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Making Decisions on Lawn Maintenance Strategies

Maintaining your home landscape in an environmentally and health conscious way can be a daunting task. Do you go DIY and make sure you know what is being applied to your property? Do you buy premixed products or is the cost savings of buying your own concentrates worth the trouble of storing them in your garage or basement? Or do you hire a professional company with some flashy advertising at a competitive rate? And what do words like “organic” and “natural” really mean when it comes to your lawn and landscape plants?

All of these questions can be applied to your grass, your flower beds, and your trees and shrubs. We’re going to focus on your lawn and apply the lessons elsewhere when we can.



FERTILIZER

Good news! There are a variety of organic and naturally derived fertilizers on the market today that deliver excellent results. Most of these contain varying levels of the three main ingredients of fertilizer:

Nitrogen (N), Phosphorus (P), and Potassium (K), as well as a variety of micronutrients that naturally occur in the fertilizer source (seaweed, compost, etc.). Inorganic fertilizers are blended to the specifications of the buyer (whether it’s an off the shelf brand or a professional applicator business) to deliver consistent results and address the needs of your lawn at different points in the growing season.

Organic fertilizers generally require more material to be applied than inorganic, and they can contain phosphorus, which can be helpful in certain situations, but is harmful to our waterways. If you choose to hire a professional, they may use a liquid fertilizer. Liquid fertilizers can be applied more accurately and are absorbed by the soil and plants immediately. They can also be injected directly into the root zone of trees and shrubs. This is the best way to make sure that fertilizer is not running off and polluting the bays and other bodies of water in Coastal New Jersey.

WEED CONTROL

Weed control in your lawn is a two-phase operation: first a preemergent needs to be applied in early spring to prevent crabgrass and other difficult weeds from appearing during the growing season. The only option for effective crabgrass prevention is a synthetic product, and once it has started to grow even a professional’s herbicide arsenal will struggle to control it.

Controlling broadleaf annuals is the second phase of turf weed control. Throughout the growing season, plants like clover, and dandelions will appear in your lawn. Your options for these weeds range from letting them be (they are green, and what kid doesn’t like to blow on a dandelion seed head?) to hand pulling, to spraying. Iron chelate is considered a natural product and has been shown to be effective at controlling these weeds. It requires repeat applications every 3-4 weeks and is applied as approximately a 10% spray solution.

A conventional broadleaf weed control product is generally effective after the first application and is applied at about 1/2% solution. Both products require that you wait until the spray has dried before walking on the lawn. It’s difficult to make these comparisons without getting too into the weeds* with the chemistry. The most important thing to keep in mind is the best defense against weeds is a thick, healthy lawn. *Pun intended

INSECT CONTROL

Controlling grubs and other insects that can damage your lawn and landscape is best left to professionals. Both natural and synthetic products can be toxic if they are improperly handled. However, there are effective organic products that can be applied around your yard to repel mosquitoes and other insect pests. These are a blend of oils that will not kill insects but will last long enough to let you have a barbecue without being eaten alive.

When you’re considering your landscape maintenance this spring keep these ideas in mind to save money and feel good about how you’re keeping up your yard. If you have any questions email info@for-shore.com and we will be happy to help.

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Signs it's time to renovate your home

STAR NEWS GROUP

Homeowners renovate their homes for a variety of reasons. Renovations can increase the value of a property and make homes safer and more comfortable for their occupants. Improvements also can be made to stay current with the times or to give a home a new vibe.

Statista projects \$510 billion will be spent on home improvements in 2024. The home improvement market is generating significant revenue. In fact, nearly a quarter of Americans opting to renovate their homes will spend an average of \$10,000 on their projects. According to a Home Stars Renovation report, 8 percent of homeowners who have renovated have



COURTESY OF METRO CREATIVE CONNECTION

Homeowners can renovate their homes when they see fit, but various signs may warn that it's time consider updating or remodeling a home.

spent more than \$20,000 on a home improvement project.

Kitchens and bathrooms often get the most attention when it comes to home improvement. However, every room and space in a home may need a renovation at some point, and the following are five signs it's time to renovate.

AGE

The National Association of Home Builders states that 50 percent of U.S. homes are over the age of 40. That means that age alone could dictate a need to renovate, particularly if some materials are original to the home. For example, asphalt roofs typically last 25 to 30 years, while window frames can last 20

to 50 years depending on how well they have been maintained.

INCONVENIENT LAYOUT

Some homeowners scratch their heads when faced with awkward floor plan layouts. While one may live with the inconvenience for some time, typically a floor plan that isn't working for the homeowner is a major driver of renovations.

