

Add Color to the Home Turf after Winter's Wicked Whiteout!

BY MARK F. JOHNSON

Old man winter is dead! With the coming spring, Mother Nature will paint in bright colors on the white canvas that he left us during this past record-breaking season of cold and snow.

The cherry blossoms, America's most famous annuals, will soon have their spring fling around the Tidal Basin, as the festival begins March 27. This means that it's about time to get things going on the home turf for those who plant spring and summer gardens. So what are some things to be aware of when planting this spring, especially after such a horrid winter? What can you plant and expect to flower fairly easily and quickly? What will bring your garden the most color?

How Does Your Garden Grow After So Much Snow?

I put these questions to local landscape designer and business owner Joe Carmack. "The only damage I can see so far from the winter's snow blizzards is tree and shrub damage," says Carmack. Shrubs are important, Carmack adds. Some are "key" as they serve as a focal point, and others, he calls them "workers," offer a solution to an outdoor decorating concern such as providing a screen for a background view.

Carmack, the owner of 14th Street's Garden District (1740 14th St. NW), says that gardeners now need to do what they always need to do at this time of the year: "Get your tools ready by cleaning them with soap and water, then oil and sharpen them." For this, he recommends the use of a whet stone. If the gardener doesn't happen to own a whet stone, he points out that tools can be sharpened for free at his store.

The next step in the process, Carmack says, is to cut back ornamental grasses and to prune perennials and shrubs. Do not walk on wet soil, he advises, because that can damage the soil by making it more compact. "Only prune shrubs that bloom on new growth." According to Carmack, a popular plant in city gardens is the hydrangea. A lot of hydrangeas bloom on last year's growth, the landscaper explains, and he says that if that growth is cut off, the plant won't bloom until the following year.

If you're looking for color as many gardeners want for their yards in spring, consider pansies.



TOP TO BOTTOM:

An exhibit of local artist Michele Cormier's paintings is currently running at Go Mama Go! Colorful works in oil on canvas range in price from \$250 to \$1,700.

Star lights from Asia shine brightly from above and cost \$32.

Colorful Marimekko fabric from Finland comes in cotton or coated finish and sells for \$32 to \$40/yard.

Brightly-colored palm oil candles from Austria burn for 12 hours and range in price from \$10-\$12.



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"They are a cool weather annual that provides nice color until it gets hot," says Carmack. Pansies bloom in yellow, gold, violet, orange, red, purple and even black (usually very dark purple). Carmack says that pansies belong in containers or in window boxes or tree boxes. "I'm a purist and never plant annuals in the garden."

Not everyone in Washington has a garden, of course. But that doesn't mean that apartment and condo dwellers as well as those living in houses with no outside garden can't enjoy the beauty of plants at this time of year. "You can get tulips, hyacinth and daffodils potted up in full bloom and enjoy them for weeks in your home in a sunny spot," he suggests. "My personal favorite this time of year is primrose. Nothing feels like spring to me like primrose. The daffodils can be planted in an outside space and will perennialize; enjoy them first inside and plant them outside once the blooms have faded."

For gardens, Carmack suggests installing some "productive plants," as he refers to figs, for example.

For fresh-cut flower lovers, the gardener suggests planting a garden full of them and then using them in an inside arrangement. You can do something as simple as cut magnolia branches and put them in a vase to add a "summer feeling to your home."

"Herbs go a long way, too," he continues. "Plant them in containers in full sun outside." His suggestion for installing a vegetable garden is to make a raised bed and fill it with organic soil and plant organic seeds. "Last year, I built a 10-by-10 raised bed. Since it was square, I made a crisscross path down the middle."

The garden store owner also offers some tips on saving money in the garden as well as other planting advice. To help your garden grow without depleting your wallet, Carmack says to assess your garden's conditions. "Know the exposure in light. Morning, northern and eastern exposures works for shade-loving plants, while western, southern

and afternoon sun works for sun-loving plants. Also, know the dimensions of your garden space – if you need to mulch, a 3-cubic-foot bag will spread out 36 square feet."

Finally, Carmack offers these garden-related tips:

1) Before you shop, make a list of what you need. Break it down to function – e.g., plants for ground-cover that work in shade; a trellis and vine that will block the neighbor's huge, electrical box which is next to my front door; a plant that takes full sun and can be green all year; herbs for the kitchen; the amount of space available for "x" number of pots, etc. ... In conclusion, get specific with what you need.

2) Buying native plants versus non-native may not save you money initially, but in the long run, they may last longer because they are more conducive to this environment.

3) Divide your perennials that have overgrown. Liriope and hostas divide beautifully. Share with a neighbor if you have too much.

