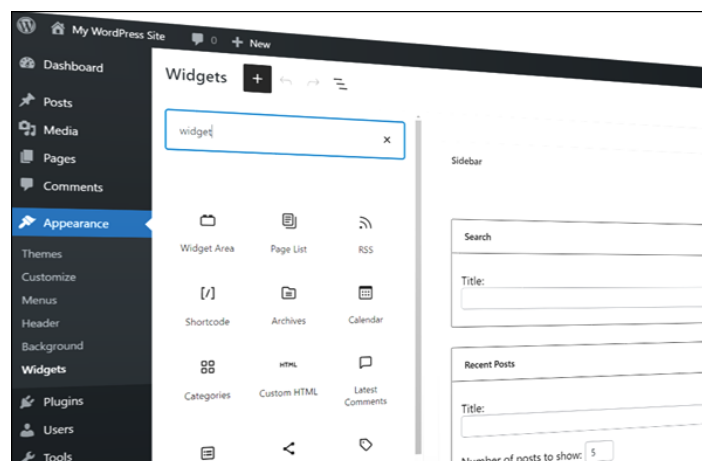




WordPress Widgets Explained

Tutorial Contents



This tutorial explains what WordPress widgets are, how widgets work, and how widgets can be used to customize and extend the functionality of your website or blog.

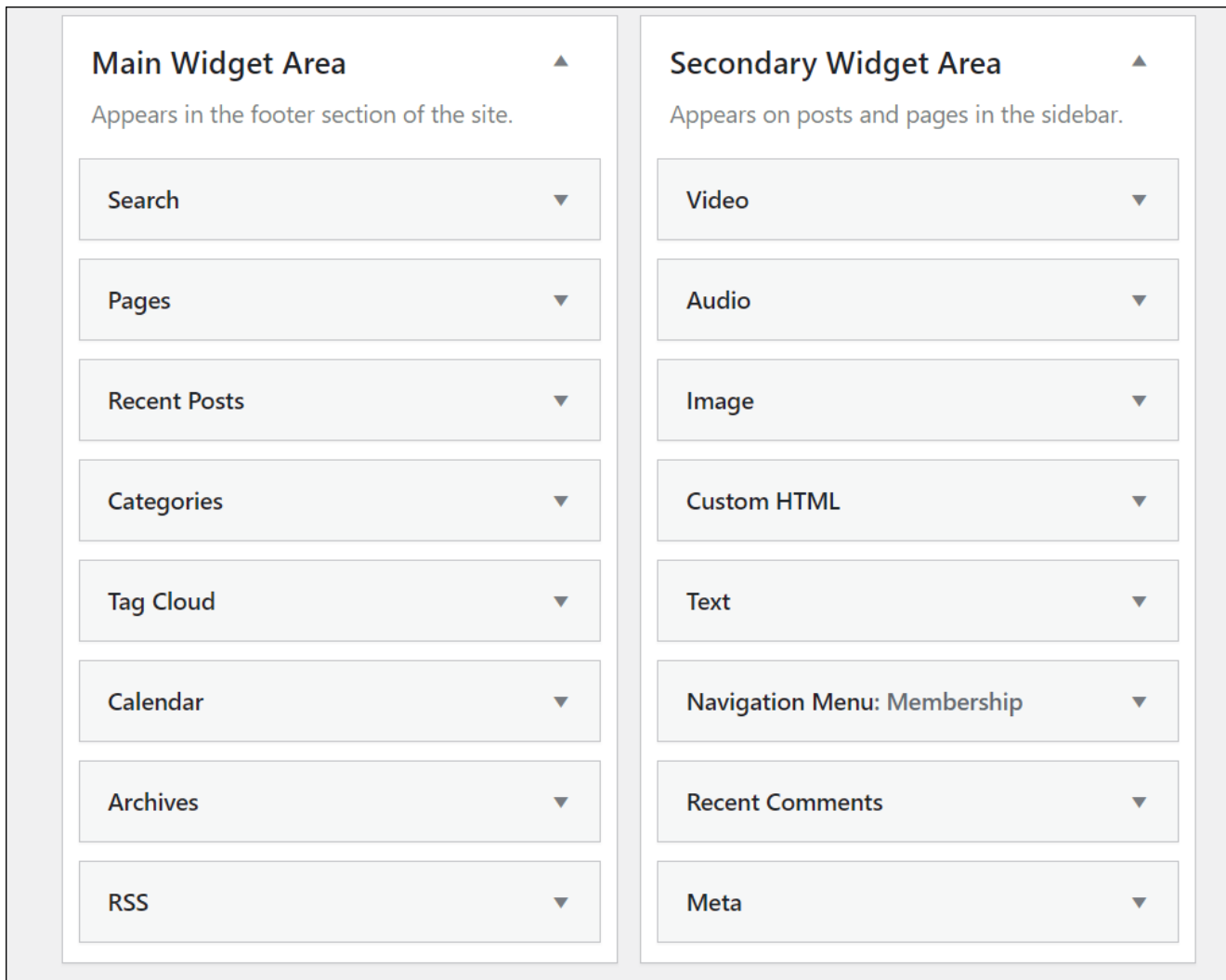
This tutorial covers the following areas:

- [Editing Widgets In The Theme Customizer](#)
- [Widget-Ready Themes](#)
- [Widget Options](#)
- [How To Use WordPress Widgets](#)

Overview of Widgets

As well as being a powerful and flexible platform for building, managing, and growing your web presence, one of the main benefits and advantages of using WordPress is that you can easily add content, enhance your site's functionality and customize your site's layout with no coding skills or knowledge required.

Depending on the **theme** you have installed, WordPress lets you quickly and easily manage different types of content and functionality on areas of your site like the sidebar, header, and footer using *widgets*.



Widgets.

What Are Widgets?

Widgets are self-contained blocks of code that perform a specific function, such as adding some type of content (e.g. a text box or a list), a media element (e.g. an image, video, or audio), a form, or a script to your site.

The WordPress software is written using an open-source general-purpose scripting language suited for web development called PHP (Hypertext Preprocessor).

Normally, adding features and functions that will enhance the functionality of a website requires knowing how to program code like PHP.

Now ... don't worry if all of this sounds *too technical*. WordPress widgets require no coding experience or programming expertise to use.

A widget contains all the complex code required to run whatever function or feature you want to add to your site.

Anatomy Of A Widget

```
class WP_Widget {  
    $widget_ops = array( 'classname' => 'example-widget',  
                        'description' => 'Example widget description' );  
    $control_ops = array( 'width' => 300, 'height' => 300 );  
    $this->WP_Widget( 'example-widget', __( 'Example Widget', 'example' ) );  
}  
  
function widget( $args, $instance ) {  
    extract( $args );  
  
    //Our variables from the widget settings.  
    $title = apply_filters( 'widget_title', $instance['title'] );  
    $name = $instance['name'];  
    $show_info = isset( $instance['show_info'] ) ? $instance['show_info'] : true;  
  
    echo $before_widget;  
  
    // Display the widget title  
    if ( $title )  
        echo $before_title . $title . $after_title;  
  
    // The name  
    echo $name;  
}
```

All of this code ...

Is contained inside a widget ...

Widgets lets you add many features and functions to your site without requiring coding skills or knowledge.

Instead of writing all the code that would be required to run a feature or functionality you'd like to add to your site, all you do is insert a *widget* that already includes all of that coding wherever you want that functionality. The widget will then run the functionality.

Many widgets also include customizable options and settings. This gives you complete control over the feature without requiring you to mess with any of the feature's code.

Everything happens 'under the hood.'

What Can Widgets Do?

Widgets were originally designed to provide WordPress users with a simple and easy-to-use way to control the design and structure of their WordPress Theme.

As you will see shortly, you can easily add, remove, reorder, and rearrange widgets around different sections of your website simply by clicking, dragging, and dropping them into “widgetized” areas of the theme, such as the sidebar, header, footer, (and even inside the content of your posts and pages if using the **block editor**).

My WordPress Site

My Tagline Goes Here

Widgets



The World's Most Desirable Jewelry Collection

February 7, 2021 Bob Writer 0 Comments

Nulla convallis, magna eget volutpat ullamcorper, sem risus varius tellus, ut ullamcorper sapien tortor at risus.

READ FULL



Another Doggone Year

February 1, 2021 Bob Writer 0 Comments

This is the post excerpt of Post 1. Curabitur sed libero hendrerit, fringilla sem ac, elementum quam.

