

FILM REVIEW

Japanese anime 'Your Name' goes in delightful directions.

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Houston Chronicle Life & Entertainment

Houston Chronicle

Saturday, April 8, 2017 | HoustonChronicle.com and Chron.com

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Section D **

STAR

5 THINGS

The weekend is packed with monster events including the Art Car Parade and the Houston Barbecue Festival.

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IN THE GARDEN

Homeowners want their landscapes to stand out on the block



A new survey shows that Houston homeowners want a distinctive look, great plants, natural stone and professional design help for their yards. Courtesy photo

YARD of the YEAR

By Diane Cowen

WELCOME to the new world. The backyard was once just about having trees, shrubs and annuals for pops of color. Today local landscape architects and designers say that stylish outdoor spaces are getting as much consideration as the homes they're attached to.

Modern architecture is on the rise, and homeowners want their yards — front and back — to be in synch, said Johnny Steele of Johnny Steele Design.

"I met with clients the other day in Memorial, and it's not the typical brick, Georgian or Mediterranean style home that we might have seen a few years ago," said Steele, a landscape architect.

The result is an opportunity to rethink plants, hardscapes and structure.

"It's cleaner in terms of the lines ... we're using fewer types of plants in a design — six or seven instead of 15 varieties or species. That's definitely a trend that I'm seeing," Steele said.

When considering the wow factor that his clients are looking for, less



Rame Hruska

Landscape architects are using less color and more texture in contemporary gardens.

may actually do more. "I can do that with one bold stroke here and two bold strokes there," he said.

Houzz — which offers remodeling and design ideas — recently released a report on trends in home landscaping.

Survey results supported local observations: homeowners want a distinctive look, great plants, natural stone and professional design help.

At Curtis & Windham, landscape designer Frank Brown III has been busy turning parts of soft green lawns into functional sources of food.

"Organic vegetable gardens," Brown said. "I've never done so many in my life. Almost every client is asking for one now."

Some are small herb gardens in window boxes or patio pots. Many, though, are raised beds filled with peppers, tomatoes, cucumbers, squash and zucchini.

"First it was with people who had children, but now it's everyone just wanting good food," Brown said.

More attention is being paid to lighting, with clients ditching harsh light in favor of warmer tones that feel more like indoors and can be op-

Homeowners continues on D2

Steele plants those shrubs as well, but works with often-used plants in different ways. Rolled steel becomes a clean edge for a border that may be filled with gravel or stone, tying in with the lines and materials in modern homes.

He'll use agave plants, giant bamboo, bald cypress and dwarf yaupon. And while many might have gravel on a walkway or in accent garden areas, Steele is using it as ground cover.

Zoysia grass is something else people are leaning toward for a soft, shaggy lawn.

Their clients also are looking for options that are easier to take care of, require fewer chemicals and maybe even require less water.

"I've had clients who



San Francisco Chronicle

Organic vegetable gardens have become very popular, said landscape designer Frank Brown III. "Almost every client is asking for one," he said.

45 percent of people working on outdoor projects are updating lighting, with 73 percent opting for LEDs and 20 percent adding "smart" lighting that can be controlled remotely.

Go for it: Homeowners with projects under a way are going big: 37 per-

cent are doing a complete overhaul while another 48 percent call their projects "major renovations."

Professional help: Those who have completed their projects are fairly evenly split on hiring experts: 34 percent hired a landscape contractor, 34 percent hired a landscape

architect or designer and 32 percent hired stone/concrete specialists.

What to build: More renovating homeowners are opting for patios or terraces (38 percent) over arbors, gazebos, pergolas or trellises (26 percent) or decks (20 percent).

On the ground: Hard-

world for various stone treatments. When a client asked for white marble, Steele produced samples from the U.S., China, Mexico and Italy. "The variety of materials is almost limitless," Steele said.

Take a seat: Purchases for renovated outdoor space include outdoor lounge furniture (36 percent), a fire pit (32 percent) or outdoor dining furniture (28 percent).

Spending: The breakdown of spending ranges from under \$1,000 to more than \$50,000. Here are some numbers: 73 percent of projects cost \$5,000 or less; 23 percent spent \$5,000 to \$15,000; and 4 percent spent more than \$15,000.

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GARDEN CALENDAR

SATURDAY

Brazoria County Master Gardeners' Spring Plant Sale: 8 a.m.-noon at the Brazoria County Environmental Educational Station, 799 E. Hospital, Angleton; 979-864-1558, txmg.org/brazoria. Free.

Installation and Maintenance of Native Landscapes — Certification Program Level 3 Class: 8 a.m.-4:30 p.m. at the Kleb Woods Nature Pre-

serve, 20303 Drape, Tomball; npsot.org/wp/houston. \$52. Class also held April 29 and May 13.

Hanging Baskets: with Jim Maas and Pat Cordray. 10 a.m. at Maas Nursery, 5511 Todville, Seabrook; 281-474-2488, maasnursery.com. \$25.

Soils and Composting: with Harris County Master Gardeners. 10:30 a.m.-noon at Parker Williams Branch Library, 10851 Scarsdale; 281-484-2036. Free.

Planning and Planting a Habitat Garden: with Nancy Greig. 10 a.m. at Enchanted Forest, 10611 FM 2759, Richmond, 281-937-9449; 2 p.m. at Enchanted Gardens, 6420 FM 359, Richmond, 281-341-1206; myenchanted.com. Free.

Seeds of Spring: 10:30 a.m.-noon and 1-2:30 p.m. at the Houston Arboretum and Nature Center, 4501 Woodway, 713-681-8433, register at houstonarboretum.org. \$45, per pair;

ages 5 years and up.

SATURDAY AND SUNDAY

Houston Amaryllis Society Spring Show and Sale: 9 a.m.-5 p.m. April 8, 10:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m. April 9 at Enchanted Forest Garden Center, 10611 FM 2759, Richmond; 281-937-9449, myenchanted.com. Free.

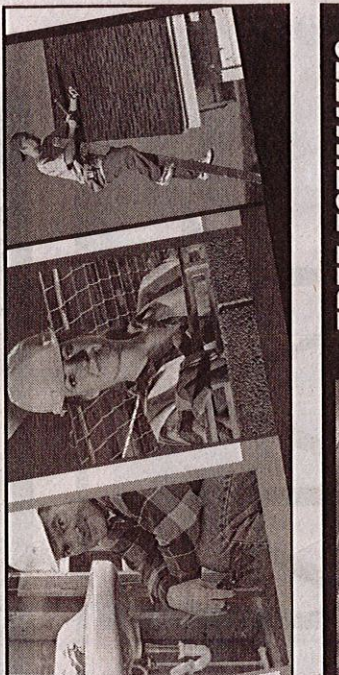
MONDAY

Propagating Native Plants: with

Mark Morgenstern, sponsored by the Native Plant Society of Texas: 6:30-8:30 p.m. at the University of Houston Clear Lake, Bayou Building; npsot.org/wp/clearlake. Free.

APRIL 13

Delighting in the Fragrance of Garden Roses: with Michael Shoup. 7:30 p.m. at the Cherie Flores Garden Pavilion, McGovern Centennial Gardens, 1500 Hermann Drive; houstonrose.



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