4) Bring houseplants outside this time of year. You can save money by using them to decorate an outside space such as a patio or balcony, bring them back in the winter and never place them in direct sun.

5) Go organic, make your own insecticide with a soap and water solution, get out and pull weeds by hand. It's not that hard and is a great way to get to know your neighbors.

Going Out In A Blaze of Colorful Glory!

As most readers probably know by now, Go Mama Go! (1809 14th St. NW) is almost gone. The store closes its doors at the end of the month. I stopped by the store recently to chat with owner Jonathan Chudnoff. Others, too, were coming in to say "good bye." He shared that he is definitely sad to be turning the lights out on deceased wife Noie's creation. She started the 14th Street home interior store eight years ago and ran it until her death in 2008. I picked out a few items that struck me because of their bright and festive colors. They

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at home + Changing Hands

looked like “happy” pieces, and I think “happy” is very much welcome right now after such a hard winter.

Until the end of the month, Chudnoff is offering about half off the cost of all merchandise at the store. The photos are just a sample of what the store is selling. Get it before it's gone forever. Go Mama Go! was among the first retail stores to help reinvigorate the 14th Street shopping district, which is now pretty firmly entrenched with not only home-grown businesses like Go Mama Go!, but also with national chains like Mitchell Gold and Bob Williams and soon to arrive Room and Board, both higher-end furniture sellers on a street that many call “furniture row” because it is home to several vintage furniture stores as well as those selling new, catalogue furniture.

Chudnoff says he's “pretty much reconciled to what I've had to do” in closing the store, but he acknowledges that he hopes “someone local and quirky comes in here after us,” even though it seems likely that the space might go to a restaurant. “Fourteenth street is a terrific street, and it offers tremendous potential for the right business,” Chudnoff believes.

Say “hello” to spring and say “good bye” to Go Mama Go! at the same time by purchasing some colorful, fun and one-of-a-kind home décor items while they are on sale and before Go Mama goes! ★



Neighborhood	PRICE	BR
FEE SIMPLE		
16TH STREET HEIGHTS		
1619 LONGFELLOW ST NW	\$1,475,000	4
1531 UPSHUR ST NW	\$739,500	4
1610 MANCHESTER LN NW	\$600,000	3
1422 ALLISON ST NW	\$545,000	3
BRIGHTWOOD		
6119 5TH ST NW	\$495,000	4
6105 14TH ST NW	\$435,000	3
1460 SHERIDAN ST NW	\$277,000	3
6415 8TH ST NW	\$270,000	3
710 ROXBORO PL NW	\$257,000	4
612 QUINTANA PL NW	\$249,000	3

