

Here's how your home and garden may grow

by Mary James

In style as in life there is one constant: change.

Having rung out the old style year, here are some things to look for in style for 2008 for your home and garden.

A LOOK AHEAD - An outdoor kitchen gives your backyard a little bling as it does to this Roxbury Estates home in San Diego's exclusive Rancho Santa Fe area. CNS Photo by Crissy Pascual. **GARDENS: WISE AND WONDERFUL**

Source: Nicholas Staddon, head of the new plants team for Monrovia, headquartered in Azusa, Calif.

Sustainability: Growers are embracing this idea of having a neutral impact on the environment. Monrovia has reduced chemical use, is recycling containers and greenery and capturing runoff. "We're also working to add invasiveness to our trial-and-evaluation process of new plants," he says.

Being water wise: Concern for this natural resource, Staddon says, is an opportunity to replace lawns with landscapes of drought-tolerant plants - "not just cactuses, but the amazing array of Mediterranean-climate plants we can grow." Nurture these plantings with new, smart irrigation controls that water only when it's needed.

Splendor with grasses: Among popular drought-tolerant grasses, deer grass (*Muhlenbergia*) is "exploding," Staddon says. "The best selection is 'Regal Mist,' for its stunning late-summer-into-autumn rosy-red color." Plant it, he says, in drifts where the wind can rustle its silky-soft plumes.

Patio plants: As gardens shrink in size, container gardening is swelling. Staddon favors putting potted plants where "you can sit among them and really appreciate their fragrance flowers and the birds and butterflies they attract." Ideal candidates for containers include Monrovia's new Heat Wave series of sages (*Salvia*) with flowers in hues of oxblood red to seashell pink. Dazzling cordylines: Tired of phormiums, those ubiquitous flaxes that seem so 2007, Staddon has set his sights on cordyline, another member of the Agavaceae family, with swordlike leaves but a columnar shape. One newcomer from Down Under is *Cordyline australis* 'Torbay Dazzler,' with striking striped leaves in shades of green, pink and cream. Another, 'Burgundy Spire,' is a fast grower that adds a hip dash of dusky chocolate foliage to gardens.

Designer dianellas: Flax lilies (*Dianella*) are prized for their evergreen strappy leaves, sky-blue flower wands and shiny purple-blue berries that pop in partial shade. Late last summer, after extensive trials, Monrovia introduced a new series of sun-loving, drought tolerant dianellas with dramatic foliage and sculptural shapes. Tasred has lemon-yellow splashed leaves and red flower stems; Little Rev has glaucous blue foliage.

Get creative: "I wish people would go into a garden center and unleash their creative beast," Staddon says. "I believe a garden is a reflection of who you are, what you think is beautiful. It's for you and your family. So don't be afraid to experiment." FURNISHINGS: BLACK, WHITE AND GREEN

Source: Jackie Hirschhaut, vice president of public relations for the American Home Furnishings Alliance, a national trade association for the furniture industry.

Going green: Consumers want environmentally friendly products, and furniture manufacturers are delivering. "The industry knows this is on the top of people's minds," says Hirschhaut. Watch for lines constructed from sustainable components, finishes with no toxic fumes, and new eco-upholstery fabrics. Due in stores in early '08 - Rowe's "Eco-Rowe" labeled furnishings, Bernhardt's eco-friendly Cascade line and C.R.Laine's "down2earth" upholstery option.

Global perspective: "Global awareness is the biggest thing that's happened in the past five years, and it just continues to escalate," says Hirschhaut. "We look to the world for design inspiration and product innovation." In addition to Europe and Asia, watch for the exotic influences of the Caribbean, South America and Africa.

Your way: Need an extra long sofa? Want one-of-a-kind upholstery? No problem, say furniture makers. "The industry is making all kinds of tools available to consumers to customize furniture," Hirschhaut says. "Even popular brand names are now giving consumers options."

