A close-up photograph of several pink dogwood flowers in bloom. The petals are a vibrant pink with darker pink veins running through them. The center of each flower is a cluster of small, green, unopened buds. The background is softly blurred, showing more of the same flowers and green leaves.

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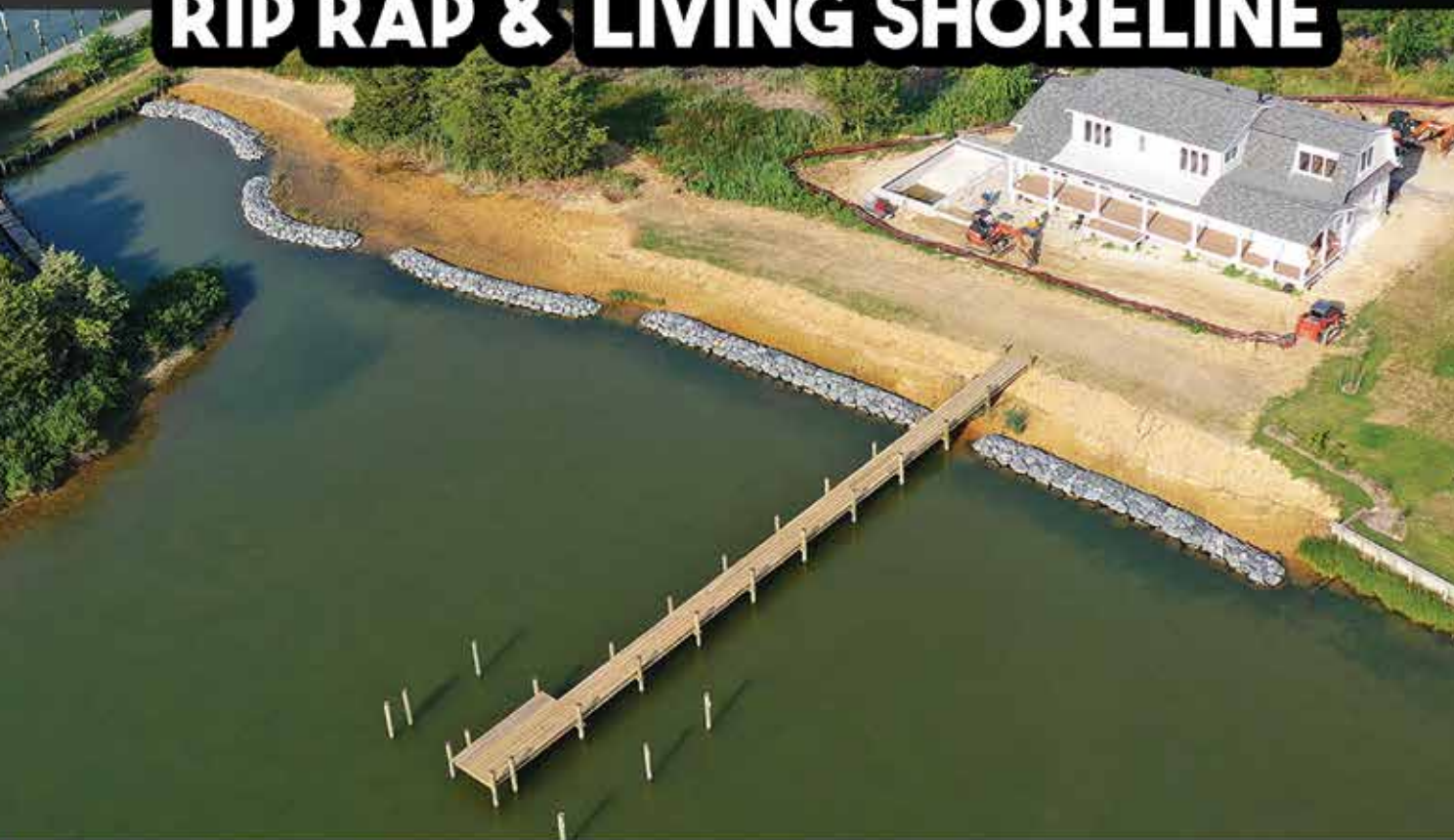
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12 Sweet Caroline homes
Caroline County is rich in agriculture, history and architecture. That will all be on display through the Sweet Caroline Historic Homes Tour on May 17.

18 Dogs and gardens?
If you've ever had a dog, you know they don't exactly tiptoe through the tulips. How is your garden coping with your Rover?

24 'Grow a Row' for needy
If you're gearing up to plant this spring, why not grow some extra to donate to your local soup kitchen or pantry?.



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Departments

Ken-Do Attitude	— Page 6
Sweet Simplicity	— Page 8
Gardening Tips	— Page 10
Antique Discovery	— Page 42
Backyard Birding	— Page 44
How Enlightening!	— Page 43
Food For Thought	— Page 50
Recipes	— Page 52-55
Events	— Page 56-58



Volume 17, Number 9
April 2025

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Spring is finally here; now get busy

Welcome to April! After a winter that didn't seem to want to end, how special is it to finally say, "Happy spring"?

The spring gardening season is in full swing, so let's discuss ways to keep your garden healthy. Your time is very valuable and we all want to use whatever time we have to garden, wisely.

The first defense against plant problems is to follow healthy garden practices.

By doing so, there are huge benefits and lower maintenance.

Remember these suggestions:

- Introduce plant diversity into your garden.
- Try to give native plant cultivars a place in your garden design.
- Buy only healthy, well-rooted plants that are disease and pest resistant.

Ken-Do Attitude



By Ken Morgan

- Choose plants that thrive in our zone (we are in zone 7). Select plants that will thrive in your soil type, because they are better able to withstand insect attacks and diseases to which the species may be susceptible and they are better able to survive normal droughts.
- Rotate crops of annual flowers,

vegetables and herbs.

- Clear out and destroy infested and diseased plants.
- Keep your garden free of weeds that could be carriers of insects and diseases; and
- Finally avoid plants that have been identified as invasive for our area.

I think it is important to follow that old saying, "Give Back to the Earth."

Compost amends the soil, and should be spread over your vegetable garden or raised beds and apply to a depth of 2 or 3 inches and either dig in or rototill it in.

You can also scratch a handful of compost into the soil around other plants.

I suggest using Leafgro or composted manure, or your homemade compost.

(PAGE 28)



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Learn to cope with hardships

Spring is here and while I am almost always happy to bid farewell to the dreary and cold winter days, I have to say that this spring, I am particularly grateful for the beauty of spring with all of its renewed hope and fresh blooms of new life.

While I have always worked very hard to achieve the ideals that I share with you, dear reader, this particular season has been a true reminder that even the best laid plans can go awry when life inevitably has other ideas for you.

How do you maintain a sweet and simple lifestyle when life hands you those proverbial lemons?

Living a simple life doesn't

Sweet Simplicity



By Kristine George

mean avoiding hardship or unexpected events such as a terminal illness or other life altering diagnosis — it means facing them with clarity, acceptance, and hopefully, some degree of peace.

Here are some ways to stay grounded when life takes an

unexpected turn.

Here and Now: Tragedy, loss and illness can truly be overwhelming — and can make long term planning both overwhelming and stressful.

Bring your attention to the right now — what you can do, how you feel, and what is within your control. Remember that no amount of regret will change anything — and neither will worrying about it.

If you need a good grounding hack for those moments when that worry takes over, keep the “5-4-3-2-1” grounding action to steer your mind back into a healthy state of being.

While this comes in handy during moments of (PAGE 38)



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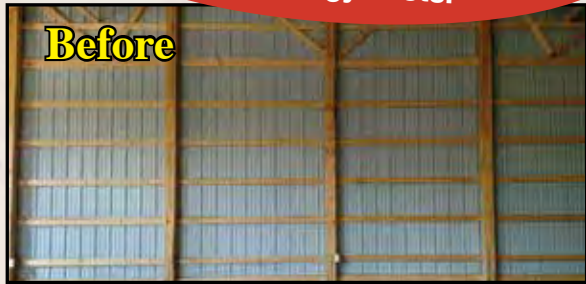
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Tulips need to have at least 12 weeks or more of really cold weather to bloom, and it is best to plant them in your garden in late fall.

(Photo by Ginny Rosenkranz)



Tulips help to introduce spring

April is finally warm enough to encourage the tulips to emerge from the ground and spread their beautiful, colorful rainbow of flowers.

Tulips are originally from Asia Minor where the wild ones still grow and bloom on the mountain slopes.

Tulips came to America in the 1600s, and by 1642 there were settlements in what is now Manhattan that were growing a lot of tulips that had been sent from Holland.

In 1951 the colorful and hardy Darwin hybrid tulips started to arrive in America.

Now you can purchase tulips at all of the box stores and garden centers in the late summer and you can even order them direct from Holland.

Gardening Tips



By Ginny Rosenkranz

These bulbs need to have at least 12 weeks or more of really cold weather to bloom, and it is best to plant them in your garden in late fall.

