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The Charlotte Observer



### NANCY BRACHEY

How you can dress up a less-than-stellar fence with evergreen shrubs or vines. 3H



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## **Problems** from rain will seep in on you



It has rained some, you might have noticed. And rained, and rained and rained

rained, and rained and rained some more. I asked Craig Madans, founder of the service network HOCOA, what kinds of calls his home repair folks tend to get when it rains for what seems like 40 days and 40 nights. He didn't miss a beat. Not a blink. He said, "Well, they come in two-by-two." After I quit laughing he said that service calls during long rainy spells are about two fleaks, flooding crawl spaces and yard drainage.

crawi spaces and yard drain-age.
Here's a soggy reminder: Heavy rain doesn't cause roof leaks – it makes them impos-sible to overlook. A passing af-ternoon shower might not dump enough water to cause a stain on your ceiling. It's over quickly, and then everything dries out until next time quickly, and then everything dries out until next time. What we've endured recently, well, it finds those holes and cracks and lets you know about them. It might be a stretch, but the heavy rains could be doing us all a collective favor by point-ing out all those leaks. Madans said roof leaks tend to be caused by missing shin-

Madans sald root leaks tend to be caused by missing shingles, failed caulking around flashing and cracked plumbing vent boots. That's the same advice other experts have offered over the years. If you have a leak, start looking for it in one of those places.

for it in one of those places.
Remember that the leak in
the roof might not be directly
above the spot on your ceiling.
Water can run along raffers
and the underside of the roof
sheathing before dripping. It
won't run directly uphill,
home inspectors have told me,
but it sure can take some creative routes in other direcrective routes in other direcbut it sure can take some cra-ative routes in other direc-tions. If you discover a ceiling stain or wet insulation, check nearby flashing and plumbing vents first.

We have some experience with old, cracking plumbing vent boots at our house.
When the first one started leaking. If found that the oth-

vent boots at our house. When the first one started leaking, I figured that the others weren't far behind. They were all the same age, and all on the hot southern slope of the roof.

Sure enough ...

You don't even have to go up on the roof to check the boots. Do it from the attic. If you can see bright sunlight between the IPVC plumbing vent and the flexible boot that's supposed to fit fightly around the pipe, that's not good.

Here's another reminder: If you hire someone to fix a leak, ask him to check other potential problems. "Hey, he has his 40-foot ladder," said Madans, who founded HOCOA (www.hon founded HOCOA (www.hon counded HOCOA (wow.hon counded HO

Special to the Observe

Scott Beattie, author of "Artisanal Cocktails." likes to put edible flowers in his drinks. such as these from Thai basil

# Cocktail gardens raise the bar



A Pimm's Cup cocktail is garnished

## Create a pretty spot to garnish - and savor - your drinks

hake things up in the backyard this summer. Cocktail garden-ing puts a new twist on edible

ing puis a new twist on edible landsenh herbs and fruit have long been the key ingredients in some of summer's most refreshing libations, and when they're within easy reach of the backyard bartender, every cocktail becomes a flourishing signature drink.

Making a mojito with homegrown mint is only part of the picture, though. A successful cocktail garden should be a comfortable and inviting place to be.

"You can't just translate the indoors to outdoors," said JNell Bryson, a landscape architect in Charlotte. "An outdoor room needs more space to be in scale with nature." Postage-stamp patios in big backyards don't look right, she said, but if a



Raspberry Shortcake is a thornle dwarf plant you can grow in a pot for sweet berries to dress up a beverage.



small space is all you have, there are lots of ways to make it work as a cocktail garden. "Even if you live in a condo and just have at iny patio, you can do a vertical garden, or use pots."

Amy Stewart, author of "The Drunken Botanist," turned the challenging side yard of her Northerm California home into a lush and colorful cocktail garden worthy of her book, which delves deep into the horticulture and lore of hops, rye, barley, grapes and dozens of other plants used to make and garnish the world's greatest drinks. Stewart worked with garden designer Sussan Morrison on the plans for her limited space, which relies heavily on container plantings and includes an outdoor bar, where Stewart stirs up garden-fresh cocktails. Most of the garden is only Teet wide, with a wider patio at one end. Stewart

## I'M SO CLEVER

## A way to keep track of warranties

By Roland Wilkerson

The winner: Whenever something breaks or quits working, I Ine winner: Whenever sometiming breaks or quits working, I always wonder how long I've had it and whether it's under warranty. So now, whenever I buy something. I take a Sharpie and write the date of purchase, length of warranty in an inconspicuous space. Example: "3/7/13 Jyr Wallmart." I also staple receipts to the warranty/product info and keep in a folder. I have gotten everything from ballpoint pens to briefcases replaced under warranties when they went kaput too soon. — 5.P. WILIAMS, SHEBY



## Hot dog! Bun tags come in handy

Those plastic tabs that come with some buns and breads are perfect for slipping on charging cords to help keep them labeled. — HAZEL MCCRONE,

MORE CLEVER



### Organize those earrings

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Organize those earnings
Here's a great way to keep earnings
organized. Snip the bottom part of a wire
hanger and bend the ends to fit into the
slots in a medicine cabinet. Fold a ribbon
or piece of fabric over wire for stud earrings. — JACKIE KOERNER, CHARLOTTE



Berries in pots, such as these blueberries, are always in reach – perfect for a cocktail garden.

### **COCKTAILS**

grows hops on a trellis and grows hops on a trellis and risk: The Plants that Creat raspherries and blueberries in pots. She keeps a romping clump of mint in check by growing it in a raised bar, and she installed 1 planter that also serves as a bar, and she installed 1, shelves on a garden wall for pots full of herbs, with Slied eucumbers, oranges

shelves on a garden wall for post full of herbs, with room for bottles and party glasses. Colorul liqueur bottles inspired the lively palette of the garden and the painted planters. Steward's cocktail garden is furnished minimally with one chair and a bench; it's basically a standing-room, space, if you have a little more room, comfortable gurden furniture makes guests feel right at home, Bryons said. Built-in seating with lost of pillows will encourage guests to relax with their drinks and enjoy the graden around them.

Before you decide where the graden around the g

terrain and the sun and shade patterns in your yard, Bryson suggested. Pull up some garden chairs and check on the views from several angles. "Choose an expansive view, not a view right into the back door," she said. "If you have the house walls on one side, a fence on the oth-

you have the house walls on one side, a fence on the oth-er, and in the third you can look up into the trees, that's what I would choose. Focus on a view away from the house."

bouls. The properties of the p are both good groundcovers with interesting texture; she also likes purple basil, lemon thyme, lawender and other aromatic plants. Of course, plant all the flowers using redients of all kinds are at the convivial heart of the base of the convivial heart of the states of the state of the states o

Pimm's Cup

From "The Drunken Bota-nist: The Plants that Create The World's Great Drinks," by Amy Stewart (Algon-quin Books of Chapel Hill, 2013).



- Amy Stewart, author of "The Drunken Botanist" (Algonquin Books of Chape collections for cocktail gar-

# ONLINE Home bars are back.

and the convival heart of the stylish culinary cocktails stylish culinary cocktails stylish culinary cocktails consumer. Cyrus restaurant in Healdsburg Calif. The cocktail recipes are preserved in fleaties with a taste reminiscent of Cyrus restaurant in Healdsburg Calif. The cocktail recipes are preserved in fleaties with a latter commendation of the commendation

Before you decide where to place a patio, study the terrain and the sun and shade patterns in your yard.

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