READ FULL



My Coffee Blog

January 31, 2021 Bob Writer 0 Comments

Café au lait white turkish spoon latte skinny caramelization dripper. Extraction sweet and extraction acerbic coffee irish aftertaste java as café au lait doppio. Blue mountain coffee single origin aroma

READ FULL



Our Sales Have Gone Bananas

January 1, 2021 Bob Writer 0 Comments

Widget Sales Report Q4 The table below shows widget sales for the last quarter: Widget Type Units Sold Revenue Blue 12,657 \$4,998,715 Red 10,944 \$4,324,155 Green 8,457 \$3,869,880 Yellow 6,483

READ FULL

The 7 Principles Of Effective Leadership

December 27, 2020 Jake Morris 0 Comments

"You have brains in your head. You have feet in your shoes. You can steer yourself any direction you choose. You're on your own. And you know what you know.

READ FULL

Search input field with a teal search button.

Audio player showing 0:00 / 4:04 with volume and play/pause controls.

RECENT POSTS

The World's Most Desirable Jewelry Collection

Another Doggone Year

My Coffee Blog



- beetroot broccoli Caffeine
- capsicum cauliflower
- celery Espresso fava bean fig
- grape greens harissa
- Java kale kohlrabi kombu
- okra pear potato pumpkin
- quandong Roasted
- Beans salsify Single
- Origin spinach
- sprouts sweet
- potato tomato zucchini

RECENT COMMENTS

Dr. Casimer Reinger DVM on Recipes For Going Nuts And Bananas

Felton Hansen on Recipes For Going Nuts And Bananas

Dr. Oda Dicki on Alphabet Soup Recipes

ARCHIVES

Select Month dropdown menu.

CATEGORIES

<p>I Woke Up Inspired This Morning</p> <p>December 25, 2020 Bob Writer 0 Comments</p> <hr/> <p>Waltzing Matilda "Waltzing Matilda" is Australia's best-known bush ballad. The original lyrics were written in 1895 by Australian poet Banjo Paterson. Waltzing Matilda – Lyrics Once a jolly swagman camped</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coffee Coffee Blends Coffee Makers Coffee Recipes Design Fruit
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Use widgets to expand the capability of your site.

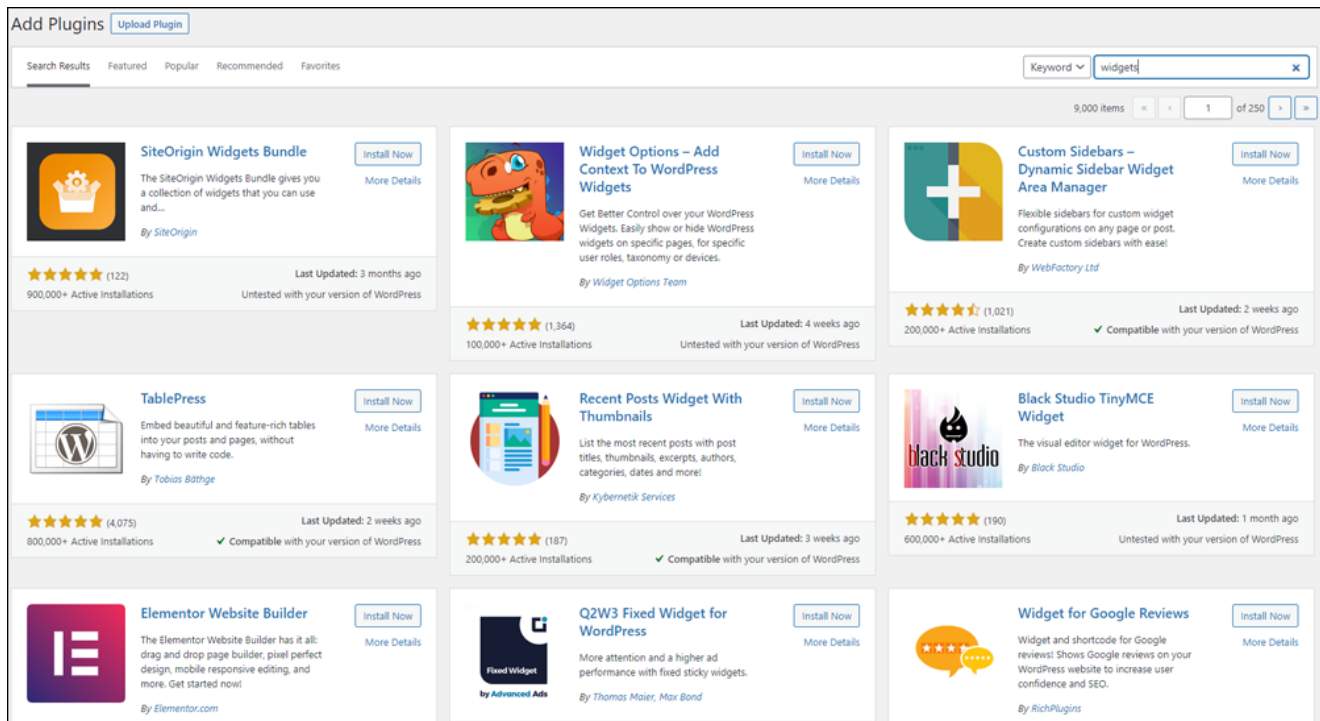
Here are just some of the many things you can add to your WordPress site using widgets:

- Site search feature
- List of pages (and nested subpages)
- List of **post categories**
- **Tag clouds**
- List of archived posts
- **Custom menus**
- Links to external sites
- Links to your **most recent posts**
- **Most recent post comments**
- Rotating advertising banners
- Client testimonials
- Polls, quizzes, and surveys
- **RSS feeds**
- Newsletter subscription/Lead generation opt-in/User registration forms
- Shopping cart information
- Featured products
- Videos, images, audio files
- Social media buttons and links
- Widgets from other applications or sites (e.g. Facebook, Instagram, Amazon affiliate programs, etc.)
- Administrative forms (e.g. login)
- And many more!



Notes:

- Installing certain **plugins** on your site can add widgets to make new features available.
- Installing different themes can affect where widgets can be used on your site and change your widget layouts.



Installing certain plugins will add new widgets to enhance your site.

The Future Of Widgets

As WordPress evolves toward a more block-based architecture and the introduction of features like Full Site Editing (FSE), where the entire site can be customized using blocks, *widgets* may end up being replaced by blocks altogether.

So, instead of dragging widgets to 'widgetized' areas of your theme like the sidebar, header, footer, etc. you would simply add a block that will do whatever you want, wherever you want that function to appear on your site.

WordPress is heading toward this future but it's not quite there yet, hence the reason why we have the "Classic" and "Block-based" widget editors.

Our widget tutorials currently cover both editors. As things change, we'll update the tutorials in this section to reflect new developments.

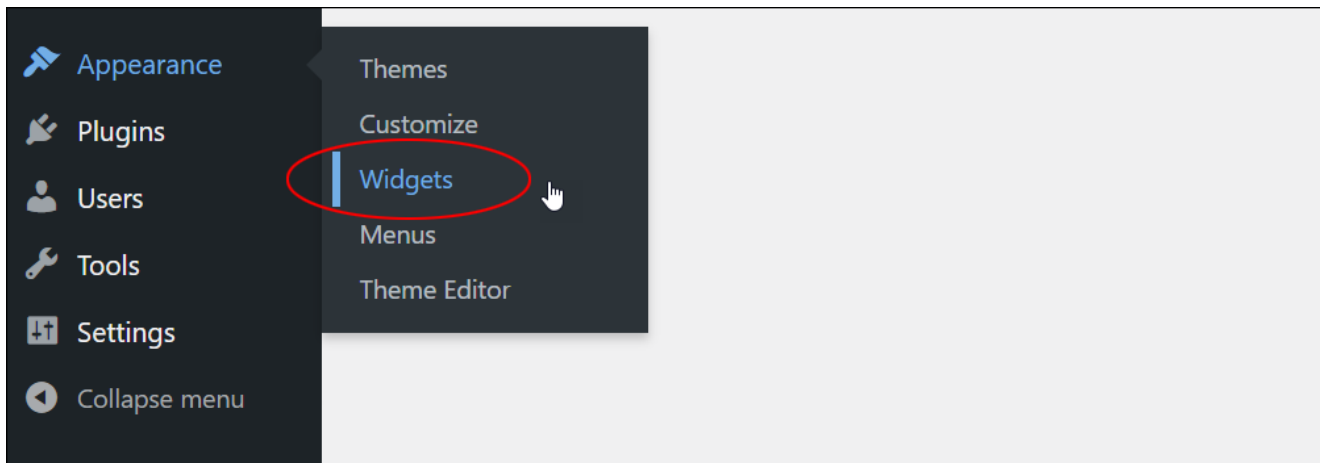
The Widgets Screen

You can access the widgets screen and customize widgets on your WordPress site:

- From the [WordPress Dashboard](#)
- From the [Theme Customizer](#)

Access The Widgets Screen From Your Dashboard Menu

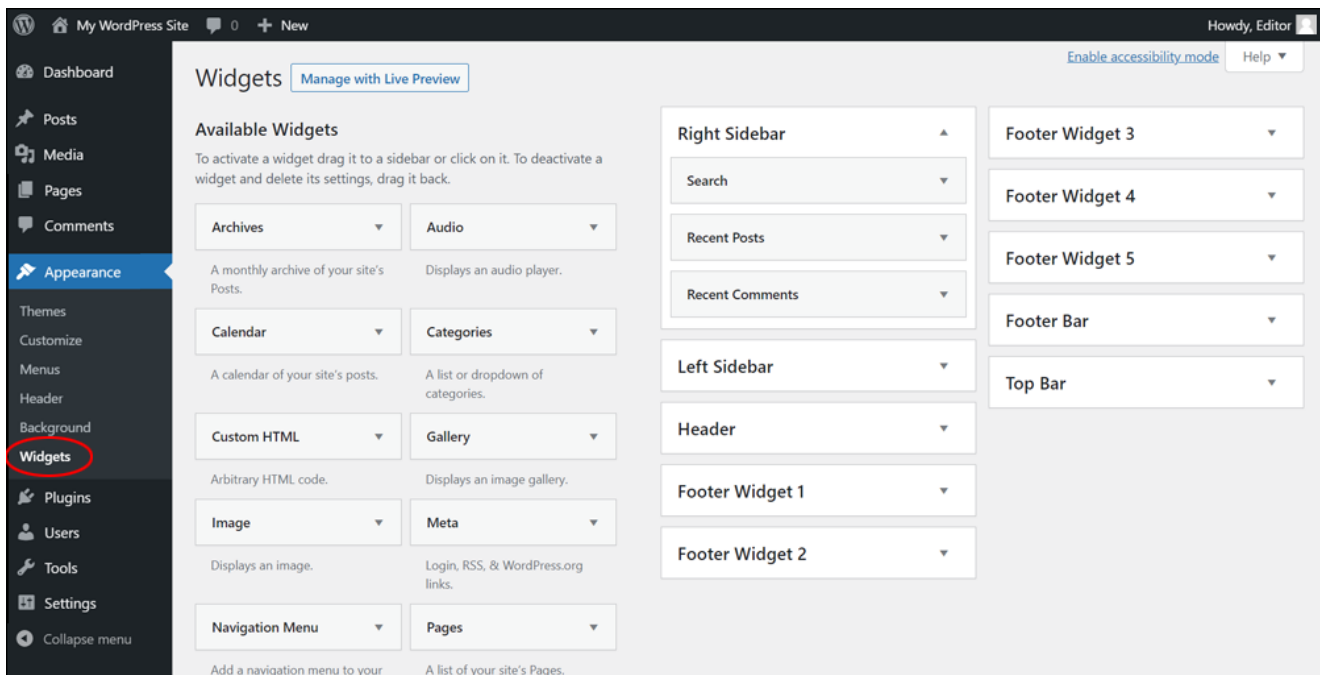
To access the widgets screen on your WordPress site from your menu, go to **Appearance > Widgets**.



Click on Appearance – Widgets to go to the Widgets section of your site.

Widgets Screen – WordPress Classic Editor

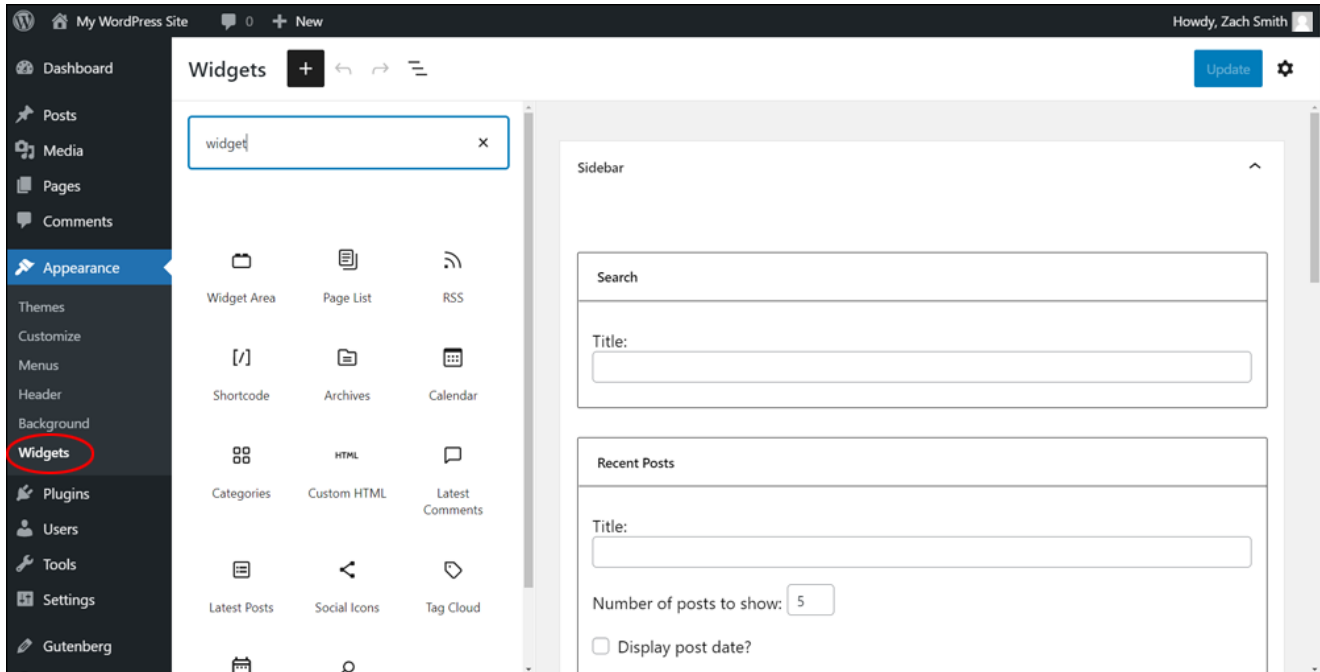
If your site uses the **WordPress Classic Editor**, your Widgets screen should look like the screenshot below.



WordPress Widgets screen – Classic Editor.

Widgets Screen – WordPress Block Editor

If your site uses the default **WordPress Block Editor**, your Widgets screen should look like the screenshot below.