OUTDATED LOOKS

A home can look dated even if it is a relatively recent build. That's because trends change quickly. For example, dark, cherry cabinets that were popular just a little while ago have now been replaced by lighter color palettes. Homeowners whose homes do not match the

looks emulated in design magazines may consider a change, particularly if they're planning to sell soon.

DETERIORATION

Signs of water, storm or structural damage should be addressed as soon as possible. Any deterioration should be a strong indicator that it's time to renovate.

EFFICIENCY

Escalating utility bills could be indicative of an inefficient home. Homeowners can conduct energy audits and then improve the areas where energy loss may be occurring, such as windows, doors, siding, and insulation.

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Three features to focus on when designing an entertainment room

STAR NEWS GROUP

It might not take a home theater to enjoy the big game with friends or fire up family movie night, but a spacious entertainment room can certainly enhance such experiences.

That's especially true when homeowners give considerable thought to designing entertainment rooms. Film buffs and sports fans may have different notions of the ideal entertainment room, but the following are three design features that merit consideration by all looking to upgrade their entertainment spaces.

1. SCREEN

It's easy to be overwhelmed by the sheer abundance of options when choosing a screen

for an entertainment room. Televisions have long been a go-to choice, but projector screens merit consideration as well. If the room will be devoted exclusively to entertainment, then a television or a fixed projector screen might be homeowners' best bets. Fixed projector screens are installed on the wall and projectors are typically hung from the ceiling. Semi-fixed projector screens provide a similar viewing experience but can be pulled down or retracted when residents are not watching a movie. Semi-fixed can even be installed in front of a television so residents can stream a movie on the projector and then watch television through a cable box when it isn't movie night.

Projectors often provide much bigger screens for a fraction of the cost of equally sized televisions. However, sports fans may prefer televisions, as live streaming sports has not yet caught up to streaming movies and TV shows in terms of reliability or even availability. As a result, many sporting events remain available via cable television only, while even those that can be streamed tend to have a few hiccups during the game.

2. SOUND

Though televisions and projectors tend to come with built-in audio, the quality of that sound often leaves much to be desired. So homeowners will want to choose a sound system that provides the-



COURTESY OF METRO CREATIVE CONNECTION

Everyone has their own ideas on what makes the ideal entertainment space. But sports fans, movie buffs and others can all agree that an entertainment room worthy of the big game or the latest blockbuster has a sizable screen, pristine sound and comfortable seats.

ater-quality sound. If the room is being renovated from scratch, such as a full basement remodel, installing speakers in the ceiling can create a genuine theater experience. Ceiling speakers also can be installed in existing rooms, though that will likely cost more and extend the time it takes to

complete the project. Surround sound is a must in any entertainment room. Homeowners worried about wires need not fret, as modern wireless surround sound systems are available at many different price points. Some systems are better suited to small rooms than others, so homeowners

should measure the room and choose a system that best suits its dimensions.

3. SEATING

Whether you're using the space to watch the big game or fire up the latest blockbuster (or both), chances are you're going to be spending considerable time sitting in your new entertainment room. A modular sofa might be ideal, as it can be reconfigured depending on what you're watching and how many people are watching along with you. Comfort is indeed important, but you'll also want seating that provides ample support so you aren't battling any aches and pains once you leave the room. That support also can keep residents and guests from dozing off.



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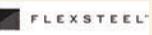
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SHORE HOME BUILDERS INC.



Give your home a new look with these shutter styles

STAR NEWS GROUP

Homeowners have many options at their disposal if they want to improve their homes. A focus on the exterior can be a promising and rewarding way to direct renovation dollars.

Curb appeal has a significant impact on how a home is viewed. Manicured landscapes, updated windows and doors and well-lit landscapes can improve the value of a home and ensure it sells quickly and above market rate.

When homeowners assess items they may want to change, shutters can be an area of consideration. Shutters can help windows look a little less plain. In most modern residential properties,

shutters are purely decorative. However, their roots lie in home protection. Originally, shutters were used in lieu of windows so they were the only way to safeguard a home's interior from the elements. Some shutters still offer that protection, but those typically are installed on homes in hurricane-prone areas.

Window shutters lend a finished and distinctive look to a home. When shopping for shutters, individuals can choose among various styles.

LOUVERED

A louvered shutter features several wood slats that overlap each other on the same frame. A typical louvered shutter features two sets of slats



COURTESY OF METRO CREATIVE CONNECTION

Color is a consideration when replacing shutters. Shutters can stand out or blend in with the siding and other architectural accents. Shutters also can flank a front door to fully complete an exterior look.

separated by a center rail. Some functional louvered shutters are operational, meaning the slats can be tilted to allow air to flow through. But this is something typically reserved for indoor shutters. Decorative ones have fixed slats.

