

Summertime

HONEY-DO'S

around the Home and Garden

# Maintenance key to functioning farms

Farmers invest hundreds of thousands of dollars on agricultural equipment, such as tractors, tillers, hoppers, and dozers. Adhering to maintenance schedules can prevent breakdowns and decrease the need for potentially costly emergency repairs.

The family automobile is not the only piece of equipment that requires routine upkeep to ensure it is operating properly.

Life on a farm can come to a screeching halt if farm equipment is not properly maintained. Farmers invest hundreds of thousands of dollars on agricultural equipment, such as tractors, tillers, hoppers, and dozers. Adhering to maintenance schedules can prevent breakdowns and decrease the need for potentially costly emergency repairs.

**Keep it clean**

Cleaning the surface of equipment can go a long way toward keeping it operating smoothly. Use a pressure washer to remove caked-on mud and other debris. Titan iron suppliers



recommend quickly washing equipment after usage so that substances do not have the chance to harden.

### Learn the equipment

Over time, it is possible to employ your senses of sight, sound and even smell to determine if equipment is working properly. Familiarize yourself with the owner's

manual so you can troubleshoot minor problems. Any unusual sounds, odors or responses from the gear should be noted.

### Routine maintenance checks

Routinely inspect hoses, fittings, and seals to ensure they are in good working condition. Be sure

fluids, such as coolant and oil, are at the proper levels. Check and replace filters as needed. Tires need to be properly inflated, and inspect the battery for corrosion or other signs that it may need to be replaced. Check belts for cracks. Tour the exterior of the equipment looking at signals and lights to ensure they are in proper working order. Hardware should be tightened and any missing

pieces replaced.

Heavy farm equipment needs motor oil, hydraulic oil and filters changed more frequently than automobiles. Such equipment also may need more frequent lubrication of chains and cables. Always

check and inspect equipment prior to jobs requiring heavy and extended usage.

### Expect some welding

Have a knowledgeable welder on call to make repairs as needed, or develop your skills to a point where you feel comfortable making your own spot repairs. The experts say cleaning the surface area and removing any paint, oil or corrosion from the metal area that needs repairing can make for smooth, durable welds. Multi-process welding generators and accessories can ensure the right welds for repairs in the field or in the shop.

Maintenance on farm equipment helps keep operations running along and protects expensive investments.

Need help? Call a pro.

## DIY projects that can conserve energy around the house

*While each individual project may not result in jaw-dropping savings, homeowners who follow many of these recommendations may end up saving more than \$1,000 per year.*

Home renovation projects can pay numerous dividends. Renovations can have a positive effect on resale value, make homes more livable for residents and, in some ways, make homes more affordable.

Renovation projects that aim to conserve energy can save homeowners substantial amounts of money. Such projects don't often require considerable effort or even sizable financial investments, which can make homeowners skeptical as to just how much they can save after completing the project. But the scale of a project may have little to do with how much homeowners will save. For example, the U.S. Department of Energy notes that a relatively effortless task like turning back a thermostat between 7° and 10° F for eight hours per day can save homeowners as much as \$83 per year. A more labor-intensive task like planting shade trees saves homeowners an average of between \$35 and \$119 per year.

When looking for ways to conserve energy around the house and save money, homeowners need not necessarily commit to expensive projects. The DOE notes that the following are some energy-saving projects and details what homeowners can expect to save after completing them. While each individual project may not result in jaw-dropping savings, homeowners who follow many of these recommendations may end up saving more than \$1,000 per year.

### Project: Install exterior low-e storm windows.

What is it? Low-e windows reflect infrared heat back into a home. Such windows are coated with an ultra-thin layer of metal that improves the window's insulation ability.

How much can I save? Homeowners who install low-e windows can save between 12 and 33 percent on their annual heating and cooling costs.

Project: Seal uncontrolled air leaks.