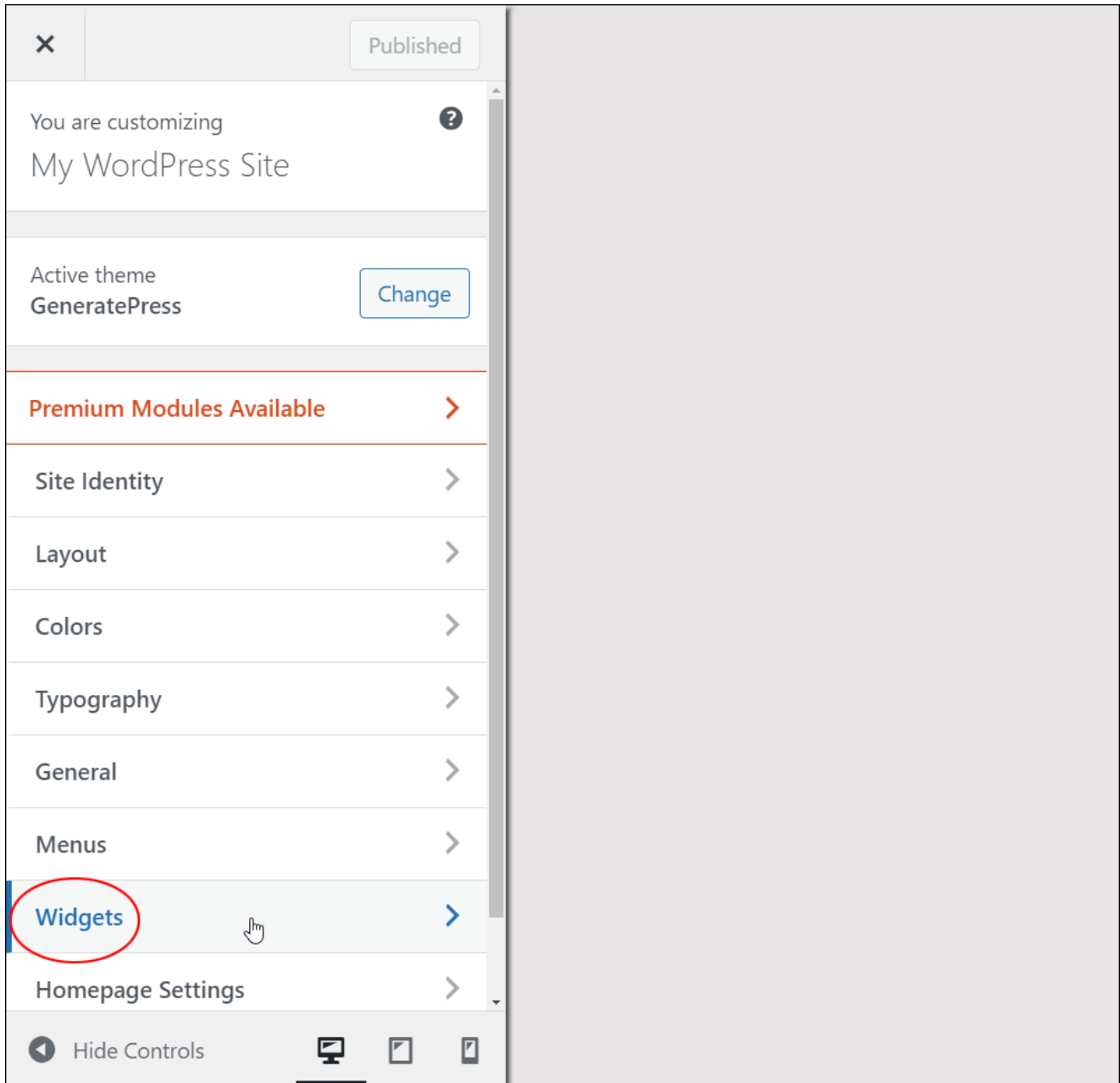
WordPress Widgets screen – Block Editor.

To learn how to navigate the Widgets screen and use widgets on your site regardless of which screen displays on your site, see this tutorial: [**How To Use WordPress Widgets – Part 1**](#)

Customize Widgets In The Theme Customizer

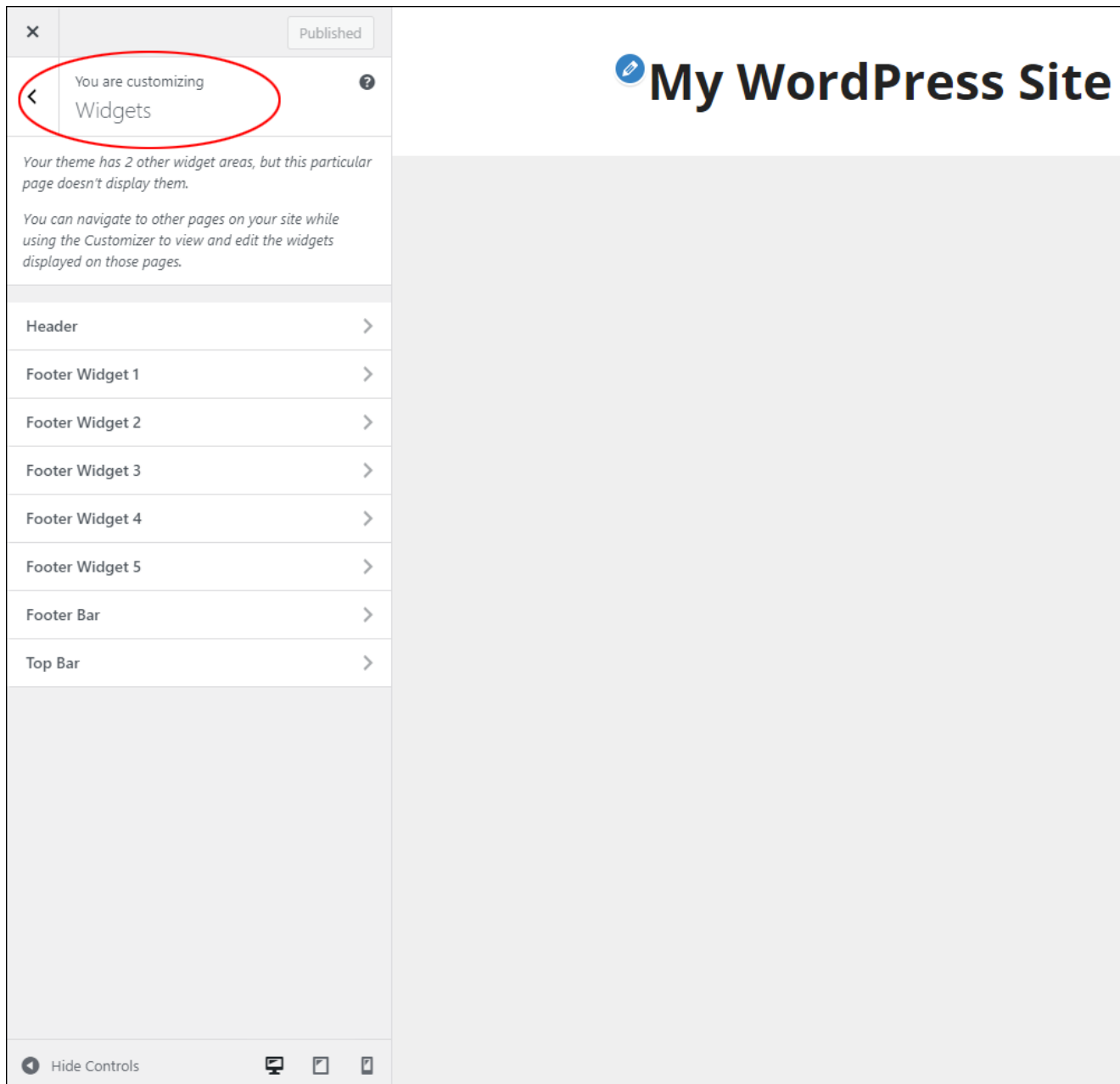
To customize widgets in the Theme Customizer, go to **Appearance > Customize**.

The items displayed in the Customizer screen will depend on your current theme. Most themes support widgets. If your theme supports widgets, click on the “Widgets” section.



Most WordPress themes let you access and configure widgets via the Theme Customizer.

This will bring up all the widget elements that your theme supports.



The widgets you will see in the Theme Customizer depend on the theme you have installed.

To learn how to use widgets in the Customizer screen, see this tutorial: [How To Use WordPress Widgets – Part 1](#)

Widget-Ready Themes

Most WordPress themes support widgets and provide “widgetized” areas on your site where you can add widgets to.

Widgetized sections of a WordPress site typically include:

- Sidebar (including left and right sidebars, or double sidebar columns on either side, depending on the theme).

- Header (including top bar).
- Footer (including multiple footer column sections).

As has been repeatedly stated here, it all depends on the current theme you have installed.

For example, the WordPress theme shown below has only one widget area (Footer), so any widgets you add to your site will only display in the theme's footer.