PANEL

Panel shutters come in different styles. Raised panel shutters present a boxed design where rectangular features will stand out from the rest of the frame. Flat panel shutters (sometimes referred to as shaker) have the boxed design, but those rectangles are not raised. Recessed panels are the opposite of raised panels. As their name suggests, recessed panels

are set back from the rest of the frame.

BOARD AND BATTEN

Board and batten shutters are formed from grouped single boards joined together with shorter crosspieces of wood called battens. Battens are positioned horizontally or at an angle. These shutters have a more informal, rural feel.

BAHAMA/BERMUDA

These tropical-inspired shutters are of the louvered variety, but they're installed from the top of the window rather than on the sides.

SCANDINAVIAN

Scandinavian series shutters are very decorative board and batten

shutters. They feature a series of cutouts and designs.

COMBINATION

Some shutters offer the best of both worlds, with louvered on top and a solid panel on the bottom, or vice versa. This gives homeowners infinite options. Shutters are available in various materials. The most common include wood, vinyl and composite. Cedar, mahogany and pine are commonly used woods for exterior shutters. Vinyl is more economical and lightweight, but they can be challenging to clean and do not offer the longevity of other materials. Composite shutters are durable and cost less than wood in most cases.

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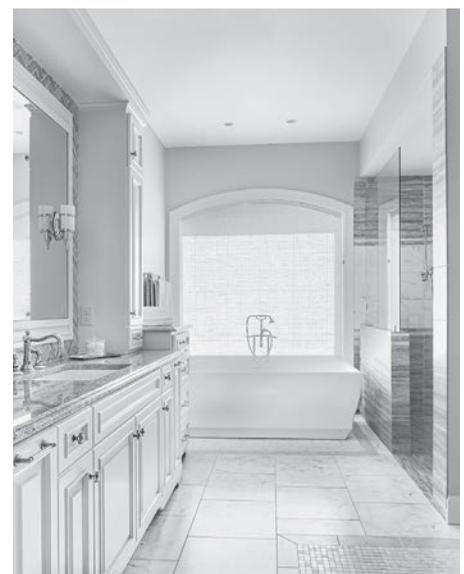
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Let the outside in with all-season rooms

STAR NEWS GROUP

Many homeowners express interest in creating fewer barriers between the interior and exterior of their homes. Some may have backyards built for entertaining and want to facilitate the transition between the inside of the residence and the outside when guests arrive. In other instances, homes may back to a nature preserve that homeowners want to enjoy more readily. Whatever the reason for bringing the outside in, all-season rooms can serve as a welcoming bridge between indoor and outdoor spaces.



COURTESY OF METRO CREATIVE CONNECTION

All-season rooms can be an ideal addition to a property, providing extra space for entertaining or lounging and a connection to the outdoors.

WHAT IS AN ALL-SEASON ROOM?

Also known as a four-season room, all-season rooms are specially engineered spaces that provide a connection to the outdoors no matter the season. They are like sunrooms, but climate-controlled so that they will be comfortable throughout winter, spring, summer, and fall.

WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A THREE-SEASON ROOM AND AN ALL-SEASON ROOM?

The biggest difference between these two spaces is the level of usage and the capacity of the room to be heated and cooled. Individuals who reside in climates with moderate year-round temperatures may get by with a three-season room. However, those who experience all four seasons may need a more insulated space to make the room

usable throughout the year.

FEATURES OF ALL-SEASON ROOMS

One of the more notable features of an all-season room is an abundance of windows, which allow plenty of natural light to shine in. All-season rooms also can feature creature comforts like a reading nook, outdoor kitchen spaces and televisions. Retractable screens can be installed when privacy or shade is desired.

MAINTAINING A COMFORTABLE TEMPERATURE

All-season rooms can be built with adequate thermal insulation and energy-saving features. Insulation will be installed in the walls and roof, and homeowners may have a choice of window ratings for efficiency. Some all-season rooms are specially equipped with HVAC systems that may

or may not be tied in to the home's general heating and cooling system. Some people use portable heaters or air conditioners to control the temperature in all-season rooms. It's best to speak with an all-season room contractor to identify heating and cooling needs.

HOW MUCH DOES AN ALL-SEASON ROOM COST?

Prices vary by region and are contingent on the features homeowners desire. According to the outdoor resource Garden Center Care, a three-season room can cost anywhere from \$8,000 to \$50,000 to build. A four-season room can cost \$20,000 to \$80,000 to add. If there is an existing three-season room, it may be more affordable to upgrade the space into an all-season room, but an architect and contractor should inspect the space to determine the scope of the project.