The bulbs need to be placed so that at least 6 inches of soil is over top of the bulb with the pointed

end upwards.

Both the tulip bulbs and the flowers are edible to voles, squirrels and deer, and they will love to eat all of your beautiful tulips.

You can protect the bulbs in the ground by planting them inside a bulb cage or by laying down a rodent proof wire mat over the bulbs.

A spritz of deer repellents can help to discourage the deer from feasting on the colorful tulips.

Please read the directions and be prepared to use a different repellent every other month.

That said, what types of tulips are best to plant on the Eastern Shore?

When looking at tulips, look for those labeled as perennial tulips which will thrive (PAGE 48)

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For admirers of the Victorian era, Memory Lane, above, is an Italianate-style dwelling with extensive porches, an octagonal cupola, ornate millwork, and even a four-seater outhouse. Marble Head, below, was built in stages between 1803 and 1820.

(Photos courtesy Caroline County Historical Society)

Sweet Caroline Historic Homes Tour set for May 17

Story by Sean Clougherty

Caroline County, known as the “Green Garden County” of the Eastern Shore, is rich in agriculture, history and architecture.

That will all be on display through the Caroline County

Historical Society’s Sweet Caroline Historic Homes Tour on Saturday, May 17.

“This one-day event celebrates the heritage of Caroline County by showcasing not only the architecture of these historic properties but the lives of those who lived in them,” the Historical Society said.



“Guests can admire the craftsmanship of skilled artisans and marvel at the preservation efforts that have kept these homes standing for generations.”

The tour features five properties with seven historic buildings to include a working gentleman’s farm from 1803; the personal home of the late JOK Walsh, an avid preservationist in the county; a colonial/federal period mansion and shipping port, the Hardcastle family legacy home, an Italianate Victorian home, a historic Black school and an early 1800’s log cabin. Four of the five homes are listed on the National Register of Historic Places and some of the homes on the tour have not been open to the general public until now.

“This is long overdue,” said Wendi Grazzini, one of the the tour’s organizers, who noted the last tour of this kinds for the county was held in 1995.

The self-driving tour includes stops at Castle Hall in Goldsboro, Marble Head in Ridgely, Knotts Walsh in Denton, as well as Memory Lane and Potter Hall in Williston.

The Historic Homes Tour not only provides a captivating glimpse into the past but helps illuminate the need for future preservation of historic properties in the county.

Funds raised from the tour will support the restoration of the 1927 Denton Firehouse on the corner of 3rd and Gay Street with the goal of creating more exhibit spaces and interactive displays in conjunction with the Museum of Rural Life on Second Street.

The Museum of Rural Life is also



Castle Hall, top, was built in 1781 by Thomas Hardcastle, an active participant in the Revolutionary War and one of the largest landowners in the region. Potter Hall, bottom, was built by a War of 1812 Gen. William Potter, who married Colonel Richardson’s daughter, connecting two prominent families in U.S. and Caroline County history.

managed by volunteers and is free to the public. The museum will be open the day of the Historic Homes Tour, with exhibits featuring World Wars I and II, Harriet Tubman, The Eastern Shore’s canning boom, and actual 18th and 19th century homes from the county re-constructed within the museum’s walls.

The Caroline County Historical Society is all-volunteer non-profit

organization working to preserve as much of the county’s history as possible.

The home tour committee consists of homeowners, society members and friends working tirelessly to make this possible.

Sweet Caroline committee members include Kathy Holden, Co-chair, Amanda Aslansan, Michael McCrea, Carolyn Spicher, Cathy

and Rick Schwab, Cathy Spence, Diana Lapsley, Erika Gailunas, Jan Galt, Kathy Mackel, Lisa Moser, and Pamela Aall and Don Barker.

Potter Hall was built by 1812 Gen. William Potter, who married Colonel Richardson's daughter, connecting two prominent families in U.S. and Caroline County history. Like Castle Hall, Potter Hall is a telescopic house capturing beautiful views of the Choptank River, once being the site of a robust shipping port.

After visiting the home on a whim, Wendi and Christopher Grazzini purchased Potter Hall in 2020 and moved to Caroline County from Virginia in June 2022.

"I think all of us have felt called to our houses," Wendi said.

For fans of the Victorian era, Memory Lane is an Italianate-style dwelling with extensive porches, an octagonal cupola, ornate millwork, and even a four-seater outhouse.

"The woodwork is beautiful," Grazzini said. "That's the appeal of that house."

A display of hand stitched quilts will be on display inside the home compliments of the Fiber Arts Center of the Eastern Shore.

Castle Hall was built in 1781 by Thomas Hardcastle, an active participant in the Revolutionary War and one of the largest landowners in the region. Part of a larger farm of the same name, the home itself is on a 5.7 acre parcel that was subdivided from the farm in the late 20th century.

The main structure is a three-part "telescope" house, built in stages, with each successive addition being



The Knotts Walsh home remains loaded with antiques and local artifacts.

smaller than the previous one. The original 2 1/2-story portion is the largest of the three parts and stands at the northeast end. The smallest of the three parts is constructed of both wood framing and brick, unlike the rest of the structure which is almost entirely brick.

In some cases, stops on the tour are linked together. When Marble Head fell into disrepair and was about to be burned by the Greensboro fire department, it was Walsh who stepped in, stopped the destruction and negotiated a \$3,000 deal to purchase the house.

Historical society members not only stabilized the building through their own funds but played an active role in finding a steward to purchase the property.

"They cleaned up that house, they advertised, they showed it and they found a buyer for it," Grazzini said.

The home was built in stages between 1803 and 1820.

In fear of losing another historic building, an early 1800's log cabin in Greensboro has since been moved to Marble Head for proper preservation.

Walsh was well-known for his county pride and family property remains loaded with antiques and local artifacts.

"I think everyone has a great sentimental value to what he was able to do for the county," Grazzini said.

Tickets for the tour can be purchased online at <https://caroline-history.org/2025-caroline-county-historic-homes-tour/>

Tickets are \$40 in advance and \$45 on the day of the event.

"Whether you're an architectural enthusiast, a history buff or simply ready for a local cultural experience, this tour promises to leave you with lasting memories of timeless beauty that these homes represent," said the historical society.





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They dig, they pee, they trample

How to garden when you love both dogs and plants

Story by Jessica Damiano

If you've ever had a dog, you know they don't exactly tiptoe through the tulips.

I'm fortunate that none of mine ever had a penchant for digging holes, but my late pit bull, Maddie, used to run through my perennial beds like a weed whacker, leaving horizontal coneflowers and black-eyes Susans in her destructive path.

Her bathroom breaks would also imprint an ever-expanding array of canine crop circles on the lawn.

Fortunately, my little Havanese, Miguel, doesn't pose as much of a threat to my plants, but there are other important elements to consider when planning a garden where dogs and plants can safely coexist.

Let's start with the lawn

The type of grass you select should be suited to your region and your sun exposure. In my sunny Northeastern front yard, that means starting with a Ken-



tucky bluegrass seed blend, which holds up well against foot and paw traffic, and mixing in roughly 10 percent each of urine-resilient perennial ryegrass and shade-tolerant fine fescue.

For further protection, consider incorporating a trample- and urine-resistant groundcover into your grass-seed recipe. I've added clover, which also enriches the soil with safe, nourishing levels



of nitrogen (free fertilizer!) and reduces or eliminates groundwater pollution from my property.

If you have a beagle-size dog or two, this will go a long way toward retaining your lawn's integrity.

But, to be honest, I don't know of any grass that will hold up against a German shepherd or bull mastiff kicking it up on a daily basis. Still, starting with the most resilient grass species for your

growing conditions will give you the best odds possible.

Barriers to entry

Typical landscaping designs often space plants far apart, leaving areas of mulch-covered soil

between plants and shrubs.

Dogs love to run obstacle courses on those bare paths, kicking up mulch and, invariably, straying into planting beds.

Instead, opt for a dense garden style that allows only enough space between plants for the expected mature size of each.

By their third year, most of the gaps will be filled, eliminating the spaces and, along with them, the invitation to enter.

If you grow delicate plants or edibles, situate them in a raised bed or surround them with short fencing or another barrier to discourage entry.

Avoid toxic plants and chemicals

Next, consider safety. Many common plants are toxic to dogs (and cats), so avoid planting them altogether, even if your pet hasn't shown an interest in grazing. A one-time curiosity could spell disaster. Check with the ASPCA for a sortable list of plants (including weeds) that are toxic to cats, dogs and horses, and remove any that your pets could access.

Avoid using chemicals. If you must apply them, keep pets out of the garden until the products have dried or dissipated (read package labels carefully and observe warnings and cautionary statements).

Create a zone for digging and playing

If your dog is a digger, fill holes and lay sections of chicken wire over favorite digging spots, then cover them with a few inches of soil. I've never met a dog that wasn't deterred by wire.