The screenshot shows a WordPress blog post with a footer widget area. The widget area contains the following text:

← Previous post
Another Doggone Year

beetroot broccoli [Caffeine capsicum](#)
cauliflower celery [Expresso](#) fava bean fig grape greens
harissa Java kale kohlrabi kombu okra pear
potato [pumpkin](#) quandong [Roasted](#)
Beans salsify [Single Origin](#)
spinach sprouts [sweet potato](#)
tomato [zucchini](#)

Published February 7, 2021
By [Bob Writer](#)

Categorized as [Design](#)

Widgets + ← → ≡ Update ⚙

Footer ^

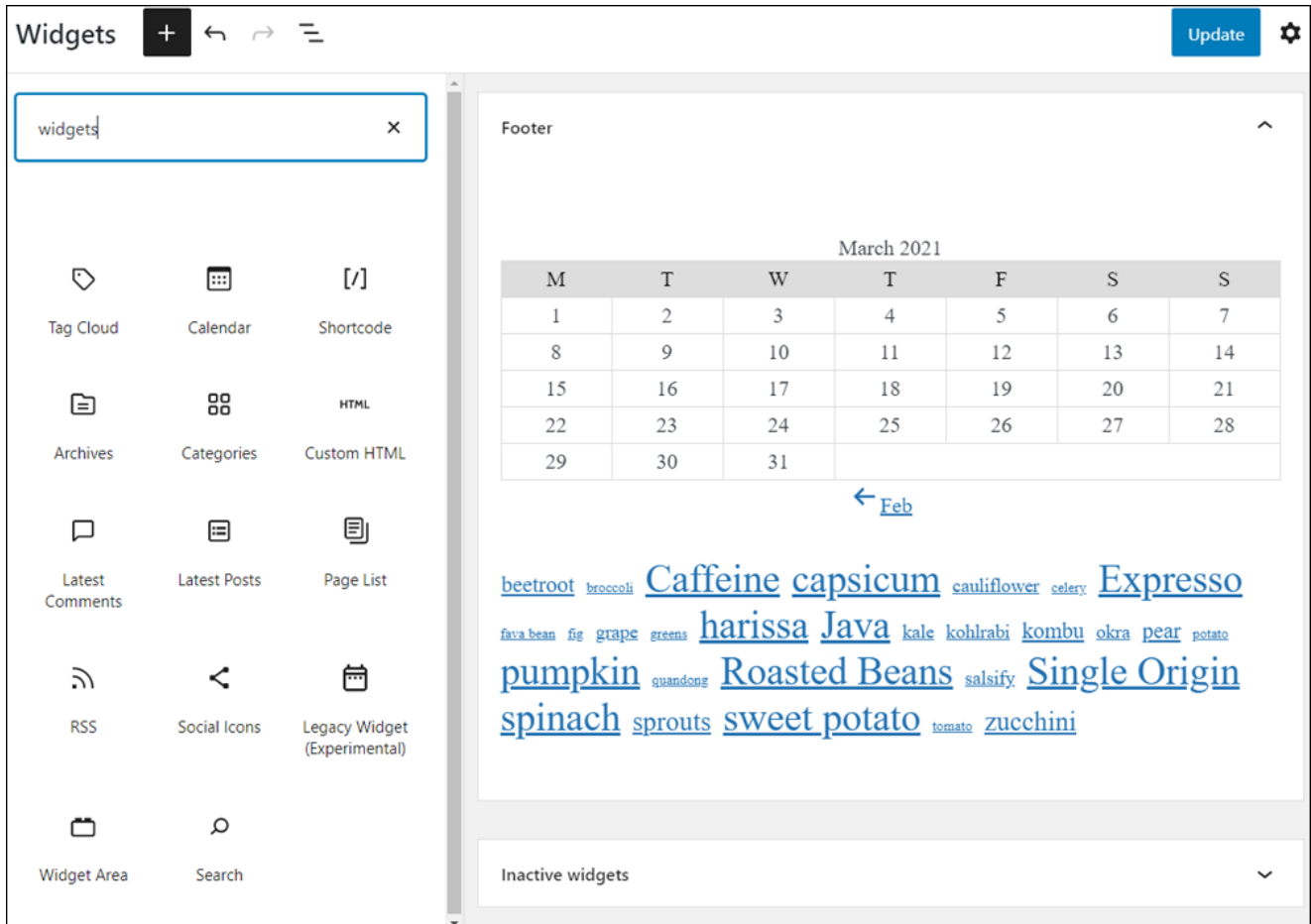
beetroot broccoli [Caffeine capsicum](#) cauliflower celery [Expresso](#) fava bean fig
grape greens [harissa Java](#) kale kohlrabi kombu okra pear potato [pumpkin](#) quandong
[Roasted Beans](#) salsify [Single Origin](#) [spinach](#) sprouts
[sweet potato](#) tomato [zucchini](#)

Inactive widgets v

MY WORDPRESS SITE Proudly powered by [WordPress](#).

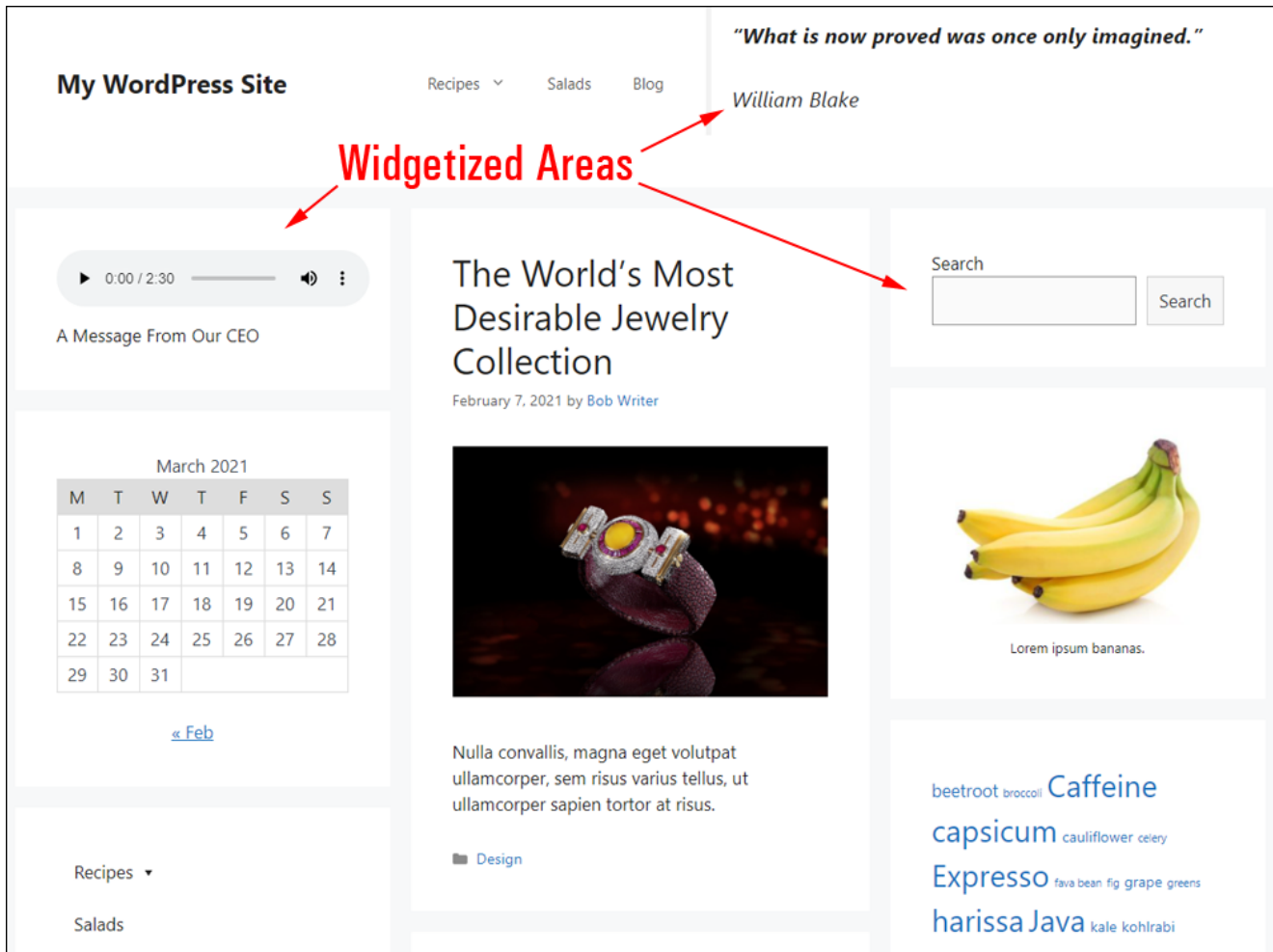
This theme only has one widgetized section in the footer. Theme: Twenty Twenty-One.

Here is the widget screen of the theme shown above. You can see that this theme only has one widget-enabled area.