What is it? Air leaks let cool air in during winter and warm air in during summer. Caulking, sealing and weather

stripping all cracks and large openings can cut back on air leaks that are costing you money. The DOE recommends hiring a contractor to seal any leaks on heating and cooling ducts.

How much can I save? Homeowners who seal uncontrolled air leaks can save between 10 and 20 percent on their annual heating and cooling bills.

### Project: Plant shade trees.

What is it? If you plant a deciduous tree between six and eight feet tall near your home, it will begin to shade your windows within a year of being planted. Depending on the species of the tree and the home, the shade tree will begin shading the roof within five to 10 years. The DOE notes that shading is the most cost-effective way to reduce air conditioning costs.

How much can I save? Properly planted shade trees can reduce air conditioning costs by anywhere from 15 to 50 percent.

### Project: Insulate the water heater tank

What is it? New water tanks are likely already insulated. But homeowners with older hot water tanks can insulate their tanks with a water heater insulating blanket kit.

How much can I save? Insulating a water heater tank can save homeowners as much as 16 percent on their annual water heating bills.

Even the smallest DIY projects can produce big savings. More information about energy-saving home improvement

projects can be found at [www.energy.gov](http://www.energy.gov).

Printed by Jim Beaver



**THE ROCK YARD**  
LANDSCAPE SUPPLY  
**WE DELIVER**  
**512.549.3555**







**0%**  
Financing\*

**UP TO 48**  
Months

**OR**

**UP TO \$200**  
Cash Back\*

When you're sitting atop the Kioti ZXR, the world is yours. And the way this baby is built, the control and power you'll have to tackle any type of turf can be addictive. With one of the most advanced zero-turn mowers in the market, the most intuitive controls known to lawn-kind, and enough get-up-and-go to make those blades of grass want to cut themselves, if an entire army of mercenaries bursts into your palace, you'll have everything you need to mow them down. **Learn more about the ZXR / ZXR SE mowers at your authorized Kioti Tractor Dealer.**

**\*Offer available March 19, 2020 - June 30, 2020. Cannot be combined with any other offer. Offer based on the purchase of eligible equipment defined in promotional program. Additional fees may apply. Pricing, payments and models may vary by dealer. Customers must take delivery prior to the end of the program period. Some customers will not qualify. Some restrictions apply. Financing subject to credit approval. Offer available on new equipment only. Prior purchases are not eligible. Offer valid only at participating Dealers. Offer subject to change without notice. See your dealer for details. Pricing and rebates in USD dollars. © 2020 Kioti Tractor Company a Division of Daedong-USA, Inc.**



**Kioti.com**

**Paige Tractors, Inc.**  
Just 20 minutes East of Elgin on Hwy 290  
<http://www.paigetractors.com>







# Butler Contracting



**FEELING A LITTLE OVERWHELMED?**

Let Butler Contracting take care of your Honey Do list so you can focus on what matters most.

**Windows and Doors**  
**Roofing   Epoxy Coating**  
**Fences   Solar   Remodels**

Online: <https://butler.contractors>  
Phone: (844) 6 BUTLER



Butler Contracting



*We fix your property and ease the tension of having a stranger in your home.*





# Family Owned Company Aims to Fix Your Property and Ease the Tension of Having a Stranger in Your Home

Since 2014, Butler Contracting has been serving Bastrop County and the surrounding areas. The general contractor offers quality work at affordable prices for area residents. All the work they do is done with honesty and integrity. Butler Contracting, formerly Butler Brothers Odd Jobs, is locally owned and operated, with a team that has more than 30 combined years of experience in the



**Butler Contracting**

Online: <https://butler.contractors>  
Phone: (844) 6 BUTLER

construction industry. Butler Contracting uses a variety of products that provide longevity and in-

crease durability in the work they do. They have an extensive list of innovative products they use to provide high-quality repairs to customers so they won't have to worry about the project again for a long time. Alan Butler started Butler Contracting after doing construction projects as a side job. He quickly realized that Bastrop County was in need of a general contractor who cared about their customers and wanted to do the job right, the first time.