Diggers will continue to dig,



be sure to provide access to a clean bowl of water at all times. It will refresh pups as they play outdoors and, as a bonus, dilute their urine to cut down on burn spots in your grass.

however, so designate a section of the yard where they can do so with reckless abandon. Bury some toys and bones for them to find, and place balls and other toys in there too. After introducing dogs to the area, watch closely and bring them to the digging zone whenever you catch them in the act elsewhere.

Such a play area or dog run would be a beneficial garden addition even if digging hasn't posed a problem, as it would reduce or eliminate plant trampling and lawn damage. Enclose it with fencing or another barrier that allows you to keep an eye on the dog — and vice versa.

Similarly, if space allows, designate a pebbled or mulched potty area. Train dogs to use it by moving scooped poop to the

spot. Their noses will convey the message, but again, you'll have to watch closely and move them to the spot when they show signs of intent to relieve themselves elsewhere. It will take some time, but they should catch on.

Finally, be sure to provide access to a clean bowl of water at all times. It will refresh pups as they play outdoors and, as a bonus, dilute their urine to cut down on burn spots in your grass.

You'll likely have to lower your aesthetic standards a bit, but getting to relish two of life's greatest pleasures simultaneously is well worth the compromise. 🐾

(Editor's note: Jessica Damiano writes weekly gardening columns for the AP and publishes the award-winning Weekly Dirt Newsletter.)

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Consider planting an extra row for the hungry in your garden this spring

Story by Jessica Damiano

If you're gearing up to plant fruits, vegetables or herbs this spring, why not grow some extra to donate to your local soup kitchen or pantry?

The national Plant a Row for the Hungry campaign, launched in 1995, has been encouraging home and community gardeners to do just that every year to help feed neighbors in need of fresh food.

The program was spearheaded in 1995 by *Anchorage Daily News* garden columnist Jeff Lowenfels, who wrote a column encouraging his readers to plant extra crops and donate their harvests.

After seeing the impact that his column had on local food donations, Lowenfels partnered with GardenComm International, then known as Garden Writers of America, to enlist garden columnists all over the country to promote the cause in their own communities.

Since then, more than 20 million pounds of produce, providing more than 80 million meals, have been donated through the campaign by home gardeners.



The national Plant a Row campaign encourages individuals and groups everywhere to plant and donate extra produce for neighbors in need of fresh food.

(Photo courtesy Marvin Makofsky via Associated Press)

“All of this has been achieved without government subsidy or bureaucratic red tape — just people helping people,” according to organizers on the campaign’s website.

And there’s no big advertising campaign, either — just garden columnists and their readers spreading the word.

If everyone reading this column planted one extra row and donated its harvest, together we could have an impact on hunger.

So what do you say?

To participate, plant an extra row or container (or, if you’re short on space or resources, even just one additional plant) and donate its harvest to your local food pantry, soup kitchen, house of worship or informally to a neighbor who could use it.

If you’d like to help even more, consider starting your own Plant a Row campaign with friends, neighbors or co-workers and plant individually or at the office, in a community garden, school garden, prison garden — whatever garden you have at your disposal.

If you need help getting started, GardenComm.org has posted steps for running your own campaign and a listing of existing campaigns to join in your state and town.

But it’s not necessary to join a group. To find food drop-off sites near you, visit AmpleHarvest.org and plug in your zip code.

Before dropping off food, call the organization to confirm they accept perishables (soup kitchens are generally more likely to



If everyone reading this column planted one extra row and donated its harvest, together we could have an impact on hunger.

have the refrigeration necessary for storage than pantries or food banks, but there may be exceptions). 🍷

(Editor’s note: Jessica Damiano writes weekly gardening columns for the AP and publishes the award-winning Weekly Dirt Newsletter.)

Tips for choosing gardening essentials

Story, photo by Family Features

Whether you're a new homeowner ready to tackle the landscaping for the first time or a seasoned gardener looking to do some updating, when it comes to gardening, you simply need the right tools to do the job well.

Consider these tips when purchasing essentials for your tool shed.

- **Shovel:** A shovel with a pointed blade is a good all-around choice for digging, mixing and moving soil. Conversely, a flat-bladed shovel should be used for "cutting" tasks such as straight-side trenches and edging. After narrowing down which style of shovel best meets your needs, check the metal to ensure it's well-constructed and won't bend or break easily. Check fittings such as bolts and screws to ensure the blade and handle are strongly connected and can withstand reasonable pressure. Finally, spend a few minutes testing out the tool to ensure it fits well in your hand.

- **Rake:** With numerous materials and shapes to choose from, finding the right rake can be intimidating. A basic fan-shaped rake with metal fingers is a universally accepted, long-lasting option. Select a model with plenty of give in the fingers if you'll be raking large areas and don't want to damage the ground below. A rake made of firmer metal allows you to work and smooth soil. Purchasing the broadest width you

can comfortably handle allows you to cover more ground, which means less work.

Depending on the space you'll be tending, you may also consider purchasing a garden fork, which has fewer tines than a traditional rake and is ideal for aerating, weeding and turning small sections of soil.

- **Hoe:** Whether flat or pointed, a hoe is essential for a weed-free garden. Flat versions can also be useful for breaking up clumps and hard spots on the surface while pointed hoes make quick work of rows and mounds to protect and irrigate your plantings.

- **Shears:** A variety of shears are available to accomplish a wide range

of garden tasks. Larger shears are ideal for big jobs such as shaping hedges, while smaller pruning shears are meant for snips and sprucing. Quality metal and sharp blades are important features. Be sure to choose a model with a safety latch to lock blades when not in use.

- **Gloves:** Even if you eagerly embrace the chance to get your hands dirty, no tool shed is complete without a sturdy pair of gloves. Choose a material tough enough to protect from thorns but pliable enough to allow for free movement. Proper fit is key to avoiding blisters.

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(FROM PAGE 6)

It is also suggested when selecting fertilizers for your gardens that you use organic-based fertilizers.

Doing so allows for a slower, longer feeding.

Using organic types of fertilizers allows for increased microbial activity in the soil.

This refers to the processes and functions carried out by the microorganisms like bacteria and fungi, and aids in decomposition and nutrient cycling, which converts nutrients like nitrogen and phosphorus into energy and food the plant can use.

Microbial activity is also vital for maintaining a healthy ecosystem. Be sure to apply them before you mulch.

One of the most important early spring jobs should be soil testing and if needed, adjusting the pH of your flower and garden beds as well as your lawn.

Ph is the measure of the degree of acidity or alkalinity. A 7.0 reading is considered neutral, any reading lower is considered acidic and any number higher is to be considered alkaline.

Nutrients supporting plant growth cannot dissolve in soil moisture that is very acidic or very alkaline. If the fertilizer cannot dissolve, they will not be able to be taken in by the plant.

Also, beneficial soil bacteria cannot live in the extremes of either condition.

The pH of soil is constantly changing so it is important to regularly test the soil. Be sure to take samples of soil from several areas of the yard or flower or vegetable bed.

Check specific plants' pH levels as well.

Some plants such as blueberries are very pH-sensitive and will die within two years of planting them if the appropriate pH levels (4.5 to 5.2) are not maintained.

Hydrangea bloom colors are the result of the pH levels of the soil.

If the soil pH is between 4.5 and 5.5, the flowers will be blue, for pink flowers the pH needs to be adjusted to 5.5 to 6.5 and for white 6.5 to 7.0.

Hollies, dogwoods, azaleas, rhododendron and most evergreens prefer acidic soils below 6.5.

Most other plants prefer soil pH closer to neutral (6.5 to 7.0).

To lower pH, we recommend Soil Acidifier by Espoma. To raise pH, use lime. 🌿

(Editor's Note: Ken Morgan is the owner of Robin's Nest Floral and Garden Center in Easton, Md.)

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The first signs of spring are the pink blossoms of dogwoods, but if you're looking for an early blooming magnolia, you'll find it here.

Early-blooming magnolias trumpet springtime

Story by Leslie Milby

When we think of magnolias, our minds often drift off to a warm summer evening with their sweet, soft scent sitting in the air and their crisp white flowers seeming to illuminate under the sun going down.

Maybe our imagination drifts to the south, sipping on some sweet tea.

No need for your mind to drift all that far, though, as most magnolias can delight your senses in

the spring, right here in Hardiness Zone 7, while you are sipping on your iced coffee instead.

The first signs of spring often get credited to daffodils and dogwoods, but if you really want a first flower show-stopper, an early blooming magnolia may be just the addition.

Magnolias have been around for more than 100 million years — so long, that there have even been fossils found, deeming magnolia the first flowering plant.

These days, there are many species and hybrids on the market, of-

fering a range of choices, whether you'd like a smaller sized shrub to accent what you already have in your garden, or have the room and sun for a tall and wide statement tree.

You can also pick from hybrids offering yellows, deep pinks and purples with blooms that range from petite to frisbee sized.

You'll be sure to have the neighbors driving by slower to take in the beauty, so make sure the kids are behaving when they are playing outside.



ng often get credited to daffodils and really want a first flower show-stopper, magnolia may be just the addition.