COURTESY OF METRO CREATIVE CONNECTION

Fireplaces can improve the appeal of a home. Various trends are popular this year, making fireplaces highly coveted features.

Fireplace trends help create attractive, comfortable rooms

STAR NEWS GROUP

Fireplaces are useful features in a home. Fireplaces are sources of ambient heat and also add style to indoor spaces.

Fireplaces can complement just about any interior style. Fireplaces can be traditional and burn wood or connect to a home's natural gas supply for on-demand ambiance. What's more, fireplaces may come in vented or ventless varieties, depending on homeowners' preferences and what is allowed by community building codes. That means a chimney or flue may not be needed — expanding the list of rooms where a fireplace can be installed.

Certain trends have emerged among fireplace fans in recent years. Here's a look at what's getting consumers fired up about these home decor elements.

MINIMALIST STYLE

Many fireplaces are designed in neutral colors with minimal trim that directs focus on the fire and not the appliance. When the fireplace is not in use, it blends in with surroundings and will not compete for attention with other design elements.

CONVERTIBLE FIREPLACES

Homeowners can choose between open or sealed fireplaces. A convertible fireplace enables homeowners to have the best features of these options. A convertible fireplace can be converted to wood from gas, or the opposite, in as little as 30 minutes.

NATURE-INSPIRED MATERIALS

Natural stone continues to be a material of choice in fireplace surrounds. Light colors

work well for a fireplace, and also fit with today's lighter color interior design preferences. Natural stone also works perfectly with both contemporary and rustic decor.

VINTAGE FIREPLACES

Vintage continues to be a buzzword in 2022, and the choice to go vintage also applies to fireplace styles. A room decorated in vintage elements can be complemented with a vintage fireplace or one designed to look vintage.

INTEGRATE INTO WALL DECOR

Fireplaces that are built right into a wall save space. One can have a television and a fireplace on the same wall. These types of fireplaces work well in modern home designs. Other fireplaces may be built into bookshelves or other wall features.



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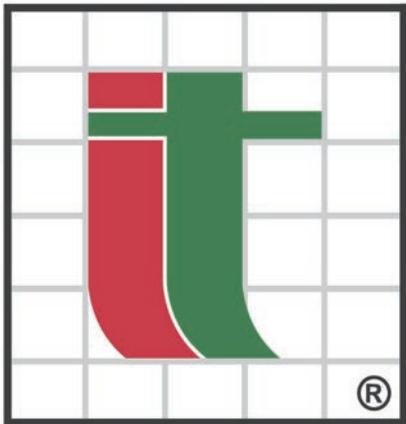
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How to create more privacy on your property

STAR NEWS GROUP

An inviting backyard can serve as a welcome retreat from the hustle and bustle of daily life. After a long day at the office or an exhausting day spent transporting kids to and fro, it's hard to resist the allure of a peaceful outdoor space in which to unwind.

Privacy is a key component of any backyard oasis. Some homes may be so remote that privacy isn't an issue. But many suburban homeowners recognize they might need to tweak their landscapes if they hope to create a private oasis outside.

FENCING OR PLANTING?

Most homeowners looking to create more privacy on their property will have to choose be-

tween fencing and planting. Fencing provides immediate privacy because, once it's installed, no one can see into the yard. Fencing also doesn't require watering or other immediate upkeep, which will be necessary when planting to ensure tree roots can establish themselves.

But planting has its benefits as well. Planting for privacy is essentially creating a living fence that can grow over time and provide even more privacy as trees reach maturity. Plants also tend to be less costly than fencing. The home renovation experts at BobVila.com estimate that fencing projects typically cost between \$1,667 and \$4,075.

SEE **PRIVACY** PAGE 25



COURTESY OF METRO CREATIVE CONNECTION

Whether it's fencing or planting, homeowners have many options to consider as they seek to create more privacy on their properties.



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PRIVACY FROM PAGE 24

However, fencing projects can cost considerably more than \$4,000, especially for homeowners with large properties they want to enclose. Large, mature trees can be expensive, though it's unlikely they will cost as much as fencing. In addition, fencing requires more maintenance and will potentially need to be replaced, while native trees won't require much upkeep and can last for generations.

PLANTING

Homeowners who choose to plant for privacy will next have to decide which type of plants to add to their properties. Evergreens provide year-round privacy because they don't shed their leaves, so these are the ones most often chosen when creating a living fence. A number

of varieties of evergreen trees can do the job, but it's important that homeowners consult with a landscape architect prior to choosing trees so they can ensure the trees will thrive when faced with the growing conditions on their properties. During such a consultation, homeowners may discuss the following popular privacy trees.