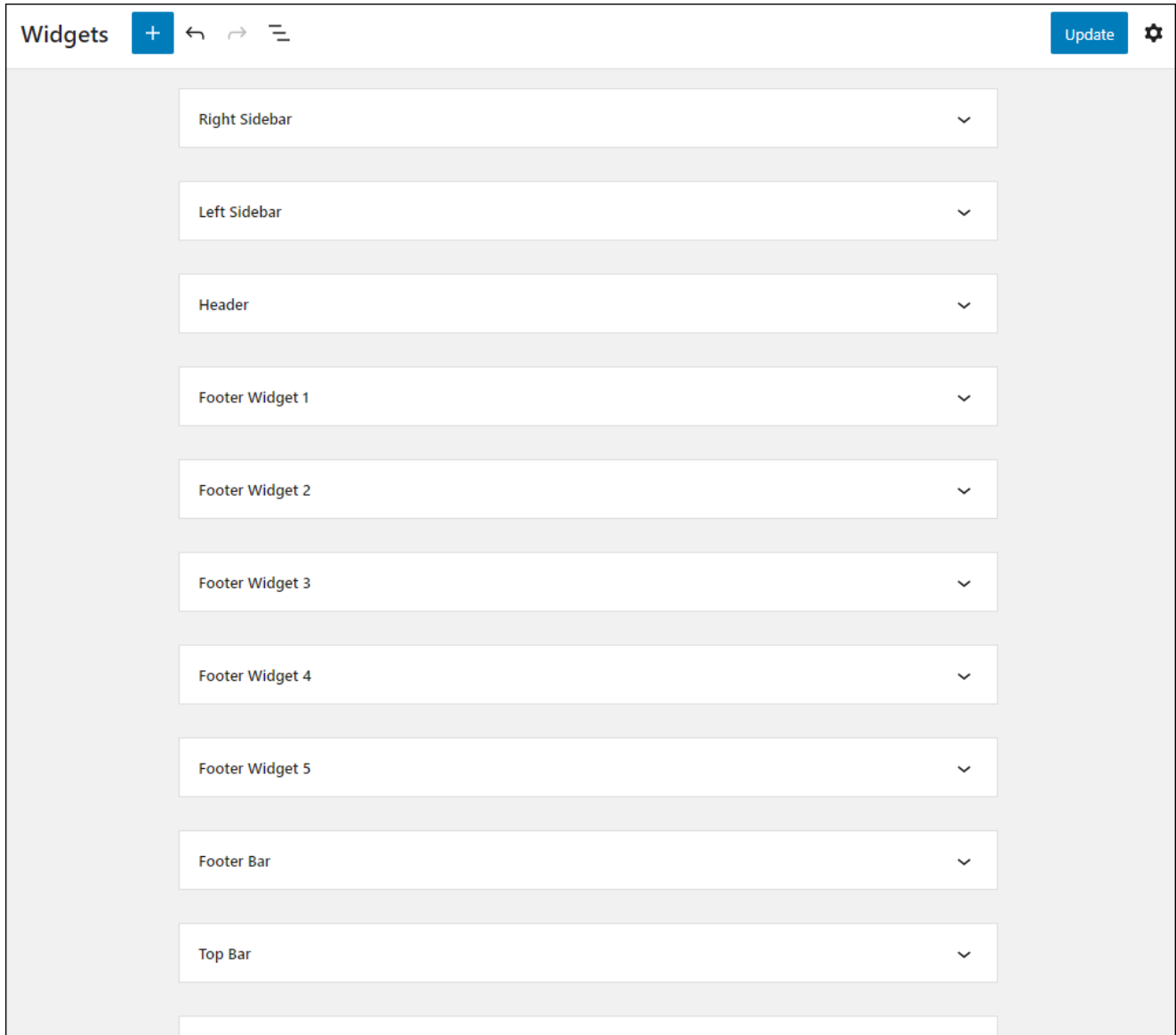
This theme only lets you add widgets to the footer.

In contrast, the theme shown below includes multiple widgetized areas.



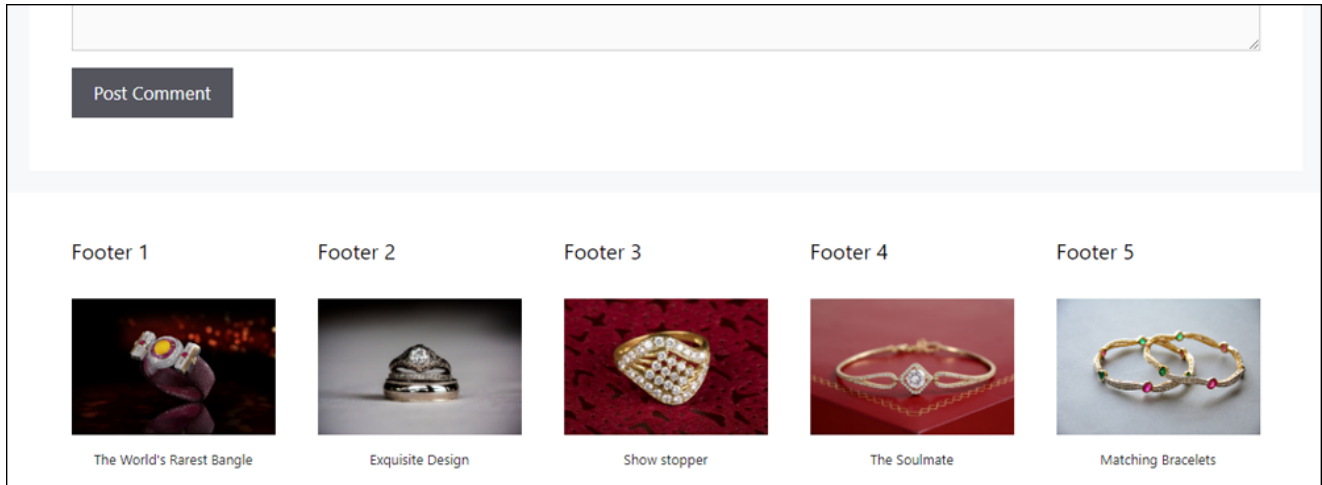
This theme has many widget-enabled areas. Theme: GeneratePress.

Here is the widget screen of the above theme. You can see this theme includes many widget-ready areas.



This theme offers you many widgetized sections.

As you can see, with the above theme installed, you can add widgets to sections like the header, left and right sidebar, and up to five different Footer areas, including a Footer bar.