For a small space, consider the *Magnolia stellata* or Star Magnolia species, whose varieties fall under a small tree or shrub.

They do not feature the typical cupped or “tulip shaped” blooms, but instead have more of a fluffy star shape with thinner and longer petals.

Of all the magnolia species, they are the earliest to bloom.

One of the smallest Star varieties is the dark purple flowered Jane, which typically reaches 5-8 feet tall with a show-stopping 8-inch bloom.

Meanwhile, the white and light pink Centennial is one of the taller

Dogwood offers year-round beauty



A popular spring flowering tree in Maryland is the flowering dogwood. With proper care, the dogwood adds natural beauty to the landscape year-round.

In the spring, the dogwood’s main attraction is its showy bracts. The bracts are commonly mistaken for the flower, but they are actually modified leaves that encircle the true flowers. The true flowers of the dogwood are small, greenish-yellow flowers that bloom shortly after the bracts open in the spring. The

bracts and flowers together are commonly referred to as the flower.

Dogwoods generally begin blooming in April. The bloom duration can last from 2 to 4 weeks. The flower size ranges from 3 to 6 inches across.

The flower color of the native dogwood is creamy white. A naturally occurring variety of the native dogwood, *Cornus florida rubra*, has pink blooms. Many cultivated varieties have been produced from native dogwoods. These range in color from white to pink to red.

Besides the grand floral display in the spring, the dogwood produces luxuriant light-green foliage. The light-green spring foliage turns to a rich green in summer, furnishing light shade in the long, hot days.

In autumn, the leaves turn red or reddish purple. The duration of fall color depends on the cultivar but can range from early September to mid-January. The dogwood’s fall color from year to year is consistent, but intensity varies with environmental conditions. Red fruit can accompany fall foliage. These red drupes are 1/3 inch long, usually in a cluster of three to five and are devoured by many different species of birds.

To round out its year-long beauty, the dogwood displays gray-black checkered bark in the winter. ➡

varieties in the bunch at a height of 25 feet and blooms as large as five inches.

In Maryland, several varieties in the Star Magnolia family will even produce a second round of blooms in the summer.

Another hybrid to take a look at is the *Magnolia x soulangea*, or “Saucer” magnolia family.

With 10-inch blooms, these show stoppers also start to flower in early spring.

Many of the varieties also have a manageable size of a height peak and spread of 15 to 20 feet.

A few varieties can even be kept in containers.

Saucer magnolias have all the pink hues, from light pink to hot pink to pinky-purple and are often bi-color as they bloom.

The most popular variety that you’ve probably seen is the light pink *Alba Superba*.

Looking for an early blooming yellow beyond just daffodils?

The Butterflies or Elizabeth Saucer hybrids both offer cheerful and bright yellow blooms with a scent that is more lemon than sweet perfume.

A quirky variety is the Cucumber tree magnolia, whose blooms look like a cucumber before opening.

Quite hardy, they grow as far south as Georgia, all the way north to Canada, making them popular to meld into other hybrids.

Their fruit (for wildlife, not for you) starts green and then turns red and pink while the flowers are a creamy white or yellow.

For a bold and darker color, one



For a small space, consider the *Magnolia stellata* or Star Magnolia species, whose varieties fall under a small tree or shrub.

of darkest hues you’ll find is that of the large flowered “Black Tulip” magnolia.

It has the tulip shape of a classic magnolia, but in a deep purple-black color, with blooms about 6 inches in diameter.

They’ll be one of your first plants to show their color when spring rolls around.

As one of the first blooms on the scene, it will help attract early moving pollinators so you can achieve having more hummingbirds than your neighbors for once.

Most varieties will prefer a sunny spot with slightly acidic soil if you can make it happen, though some can settle for partial shade, if needed. Well-drained soil is also important.

Depending on the variety and growing conditions, with proper care, they can grow as much as two feet per year.

After their blooming season, you’ll still be left with some interest in your garden.

Some magnolias are evergreen while others are deciduous.

Deciduous varieties are still loved for their look as they feature silvery limbs to add depth to your garden even after blooming season.

Perhaps most important in selection is to research the size of the variety you pick before planting to make sure you leave space for your new friend to reach full potential.

You may also consider splurging on a tree that is a few years old, as some trees can take as long as five years to flower.

A tree that’s had a head start also has a better chance of warding off damage from late frosts.

Have a magnolia already growing and thriving in your yard, but not sure of its type?

The easiest way to identify it is by looking at the shape of the petals and flower form as each species varies quite distinctly.

From there, consider the size and coloring to narrow it down further.

No matter the variety you choose, your magnolia is sure to be a lovely addition to your landscape. 🌿

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Tropical trees, such as this ginseng ficus bonsai tree are best kept indoors in regions outside the tropics.

Be patient, don't be intimidated by growing bonsai

Story, photos by Jessica Damiano

Growing a bonsai is more than just caring for a miniature tree — it's an art, a craft and an ancient meditative practice.

Originating in China thousands of years ago, bonsai was later adapted by Japanese growers who further developed it into the bonsai we know today.

Translated to “plant in a tray,” bonsai is understandably intimi-

dating at first. It was to me.

But as I learned more, I realized that — like any new skill — familiarizing yourself with the basics, having patience, paying attention to detail and being consistent can set anyone on the path to success.

When selecting a tree, consider both your climate and experience level. Chinese elm, jade, Japanese maple and juniper are popular beginner trees; pines and maples are cold-hardy and best suited

to growing outdoors; tropical trees, such as Ficus, are best kept indoors in regions outside the tropics.

The small, shallow dishes that house bonsai trees are sized to inhibit root growth.

Larger pots would hold more soil and water, allowing more space for roots to spread.

That would be counterproductive, as more growth beneath the soil would result in more growth

above it.

Specialized bonsai soil serves a purpose, as well. Its well-draining consistency discourages excess water retention, which often causes root rot.

After bringing your bonsai home, place it in a spot that accommodates its specific sunlight and temperature requirements. You will find that information on the plant's care tag.

Growing a young bonsai into a form that resembles a mature tree requires regular pruning to encourage even growth and to remove dead limbs, foliage and errant branches.

Take your time. Stop periodically to assess the tree and plot your next cut.

Relax. ... Breathe.

Growers often train branches to grow into desired shapes by wrapping them first with protective raffia, then with bonsai wire that is bent into formation.

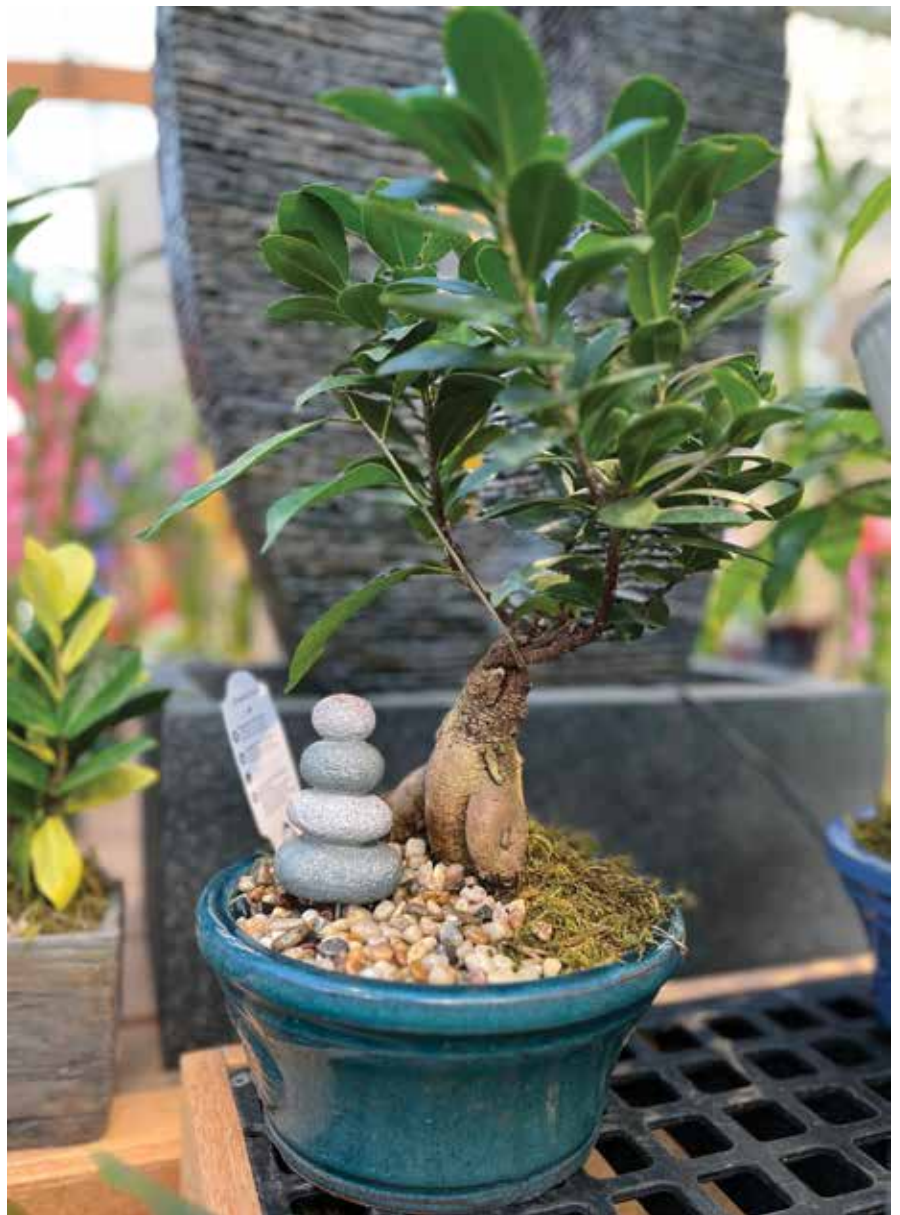
This must be done gently so as not to damage bark, and the wrappings should be periodically loosened and reapplied to protect branches from damage as they grow thicker.