Leyland cypress: The Arbor Day Foundation® [ADF] notes that the Leyland cypress is popular for hedges and boundaries, likely because a typical tree reaches a mature height of 60'-70' and can spread as wide as 25'. The Leyland cypress grows fast, which may appeal to homeowners who don't want to wait to establish privacy.

Green Giant Arborvitae: There are different varieties of the arborvitae, but the Green Giant tends to

be the go-to option for privacy. The ADF notes that Green Giants will grow up to three feet per year until they reach maturity, providing a fast-growing option for privacy planters. The Green Giant can spread as wide as 20 feet at maturity, which is another attribute that makes it so popular among homeowners desiring privacy.

Eastern White Pine: The ADF notes that the eastern white pine, which can reach heights as high as 80 feet, is favored in spacious yards. That's likely due to its height and its potential spread, which can reach 40 feet. Homeowners who choose the eastern white pine might like it for its resemblance to a Christmas tree, and in fact it is widely used for that purpose. The privacy provided by the eastern white pine is significant, but it might be best suited to especially large properties.

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Simple landscaping strategies that can transform a home's exterior

STAR NEWS GROUP

The interior of a home may be where homeowners and their families spend the majority of their time, and there's no denying that a well-planned interior goes a long way toward making a house a home. However, the exterior of a home, including its landscaping, can serve as a source of pride and catch the eye of prospective buyers when the home hits the market.

It's easy to walk past a home with an eye-catching exterior and assume the homeowner has a green thumb or has spent lots of time and money working on the landscaping. Though that may be true, oftentimes it's the simplest strategies that make all the difference. Homeowners can keep

these strategies in mind as they look to transform the exterior of their homes.

DRESS UP THE WALKWAY

A longer walkway can give guests a strong first impression of a home and won't break the bank. Create new planting beds and plant bright plants and flowers along each side of the walkway. If it's necessary and within budget, lengthen the walkway to create the feel of a more grandiose entryway.

MAKE THINGS MORE SYMMETRICAL

A messy landscape can give a poor first impression, even if the area features some beautiful plants. In such instances, a little effort to make things more symmetrical,

with equal parts grass and vegetation, can create a cleaner, more inviting look.

MULCH YOUR FLOWER AND TREE BEDS

Mulch is a relatively inexpensive but effective way to add aesthetic appeal to a landscape. Freshly mulched beds beneath trees and flowers creates a clean and organized look, and the mulch also serves a practical purpose, as it reduces weed growth and helps the soil retain moisture so plants stay healthy and look better throughout the warmer months when rainfall may not be steady or significant.

PLANT SHADE TREES

Shade trees can be especially useful when selling a home. The



COURTESY OF METRO CREATIVE CONNECTION

Some simple landscaping strategies can help homeowners transform their home exteriors without requiring a significant investment of time or money.

shade provided by trees can shield grass from blistering summer sun, potentially helping it stay green. A lush green lawn appeals to buyers and gives the impression the home has been well maintained. In addition, shade trees can be used to create the look of a

backyard oasis. A well-placed bench beneath a large shade tree can entice buyers who want a relaxing spot to enjoy warm summer days outdoors without getting a sunburn.

CONSIDER MAINTENANCE

The more exotic an exterior landscape is, the more maintenance it's likely to require. Lawn and garden enthusiasts may not be turned off by landscape features that require steady maintenance, but homeowners who don't have much time for such work should keep things simple. A poorly maintained landscape, even if it includes exotic plants and elaborate designs, will adversely affect curb appeal. Another feather in the cap of low-maintenance landscape features is they could prove more appealing to prospective buyers, who may view elaborate, exotic landscaping as a lot of extra work they won't want to do.



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COURTESY OF METRO CREATIVE CONNECTION

Renovations can disrupt life, but often are well worth the sacrifices homeowners must make to see them through to completion.

How to handle a lengthy renovation

STAR NEWS GROUP

A passion for home renovations have been reignited over the past couple of years, as people have spent more time at home than usual.

According to the 10th annual Houzz & Home survey of more than 70,000 respondents in the United States, higher-budget projects cost around \$85,000 or more in 2020, compared with \$80,000 in the two years prior.

Kitchen projects were the most popular among renovating homeowners.

Homeowners embarking on home renovation projects understand that a certain measure of upheaval is to be expected, but some may not fully anticipate the impact that renovations have on daily life. The following are some tips for making it through a lengthy renovation.