Butler Contracting received the Best of Manor 2019, Best of Bastrop County in 2018 and 2019. Butler Contracting is a member of the Manor, Elgin, Bastrop, and Smithville Chambers of Commerce, a member of the American Fence Association, and the Bastrop County Board of Realtors. Butler Contracting is an approved installer of Nova Tuff Epoxy coating and a Powerhouse Pro-

fessional, as designated by RGS Roofing. Every project that Butler Contracting works on is the chance to make a customer's dream come true. Whether it's screening in a patio or building a privacy fence with a window for the pups, Butler Contracting is here to serve all your residential and commercial general contracting needs.



## Why Solid Ground Storage? Because it's convenient, secure and affordable

- We are dedicated to our customer service.
- We are committed to offering you exceptional value for your hard earned money
- Variety of unit sizes available
- Book online, Pay online and Manage your account online

Managing your account should be hassle free. Online payment options, auto-payment & our free app make it easy to pay your bill. We have storage to suit your every need. Climate controlled storage to protect the integrity of your belongings & drive-up non climate units for easy access. Multiple sizes of each to better fit your budget. We offer an array of shipping & packing supplies to minimize your

stops along the way. We also sell boxes to help organize and make life a little easier. Although our headquarters are based in Elgin, Texas we serve the surrounding communities; including the Austin metroplex.

- Elgin
- Bastrop
- Manor
- Giddings
- Pflugerville

- McDade
- Austin
- Bastrop
- Bastrop County

Moving Van Available

Rent with us and use the truck for FREE!

Up to 4 hrs. at no charge with new leases. Affordable rates for additional use.

(512)281-5779

2 LOCATIONS

505 W. US HWY 290 & 1210 HWY 290

ELGIN, TX 78621

## Get your outdoor equipment ready now to be safe and prepared when bad weather hits

(NAPSI)—The preparations you make now, ahead of storms, floods or hurricanes, can help you recover faster and stay safe during cleanup. The Outdoor Power Equipment Institute (OPEI), an international trade association representing manufacturers and suppliers of power equipment, small engines and battery power, utility and personal transport vehicles, and golf cars, reminds home and business owners to get ready before a storm strikes and make preparations now.

“Weather can be unpredictable, so it's important to always keep your equipment in working order, to have the right fuel on hand and to know where your safety gear is. This is doubly true during storm season, as the weather can change quickly,” said Kris Kiser, president and CEO of OPEI. “You also want to know how to use your equipment safely and use caution when cleaning up.”

These tips can help homeowners and businesses plan ahead for storm cleanup:

- Take stock of your outdoor power equipment. Make sure it's in good working order. If needed, take the equipment to an authorized service center for maintenance or repair. If you need to buy a new piece of equipment, get it before the storm and learn how to use it.
- Find your safety



- gear. Avoid the scramble for sturdy shoes, safety goggles, hard hats, reflective clothing and work gloves, which should be stored in an accessible area with your equipment.
- Review the owner's manuals. Read product manuals to ensure you know how to operate your equipment safely.
- Have the right fuel on hand. Fuel stations may be closed after a storm. Store your fuel in an approved container. Use the type of fuel recommended by the equipment manufacturer. It's illegal to use any fuel with more than 10% ethanol in outdoor power equipment (for more information on proper fueling visit [www.LookBeforeYouPump.com](http://www.LookBeforeYouPump.com)).
- Charge batteries. Collect the batteries for your outdoor power equipment and fully charge them ahead of the storm.
- Use safety precautions. Be aware of fundamental dangers that can occur. For instance, chainsaw kickback may happen

when the moving chain at the tip of the guide bar touches an object or when the wood closes in and pinches the saw chain in the cut. Always stand with your weight on both feet, and adjust your stance so you're angled away from the blade. Hold the chainsaw with both hands. Never over-reach or cut anything above your shoulder height. Have a planned retreat path if something falls.

