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2005 Gardening Trends Report

Chadds Ford, PA – September 10, 2004 -- Good news. Americans have emerged from their cocoons and are “insperiencing” life --enjoying more their families, friends and hobbies and creating “5 star living” experiences in our own domains. Instead of retreating to the shelter of our homes, we are gathering like bees buzzing around a hive, choosing to invite friends over for an outdoor party or alfresco dinner instead of going out on the town.

The home, definitely, is the castle, and we have become masters of the “youniverse” with comfort and quality at the top of our demands. Our homes have turned into highly sophisticated “resorts” with plasma screen TVs, luxurious bathroom spas and state-of-the art outdoor kitchens.

With homeownership at an all time high, more people are expanding their living areas to the outdoors. According to Kip Creel, a market research analysis with NQeury, landscaping is now the number one “discretionary project” for today’s new homeowner. Today some four in five American families garden, spending some \$67 billion on gardening and landscaping services combined.

And Pam Danziger, president of Unity Marketing and author of *Why People Buy Things They Don't Need*, sees that figure increasing. She predicts that for the next five to ten years consumers will shift their decorating focus from the home's interior and will spend more money enhancing their gardens, patios and lawns.

The garden truly has become the “new living room.”

In its “2005 Garden Trends Report,” Susan McCoy, president of the Garden Media Group, says these new lifestyle gardeners, although still short on time, are more self-confident and determined to add their personal signature to their backyards.

Released at the 56th Annual Garden Writers Symposium on Long Island in September, McCoy says gardeners should “use these trends to discover how to make your own outdoor statement this spring.”

Visuals available upon request

WHAT'S IN - WHAT'S OUT FOR GARDENING IN 2005

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SIGNATURE GARDENS ARE IN.

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DO SOME OF IT FOR ME IS IN.

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AND NOT GOING OUT.

NEEDY PLANTS ARE OUT.

COTTAGE GARDENS ARE OUT.

GREENLESS HOUSES ARE OUT.

REALITY GARDENS ARE IN.

IDEAL GARDENS ARE OUT.

Gone are the days when we would drool over designer-driven million dollar dream gardens wishing, "If only I could have a yard that looks like that!" With the onslaught of reality television and makeover shows, Americans are learning that it is not the ideal or picture perfect garden they want but their own personal paradise that reflects their style and personality. They use their garden more for entertaining, relaxing with family and friends or simply reading the newspaper. *Garden Life*, one of the leading British magazines, calls this new breed "lifestyle gardeners" and says they have "an eye for the latest home and leisure trends."

Visuals available upon request

SIGNATURE GARDENS ARE IN. COOKIE CUTTERS ARE OUT.

Steve Hutton, president of The Conard-Pyle Co. (conard-pyle.com), calls them “3 note gardens.” The landscapes installed by homebuilders that all feature the same three plants. But with better gardening information from plant growers and garden writers combined with makeover gardening shows, today’s consumers are more convinced of their own good taste and do not want to be force fed décor. They want their yards to reflect their personal lifestyle. Thanks to Martha Stewart for leading the way, Americans are eating up shows like Ground Force and Weekend Gardening. With each new episode, they gain more knowledge and more skill which means more success in their own yards. With help from experts on web sites like VirtualPlantTags.com, gardeners are learning what plants work in their conditions to create their own looks.

SIMPLE IS STILL IN. CLUTTER IS OUT.

We are still in the “less is more” mode, and still short on time and long on ideas, both feeding the need for simplicity in our daily lives. Keeping gardens simple remains a driving force of today’s gardeners, who are picking flowers and plants that work together in harmony and are happy in their environments. Plants that need heavy maintenance or don’t provide four season of color are just of no use. Joe Gray, general manager of Hines Horticulture (hineshorticulture.com), one of the largest purveyors of ornamental shrubs, color plants and container-grown plants in North America, sees this all over the country. “Mass plantings of colors that work together or are all in the same general color family are easier for most people to envision in the garden and, in the long run, maintain. And it’s so much easier on the eye,” says Gray. “Our backyards really have become an oasis, a quick get away, in a hectic world.”

DO SOME OF IT FOR ME IS IN. DO IT ALL YOURSELF IS OUT.