DISCUSS THE TIMELINE WITH CONTRACTORS

It may be easier to make a plan for how much life will be disrupted if you have an idea of

how long the renovation will be (if everything goes according to plan). Sit down with contractors and have them spell out the minutiae of the project so you'll be able to anticipate what's going on day-to-day.

START AT THE RIGHT TIME

Some contractors may say they can fit your project into their schedules in between other jobs. While this may seem convenient and timely, your work may be put on hold if there are delays with the other job or jobs. Instead, it may be better to hold off until the contractors can devote the bulk of their attention to your renovation.

RECREATE COMMONLY USED SPACES ELSEWHERE

A kitchen or a bathroom remodel often requires giving up spaces that are used throughout a typical day. Unless you have a spare full bathroom or kitchen, you'll need to make due. Set a microwave, tabletop electric burner and a cof-

fee pot on a folding table in the garage or utility room. Rent or purchase a small refrigerator where you can store a few necessities. Ask your contractor to set up a makeshift outdoor shower so you have a place to get clean when the bathroom is under construction.

PACK UP AND COVER

Remodeling one room may cause a trickle down effect on other areas. Dust from drywall sanding can infiltrate many rooms in the home. Pack and label boxes with items not immediately needed and store them in another area. Cover most things so a film of dust won't form on them.

ADJUST YOUR SCHEDULE

Sleeping in will be a thing of the past for the duration of the renovation, as may be working from a home office. Try to get out of the work zone as much as possible for new scenery and respites from the noises and smells.



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Spring cleaning pointers

STAR NEWS GROUP

Spring is a season of renewal. When the flowers are blooming and the trees are budding and the weather is pleasantly warm, people often feel inspired to make changes around their homes. Work may begin with culling belongings and organizing essentials.

There is debate regarding where the practice of “spring cleaning” originated. Some researchers link it to certain religious groups. It has long been an ancient Jewish custom to thoroughly clean a house in preparation for the springtime feast of Passover. The house is scoured to remove any yeast bread, or chametz, from the home. Similarly, members of the Greek Orthodox church celebrate “Clean Week,” which is a week of cleaning before Lent. In Iranian culture, families spend days cleaning prior to the Persian New Year, which begins on the spring equinox.

Spring cleaning also has some secular roots. For instance, in the 1800s, Londoners routinely cleared their homes of grime and soot that accumulated over the winter.

Spring cleaning is still a ritual for many today. As people embark on their plans to tidy up, these tips can help them along.

TACKLE ONE BIG TASK A DAY

Who hasn't started one project only to be distracted into moving along to another room? This often occurs when people discover something out of place in one space and then move that item



COURTESY OF METRO CREATIVE CONNECTION

Spring cleaning season has arrived, and certain tips can make the job more efficient and manageable.

where it belongs, only to find a new cleaning task at hand in that space. Inefficiency can make you give up on spring cleaning prematurely. Agree to address one room/task a day. Keep a basket or box handy to store errant items until you move on to the next room.

STOCK UP ON SUPPLIES

Prepare all of the cleaning supplies in advance. Put together a tool kit of sorts with the equipment you need, including mops, brooms, rags, cleansers, and the like. Organization can keep you on course.

HARNESS YOUR STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

Some people clean because they are stressed or angry, others do so to avoid other tasks. Keep personality in mind when establishing a cleaning schedule. For example, clean at night if you're a night owl, or wait un-

til you are feeling antsy before embarking on a “calm down cleaning.”

TACKLE SEASONAL CHORES FIRST

Some tasks need to get done to prepare for the spring and summer season. These may include cleaning the grill and sorting through outdoor furniture and decor. Spring cleaning may involve readying the pool for another year of use, or cleaning out rain gutters to prepare for spring storms. Tackle time-dependent tasks first and then move on to others that are less time-sensitive.

SPREAD OUT THE WORK

Some people like to devote full weekends to spring cleaning, but that can be overwhelming for others. Breaking down cleaning tasks into 15- to 30-minute intervals each day can make the job more tolerable.

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Budget-friendly ways to freshen up your home's exterior

STAR NEWS GROUP

As any homeowner knows, renovation projects tend to cost a lot of money. The average cost of a home renovation is difficult to gauge, as such endeavors run the gamut from complex projects like a kitchen overhaul to simpler ones like painting a room inside a home. Indeed, the National Association of the Remodeling Industry notes that scope is what drives the cost of a renovation project.

