



BRRAlliance INC.

Building Bridges to a Brilliant Future

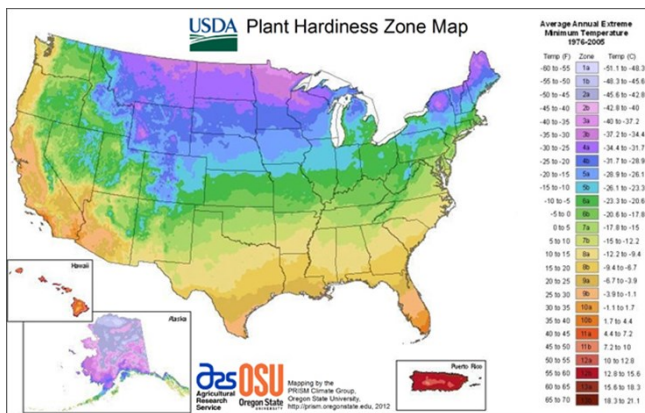
Garden Patch Pg. 1

Plant Hardiness Zone Map Showing Changes

The USDA and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) track the average minimum winter temperature and a 30 year average temperature. Both are showing a slow creep of the hardiness zones northward.

One of the most important factors in which plants will do well in your garden is how cold the winters are. Maps created by the National Oceanic And Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) that look at 30-year averages of the coldest days of the year show that since the 1980s,

hardiness zones have been steadily moving northward and upward in elevation—and many parts of the country have experienced enough of an uptick in overnight lows and winter temperatures to move up a zone.



What does this mean for your garden?

First, the good news. Shifting temperatures, especially in so-called “marginal” areas of the map (where one zone abuts another) mean you can expect success with a wider range of plants than before. In parts of northwest Montana (which have been reclassified from zone 5b to

6a), longer summers and shorter winters have made it possible for farmers to grow artichokes. If you have a sheltered area it may be worth trying to stretch the zone and see if plants from the next southern zone will grow in your garden.

The bad news: trees like sugar maples that depend on frigid winters to fend off pests and diseases, have been perishing in the southern reaches of their ranges. And gardeners of all stripes have to deal with more insect pests, which are better able to thrive and spread throughout natural landscapes, unchecked by a winter freeze.

Excerpts from Rodales: [Organic Life](#)

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New Perennials for 2018

Carrying on the natural landscaping theme, here are some beautiful potential additions to the garden. These come from Bluestone Perennials and they look amazing!

Echinacea Meteor Yellow



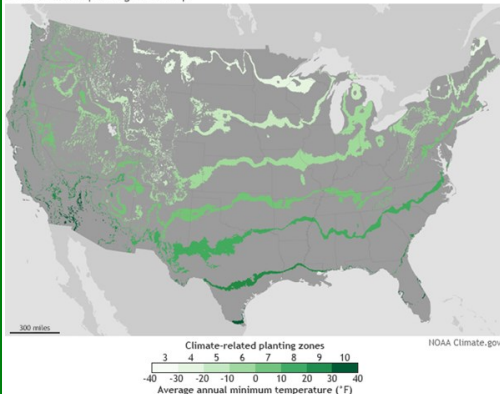
Echinacea Rainbow Marcella



Echinacea Cantaloupe



Climate-related planting zone map





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Garden Patch Pg. 2

Use Adaptable Native Plants Amid Weather Extremes

Your garden can make a significant difference in the fight against climate change. We can use trees, shrubs, and vines to shade our homes and reduce energy use while sequestering carbon from the air.

The plants we choose can be composed largely of natives, which are genetically hardwired to tackle local weather extremes. Lawn-reducing planting beds that are thick and lush, just like we'd see in nature, make added contributions to minimizing carbon footprints while providing essential habitat for diverse wildlife.

Bug Bits: Lady Bugs

We are always looking to add something fun to the Garden Patch News-letter as it enters its eight year. This feature will be part of our newsletter all year long. It is meant to tell us something we might not know about the critters who share our gardens. So if you have any fun bug bits please send them along; we will be happy to add them to the newsletter.

Here is just one sample: in several languages, the portly, spotted lady-bug is affectionately known as a little cow. For example, a popular Russian name for the ladybug is bozhya ko-rovka, which translates to "God's little cow." French people sometimes use the term vache à Dieu, which means "cow of God." The English once called it a ladycow before they switched to bishop and ladybird.



Feeder Cleaning Supplies

Make feeder cleaning easier by stocking up on a few useful tools. With the right equipment on hand you will be able to keep your feeder clean and inviting.

Sturdy Scraper Tool



Brush with Stiff Bristles



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Did You Know?

There are about 4,300 kinds of lady-bugs in the world.



Female ladybugs can eat as many as 75 aphids in one day! Lunch anyone!



A ladybug's jaws chew side to side instead of up and down like our jaws.



The color of a ladybug's spots begin to fade as it gets older



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Tiny Gardens

It is definitely a cold and blustery winter and it looks like the first part of 2018 will be equally as cold. I find that at this time of year it is particularly important for us to find a way to keep our gardening skills sharp. One easy way to do this is to start a few Tiny Gardens. I happen to have two in my house. They are each about 9x9 squares and are perfect for a desktop or window sill.



As you can see they lend themselves to succulents and fairy garden-type decorations. The bonus is they tend to be low maintenance, requiring just a few drops of water every couple of weeks. The containers are readily available at most garden stores as are the succulents and fairy garden items. When you start looking for your seeds this year use this as another reason to stop at your local garden stores. They appreciate the business in the cold winter months.



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What do Honeybees do in Winter

Honeybees are anything but sluggish in the winter months. They head for the hive when the temperature drops to 50 degrees. The bees form a “winter cluster” around the queen to keep her warm and safe. It’s about the size of a football. Worker bees get energy from eating their own honey, flutter their wings to create constant air movement in the hive and shiver to produce heat. This keeps the hive warm with temperatures ranging from 46 degree on the outer surface to 80 degrees at the core. The colder it gets outside the hive, the tighter the cluster becomes.



Invitation to Write an Article for the Garden Patch

The garden patch is really meant to be a fun and informative newsletter that should make your day every time you open it. We have always tried to make it viably appealing and a relatively quick read.

I am inviting anyone who would like to add articles to the newsletter to give it a try. We are pulling together a team of people who will help edit and publish this year’s newsletter. They are much more skilled than I am and they would happily edit whatever you write.

There are only a few ground rules. First, the article needs to focus on gardening and plants. Opinions need to be kept to oneself and facts should be given. The articles need to be about a page and include lots of pictures.

I am including an email if you would like more info about what or how to participate.

BRRAlliance@outlook.com

Come join us. You will not want to miss out on the fun.
The Garden Patch Team

Upcoming Events

We are looking forward to announcing our Spring adult coloring series soon. We are also hoping to have another year of our Spring Nature Lecture Series.

We will also have some exciting announcements for the Black Rock & Riverside “Tour of Gardens” coming soon.

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