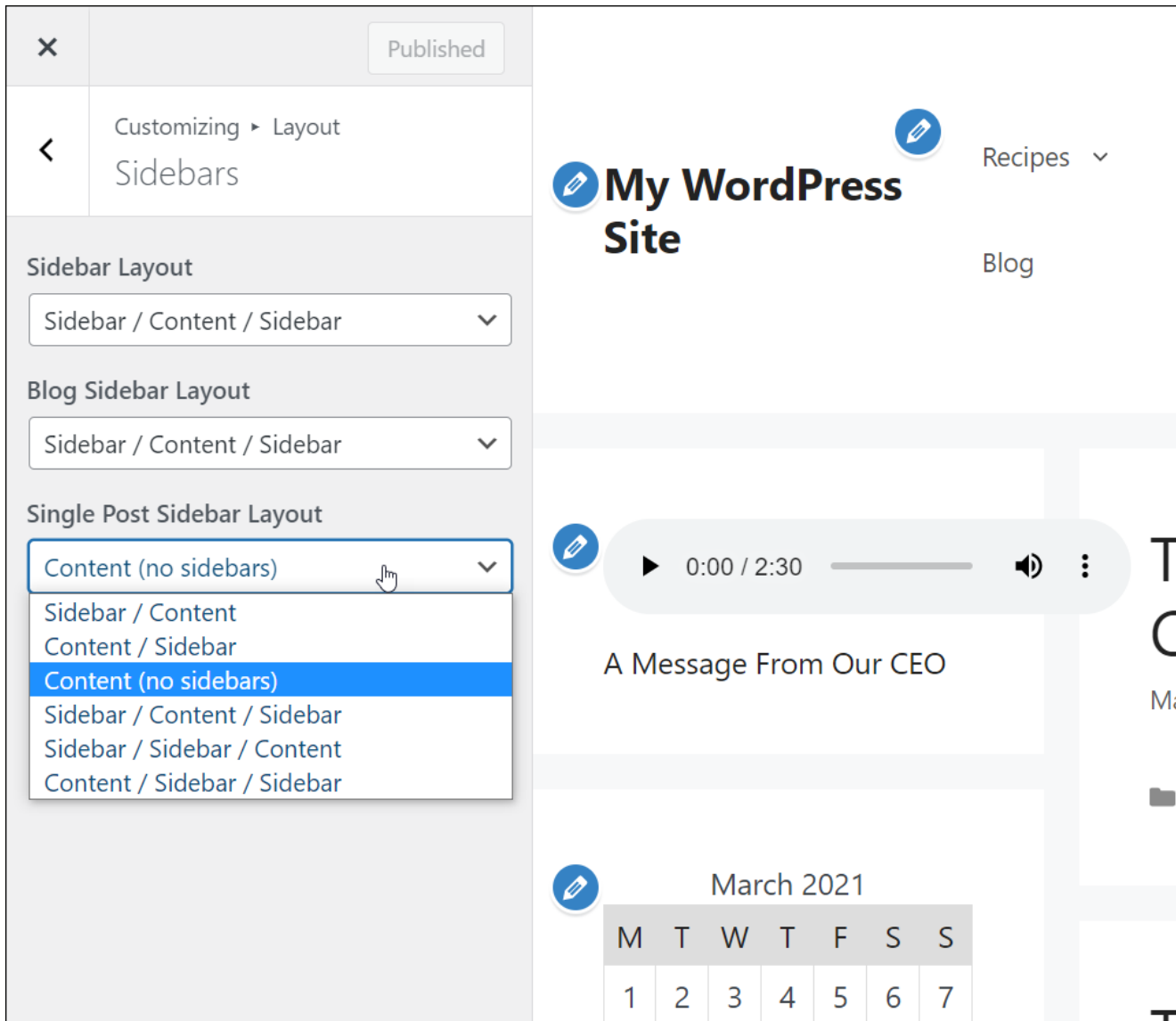


This theme lets you display up to five footer columns on your site.

Widget Options

As we have just seen, different themes affect how widgets display on your site.

For example, in the theme options below, how widgets display in the sidebars of this specific theme depends on how you configure different sidebar layouts for different site elements (e.g. the [blog page](#) vs single post layouts).



Your theme configuration settings can affect how widgets can be customized and displayed on your site.

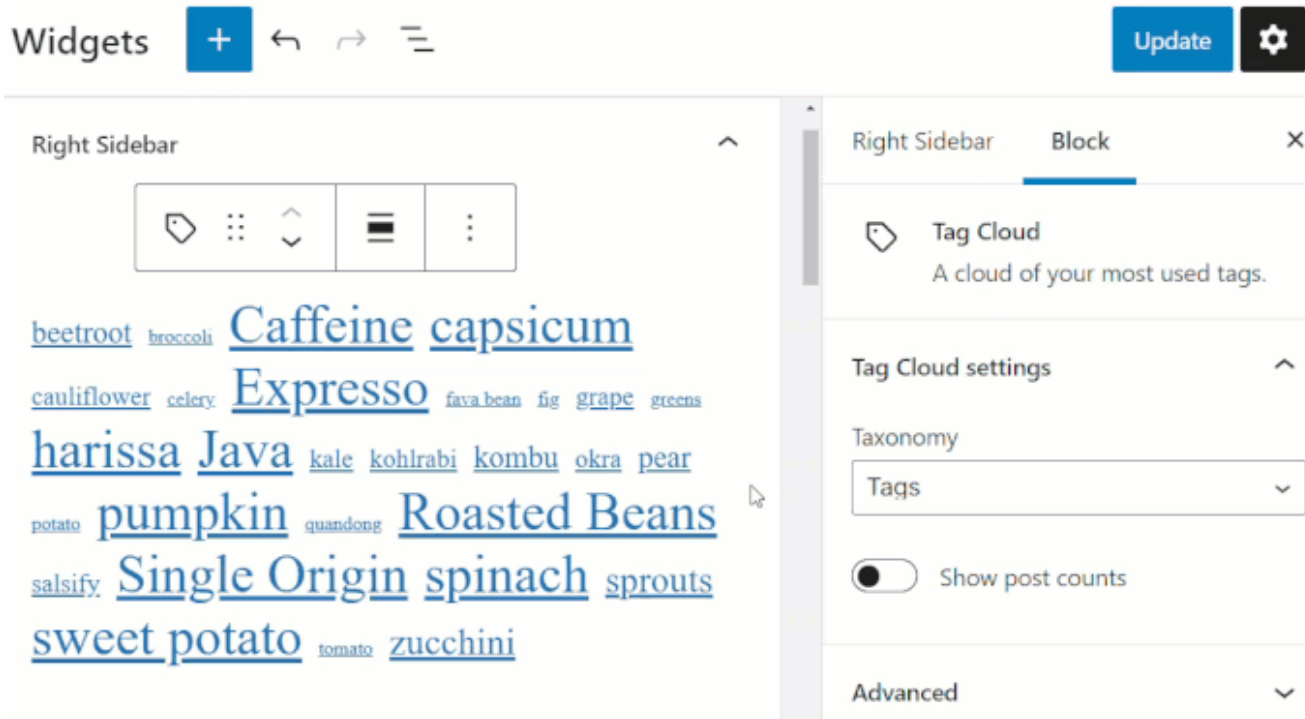
Ok, so different themes affect where widgets can show up on your site.

But what about the widgets themselves. Can they be configured and customized?

Yes, but it depends on the widget.

Some widgets provide little to no configurable options or settings.

For example, the **Tag Cloud** widget only allows you to switch taxonomies (e.g. display categories instead of tags in the word cloud) and show post counts.

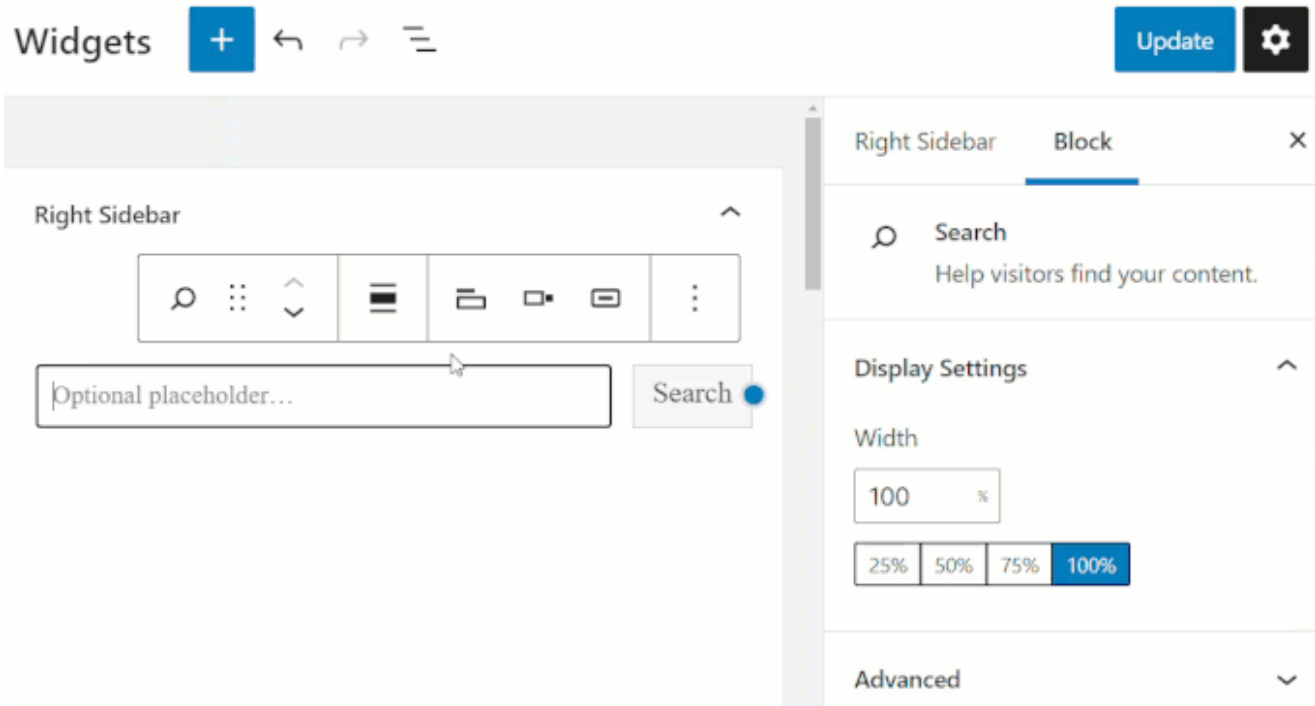


Tag Cloud widget block.

The **Search widget** block gives you limited options.