- Ensure portable generators have plenty of ventilation. Generators should never be used in an enclosed area or inside a home or garage, even if the windows or doors are

open. Place the generator outside and away from windows, doors and vents that could allow carbon monoxide inside. Keep the generator dry. Do not use it in rainy or wet conditions. Before refueling, turn the generator off and let it cool down.

- Drive Utility Type Vehicles (UTVs) with caution. Keep the vehicle stable and drive slowly. Do not turn the vehicle mid-slope or while on a hill.
- Be aware of others. Keep bystanders, children and animals out of your work area. Don't let other people near outdoor power equipment when starting or using it.
- Pay attention to your health. Storm cleanup can be taxing on the body and the spirit. Don't operate power equipment when you're fatigued. Drink plenty of water and take regular breaks.

Keep this advice in mind and you may be better prepared to weather any storm.

**A&B Sheet Metal and Roofing of Taylor**

Family owned and operated

Sales and Installation | Fully Insured

Member: Local area Chambers of Commerce, Roofing Contractors Association of Texas

New Construction & Re-Roofs | Commercial & Residential Metal, Shingles & TPO

FREE ESTIMATES

4804 W Second (Hwy 79W) • Taylor, TX

512-352-7870

[www.ab-roofing.com](http://www.ab-roofing.com)

RENT WITH US & USE THIS TRUCK FOR FREE

RESERVE YOUR UNIT TODAY!

(512)281-5779



**CLIMATE CONTROLLED STORAGE**

505 HIGHWAY 290 ELGIN, TEXAS

SOLIDGROUNDSTORAGE.COM



**RENT EQUIP**

EQUIPMENT AVAILABLE HERE

**PICK UP & DELIVERY**

**EXCAVATORS • TRENCHERS**

GET THE EQUIPMENT YOU NEED, WHEN YOU NEED IT. WE RENT ALL TYPES OF HEAVY MACHINERY AND EQUIPMENT TO GET THE JOB DONE. CALL OR COME BY FOR MORE INFORMATION.



**Elgin GENERAL STORE**

Your One-Stop Service Store for all your Farm & Ranch Needs

Monday-Friday 8am-7pm  
Saturday-Sunday 8am-6pm

1155 DILDY DRIVE • ELGIN

512-285-3210

[www.elgin-generalstore.com](http://www.elgin-generalstore.com)