Do some of it for me is in. Do it all your self is out. Don't worry. You don't have to actually "do it" all yourself. It's OK to call in the experts even if it's just to weed, mulch or mow. With our lack of both time and knowledge, the trend to hire others to do the things in our yards we either don't want to do, don't have the time to do or don't know how to do is increasing. Lawn and garden services are one of the fastest growing segments of the industry. According to Robert Dolibois, executive vice president of the American Nursery and Landscape Association, mowing and yard care services as well as fully installed landscapes are the fastest growing areas of the \$69 billion lawn and gardening segment. The latest study reports almost \$30 billion was spent on landscape services alone. "People just don't have the time, the knowledge or the inclination to do many of the tasks so they hire someone to do it for them."

MEGA BLOOMS ARE IN. SEEDLINGS ARE OUT.

Today, consumers want life to be simple. They want plants that are “ready to wear” – nearly mature with an instant effect in the garden. “It comes down to the fact,” says Allan Armitage, author of the definitive books on annuals and perennials, “that people have more money than time”, a trend GMG identified last year. Old fashioned flats of seedlings have all but vanished. Super sized plants are the plants of choice. Six-pack varieties like Simply Beautiful® (simplybeautifulgardens.com) in mint packs and Wave® petunias in hot pink packs were a big hit this season in garden centers. The Kong™ coleus series from Simply Beautiful® grow to be 18 to 22 in. tall in a matter of weeks. The gigantic leaved foliage comes in five unique and bold colors from Green, Mosaic, Red, Rose and Scarlet. The Raymond Evison Patio Clematis Collection™ (hinesvines.com) comes in a decorative pot ready for the deck or patio. These long-blooming “queens of the vine” come in violet, pinkish-red and a wine red, and bloom constantly from June to September.

SPECIALTY ANNUALS ARE IN. BEDDING PLANTS ARE OUT.

Once disdained by serious gardeners, Adrian Higgins of the Washington Post reports that annuals are now being integrated in to the garden along with perennials and shrubs. According to Higgins, “annuals were eclipsed for years by perennials,” but new varieties and the ease of care are making seasonal flowers and foliage the choice of both beginner and expert gardeners. Kong coleus will be “king” in the garden this year with its gigantic multi-colored leaves. Fiesta™ Double impatiens look like roses in the shade and offer new colors for the spring in Fiesta Rose, Purple Ole and the improved Salsa Red. Fusion™ impatiens emit novelty with names like Glow, Heat, Infrared and Radiance.

Visuals available upon request

The vincas return in a big way this season with Simply Beautiful Wind Dancer™, Eragrotis, sporting gigantic flowers in seven colors including Polka Dot, Punch and Blue Halo.

LUXURY BRANDS ARE IN. BARGAIN BRANDS ARE OUT.

Luxury garden purchases for decorative garden enhancements, i.e. pools, fountains, and sculptures, high-end barbecues, and patio and pool furniture were second only to luxury electronics in Unity Marketing's latest luxury market survey. Some 45% purchased luxury garden products spending on average \$1,000 on enhancements for their yard. Campania International, Inc. (campaniainternational.com) confirms this. Sales of fountains and high end containers have sky rocketed in the last few years, whereas the lower end items are flat. Large garden art, beautiful eye-catching garden art and garden knick-knacks all make you feel at home in your outdoor living room.

VERTICAL GARDENING IS IN. ONE DIMENSIONAL GARDENING IS OUT.

As our time to garden decreases and the pressures increase, we are finding ourselves living and gardening in smaller spaces – on decks and patios and even from balconies of high rise apartments. With less horizontal space, our need to garden up – or down for that matter – is growing. Look for more and more trailing plants that can grow up a trellis or on a fence or cascade over a balcony or wall. The Raymond Evison Royal Horticultural Collection® Clematis is perfect for climbing up a fence or cascading over a balcony. These long blooming plants come in four jewel tones and are perfect mixed with the new Simply Beautiful® Fanfare™ trailing impatiens or the floriferous and climbing Tidal Wave™ Silver to create a show stopping wall or waterfall of color.

ROMANTIC IS IN. PEDESTRIAN IS OUT.

Just look on the covers of the leading fashion magazines. Soft feminine flowers in wonderful jewel tones are in. Romantic glamorous gardens, lacy feminine flowers are in. From the fashion catwalks of Paris, the word is that gardeners today like plants that are soft. The last few years have heightened the importance of home, family, security, and comfort; however, what we're seeing now is a transition to more glamour. Romanticism and glamour are back in a big way. Whether in fashion or home décor the look is more sensual and lush. The new roses from Star® Roses speak the language of love. Elle™, Queen Mary 2™ and other Romantica™ Roses bring luscious colors and rich fragrances to the garden. Luna™ Hibiscus with its lush red flowers makes you feel like you're in a tropical island. Add an airy touch of elegance to containers with the purple passion of Evison's Cezanne Patio Clematis.