Check the soil's moisture level daily by inserting your finger into the top inch.

When it feels dry at that depth, water slowly until it drains from the hole in the bottom of the pot.

In general, bonsai should be fertilized from spring through fall.

Educate yourself on the requirements of your particular species and its stage of maturity, as each plant's nutritional requirements



Juniper trees are popular beginner trees for people getting into bonsai tree care.

are different and will change as it ages.

And here's where the patience comes in. Instead of a rush to bloom or fruit, as is typical when growing annuals, perennials or crops, the beauty of bonsai lies not in the final product but in the journey.

The tree, which can live for

decades or even centuries, will evolve over time, as will you.

And by putting your personal touches on every shoot and branch, you will imprint your bonsai with your own identity. 🐉

(Editor's note: Jessica Damiano writes weekly gardening columns for the AP and publishes the award-winning Weekly Dirt Newsletter.)

high anxiety, it can be a useful exercise to maintain your daily zen. Name five things you see, four things you feel, three things you hear, two things you smell, and one thing you taste. Another favorite of mine is box breathing. Box breathing, also known as square breathing, is a simple but effective deep breathing technique that helps reduce stress, improve focus, and promote relaxation.

It involves four equal steps: Inhale deeply through your nose for 4 seconds; hold your breath for 4 seconds; exhale slowly through your mouth for 4 seconds; and hold your breath again for 4 seconds.

Repeat this cycle for a few minutes to calm your nervous system and regain focus.

Create daily habits: When our lives become out of balance, it is important to get back to basics. Making small tweaks can make a major difference toward achieving that inner peace. A few easy daily habits to add to your routine include the following:

Single-Tasking: Single-tasking is a powerful approach to boosting productivity and mindfulness. Unlike multitasking, which divides attention and can reduce efficiency, single-tasking helps you stay fully engaged in one task at a time. You will find better focus, deeper concentration, increased quality of work and less stress overall! While that may go against how you have planned your tasks in the pace, you may find, particularly during high stress times, that this approach will make you more efficient in general and help

you really engage fully in each task.

Pause & Observe: When life gets overwhelming, taking time to check in on yourself can be a task you simply overlook but taking short pauses throughout the day can help you break out of autopilot mode and become more present. These 10-second check-ins act as a reset button for your mind and body, helping you stay grounded and aware of the moment. This is a simple but very effective mindfulness activity. First, hit the pause button — stop for a moment, whether you're working, walking, eating, or scrolling. Inhale deeply through your nose, hold for a second, and exhale slowly. Ask yourself how you are feeling. Are you relaxed, tired, energized or tense?

What is happening around you? After a few seconds, go ahead and gently reset. If you're tense, relax your shoulders. If your mind is racing, focus on your breath.

If you're overwhelmed, remind yourself, I am here, and this moment is enough. Go back to whatever you were doing but with a fresh perspective,

Peace Each Day: When life throws unexpected challenges your way, it's easy to be hard on yourself, to feel like you need to be strong all the time. But just as you would comfort a friend in pain, you deserve that same care and understanding. Acknowledge your emotions without judgment — they are part of being human.

And no matter how overwhelming things may feel, life keeps moving forward.

Pain, uncertainty, and fear are never permanent. Even in

the hardest moments, trust that you are finding your way, step by step. You don't have to have all the answers — just focus on what you can do today. If you need some tangible to-do's to help this, instead of a to do list, create a "Let It Go" list. Feel free to channel your favorite Frozen character when you do this. Write down worries, frustrations, or things outside your control. Then, crumple the paper or delete the note — symbolizing a release. While you are crumpling that paper, go ahead and try the 10-Second Smile Trick. Even if you don't feel like it, smiling for 10 seconds (even a fake smile) can trick your brain into feeling better by releasing endorphins. It works! Finally, no matter how rough the day, end each day with a grateful heart. Before bed, think of three things — big or small — that you're grateful for. This shifts your focus from stress to appreciation.

Finding peace in the midst of life's challenges doesn't require drastic changes — it's about small, intentional shifts in mindset and daily habits. By embracing simplicity, practicing self-kindness, and focusing on the present moment, we can create a sense of calm even during difficult times.

Whether it's deep breathing, letting go of what we can't control, or savoring small moments of joy, peace is always within reach.

The key is to take things one step at a time, trusting that life moves forward and that we have the strength to navigate whatever comes our way. 🍂

(Editor's Note: Kristine George is a freelance journalist who resides in Easton.)

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April 9 is 'Cherish an Antique Day'

(Editor's note: DeeDee Wood is the owner of Black Cat Curiosities, an online antiques research and sales venue.)

Although the exact origins and creator of the annual April 9 "National Cherish an Antique Day" are a bit unclear, it has been celebrated since around 2019 or perhaps a few years earlier.

The celebratory day aims at honoring and appreciating history, craftsmanship, heirloom heritage and memories of a by-gone era.

A day set aside to cherish an antique is an encouraging activity to observe items we might often overlook in our daily lives.

Inherited items, furniture, books and more have a special day in April that highlights family and friends to appreciate, identify, research, learn and ask questions about particular items that are in their lives or homes.

Antiques are also a great way to learn about cultural heritage and observation, and affords people willing to participate in the day the ability to learn of industrial standards of a particular time period, art, design elements and the technology of the era.

There is a vast knowledge waiting to be discovered by researching.

The utilization books, media, social sites and databases, as well as other modern tools, aid in the discovery of the past with a representative object.

On National Cherish an Antique

Antique Discovery



By DeeDee Wood

Day, people could celebrate this day by a visit to an antique shop or museum to appreciate, value and learn about antiques from many time eras.

The opportunity for a visit such as this affords the visitor to discuss these topics with seasoned professionals at an antique shop, or museum staff, to unlock even more data in the quest for details of objects of the past.

Other ways to celebrate and honor an antique on this special



day would be to learn about antique appraising-the characteristics, markings, condition and aging of antiques that determine their market value, as well as ways and techniques to properly clean and care for these heirlooms.

Many techniques and inventions over time have changed and enhanced how artifacts in museums and antiques in private collections maintain longevity in a harsh or exposed environment.

Another important aspect of this antique celebration day is to connect with stories of your own personal family heirlooms, hear the stories, and appreciate the past in your own family tree.

Every object, as they say, has a story. As well, studying and learning about cultural relics of the past, historically significant items, or researching of such objects opens a door to the rich heritage of tangible items that represent periods of time.

Remember antiques on April 9th this year, as you take that forgotten vase off of a shelf and clean it, open a very old book your uncle gave to you years ago, or find yourself entering into that antique store you pass by daily on your way to work.

