

Old Jim



By Dan Caldwell

A note from the Dan Caldwell, author of "One Old Mule." We hope you have enjoyed volume one and volume two of The Story of the Old Farmer and His Mule. Coming soon volume three, the continuing story of The Old Mule and the Hawkins Family! Look for it in early 2022.

Yards to Paradise

by Max Phelps

Trending in Urban Landscaping



The cold or the gloomy day is a good one for some introspection. And for writing a landscaping column about trending topics and designs. Things that are likely to be popular next year. Briefly, we will mention a couple dozen items and styles that appear to be on designers, landscapers, and homeowners minds as we pause and spend some of the long hours of dark dreaming of things to do when it's warm outside again and another growing season rolls around. Many of these mentions may get a whole article devoted to them in the coming year.

Simple and layered. Usually low maintenance, but some actually love the tending of their gardens.

Asymetry. The pair of shade trees, one in either side of the lawn that is divided by a straight path to the street or the mailbox is stuffy and dated. A big tree on one side, and a grouping of three shrubs or a bunch of flowers or clumps of grass on the other side of a curved walk is so much more chic.

Divide and conquer! Carve the outdoor spaces into segments. Outdoor rooms can be for recreation or for the quiet zen experience. Different "rooms" for different folks. And different occasions.

Transition from inside to outside is not real clear. Blurring that distinction is trendy.

Add water! Waterfeatures are making a comeback. Remains to be seen if they become as popular as fifteen to twenty years ago. Fire is also in demand, and lighting.

Add "wow" to your place! Graceful sweeping lines, focal points, garden structures, and hidden rooms that open into that lush get-a-way place without leaving the security and serenity of your own yard.

Green walls, living walls. Living rooftops. Container gardens on what was a concrete patio or walk.

Multi-functioning areas, small gardens, including real veggie and fruit gardens. Urban gardening is a "growing" trend! Pergolas and huts are still in style. Succession gardening is in vogue.

Natural materials are replacing plastics and fake stone. Gravel and stone or woodchip paths are replacing concrete ones. And paving materials that don't cause flooding runoff in heavy rains are gaining in popularity. And something called "wilding" is increasingly popular.

Black is a color trend, weathered steel is too. Gazing balls are "last century". Grasses are replacing both lawns and perennial and shrub beds.

Sunken gardens. Sunken patios. (The elevated deck; not so much.) Private spots is the point.

Pay attention to the look from above! The view from second or higher floors of neighboring properties is a concern for having some privacy and as communities get more crowded this concern has grown. (Now you also have to be concerned with drone footage and satellite views!)

Even if you're not one to follow the latest craze, maybe you'll find it useful to know and anticipate things your neighbors may be doing in the coming seasons.

The author is a landscaper. Comments and suggestions welcome. www.rockcastles.net

Granny's Porch

Hello Everyone! On this cold winter morning, I am sitting here having my hot cup of coffee in my favorite chair. It is hard to believe that it will be Christmas in four more days. Christmas has always been a very special time for me from the time I was just a young girl. This week I am going to tell you a memorable story about my special little Christmas tree.

Each year, the children would go into the woods and cut a tree to decorate for Christmas. I can remember how nice the aroma of the fresh pine always was and the enjoyment we had decorating the tree



each year. I wanted that one but the boys wasn't up to climbing to get it for me until this one Christmas when they brought back the tree they had cut and it was the tree I always wanted. They had climbed up into the old Spruce and sawed out the top of my perfect Christmas tree.

Every year, we would decorate the tree and pop popcorn and string it to put on the tree. I told the boys to put more popcorn and decorations to make it pretty. While the girls were popping the corn, the boys were supposed to be stringing it up. When the girls arrived with more popcorn, they saw the boys had strung part of it and was playing a game throwing it at each others open mouth trying to catch it with some of it going in their mouth, while most of it went on the floor but they were having fun and the girls just popped more corn and joined in on their game. After they got tired of playing the game, they strung up the rest of the popcorn and with the lights decorations and the popcorn strung, it was the most beautiful tree I had ever seen. My special tree.

It was always such a joy when my children played a game together and there were many of those throughout the years. We played monopoly, a game called skunk, which we had so much fun with, and many laughs and several others. Like the time my girls Kathy, Anita and Cassie were going to paper the living room to get it ready for Christmas. So I made them a big pan of starch to use to paste the paper on the wall. I get that all ready for them and layed out the paper and me and their daddy had to go somewhere and I figured they would have the living room finished by the time we got back. We were sure surprised to see how their work had turned out some of the living room was finished but the girls was a sight to see. They had starch in their hair and all over them and in the floor. It seems one of them and I am still not sure which one started it, got the starch maybe by accident on one of them and the game started and the work stopped. They threw starch at each other and a lot of it went on the floor. They tried to clean it up before we got back but there was just to much of it. They cleaned the floor up pretty good but you could still see the signs of a starch fight. I made them another pan of starch and they finished the work after they took a bath and washed their hair.

We knew they had had a lot of fun so all we said was girls finish the job and they did.

It is really good to have a big family - we had a lot of fun and good times and still got our work done.

As we close out this year of my weekly column, I just want to say thank you and I sure have enjoyed sharing my life adventures with all of you. I hope to see you back next year on Granny's Porch. Have a very merry Christmas and Blessed and safe New Year! Love, Granny.

Inspirational Thoughts Into God's Word

By Lynetta Hunter

In an obscure way, figuratively and not literally, there are doors that are walked through during the course of life. Some open up to life-changing improvements, while others hang out the welcome sign for destructive intents. (John 10:6-18) Jesus is the door, which leads into a place, where divine benefits are there for the asking. Of course, not all pleas get a response from Him instantly, or all that is asked for, get thrown at someone's feet upon release of the request, sometimes timing is an issue, a decisive move is required, or it's asked inappropriately (James 4:1-6).

Picture someone walking into a vestibule, with nowhere to sit, or nothing to do. From there, another door leads into a place where God's provision and help abounds. There is not a doorknob to pull on and the door doesn't open by pushing. Knowing God hears anyway, the things needed are simply asked for, with no response given back. (John 6:68) Pacing begins because there is nowhere else to go for help. As the person falls on their knees to seek God and try to find an answer or way to receive help from Him, the crying out doesn't get His attention either. So pacing continues, until the nothingness of what has become their life, drains the very hope out of their sincere heart. Eventually, they knock on the door in desperate need of relief from the present circumstance. This is what God has been waiting on and as the Door opens, walking into the unknown is not a concern anymore. Anything has to be better than the empty, lonely life of seclusion spent while in need of Jesus.

Kingdom provision is not always handed out by simply asking or seeking for it, sometimes a knock to signify a readiness to make a change is required, and then the Door will open, allowing entrance into the most life-changing developments ever known to man.

Jackson County
Transfer Station Christmas Hours

Friday, December 24
 Open half a day, from 8:00 am to 12:00 pm.

Saturday, December 25
 Closed for Christmas

Monday, December 27
 Open half a day, from 8:00 am to 12:00 pm