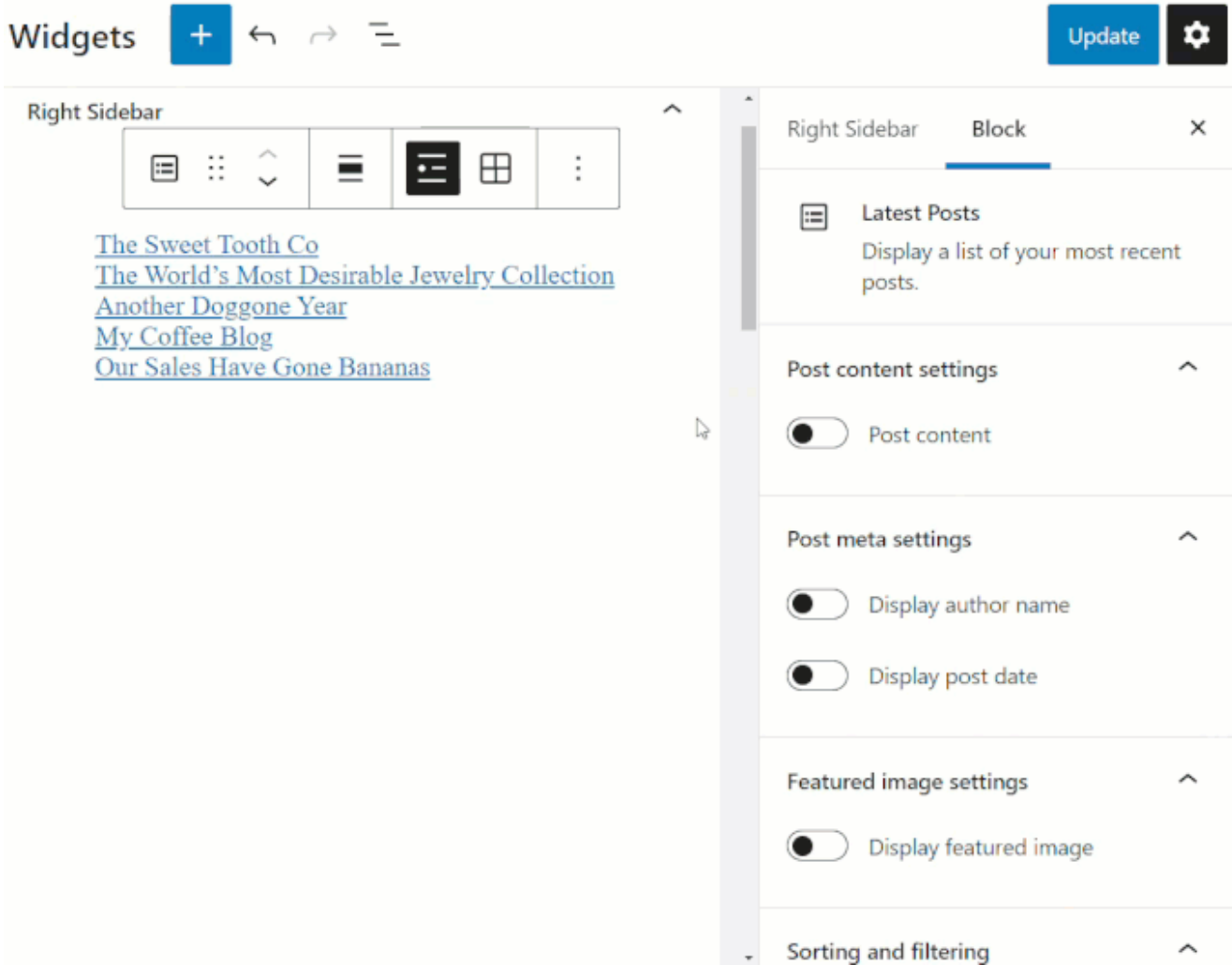
You can:

- Toggle the search label on or off.
- Specify the position of the search button (no button, button outside, button inside).
- Change the Search label into an icon
- Choose a fixed width for the search field (25%, 50%, 75%, 100%).



Search widget block.

The **Latest Posts block** gives you a wider range of options.



Latest Posts block.

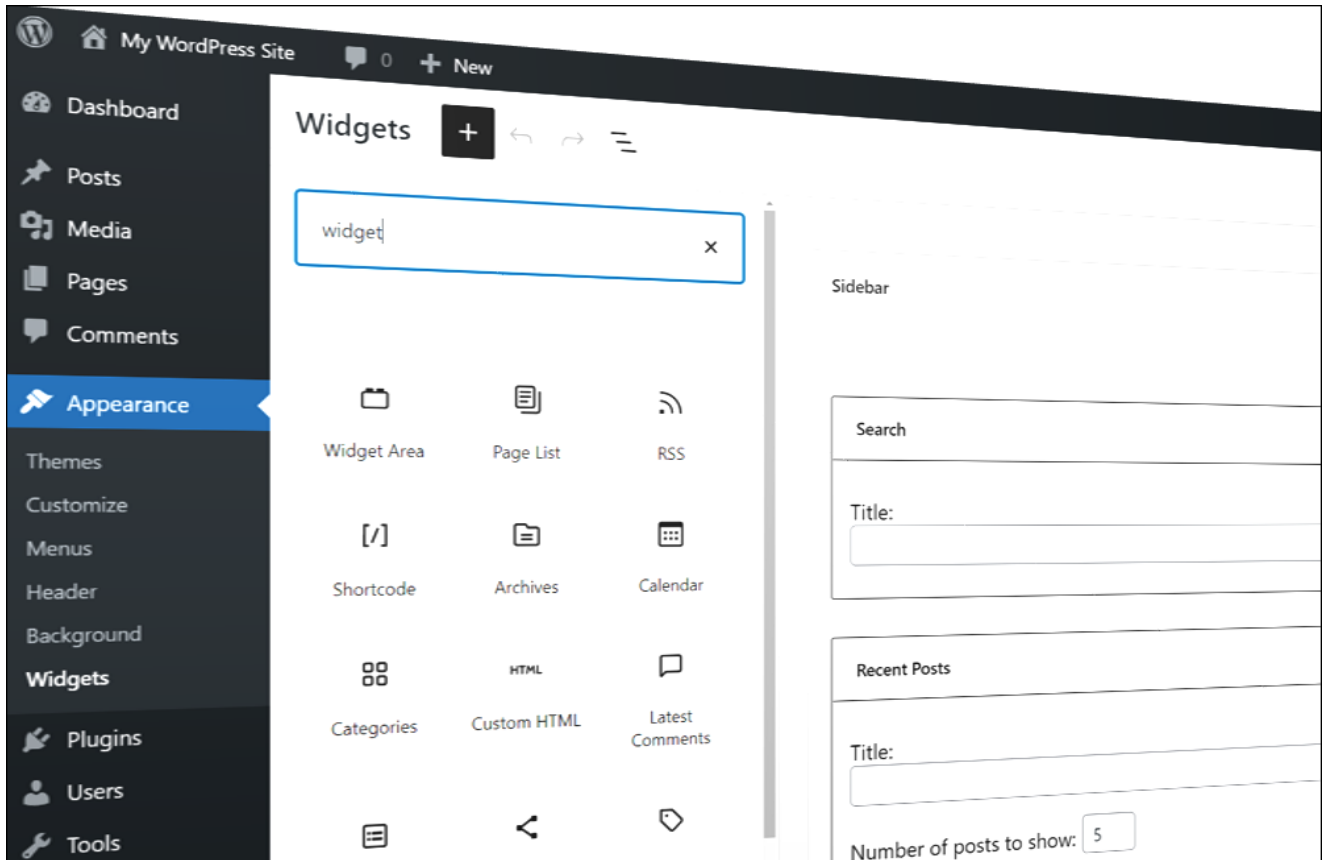
Every widget has its own unique set of options and settings. Some widgets offer no customizations or configuration options (i.e. you add them to your site, and they do whatever they are supposed to do) and some are highly configurable...it all depends on the widget!

How To Use WordPress Widgets

For detailed, step-by-step tutorials on using widgets in WordPress, go here:

Also, the following tutorials contain additional useful information to help you understand how to use widgets on your site:

Congratulations! Hopefully, you now have a better understanding of what widgets are and how they can add useful features and functionality to your website or blog.



Add useful features and functionality to different sections of your WordPress site using widgets.

Updated: April 9th, 2023