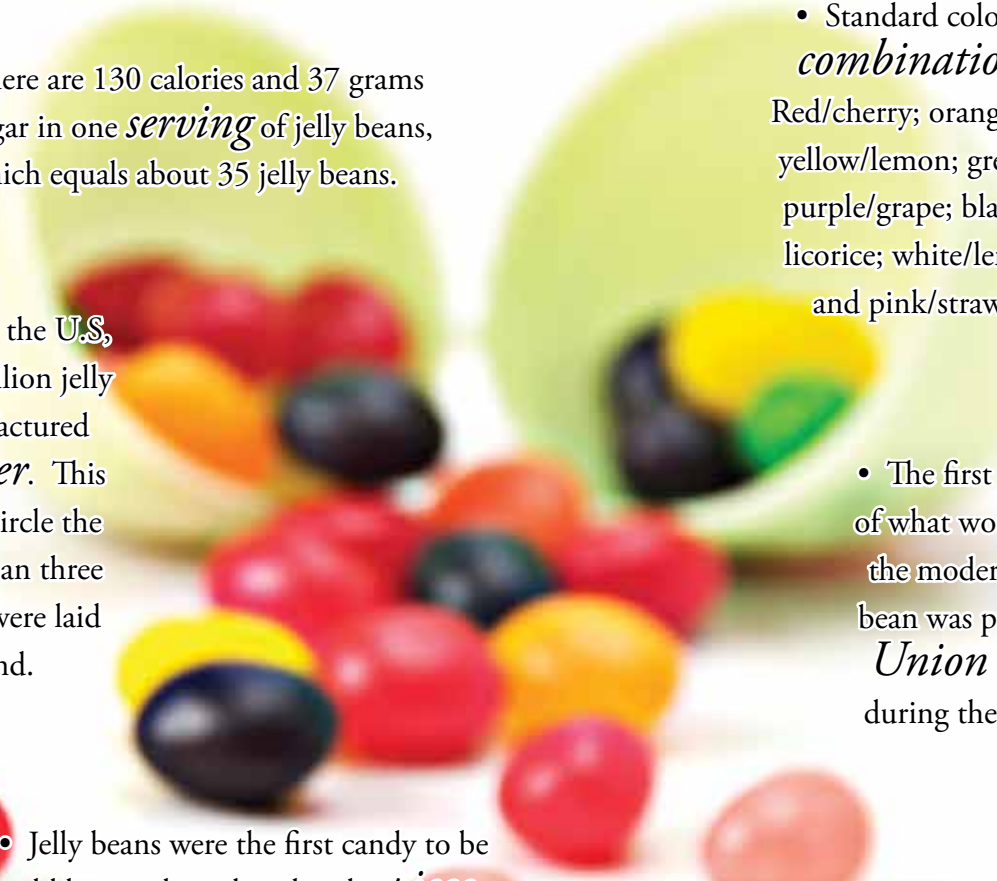
These objects bridge our past and present with the rich tapestry of innovation, ingenuity and heritage.

Relish the celebration of layers of history and tangible examples of culture and creativity. ➡

How Enlightening!

Good thing, small package

The noble jelly bean has become synonymous with Easter and spring

- 
- There are 130 calories and 37 grams of sugar in one *serving* of jelly beans, which equals about 35 jelly beans.
 - Each year in the U.S., there are 16 billion jelly beans manufactured just for *Easter*. This is enough to circle the Earth more than three times if they were laid end to end.
 - Jelly beans were the first candy to be sold by weight rather than by *piece*.
 - They were *President Ronald Reagan's* favorite candy and he used them to help him quit smoking when he was the governor of California. As part of his first inauguration in 1981, 7,000 pounds of jelly beans were ordered and distributed.
 - Standard color/flavor *combinations* are: Red/cherry; orange/orange; yellow/lemon; green/lime; purple/grape; black/black licorice; white/lemonade; and pink/strawberry.
 - The first appearance of what would become the modern day jelly bean was promoted to *Union soldiers* during the Civil War.
 - It takes seven to 21 *days* to make a jelly bean.
 - Jelly bean producers use a process called '*panning*' which creates the hard outer shell while preserving the gooey middle.



By Suzette Stitely

(Editor's note: Suzette Stitely is a member of the Talbot Bird Club and travels extensively for birdwatching.)

Spring is here and that means the return of the Mid-Shore's iconic bird — the osprey.

Every year around St. Patrick's Day, Osprey make their return from South America to once again fill our skies with their rhythmic ascending and descending, "cheep, cheep, cheep, cheep, cheep, cheep" calls.

Ospreys have rich dark-brown upper parts with white underparts and a white head with a wide, brown eye stripe.

You can see ospreys with a quick stop near water anywhere on the Mid-Shore.

Osprey are commonly seen sitting on their huge stick nests which they build on trees, platforms in the water, or on large highway signs along Route 50.

Ospreys have adjusted to using many human structures to build their nests, so long as it's safe and



Ospreya are the only raptor that plunge-dive to feed. They will hover until spotting fish and using their excellent vision dive feet-first to catch fish near the surface with amazing accuracy.

(Photo by Suzette Stitely)

near water.

On the Chesapeake Bay, ospreys have almost entirely shifted nest location from trees to man-made structures.

Ospreys are usually monogamous and mate for life.

The male chooses the site and may start to build the nest.

He'll carry the bulk of the sticks to the nest where the female arranges them to her liking.

Once the nest is built, an average of three eggs is laid and they are incubated mostly by the female.

Once hatched, the young are fed small pieces of fish and need 50-55 days before they are ready to leave the nest.

Studies are showing that birds on the Chesapeake Bay now need longer to fledge; possibly linked to

a shortage of food.

In fact, the decrease in the Menhaden population due to over fishing is leading to decreased survival of osprey young on the Chesapeake Bay.

Ospreys are the only raptor that plunge-dive to feed. They will hover until spotting fish and using their excellent vision dive feet-first to catch fish near the surface with amazing accuracy.

Powerful wing strokes are then needed to take off after catching the fish while partially submerged in water with the heavy load — a large fish can increase the weight the osprey needs to lift by 50 percent.

Once in the air, the fish is maneuvered in the osprey's feet (using their reversible outer toe) to be aimed head forward to reduce drag.

Fish are usually eaten on a perch near the nest.

Learn more about birds, including ospreys, by joining the Talbot Bird Club.

The Talbot Bird Club offers local birding trips weekly and welcomes anyone who has an interest in birds, whether a novice or experienced ornithologist, and whether you enjoy watching birds at your feeder or traveling throughout the world.

Our members learn from one another and are willing to share their knowledge.

The Talbot Bird Club is part of the Maryland Ornithological Society and also has a Facebook page.



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(FROM PAGE 10)

within the USDA zones of 3 to 8.

Those labeled as perennial can come back at least three years in a row, and sometimes even more.

Species tulips are small but very hardy and have continued to come up to bloom for up to 10 years.

Because the temperatures on the Shore can warm up quickly, the early spring and the mid-spring blooming tulips thrive the best and bloom the longest.

The Darwin hybrid Tulips are the longest lasting flowers on tall strong stems with brilliant colors, and are considered the best of the perennial tulips, blooming in mid-season.

Single early tulips bloom the earliest and come in wonderful rainbows of colors, blooming the longest due to the cooler weather.

Triumph Tulips have the widest range of colors with medium length stems, but are usually planted for the one season.

French single late Tulips are strong perennials with oblong shaped flowers that come to a pointed top. Their long stems make them excellent cutting tulips, and these varieties perform well on the Shore.

Double- and semi-double tulips that bloom early and mid-season will continue to bloom year after year for at least three years, while the late blooming varieties have a shorter life.

Fringed or "Crispa" tulips bloom from mid-season to late, providing lovely color and interesting textures.

Fosteriana tulips have exceptionally large and tall flower with vivid rich colors, blooming in early spring



When looking at tulips, look for those labeled as perennial tulips which will thrive in the USDA zones of 3 to 8.

(Photo by Ginny Rosenkranz)

and are considered perennials.

Greigii tulips are also early and mid-season bloomers with purple striped foliage and bicolored flower petals that open wide during the day to share their bright colors.

Kaufmanniana tulips are very long-lived perennial tulips, blooming in early- to mid-season.

Some have striped foliage and all open in the heat of the day to create stars blooming in the garden.

Lily-Flowered tulips are late spring bloomers and are worth planting for their elegant and graceful flowers that have their pointed petals curving outwards.

Virdiflora tulips have a stripe of green on each white, pink or lavender colored petal, creating an exotic picture in the late spring flower beds.

Parrot Tulips bloom very late in spring but are really worth waiting for with their large blooms in brilliant, dramatic colored petals with scalloped or fringed tops.

They need protection from wind,

snow and rain, so it might be best to plant them in containers.

Species tulips are usually the first to bloom in warm colors of yellows, oranges and reds on their short stems.

They too open to present colorful star shaped flowers that are best suited to the front of borders or among small spring blooming plants like violas and pansies.

Kaufmanniana "Heart's Delight" has alternating bright red petals edged in creamy white on the outside and open up to a star shaped flower of light pink with a golden center.

As the sun warms up the flowers in the morning the upright petals open up to create a cup to encourage the pollinators to visit.

As evening comes and the temperatures drop, the petals close again.

Another beautiful Kaufmanniana is "Showwinner" that has scarlet outer petals that open to a softer red and a golden center.

Although they are small compared to other tulips rising only grow 8-10 inches high, they come from a region that has very cold winters and hot dry summers and usually have a very long life here on Maryland's Eastern Shore.

The Fosteriana tulips are also known as the Emperor Tulips, with their large elongated blooms that open to form a cup shaped flower with broad and slightly pointed petals.

The sturdy green stems hold these elegant flowers 10-2 inches above the ground and as some of the earliest bloomers, add vivid reds, oranges, yellows along with pastel

pinks and creams to brighten up the landscape.

These beautiful flowers also come in bicolors, combining a red base with yellow edges or white petals with a splash of pink.

Some of the better known include “Red Emperor” with huge bright red petals that open to reveal a black heart.

“Yellow Purissima” has broad, elongated yellow petals edged with a brighter yellow and has been known to bloom for up to three weeks.