Though there might not be an "average cost" of a renovation project, homeowners can expect to spend thousands of dollars on projects that are not very small in scale. Navigating such an expense at a time when inflation remains high might be difficult for



COURTESY OF METRO CREATIVE CONNECTION

Exterior renovations need not break the bank. Various simple and inexpensive tweaks can quickly revitalize the exterior of a home.

some homeowners looking to maintain the appearance of their home exteriors. However, there

are many budget-friendly ways homeowners can tend to the exterior of their properties.

POWER WASHING

Power washing won't break the bank but it can revive the look of a home. Power washing removes dirt and grime from the siding of a home and a power washing can be used to clean porches, walkways and patios as well. Hardware chains like Home Depot and Lowes typically rent power washers, but homeowners who don't want to do it themselves can hire a professional for a few hundred dollars, if not less. Power washing after winter can be a good idea, as the elements can take a toll on a home's exterior. A good power washing before spring and summer entertaining season can thus give a home a fresh, clean look without breaking the bank.

FURNISHED FRONT PORCH

A furnished front porch can serve as a welcome sign to neighbors and provide a great place to relax with a morning cup of coffee and a good book. Homeowners with a small porch won't need to bust their budgets to upgrade their front porch furnishings. Some small chairs with bright cushions, a small table and a rug underfoot can revamp an entryway at low cost.

WINDOW BOX INSTALLATION

Installing window box planters is another cost-effective way to brighten up a home's exterior. Homeowners can hang window boxes outside windows on the front of their homes and then fill them with brightly colored flowers to add

an inviting pop of color to their home exteriors. The experts at Better Homes & Gardens urge homeowners to take weight into consideration before buying window planters. Keep in mind that soil and developed plants can be heavy, so look for a sturdy box as well as one that has drainage holes.

REPLACE HARDWARE

Another simple way to freshen up a stale exterior is to replace hardware. Door knobs, knockers, house numbers, and even the mailbox can appear dated after a while. Replacing these items is inexpensive and quick but can have a profound impact on how the exterior of a home appears to residents and visitors.