# BROHN SAVES THE DAY!

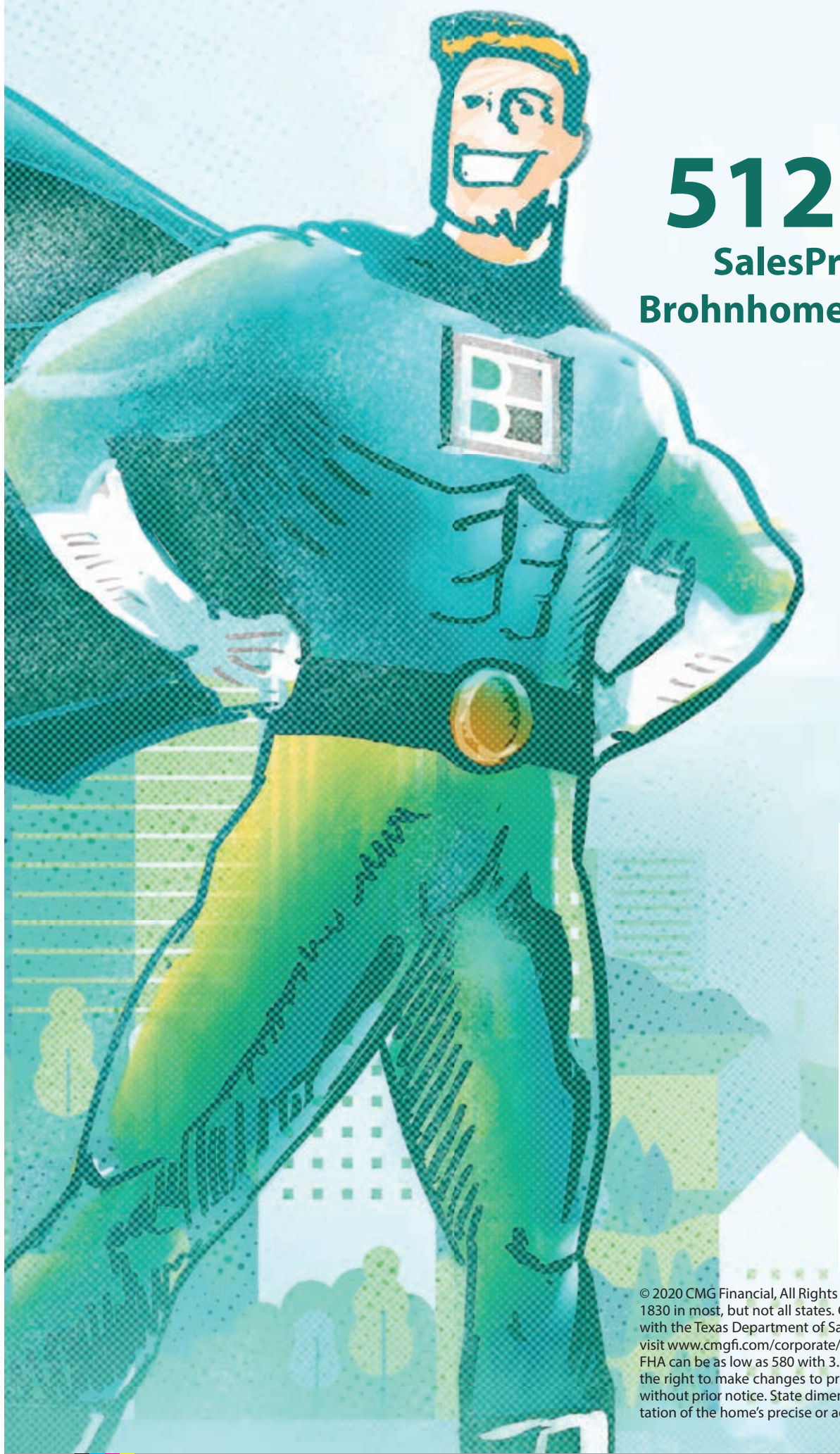
**Credit Score  
Of 580?  
\$0 Down  
Payment?  
Closing Costs  
Paid?**

**“We Got  
You!”**

*Now you, too, can have the American Dream as our incredible homes are made available for everyone! Our commitment to provide superior designs, quality craftsmanship, and unparalleled value is what makes home ownership attainable for almost any buyer.*

**Contact Our Sales  
Consultants Today  
To See What Program  
Works For You!**

**512-515-9199**  
**SalesPromo@BrohnHomes.com**  
**Brohnhomes.com/Brohn-Saves-The-Day**



© 2020 CMG Financial, All Rights Reserved. CMG Financial is a registered trade name of CMG Mortgage Inc., NMLS# 1830 in most, but not all states. CMG Mortgage, Inc. is an equal opportunity lender. Registered Mortgage Banker with the Texas Department of Savings and Mortgage Lending. To verify our complete list of state licenses, please visit [www.cmgfi.com/corporate/licensing](http://www.cmgfi.com/corporate/licensing) and [www.nmlsconsumeraccess.org](http://www.nmlsconsumeraccess.org). All loans subject to credit approval. FHA can be as low as 580 with 3.5% down. All offers may not be able to be combined. DBA Brohn Homes reserves the right to make changes to pricing, floor plans, specifications, features, dimensions, elevations, and incentives without prior notice. State dimensions and square footages are approximate and should not be used as representation of the home's precise or actual size. Copyright © 2014 Clayton Properties Group, Inc. DBA Brohn Homes.