“Exotic Emperor” blooms early in spring with large double creamy white petals that are framed in bright green.

Like a lot of the Fosteriana tulips, they will naturalize and bloom year after year.

Darwin hybrid tulips bloom for at

least 3 years and sometimes longer in our area.

They come in all the rainbow of colors from pure white to cream, the lightest pink to the darkest deepest reds.

Pale- to bright-yellows to the deep orange, except for black, but there are deep dark purple ones that can look almost black.

Some even are two-toned, mixing alternating yellow and red petals for a bright sunset look, or mixing soft pinks fading into darker pink.

The flower blooms fairly early and has a lovely bowl-shaped flower rising 24-26 inches high on sturdy stems that emerge from the lance shaped deep green leaves.

Some of the favorites include “American Dream” that opens up to 6 inches wide with golden yellow


low petals edged in bright reddish orange.

“Pink Impression” has deep rose-colored petals edged with softer pink, and “Ollioules” has rose red petals that fade into ivory edges.

“Marit” has raspberry red petals that are outlined with primrose yellow, while “Daydream” has fragrant sunny yellow petals edged with apricot orange.

Another fragrant Darwin tulip is “Ad Rem,” with scarlet petals edged in golden yellow.

Spring may be chilly but the elegant beauty of the rainbow-colored tulips will always make a short walk to admire them well worth the time.


(Editor's Note: Ginny Rosenkranz is a commercial horticulture specialist with the University of Maryland Extension.)

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Only rule is to have fun and be true to yourself

(Editor's note: Deborah Walker has written about food and recipes for 15 years. She resides in Ocean City.)

Contrary to popular belief, entertaining does not have a solitude nature but encompasses a wide variety of personalized subtext.

Because there has been a tidal wave of information concerning foods, their potential possibilities, and pairings; a host is faced with countless choices which often stifles one's vision when planning a menu.

Food For Thought



By Deborah Walker

One way to avoid this dilemma is to get into the habit of considering the practicality of a menu.

Will this dish work with the respect to the number of guests, the setting or service?

In choosing a menu, be aware of color, height, and texture. Think of the plate as your palette and allow the artistic side of you to translate into a decadent course. The only rule is to have fun and be true to yourself. These decisions can make the difference between dazzling your guests or a mediocre experience.

A few helpful hints are always welcome. See the occasion from the eyes of your guests.

Walk through the setting from the moment they arrive to when they leave. This allows one to encompass the entire setting in a matter of minutes.

A specialty drink such as a champagne punch is a great way to start your festivities. Your friends will notice your efforts and love your consideration.

Fresh flowers make such a difference. A few simple arrangements can elevate the occasion to a superlative level.

Which room is the most overlooked when planning a special event? If you guessed the bathroom, you are correct.

Cleanliness is a must, but a basket of mini mouthwash spray, mini hair spray, and pantyhose will be greatly appreciated.

If you want to go one step further, present a small bowl of kosher salt, mineral oil, and essential oil for an aromatic hand scrub. It is these

Roasted red grapes with balsamic glaze over whipped feta cheese crostini

Roasted Red Grapes with a Balsamic Glaze

- 4 heaping cups red seedless grapes
 - 5 tablespoons balsamic glaze
 - 3 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
 - 4 tablespoons balsamic vinegar
- ***

1. Preheat oven to 375 degrees.
2. Using a very sharp knife, cut the grapes in half lengthwise.
3. Combine all of the ingredients in an oven-proof dish and toss well.
4. Bake uncovered for 25 minutes. Remove from oven, lightly toss, and set aside.

Whipped Feta Cheese

- 1 (8-ounce) block feta, room temperature
 - 1 (6-ounce) cream cheese, room temperature
 - 1 (5-ounce) Boursin Garlic & Fine Herbs Cheese, room temperature
 - juice of one lemon
- ***

1. Combine all ingredients in a medium bowl. Using a hand-held mixer, blend ingredients until smooth. Refrigerate for 45 minutes.

Crostini

- 1 baguette
 - 1/3-cup extra-virgin olive oil
- ***

1. Slice baguette with a serrated knife at an angle. Slicing the bread at an angle will give you a larger circumference area for the ingredients.

2. Using a pastry brush, brush both sides of each slice of baguette with olive oil.

3. Bake in oven until golden brown.

Presentation

- 1 baguette
 - 1/3-cup extra-virgin olive oil
- ***

1. Place feta mixture on the base of a cake display stand. If you don't have one, a small platter will do. Place a mound of feta mixture in the center. Using a spoon, hollow out the center. Keep in mind the presentation.

2. Carefully spoon cooled roasted red grapes with balsamic glaze into the center of the feta mixture.

3. Serve slices of toasted baguettes on the side.

(Serves 10 as a party appetizer.)

Secret ingredient is 'Preparation.'

"By failing to prepare, you are preparing to fail."

— Benjamin Franklin

little touches that say so much.

One must plan a special dish for those who are vegetarians. Roasted red grapes with a balsamic glaze over whipped feta cheese crostini are delicious and will make an impression on all.

The sweet and savory components are a classic combination. The contrast of the creamy cheese, glazed grapes, and crunchy crostini blend together for a perfect bite.

When making this dish, it is important to make sure the cheese is room temperature.

Otherwise, the cheese can be lumpy. In addition, the grapes must be sliced. Remember, the crostini are a small bite and whole grapes will be too large.

For a stunning presentation, place a mound of the feta mixture on the base of a glass cake pan. Using a spoon, hollow out the center and carefully spoon the red grape glaze



The sweet and savory components are a classic combination. The contrast of the creamy cheese, glazed grapes, and crunchy crostini blend together for a perfect bite.

(Photo by Deborah Walker)

in the center.

Serve sliced, toasted baguette slices on the side. This recipe is so easy to make and is packed with flavor.

In closing, the secret to entertaining is to keep it simple.

A dash of originality and lightheartedness measures memorable occasions. Enjoy! 🍷

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FAMILY FEATURES

If you'll be hosting friends and family for Easter this year, creating the perfect spread doesn't have to be hard. Make your gathering as simple as it is delicious by serving dishes that can be made ahead of time then easily put together on the big day.

Opting for an array of appetizers can help keep hungry people out of the kitchen until the main course is ready. Featuring easy prep and short cook times, these apps from "Cookin' Savvy" can let you spend more time creating memories with loved ones.

Whether you're celebrating with your nearest and dearest or hosting a larger crowd, these Deviled Eggs, Pimento Cheese Bites and Spinach Bites recipes can be halved or doubled to fit your needs. Plus, they feature many ingredients you may already have on-hand, making them easy to prep ahead of time to avoid spending too much time in the kitchen while trying to host.

Find more recipe inspiration to make your Easter celebration extraordinary at Culinary.net.

Deviled Eggs

Recipe courtesy of "Cookin' Savvy"

Yield: 16 deviled eggs

- 8 boiled eggs
- 1/2-3/4 cup mayonnaise
- 2 tablespoons mustard
- 2 tablespoons dill pickle juice
- 1 package (2 1/2 ounces) real bacon pieces
- 1 teaspoon garlic powder
- 2 teaspoons onion powder
- salt, to taste
- pepper, to taste
- smoked paprika, for garnish (optional)

Slice each egg and place whites on plate and yolks in bowl.

In bowl of yolks, add 1/2 cup mayonnaise, mustard, pickle juice, bacon pieces, garlic powder, onion powder and salt and pepper, to taste. With fork or hand mixer, blend until smooth. Add more mayonnaise until mixture reaches desired smoothness.

Spoon or pipe mixture into egg whites. Garnish with smoked paprika, if desired.

Note: Deviled eggs can be made day before and kept covered in refrigerator until needed.

Pimento Cheese Bites

Recipe courtesy of "Cookin' Savvy"

Yield: 12 shells and 12 tops

- 2 cups shredded cheddar cheese
- 8 ounces cream cheese, softened
- 1/2 cup mayonnaise
- 1 jar (4 ounces) pimentos, drained
- 1/4 teaspoon garlic powder
- 1/2 teaspoon onion powder
- 1 package (2 1/2 ounces) real bacon pieces
- salt, to taste
- pepper, to taste
- 2 packages frozen puff pastry shells

With hand mixer, blend cheddar cheese, cream cheese, mayonnaise, pimentos, garlic powder, onion powder, bacon pieces and salt and pepper, to taste, until smooth; set aside.

Heat oven to 400 F.

Thaw then bake pastry shells

15 minutes.

Remove tops and set aside. Spoon pimento cheese mixture into each shell.

Place dab of pimento cheese mixture on tops for smaller appetizers.

Notes: Pimento cheese mixture can be made in advance and kept in refrigerator up to 5 days before using. Recipe can be halved or doubled depending on needs.



