

The Fall River Ridge Report! (It's scary good!)

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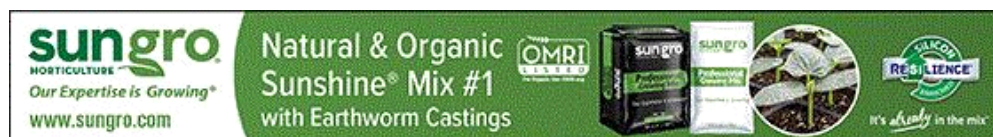
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GrowerTalks' Acres Online

News and Commentary from GrowerTalks Magazine

A big jump up!



One is not supposed to start a sentence with numerals, which is the reason for this preamble before stating the point of this story: 2021 has been a fabulous year!

My evidence? The results from the Fall 2021 River Ridge Report (up 11.5 points over 2020), combined with the already-revealed results of the [Spring River Ridge Report](#) (up 5 points). Phenomenal!

But before I reveal the details, a word from our fine sponsor, Sun Gro Horticulture, crafters of top-shelf potting media products for your growing and gardening pleasure, including specialty performance mixes designed for controlled-environment crops. If my River Ridge neighbors had some control over their environments, I bet they'd pick Sun Gro!

Now, back to our regularly scheduled newsletter ...

As I so gleefully stated above, the results of our Halloween morning drive through River Ridge, my Chicagoland subdivision of 14 streets and 356 homes revealed that 276 of the residents (including me) decorated in some way, shape or form for the Fall, resulting in a participation rate of 77.5% of homes—the second-highest result ever (behind 2010's 81%) and well above the 11-year average of 70%. And seeing how we've been in the low- to mid-60s since 2016, it's a big improvement!

Here's the data:

	2021	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016	2015	2014	2013*	2012	2011	2010	11-year avg
Homes that decorated	77.5%	66%	65%	67%	66.5%	63%	72%	65%	*	71%	71%	81%	70%
Party poopers	22.5	34	35	33	34	37	28	35	*	29	30	19	31
Fall Flowers	35.5	34	34	34	23	30	20	26	*	31	31	23	29
Pumpkins, corn, etc	67	79	62	61	58	62	68	80	*	61	49	65	65
Plastic décor	78	79	77	76	75.5	71	70	63.5	*	75.5	77	80	75
All Three	21	19	18.5	15.5	14	16	12.5	14.5	*	16	11	15	16
Inflatables	7	7	8	6.5	7	6	5	4	*	5	6	8	6

*No Fall report in 2013. I have no earthly clue why.

Now for the question: Why did an additional 40 of my neighbors (276 vs. 236) pick 2021 to put out Fall/Halloween decorations? I have no idea. I did put out a query on the neighborhood Facebook page, asking for comments from anyone who decorated this year but not last, but haven't received any answers yet. I can't recall that the weather was more conducive. Perhaps it was just a desire to see the end of the pandemic (although the state of Illinois is still under a mask mandate).



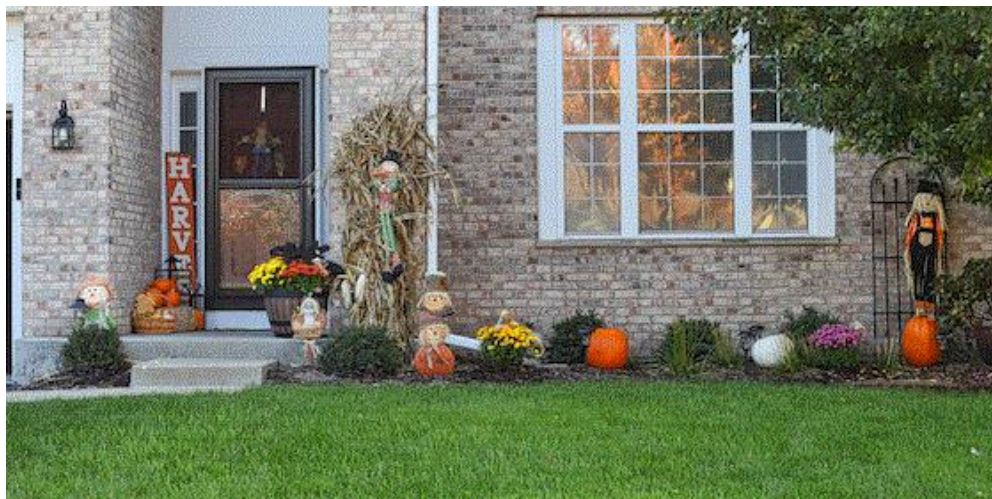
Avid gardener and decorator Bertha Mireles never fails to go all out at her home.

Maybe you can venture a guess based on your own fall sales or even your own decorating habits. Shoot me an email [HERE](#). And if I get any insights from my neighbors, I'll share them via the regular *Acres Online*.

How they decorated

Laurie and I count flowers, agricultural products (pumpkins are the first things we spot, then strawbales and corn stalks), any sort of artificial décor, inflatable decorations (we have a soft spot for Snoopy and the Minions), and lastly the party poopers who have zip, zero, nada décor. From the data, we tabulate the above results.

Flowers, our favorite category, naturally, were purchased by 35.5% of those who decorated—up 1.5 points from 2020 and the highest number in at least 11 years. Mums are far and away the most common fall flowers; in fact, we spotted very few flowers that weren't mums—I recall one large combo planter with a spike and cabbage. Mum use seems about split between pots and in the ground; we didn't count that, but maybe next time we will.



Mums used both ways—in pots and in the ground. Plus ag products and artificial decor, for an "all-three" rating.



One of the few large combo pots we spotted.

Agricultural products—pumpkins, corn stalks, strawbales, Indian corn, etc.—were used by 67% of those who decorated, down considerably from 2020 (79%), but above the 11-year average of 65%. I can't say there was a pumpkin shortage or anything like that, at least based on my own local shopping experiences in October. Perhaps its kid-driven—"Momma, please buy a pumpkin to carve!"—and this year kids were into TikTok. (Do kids say "please" these days?)

Plastic/artificial décor is, of course, the No. 1 category, at 78% of decorators choosing some form of skeleton, ghost, ghoul, cemetery plot or other horror to scare the kiddos. That number has remained consistent for most of the survey.

One number I like to see up is the "all three" number, meaning those who went all out with their decorating. This year's 21% figure is the highest ever, and to me, reflects an optimism that things are good enough to want to celebrate and not pinch pennies.

Not on the chart is those who I call the "fall purists"—the folks who decorate not for Halloween, but for Fall, using only flowers and agricultural products. This year, the purists accounted for 5.5% of my neighbors, up slightly from 2020's 5% and a bit more from 2019's 3.4%.



The purist. Tasteful, subtle ... maybe lazy (I can say that, as it's my front stoop).



Then there's the minimalist. But still, they count as having decorated.

As I mentioned at the beginning, both of the 2021 River Ridge Reports, Spring and Fall, showed nice increases in overall participation. That bodes well for the Winter Greens report coming up in December. And, hopefully, it bodes well for your Christmastime sales, as well.

Questions, comments or insights about this Fall's report? Shoot your thoughts to me at beytes@growertalks.com.



See you next time in the regular *Acres Online*!

Chi

Chris Beytes
Editor
GrowerTalks and *Green Profit*
beytes@growertalks.com