# How home design trends are evolving for social distancing

COVID-19 has brought changes to everything, and home design is no exception. Experts are expecting to see lasting impacts on everything from the materials we use to the rooms we prioritize. Check out these and other noteworthy trends:

**Houses over apartments:** Many people who live in condos or apartments do so to be closer to the action - work, entertainment and shops - and never planned on spending much time at home. But the pandemic has changed that, and more people are going to want a home that offers plenty of room and outdoor space in case they need to self-isolate again

**Self-sufficiency:** A hard lesson we've learned is that things and services we thought we could count on aren't necessarily a sure thing, so items that increase self-reliance will become very

popular. Expect to see more homes with sources of energy like solar panels, sources of heat like fireplaces and stoves, and even urban and indoor gardens that allow you to grow your own produce.

**Outdoor living:** Between playgrounds closing and parks becoming overcrowded, many of us are turning to our balconies, patios and backyards for fresh air and nature. This means we're going to be investing more in our outdoor spaces, with functional kitchens, soothing water features, cozy firepits, and high-quality outdoor furniture to create a much-needed escape.

**Healthier spaces:** Thanks to spending more time indoors and reprioritizing our health, we'll turn to design to help ensure our homes are safe and healthy for our families. We'll see a rise in products like water filtration systems

as well as materials that improve indoor air quality. For new homes and additions, alternatives to wood-framing like insulated concrete forms from Nudura, which offer improved ventilation for healthier indoor air quality and an environment that's less susceptible to mold, will be key.

**Home office space:** Business experts are suggesting many companies will see that working from home is not only possible but offers tangible benefits, like saving money on office space rent. With working from home on the rise, creating a home office space that inspires productivity will be a major project many of us tackle. Luxury home office furniture that feels chic and blends into your décor as well as ergonomic chairs and desks will see a major boost.

**Custom and quality:** With the hit to the economy, people are



Brohn Homes provides superior designs and quality craftsmanship

**“Since 2002, Brohn Homes has been building in the most sought-after areas in Central Texas, with a steadfast commitment to provide superior designs, quality craftsmanship, and unparalleled value. Whether it’s your first home or an exquisite luxury home on acreage, Brohn Homes has something to meet any future home buyer’s needs by making home ownership attainable for almost any buyer.”**

going to be buying less, but what they do buy will be better quality, while at the same time making an

effort to support American businesses. When it comes to design, trends will shift to locally made

furniture, custom-built homes and pieces and materials that stand the test of time.

# Before planting a perennial garden, those new to gardening may want to consider these three tips

Gardening is an engaging hobby that can provide a host of benefits, some of which may surprise even the most devoted gardeners. For example, the Harvard Medical School notes that just 30 minutes of gardening activities burns 135 calories, making gardening a fun and simple way to incorporate more exercise into your daily routine. In addition, scientists have long proven that gardening releases the hormones serotonin and dopamine in the brain, each of which are associated with improved mood.

Perennial gardens can be especially attractive to seasoned gardeners and novices. Perennials are plants that come back year after year, and committing to a perennial garden can ensure people stick with gardening for the long haul, reaping all of the rewards that come with making such a commitment. Before planting a perennial garden, those new to

gardening may want to consider these three tips.

**1. Make a plan.**

A perennial garden comes back year after year, which means any mistakes you make when planting are likely to haunt you year after year as well. Factors like space and location must be considered before planting. Many gardeners utilize garden planning applications like GrowVeg to make the process of planning a garden simpler and more organized. Such applications can be especially useful for novices

**2. Consider aesthetics.**

Gardens can be awe-inspiring, especially when gardeners consider aesthetics prior to planting. The DIY Network advises gardeners to consider scale before choosing which perennials to plant. Tall plants and wide beds tend to look best outside large homes,

while short plants in small beds tend to look better outside small homes.

**3. Work with a professional.**

Local garden centers can be excellent resources when planning perennial gardens. Representatives at such businesses can offer tips on native plants, which will be more likely to thrive year after year than non-natives. Such representatives also can help you choose the right plants based on the amount of sunlight the plants will likely get after being planted. Each of these factors can be easily overlooked by people without much gardening experience.