Spinach Bites

Recipe courtesy of "Cookin' Savvy"

Yield: 24 spinach bites

- 1 package (8 ounces) cream cheese, softened
- 1/2 cup mayonnaise
- 1/2 cup sour cream
- 1 cup thawed frozen spinach
- 1/2 cup Parmesan cheese
- 1/2 cup mozzarella cheese
- 1 package (2 1/2 ounces) real bacon pieces
- 1 teaspoon garlic powder
- 2 teaspoons onion powder
- salt, to taste
- pepper, to taste
- 1 package (2 sheets) frozen puff pastry

With hand mixer, blend cream cheese, mayonnaise, sour cream, spinach, Parmesan cheese, mozzarella, bacon pieces, garlic powder, onion powder and salt and pepper, to taste.

Heat oven to 400 F.

Thaw and roll out puff pastry sheets. Cut each sheet into 12 squares. Place each puff pastry square into hole in muffin pan then spoon spinach mixture into each square and pinch corners together. Bake 15 minutes and serve warm.

Notes: Spinach mixture can be made in advance and kept in refrigerator up to 5 days before using. Recipe can be halved or doubled depending on needs.

Now we're cooking!

Creative Easter Cakes



Celebrate the holiday with tasty desserts and time with family

FAMILY FEATURES

Sweet, delicious treats make Easter celebrations magical, putting the final touch on brunch, lunch or dinner gatherings. Whether your crowd enjoys the sweet-tart combination of fruit-infused cakes, mini bundts with personalized decorations or rich, creamy cheesecake, the dessert table is sure to be popular.

Blueberry Lemon Bundt Cake and Carrot Cheesecake from "Cookin' Savvy" are

perfect desserts for sharing with loved ones, made with little effort and a lot of love. You can even let little ones help in the kitchen with Fun Mini Easter Bundts by allowing their creativity to run wild – just hand over the icing and chocolate toppers then watch the artistry unfold.

To ensure your feast goes off without a hitch, create these tempting cakes the day before for a no-hassle Easter.

Find more ways to elevate Easter celebrations with food by visiting Culinary.net.

Blueberry Lemon Bundt Cake

Recipe courtesy of "Cookin' Savvy"
Yield: 1 cake

- 1 pint fresh blueberries, rinsed
- 1 box lemon cake mix
- 1 stick butter, melted
- 4 eggs
- 1 cup milk

Glaze:

- 3 tablespoons melted butter
- 1 cup powdered sugar
- 3 tablespoons milk

Heat oven to 350 F.

Grease bundt pan and place rinsed blueberries in bottom. Mix cake mix, butter, eggs and milk; pour on top of blueberries. Bake 35 minutes. Let cool and remove from pan.

To make glaze: Mix butter, sugar and milk then pour over cake.

Carrot Cheesecake

Recipe courtesy of "Cookin' Savvy"
Yield: 1 cake

Cake:

- 1 box spice cake mix
- 1 cup grated carrot
- 1 cup coconut
- 4 eggs
- 1 stick butter, melted
- 2/3 cup vanilla Greek yogurt

Cheesecake:

- 1 cup heavy whipping cream
- 3 tablespoons sugar
- 8 ounces cream cheese, softened
- 1 teaspoon vanilla
- 1/2 cup powdered sugar

Topping:

- 1/2 cup chopped walnuts
- 1/2 cup chopped white chocolate chips

Heat oven to 350 F.

To make cake: Mix cake mix with carrot and coconut. Using hand mixer, blend in eggs, butter and yogurt. Pour mixture into greased springform pan and bake 30 minutes. Let completely cool in pan.

To make cheesecake: Using hand mixer, whip whipping cream and sugar to form whipped cream and set aside.

Using hand mixer, whip cream cheese, vanilla and powdered sugar. Add in whipped cream and mix. Pour onto completely cooled

carrot cake in springform pan. Let set in refrigerator at least 4 hours or overnight before unspringing pan.

For topping: Sprinkle chopped nuts and chocolate chips on cake before serving.

Tip: For extra festive appearance, add desired Easter candy on top.



Fun Mini Easter Bundts

Recipe courtesy of "Cookin' Savvy"
Yield: 24 mini bundts

- 1 box confetti cake mix
- 1 stick butter, melted
- 4 eggs
- 1 cup milk

Chocolate Toppers:

- 1 cup each color melting chips of desired colors
- silicone Easter candy molds of desired shapes
- 1 pouch ready-made green icing

Heat oven to 350 F.

Mix cake mix, butter, eggs and milk. Pour into greased mini bundt pan and bake 20-25 minutes. Let cool and remove from pan.

To make chocolate toppers: In bowl for each color, melt melting chips in 1-minute intervals in microwave until thoroughly melted. Pour into baggies and snip corner. Pipe melted chips into molds and freeze 15-20 minutes. Pipe green icing onto mini bundt cakes for "grass" then place chocolate mold pieces on top.

Substitution: Save time on toppers by replacing with store-bought chocolate bunnies, eggs, crosses or marshmallow bunnies.

April events

Lip Sync Battle to aid Talbot Interfaith Shelter

EASTON — A Lip Sync Battle to benefit Talbot Interfaith Shelter will take place on Saturday April 26 at 7 p.m., at the Waterfowl Building.

Organizers will gather as a community to dance, laugh, sing and

fight homelessness in our community!

Teams from all over our community will be duking it out on stage and screen to see who has what it takes to be the 2025 Lip Sync

Champions.

Meet the teams, vote for the winners by donating, and purchase your tickets for our live event by visiting <https://talbotinterfaithshelter.org/lsb/> 🐾



'Pinwheels for Prevention' slated for April 16

DENTON — CASA of Caroline will hold its fifth annual Pinwheels for Prevention ceremony on April 16 at 3 p.m., at the Denton Community Garden.

The gathering is more than just an afternoon outdoors — it's a powerful statement of unity in the fight against child abuse.

By planting a pinwheel, participants will help create a striking visual reminder of our shared commitment to ensuring every child grows up in a safe and nurturing environment.

Throughout the event — which is open to the public — local leaders will share inspiring words, among

an afternoon of great food, light music, and community connection.

This event is open to the public, and organizers say they urge everyone to attend as they stand together in support of children and families.

Organizers ask the public to join them in making a difference one pinwheel at a time. 🐾

Chestertown hosting annual Earth Day Festival

CHESTERTOWN — The 15th annual Chestertown Earth Day Festival is scheduled for Saturday, April 26.

The free, family-friendly event, situated on the Park Row side of Fountain Park in downtown Ches-

tertown includes features, such as a “community trash walk,” electric vehicle car display, free recycling of batteries and fluorescent bulbs, free tree seedlings, and educational and information booths promoting stewardship — from solar energy

to making your backyard more eco-friendly.

For more information, call 443-480-1987, e-mail: chestertownenviro@gmail.com or visit <https://www.chestertown.gov/environmental-committee>. ➡



'Run Fur Their Lives 5K' scheduled for April 19

CAMBRIDGE — The second annual Run Fur Their Lives 5K, organized in support of the Baywater Animal Rescue will take place on Saturday April 19 at 104 Tech Park Drive.

www.shorehomeandgarden.com

Check in is scheduled for 7 a.m., and the race starts at 8 a.m.

Registration is \$35 per person.

For more information, or to register, call 410-228-3090.

Runner bags are available for

participants, and there are finisher prizes.

For more information, visit <https://findarace.com/us/events/run-fur-their-lives-5k-fun-run-walk-2>. ➡

Pickering Creek inviting gardeners to events

EASTON — Pickering Creek will hold its annual Garden Day on Saturday, April 5, and its first Garden and Grounds Day of the season just two days later.

The Garden Day will be held at 9:30-11:30 a.m., when organizers are welcoming the community's assistance with preparation of the center's Pollinator Garden, established last year for its spring debut.

Participants will clean out the garden beds, pruning and weeding as needed, and staffers will add plant labels so visitors can identify native plants they enjoy.

It's a fun chance to learn about native plants visitors might want



to try out in their yard and practice gardening skills with both experienced and novice gardeners!

To register visit <https://interland3.donorperfect.net/webink/web-link.aspx?name=E356186&id=251>.

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The first Garden and Grounds Day will be on Monday, April 7 from 2-3:30 p.m.

This season's projects include trail work, gardening, invasive plant management, and preparing the center's nestbox trails for spring nesting of bluebirds and wood ducks.

There will be different Garden and Grounds Day on the first Monday of each month.

To register visit <https://interland3.donorperfect.net/webink/web-link.aspx?name=E356186&id=251>.





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Church Hill park hosting community yard sale on May 3

CHURCH HILL — Participants are encouraged to register now for Queen Anne's Community Yard Sale at the Church Hill Park on May 3 from 7 a.m. to 11 a.m.

People are being urged to secure their spot to sell their gently used items such as clothing, household items, furniture, electronics, and toys.

No selling of firearms, food, drinks, or re-selling recalled items/products will be permitted.

Organizers will provide the space; participants will provide everything else.

No late set-ups or early break downs will be allowed.

Set-up is scheduled for 6-7 a.m., and clean-up must be completed by noon, with no items left behind.

For more information, call 410-758-0835.





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