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Wanna get away? ...

Tired of the dreary and colorless depths of winter? Have you got cabin fever? Two nearby conservatories — the U.S. Botanical Garden and Longwood Gardens — offer the looks and beautiful aroma of the waiting spring. Are you anxious to experience the Western Rose, as seen to the left? See page 20!

Cover photo courtesy U.S. Botanical Garden

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See what new plants are available for your landscaping projects this year.
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Going green, or a creative necessity?

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Is there something you'd like to share?

Call 410-822-4025 or e-mail
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Can you handle this? ...

You can win a high-quality, canvas Shore Home & Garden Magazine tote bag, either by giving us a recipe we publish or by winning this month's "What is This???" contest on page 58. It's made of durable canvas and is trimmed in hunter green.

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Brian T. Brown, President



February ... who needs it?

A recent opinion poll (in other words, friends I have talked to) designates February as the least favorite month of the year.

Maybe that's why they made it so short.

All joking aside, it's the slump after the holidays and the nail-biting, wall-climbing period before spring.

It's no wonder that groundhog hates being dragged out of his hole and put in the spotlight under pressure.

Known also as Candlemas Day, a day of blessing the candles for the coming year, in the Roman Catholic church it was a superstitious belief that the groundhog or woodchuck would emerge from hibernation on this day.

If he saw his shadow, six more weeks of bad weather could be expected.

So a sunny Feb. 2 predicts bad weather to come. It is also considered to be winter's midpoint and was designated as a time to check the supply of food and fuel source to be sure you still had half of each on hand.

On the new moon of the month, calling through stored produce such as potatoes, onions, squash and apples, removing any soft or rotting was recommended.

One bad apple will spoil the whole bunch.

Want to get away yet? For those who can, February seems to be a prime time for long vacations.

If you choose an island cruise or a skiing trip, it's a chance to relax before the weather breaks into spring and things get busy again.

For home bodies like myself,

there is preparatory checklist I like to make. ... Things I like to try to accomplish so I am not so hustled and stressed when spring arrives.

I try to remember to feed the birds and do some bird watching in between chores.

On the outside, this is a good time to check the mulch in your beds to be sure early bulbs are protected. It also helps to keep moisture and heat in the soil for the planting of cool-weather annuals.

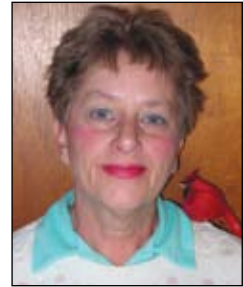
You can begin seeds of those same annuals indoors if you have the patience and space.

Personally, I have tried and failed so many times I can't justify it.

Early annuals for a perennial lover like myself are a cheap extra added attraction. Lee, my husband, loves the instant color — and to that,

By Bev Leitch
Columnist

*Shore Home
& Garden
Magazine*



I do not disagree.

I'll take the plant over the home-started seedlings any day, at least for my very busy 'Now' Years.

I have learned to hit the stores and stock up early for seed packets of flowers and vegetables I will sow outdoors.

I suppose owing to the fact some of you are more patient and successful than myself, the shelves seem to empty early in the season.

If you have lawn trouble spots, check the Ph now and prepare to amend your soil, control crab grass, other uninvited weeds and lawn insects.

Go through (PAGE 44)



Now's the time to go through lawn and garden tools and get them cleaned, oiled and sharpened



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Gardening Tips

It doesn't have to be gloomy with fresh-cut flowers



By Ginny Rosenkranz
Extension Educator Commercial Horticulture

The month of February can be dark and gloomy, cold and dreary, so it is nice that it only lasts 29 days.

To push back the dark and dreary aspect of February, buy fresh flowers!

There have been studies documenting the positive feelings of people who receive flowers as gifts, and the positive attitudes of the people in rooms where live flowers are displayed.

Fresh-cut flowers are not expensive if the varieties are chosen carefully, and some varieties will last and look fabulous for more than a week.

To keep cut flowers fresh and long-lasting, a few simple steps should be taken.

First, always trim off the bottom foliage so it is not sitting in water (and rotting).

Next, trim the bottom of the stems at an angle; that way, the flowers are never flush against the bottom of a vase and unable to drink in water.

Always use fresh water that has had either the flower-saver packet that is sold with most cut flowers, or you can add some regular lemon-lime soft drink.

Both the soft drink and the flower-saver packet contain sugars for the flowers, and both acidify the water to keep bacteria down.

Last, place the flowers where people will see them, but never in front of a window where they might

get too hot or have the fresh water evaporate too quickly.

Roses are often the first cut flower that people think of and they are an excellent choice for color selection, size of flower and fragrance.

Long-stem roses are very expensive, but the medium stem roses and

the smaller flowered roses are very reasonably priced and all roses should last about a week.

To get the (PAGE 18)



There have been studies documenting the positive attitudes of people in rooms where live flowers are displayed.

(Photo by Ginny Rosenkranz)

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Overcoming ‘Light Fright’

With daylight savings time still months away, don't succumb to the winter blahs.

You can easily brighten your surroundings with the flick of a switch.

Surprisingly, most homeowners do not realize the importance of home lighting, nor understand the basic principles of lighting a room properly.

Don't let “Light Fright” keep you in the dark!

To start with, acknowledge that your room needs three different types of lighting (I don't mean a three-way bulb!). They are general, task and ambient.

If you look carefully at each of these, it will make shopping for lighting a more illuminating experience.

Take an objective look at the room and assess your lighting inventory. Once you know what you have, you will know what else is needed. We will use your family room or living room in this example.

Do you have a single ceiling-mount fixture in the center, a more contemporary track system or perhaps four recessed can lights? That is your general overhead lighting.

Additionally, a light adaptor kit on your ceiling fan can serve the function of general lighting. This is the most important lighting you need once the sun sets. However, it is not really enough on its own.

The second source, task lighting, is designed to serve during a specific activity such as reading, knitting, scrap-booking or playing cards.

In these instances you would require a more direct source of ad-



General lighting is the most important lighting you need once the sun sets. However, it is not really enough on its own.

justable light. A three-way bulb in a floor lamp beside your favorite reading chair is a great way to add task lighting. If you have room for a long table behind your sofa, you can place matching lamps on each end, which enables more than one person to read while stretched out.

For the card or hobby table, an overhead hanging light provides excellent lighting. You may not have wiring in the ceiling nor wish to loop the chain up and over from a wall outlet, so the alternative would be a floor lamp that features a swinging arm to pull over the table top.



By Michele Roark
Columnist

Shore Home & Garden Magazine

This will make any game or craft much easier to complete with less eyestrain.

To complete your lighting inventory, look for sources of ambient, or mood lighting. No, this type of lighting is not just for the boudoir — it is perfect for every room, or even an entrance foyer.

A restful soft light is a nice way to relax after work, while a cozy low light is great for intimate conversation. You may choose from candles in colored glass vases, or wood and metal candlestick holders for interesting effects. Some architectural features of the room or tall plants can be accented with an uplight on the floor, tucked discreetly in a corner of the room. These lights are very inexpensive and easy to use.

If your kitchen opens to your family room, you can also place lighting above or below the kitchen cabinets, which provides “background light.”

In many instances, the use of dimmer switches on your overhead or general lighting will allow you to also have ambient lighting.

I suggest dimmer switches on just about all the light switches in your room or home for versatility.

You will be amazed at the range of environments you create when you experiment. ➤