Perennial gardens can provide years of joy and inspiration, especially when gardeners give ample attention to certain details prior to planting.



Local garden centers can be excellent resources for gardeners planting perennial gardens for the first time.

# Keep your landscape looking good with less effort

By Melinda Myers

Keep your garden looking its best and reduce your workload by enlisting practices that provide multiple benefits. Your garden will flourish and you'll have more time to enjoy its beauty.

Put your yard waste to work in your garden. You'll save time hauling plant debris to the recycling center and money spent buying bagged material. Use shredded leaves, evergreen needles, herbicide-free grass clippings or other pest- and weed-free organic material as mulch. Spread a one to two-inch layer of these materials over the soil around annual and perennial flowers and vegetables.

Use woodchips and shredded bark to mulch pathways, trees, and shrubs. Consider joining forces with your neighbors, renting a chipper, and turning brush into mulch for your landscape. Maintain a two- to three-inch layer of mulch around these plants. And keep the mulch away from tree trunks and the crowns of the plants.

Organic mulch helps conserve moisture, reduce weeds, and improve the soil as it breaks down. So, you get multiple benefits from this one task while burning a few calories and strengthening your muscles.

Water plants thoroughly



and less frequently whenever you irrigate the garden. This encourages deep roots, making your plants more drought tolerant and pest resistant. Water early in the day to reduce water lost to evaporation. And consider using drip irrigation or soaker hoses to deliver water right to the plant roots where it is needed.

Check container gardens daily. Water thoroughly until the excess water runs out the bottom. Or enlist the help of one of the many container irrigation systems. Consider using a slow release fertilizer when needed to keep plants thriving with less effort. These types of fertilizers provide a slow, steady release of nutrients for balanced growth without sacrificing flowers or burning drought stressed plants.

Don't forget your trees and shrubs. Proper watering will also improve their health. Water new plantings and moisture

lovers whenever the top few inches of soil are dry. Even established trees and shrubs need a helping hand during extended periods of drought. Always water thoroughly to encourage deep, drought-resistant roots.

Keep mowing your lawn as long as your grass is actively growing. Mow high since taller grass is better able to out compete the weeds and forms deeper roots, making it more drought tolerant. Minimize the stress by removing no more than a third of the total grass height each time you mow.

Always use a sharp mower blade. Sharp blades cut more efficiently, saving you time whenever you mow. You'll consume 22% less fuel and the lawn will use up to 30% less water when using sharp blades. Plus, the clean cut will be less noticeable and the wound will close quickly, helping you grow a healthy,

better-looking lawn.

Be sure to leave grass clippings on the lawn. They add nutrients, moisture, and organic matter to the soil. A season's worth of clippings is equal to one fertilizer application. So every time you mow you are fertilizing the lawn and improving the soil.

Finish every garden chore with a bit of cleanup. Sweep clippings, plant debris and fertilizer off walks, drives and patios, so it won't wash into storm sewers. Keeping plant debris out of our waterways is good for us

and the environment.

Melinda Myers is the author of more than 20 gardening books, including *Small Space Gardening*. She hosts *The Great Courses* "How to Grow Anything" DVD series

and the nationally-syndicated *Melinda's Garden Moment* TV & radio program. Myers is a columnist and contributing editor for *Birds & Blooms* magazine and her web site is [www.MelindaMyers.com](http://www.MelindaMyers.com).

## WE HAVE YOUR SUMMER OUTDOOR SUPPLIES

Grass high with all the rain? CHECK OUT OUR SELECTION OF MOWERS





**Elgin**  
GENERAL STORE  
*Your One-Stop Service Store for all your Farm & Ranch Needs*



Monday-Friday 8am-7pm  
Saturday-Sunday 8am-6pm

1155 DILDY DRIVE • ELGIN  
**512-285-3210**  
[www.elgin-generalstore.com](http://www.elgin-generalstore.com)