1379 SHERIDAN ST NW	\$240,000	3	4519 ILLINOIS AVE NW	\$375,000	4
518 SOMERSET PL NW	\$212,500	3	6 GRANT CIR NW	\$370,000	3
BROOKLAND			5505 7TH ST NW	\$315,000	3
4119 13TH PL NE	\$400,000	3	4208 NEW HAMPSHIRE AVE NW	\$305,000	4
4702 10TH ST NE	\$336,500	3	829 RANDOLPH ST NW	\$237,800	3
607 BUCHANAN ST NE	\$310,000	3	4602 8TH ST NW	\$215,000	4
229 CROMWELL TER NE	\$210,000	3	5023 5TH ST NW	\$202,700	4
4236 14TH ST NE	\$189,000	3	808 MADISON ST NW	\$190,000	3
			440 JEFFERSON ST NW	\$180,000	3
			418 JEFFERSON ST NW	\$177,500	4
COLUMBIA HEIGHTS			RIGGS PARK		
1005 IRVING ST NW	\$573,000	4	5153 7TH ST NE	\$240,000	3
3801 10TH ST NW	\$456,000	5	714 JEFFERSON ST NE	\$237,000	3
1363 MONROE ST NW	\$455,000	5	5307 DAKOTA AVE NE	\$195,000	3
1017 FAIRMONT ST NW	\$447,000	3	SHAW		
2911 SHERMAN AVE NW	\$420,000	2	1718 NEW JERSEY AVE NW	\$594,000	4
624 KEEFER PL NW	\$395,000	3	TRINIDAD		
1409 MONROE ST NW	\$385,000	3	1512 TRINIDAD AVE NE	\$299,500	3
1347 OAK ST NW	\$370,000	4	1406 ORREN ST NE	\$295,000	4
651 KEEFER PL NW	\$360,000	3	1513 TRINIDAD AVE NE	\$285,000	3
1342 OAK ST NW	\$290,000	4	1409 MONTELLO AVE NE	\$280,000	3
3610 ROCK CREEK CHURCH RD NW	\$287,900	4	832 21ST ST NE	\$196,000	2
1026 LAMONT ST NW	\$240,000	2	1223 SIMMS PL NE	\$140,000	8
3018 WARDER ST NW	\$192,000	3	1224 ORREN ST NE	\$135,000	3
3537 6TH ST NW	\$149,900	3	WOODRIDGE		
ECKINGTON			2928 YOST PL NE	\$290,000	3
1835 NORTH CAPITOL ST NE	\$399,000	4	1516 MONTANA AVE NE	\$259,000	3
133 QUINCY PL NE	\$360,000	3	2820 MYRTLE AVE NE	\$198,000	6
82 SEATON PL NW	\$315,000	3	CONDO		
152 T ST NE	\$299,000	3	16TH STREET HEIGHTS		
129 U ST NE	\$255,000	3	1322 MISSOURI AVE NW #101	\$130,000	1
21 T ST NE	\$230,000	3	ADAMS MORGAN		
2012 4TH ST NE	\$125,000	3	1725 LANIER PL NW #25C	\$307,500	2
KALORAMA			BROOKLAND		
2426 WYOMING AVE NW	\$3,700,000	4	4411 1ST PL NE #38	\$171,000	2
LEDROIT PARK			2824 12TH ST NE #202	\$167,000	1
135 T ST NW	\$620,000	4	CENTRAL		
417 T ST NW	\$580,000	4	616 E ST NW #651	\$545,000	2
2010 2ND ST NW	\$217,900	3	1150 K ST NW #608	\$520,000	2
LOGAN CIRCLE			1133 14TH ST NW #1101	\$345,000	0
1522 KINGMAN PL NW	\$945,000	3	1117 NEW HAMPSHIRE AVE NW #11	\$225,000	1
1519 12TH ST NW	\$810,000	3	COLUMBIA HEIGHTS		
MICHIGAN PARK			1221 HARVARD ST NW #2	\$595,000	2
4230 19TH PL NE	\$335,000	3	1326 GIRARD ST NW #CH	\$505,000	1
MOUNT PLEASANT			1414 BELMONT ST NW #304	\$462,500	2
1812 ONTARIO PL NW	\$567,500	3	1300 TAYLOR ST NW #104	\$405,000	2
N CAPITOL HILL			907 EUCLID ST NW #301	\$299,750	1
1008 11TH ST NE	\$360,500	3	1020 FAIRMONT ST NW #4	\$270,000	2
OLD CITY #1			1372 RANDOLPH ST NW #202	\$245,000	1
619 4TH ST NE	\$839,000	3	3534 10TH ST NW #220	\$227,500	1
1329 E ST NE	\$582,000	3	3534 10TH ST NW #450	\$226,500	1
1524 D ST NE	\$497,000	3	3534 10TH ST NW #400	\$220,000	1
1803 INDEPENDENCE AVE SE	\$470,000	3	1341 CLIFTON ST NW #101	\$210,000	1
918 C ST NE	\$460,000	4	1401 COLUMBIA RD NW #308	\$175,100	0
1102 K ST NE	\$455,000	3	56 GALVESTON PL SW #2-A	\$27,000	2
1422 IVES PL SE	\$380,000	2	ECKINGTON		
1826 BURKE ST SE	\$330,000	3	49 QUINCY PL NW #B	\$369,000	2
1237-1239 C ST SE	\$300,000	0	11 S ST NE #B	\$260,000	3
1329 K ST SE	\$261,000	2	GALLUDET PARK		
1035 10TH ST NE	\$255,000	4	1660 WEST VIRGINIA AVE NE #102	\$176,000	2
2415 E ST NE	\$230,000	4	KALORAMA		
1015 FLORIDA AVE NE	\$215,000	4	2231 BANCROFT PL NW #1A	\$1,170,000	3
1604 ROSEDALE ST NE	\$149,500	2	2125 S ST NW #PH-2	\$780,000	2
939 N ST NW	\$692,500	3	2311 CONNECTICUT AVE NW #201	\$609,000	2
406 RHODE ISLAND AVE NW	\$425,000	5	2012 WYOMING AVE NW #402	\$385,000	1
226 P ST NW	\$300,000	3	2123 CALIFORNIA ST NW #A4	\$299,990	1
PETWORTH					
506 RANDOLPH ST NW	\$535,000	3			
713 QUINCY ST NW	\$529,000	4			
5215 KANSAS AVE NW	\$414,000	3			
701 RANDOLPH ST NW	\$395,000	4			