Black and white: Sophisticated, simple, minimal and elegant, timeless black and white is the color combo to watch next year. Accent colors are minimal, but the effect, Hirschhaut says, is crisp, not somber.

Martha, et al.: Designer collections and lines inspired by romantic or historic destinations will multiply in number and appeal. "Some consumers are drawn to a favorite designer or place," says Hirschhaut. "Others like their one-stop shopping convenience." Joining Martha Stewart as furniture designers are TV stars Candice Olson and Cristina Saralegui and retooled fashion designers like Bob Mackie.

COLOR: CHIC COMFORT

Source: Leatrice Eiseman, consultant and director of the Pantone Color Institute, the New Jersey-based color authority and forecaster.

"So much of home decor depends on individual takes on comfort levels," said Eiseman. "Consumers are looking at colors they can instantly connect with, that suit their comfort level and excite them. At the same time, they want to connect to things they already own."

Here are eight palettes she predicts will color our homes next year. Color names are Pantone's.

Chinoiserie: Instead of Imperial yellow and lacquer red, these shades of Muted Lime, Nostalgia Rose and Slate Green are "grayed down, like you might find in Chinese antiquities," Eiseman says.

Agrestic: This sophisticated take on country-casual - European and American - updates an earthy palette of brown (Brown Sugar), tan (Eggnog), tender green and warm gold with a fresh jolt of vibrant pink (Strawberry Ice). The look is "more upscale than down-home," Eiseman observes.

Wellspring: These cool water-based shades of blue, green and aqua are warmed by Kiwi green, iridescent Mother of Pearl and Sandstorm. "The warm colors balance the look," Eiseman says. Ethnic chic: "The idea of ethnic has been around for several years, but now it's gotten much more chic," Eiseman notes. Plummy shades like Carmine and Dark Purple combine with Burnt Ochre and Stone Gray. The accent, Baja Blue, is a cobalt blue of Talavera pottery.

Savories: Brights with yummy names like Daiquiri Green, Frappe and Sun Orange are served up with a Rum Raisin brown. Fun and whimsical, the palette is perfect for "a family with young kids and anyone who has a wonderful sense of color," Eiseman says. Nuances: Comforting neutrals like beiges, grays and taupes are energized with plummy shades of Baroque Rose, Red Plum and green-tinged Antique Bronze. The accent colors "pump this palette up so it doesn't get boring," says Eiseman.

ReCollections: Traditional with a twist best describes this decor and companion palette. Soft, warm colors like a Peach Beige, Pale Gold and Withered Rose are accented with gray-blue Tapestry and metallics. "The past has definitely been tweaked," Eiseman says of the look.

High profile: Techno with retro, mystical with modern, says Eiseman, results in a "very modern, sophisticated look that's sexy because it's so sleek." Colors are classic black, pure white, rich brown and grays accented with glamorous Festival Fuchsia, Royal Lilac, Silver and Rich Gold.

HOME: GOODBYE, CLUTTER; HELLO, BLING

Source: Ann Mack, director of trend-spotting for J. Walter Thompson, the largest ad agency in the U.S.

Prius homes: Green moves from the garage to throughout the home as homeowners strive to cut energy costs. Saving the planet from pollution and global warming will be easier - and cheaper - as the "green" marketplace grows.

Backyards with bling: Tropical oases, outdoor kitchens (below), glorious gardens - exterior amenities will be as glamorous as their indoor counterparts - and just as highly decorated. Grow it: Homegrown produce is the next step in eco-living. After all, veggies and fruits picked from the garden taste better and are better for you. Watch for more community gardens to spring up in urban settings.

Space Age: All that electronic gear needs a home when you're at home. Plug your iPod into your favorite chair, nightstand or coffee table, as furnishings link to technology.

Boomer proofing: Homes will change as boomers enter old age. Watch for live-in-place renovations ranging from levered door handles to stair lifts.

De-clutter me, please: No time to get organized? Experts and merchandisers will be there to help and tailor solutions that suit your messy inner self.

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