NEW CLASSICS ARE IN. TRENDY IS OUT.

Today's homeowners, according to Creel, value quality and the product's longevity in the market place. Working with companies like Star® Roses who has helped American gardeners for almost 150 years or Ball Horticulture (ballhort.com) with its Simply Beautiful® and Wave™ petunias, who has been growing flowers and vegetables for almost a hundred years, gardeners know they are brands they can trust. These companies are improving on grandmother's classic favorites and helping to make them easier to grow in anyone's yard. Ball's Centennial Collection celebrates great annuals and perennials from the best breeders in the country. Campania International's Longwood Gardens Collection, for example, combines high quality statuary, benches, birdbaths and containers with the historical importance of one of American's golden families – instant class.

CURATED CONSUMPTION IS IN. AVALANCHE OF CHOICES IS OUT.

We are time starved and overwhelmed with the avalanche of choice in a garden center. To help navigate our shopping experience and make it move efficiently, consumers are looking for "masters of consumption" like *Lucky* magazine, the Fab Five or opinionated bloggers to tell them what is hip and cool. Today's gardeners are turning to experts like Allan Armitage and Michael Dirr at the VirtualPlantTags.com to help make smart choices in plant purchases and plant care advice. After selecting the plants that work for them, consumers can find where they're sold in a matter of a mouse click. Brands like Simply Beautiful® are putting "Ask the Experts" on their websites (simplybeautifulgardens.com).

Visuals available upon request

ENVIRONMENTALLY SENSITIVE GARDENING IS IN.**CHEMICALLY DEPENDENT GARDENING IS OUT.**

This trend is getting stronger each year. Eschewing chemicals once meant that gardeners tolerated some disease, damage and weeds in their gardens. Now, with products like aerated compost tea from SoilSoup (soilsoup.com) and Messenger®'s (edenbioscience.com) harpin protein coupled with the many choices of disease resistant plants like the Knock Out® rose family, chemical controls are unnecessary. A growing number of neighborhood nurseries and garden centers are offering education and environmentally friendly product alternatives that were formerly only found through organic gardening organizations. Environmental products sales are up 200% in the last 5 years.

CONTAINER GARDENING IS STILL IN.**AND NOT GOING OUT.**

Not only is it in, but it is expanding with more creative ways to combine plants and more wonderful containers. The Raymond Evison Patio Clematis Collection™ is a perfect choice for small space gardeners looking for a big impact. This long blooming vine is covered with star burst flowers from June until October and was bred to thrive in containers. Simply Beautiful®'s new Plant by Number program helps gardeners quickly select combinations of flowers that will grow happily together in containers – without fear of making poor choices. Perennials and shrubs are making a great show in containers. Lemon Yellow Sunblaze™ makes a permanent centerpiece in containers allowing you to change out the annuals for the seasonal interest.

EMPOWERED PLANTS ARE IN.**NEEDY PLANTS ARE OUT.**

The current craze for exercise and healthy living has spilled over into the garden. Savvy homeowners are selecting products that have been tested and tried to be “happy” in their growing conditions. Low maintenance plants like Meilland Star® Shrub Roses are in big demand by today's busy gardener. High in demand are fool proof annuals that need little food and water to bring color from spring to fall. Plants, like people, who are less stressed and healthier flourish and add joy to all those around them. Products like Messenger, which actually help plants fight disease naturally instead of using harsh chemicals, are the wave of the future.

TROPICAL GARDENS ARE IN.**COTTAGE GARDENS ARE OUT.**

Big bold flowers and foliage are making a big splash in the garden. This is a smart and cost efficient way to create the look, and, according to Steve Bender, garden expert with *Southern Living*, “You can get lots of color and show in the heat of summer with tropicals.” Hardy plants with a tropical look, like Blush Luna™ hibiscus, the funky Chili Chilly ornamental peppers and lush flowering vines like Raymond Evison clematis are being incorporated into borders and beds. Using container plants with huge leaves and unique colors brings the look to decks and patios.

HOUSEPLANTS ARE IN.**GREENLESS HOUSES ARE OUT.**

Ferns, snake plants and palms aren't for your grandmother's parlor any longer. Bigger houses with lots of open space and sun porches lend themselves beautiful to being filled with houseplants. These plants work great indoors during cold weather and moved to decorate the deck or patio in the summer.

For more information, on these and other trends, visit www.gardenmediagroup.com.

Visuals available upon request