimes their parents) around a crackling fire. I also wanted a place to entertain my friends or relax with a good book on a long, lazy June afternoon. We now have a beautiful patio in our backyard, placed down close to the pond we pretend is a lake. Sunset there is a magical thing. My latest addition is a wandering waterfall fashioned from rocks collected from my yard. The sound works wonders on the noise from a nearby highway. I am also getting smarter and using child labor when I start moving rocks and bushes. I just tell them that it is the best weight training money can buy. Great conversations can happen with your kids on a quiet morning digging in the dirt.

Your yard is another living space that should change as you and your family change. We update and redecorate our houses so why not do that in your yard? Don't be afraid to make changes. Change is good.

I have moved most every plant in my backyard, again. I have added tons more bushes and plants. I have watched where the sun is in the afternoon and where the shade stays all day. Strictly by accident I have learned lots of ways to make things grow and look good. Hopefully, I can help you with what I have learned.

**Chris Lavigne-**  
the "Accidental Gardener"



## New Plant of the Month

There are lots of new plants available this spring. Some of the best include a whole new batch of mini hostas. Varieties include Little Darling and Wheee! Make sure to plant slightly apart from other plants. They like a little space. There is a gorgeous new coneflower called DoubleScoop Orangeberry as well as a whole new line of unique looking coleus. It is called the Under the Sea series. There are 8 new varieties that all resemble some kind of fish. The colors in the Bone Fish coleus are spectacular.



garden advice >>>

## WATERING THE LAWN

*Let it rain. But when it doesn't, it's up to you to give your grass a drink-but don't drown it! If you have a sprinkler system set to water every morning, you're probably overwatering. Lawns react to about 1 inch of water a week and actually prefer a good, long drink rather than short shots. Watering in the morning is best. Sandy soils need more water, more often. Clay soils, less water, less often.*

Here are some other things to think about this spring:

\*Grasscycle! Leave the clippings on the lawn. They'll decompose and WON'T enhance thatch.

\*Control slugs early-they lay dozens of eggs at a time-many times during the season. Use Iron-phosphate baits.

\*Don't cut down bulb foliage until it yellows. Leaves are food factories for next year's blooms.



## Patio Party!

Come join us on one of our installed patio projects so you can see for yourself how much people enjoy not only the work we do but also the spaces that we create!

Our next patio party will be at:  
787 Manomin Ave  
St Paul, MN. 55107  
Sat May 20.2012

For more information go to  
[www.urbanescapesmn.com](http://www.urbanescapesmn.com)

ask the experts >>>

**Q:** When Do I Cut back My Grasses?

**A:** Early Spring, Before The New Growth Starts

Cut back the foliage on your perennial grasses to about 4-6 inches in the spring before growth resumes. When foliage is removed, spring growth will begin earlier. Old foliage left on the plant can delay the crown's warming and growth by as much as 3 weeks.

## Crab Grass Prevention

Timing is everything. You have to apply preventers two weeks before the crabgrass seed germinates. Seriously? How do you know when that is? Simply watch the lilacs. When they are blooming, around mid-May, get to work. Be aware, if you have lawn repair or reseeding to do you can't do that and put down the crab grass preventer at the same time. It prevents all seeds from germinating. Reseed or repair first, then after that has sprouted, put down the preventer.

## Don't Bug Me!-Pests

This corner will be devoted to removing the pests from your landscape. This month, the Japanese Beetle. There is no telling how bad they will be this summer, but you can get a jump on destroying the little buggers. They start out as grubs under your grass. Kill the grubs early in the spring and hopefully the Japanese beetle population will go down. Scotts makes a product called Grubex that works well. Just tell your neighbors to do the same.