Normandy Beach, NJ

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<p style="font-size: 2em; font-weight: bold; color: blue;">3⁰⁵</p> <p style="font-size: 0.8em;">sq. ft.</p> <p style="font-weight: bold; color: blue;">Multi-Tone Cut Pile</p> <p style="font-size: 0.7em;">Stunning textured carpet. 9 Colors. Lifetime Stain & Fade Warranty.</p>	<p style="font-size: 2em; font-weight: bold; color: blue;">4⁴⁹</p> <p style="font-size: 0.8em;">sq. ft.</p> <p style="font-weight: bold; color: blue;">Mohawk® Aztec Pattern</p> <p style="font-size: 0.7em;">16 colors, 25 oz. EverStrand Lifetime Stain and Soil Warranty, 10 Year Quality Warranty.</p>	<p style="font-size: 2em; font-weight: bold; color: blue;">4²⁹</p> <p style="font-size: 0.8em;">sq. ft.</p> <p style="font-weight: bold; color: blue;">Mohawk® Modern Multi-Level Berber</p> <p style="font-size: 0.7em;">For Today's Home Fashion 9 Colors. Lifetime Stain Warranty.</p>	<p style="font-size: 2em; font-weight: bold; color: blue;">4¹⁵</p> <p style="font-size: 0.8em;">sq. ft.</p> <p style="font-weight: bold; color: blue;">SmartStrand ALL Pet</p> <p style="font-size: 0.7em;">9 colors, 20 Year Warranty</p>	<p style="font-size: 2em; font-weight: bold; color: blue;">4⁷⁵</p> <p style="font-size: 0.8em;">sq. ft.</p> <p style="font-weight: bold; color: blue;">Mohawk® Newber</p> <p style="font-size: 0.7em;">Awesome new berber in 6 Fashion Colors. Lifetime Stain Warranty!</p>	<p style="font-weight: bold;">Our FREE Guarantee!</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ FREE Measuring ✓ FREE Premium Padding ✓ FREE Financing* ✓ FREE Furniture Moving*
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<p style="font-size: 2em; font-weight: bold; color: blue;">4⁹⁵</p> <p style="font-size: 0.8em;">sq. ft.</p> <p style="background-color: red; color: white; padding: 2px; font-weight: bold;">INSTALLED!</p> <p style="font-weight: bold; color: blue;">Shaw® DuraTru Resilient Sheet Vinyl</p> <p style="font-size: 0.7em;">15 new colors and patterns! Floor prep may be additional.</p>	<p style="font-size: 2em; font-weight: bold; color: blue;">6²⁹</p> <p style="font-size: 0.8em;">sq. ft.</p> <p style="background-color: red; color: white; padding: 2px; font-weight: bold;">INSTALLED!</p> <p style="font-weight: bold; color: blue;">Woodworks® Laminate Flooring</p> <p style="font-size: 0.7em;">7 colors. Lifetime Residential Warranty. Floor prep may be additional.</p>	<p style="font-size: 2em; font-weight: bold; color: blue;">6⁵⁹</p> <p style="font-size: 0.8em;">sq. ft.</p> <p style="background-color: red; color: white; padding: 2px; font-weight: bold;">INSTALLED!</p> <p style="font-weight: bold; color: blue;">Mannington® Adura® Flex Vinyl Hybrid</p> <p style="font-size: 0.7em;">14 colors. Waterproof. 7-1/4" wide plank. Floor prep may be additional.</p>	<p style="font-size: 2em; font-weight: bold; color: blue;">3⁹⁹</p> <p style="font-size: 0.8em;">sq. ft.</p> <p style="background-color: red; color: white; padding: 2px; font-weight: bold;">INSTALLED!</p> <p style="font-weight: bold; color: blue;">Shaw® Scratch Resistant Vinyl Plank Flooring</p> <p style="font-size: 0.7em;">8 mil. wear layer, 7 color options! Floor prep may be additional.</p>	<p style="font-size: 2em; font-weight: bold; color: blue;">7⁹⁹</p> <p style="font-size: 0.8em;">sq. ft.</p> <p style="background-color: red; color: white; padding: 2px; font-weight: bold;">INSTALLED!</p> <p style="font-weight: bold; color: blue;">COREtec® Waterproof 7" Flooring</p> <p style="font-size: 0.7em;">Available in 19 colors. Floor prep may be additional.</p>	<p style="text-align: center; font-weight: bold;">27th ANNIVERSARY</p> <p style="text-align: center; font-weight: bold;">A+</p> <p style="text-align: center;">ACCREDITED BUSINESS</p>
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<p style="font-size: 2em; font-weight: bold; color: blue;">8⁶⁹</p> <p style="font-size: 0.8em;">sq. ft.</p> <p style="background-color: red; color: white; padding: 2px; font-weight: bold;">INSTALLED!</p> <p style="font-weight: bold; color: blue;">Shaw® Albright Oak</p> <p style="font-size: 0.7em;">5 inch wide Engineered Oak Wood flooring. Available in 9 colors. *Nail down installation. Floor prep may be additional. Cannot be combined with other offers.</p>	<p style="font-size: 2em; font-weight: bold; color: blue;">9⁹⁹</p> <p style="font-size: 0.8em;">sq. ft.</p> <p style="background-color: red; color: white; padding: 2px; font-weight: bold;">INSTALLED!</p> <p style="font-weight: bold; color: blue;">Lauzon® Solid Red Oak</p> <p style="font-size: 0.7em;">3 1/4" Solid Hardwood Flooring, 4 colors, 15 Year Wear-Through Finish Warranty! *Nail down installation. Floor prep may be additional. Cannot be combined with any other offers.</p>	<p style="font-size: 2em; font-weight: bold; color: blue;">8⁰⁹</p> <p style="font-size: 0.8em;">sq. ft.</p> <p style="background-color: red; color: white; padding: 2px; font-weight: bold;">INSTALLED!</p> <p style="font-weight: bold; color: blue;">Mohawk® Revwood Plus 12MM Waterproof Laminate</p> <p style="font-size: 0.7em;">GORGEOUS *Floor prep may be additional. Cannot be combined with other offers.</p>	<p style="font-size: 2em; font-weight: bold; color: blue;">8⁵⁹</p> <p style="font-size: 0.8em;">sq. ft.</p> <p style="background-color: red; color: white; padding: 2px; font-weight: bold;">INSTALLED!</p> <p style="font-weight: bold; color: blue;">Mohawk® Islandair</p> <p style="font-size: 0.7em;">6-1/2" Engineered White Oak, 5 colors. *Nail down installation. Floor prep may be additional. Cannot be combined with other offers.</p>	<p style="font-size: 2em; font-weight: bold; color: blue;">9⁹⁹</p> <p style="font-size: 0.8em;">sq. ft.</p> <p style="background-color: red; color: white; padding: 2px; font-weight: bold;">INSTALLED!</p> <p style="font-weight: bold; color: blue;">Brazilian Cherry</p> <p style="font-size: 0.7em;">4" Wide Solid Hardwood Flooring. *Floor prep may be additional. Cannot be combined with any other offers.</p>	<p style="text-align: center; font-weight: bold;">TOP RATED</p> <p style="text-align: center; font-weight: bold;">5 ★★★★★</p> <p style="text-align: center; font-weight: bold;">SHOPPER APPROVED</p>
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