

HOME & GARDEN

MARCH 2022

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Democrat to host second annual Home & Garden Show

By Democrat Staff

Just in time for spring home improvement season, the Sedalia Democrat is hosting its second annual Home & Garden Show on April 2.

More than 30 regional vendors will be in the Mathewson Exhibition Center ready to talk with area residents about their home and garden needs. Vendors include real estate, insurance, windows, doors, decking, fencing, concrete work, lumber, building supplies, storage facilities, gutting, mowers, roofing, landscaping, decorations, cleaning, heating and cooling, pest control, and many others. Many of the vendors will be offering specials only available at the Home & Garden Show.

"We're excited to bring back the Home

& Garden Show for the second year in a row," Democrat Advertising Manager Julie White said. "We have a wide variety of vendors that can help homeowners and renters with many of their spring home improvement projects, all while supporting local businesses."

In addition to the vendor booths, there will be live presentations and demonstrations almost every hour:

9 a.m. to 6 p.m.: CASA Art Exhibit

10:05 a.m.: Missouri Department of Conservation

11:05 a.m.: CASA 5K Poker Walk/Run winner announcement and CASA speech

11:30 a.m.: Mayor's Proclamation on Sexual Assault Awareness Month

1:05 p.m.: Springwater Greenhouse Class

2:05 p.m.: Meet Pettis County Sheriff's Office K9 Cav

Door prizes will also be given out at the top of each hour.

Thorni Ridge Exotics will have a selfie station all day and for only \$5, visitors can get a photo with a kangaroo, lemurs, alligators, or an African Spurred Tortoise.

Several events hosted by CASA will coincide with the Home & Garden Show. CASA will host an art exhibit from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. on the mezzanine, featuring local artists who created artwork that depicts survival of abuse, freedom, and/or impacts of abuse. At 11 a.m., Sedalia Mayor John Kehde will read a proclamation about CASA and Sexual Assault Awareness Month. CASA's inaugural 5K Poker Run, which starts at 9 a.m., will begin and

end at the Mathewson Exhibition Center. Winners will also be announced at 11 a.m.

In the March 29 edition of the Warrensburg Star-Journal and the March 30 edition of the Democrat, Plainsman and Star-Advertiser, readers will find a Spring Home & Garden special section full of stories, information about the upcoming event, and ads from vendors. Show visitors are encouraged to bring their copy to the event and use the notes pages when meeting with vendors about their home improvement projects.

The Home & Garden Show will be hosted from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. Saturday, April 2 in the Mathewson Exhibition Center on the Missouri State Fairgrounds. It is free and open to the public. For more information, call the Democrat at 660-826-1000.

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Gardening tips for homeowners looking to start their own garden

By Skye Melcher
skyem@sedaliademocrat.com

Springtime is the beginning of many home improvement projects and when homeowners’ and renters’ gardens start to blossom.

Dave Moore, owner of Moore’s Greenhouse and Flower Shop, provides some home gardening tips, such as when to plant and some things to watch out for.

Moore said one of the first things to do when planting vegetables is to get a soil test done. Gardeners can take some of the soil from where they want to plant and take it to the University of Missouri Extension Pettis County office. MU Extension will send it off and once the test comes back, a gardener will know how much fertilizer they’ll need and which chemicals will bring up the ph level of the soil.

Moore’s Greenhouse and Flower Shop offers tips to have a perfect garden and ways to keep up with it.

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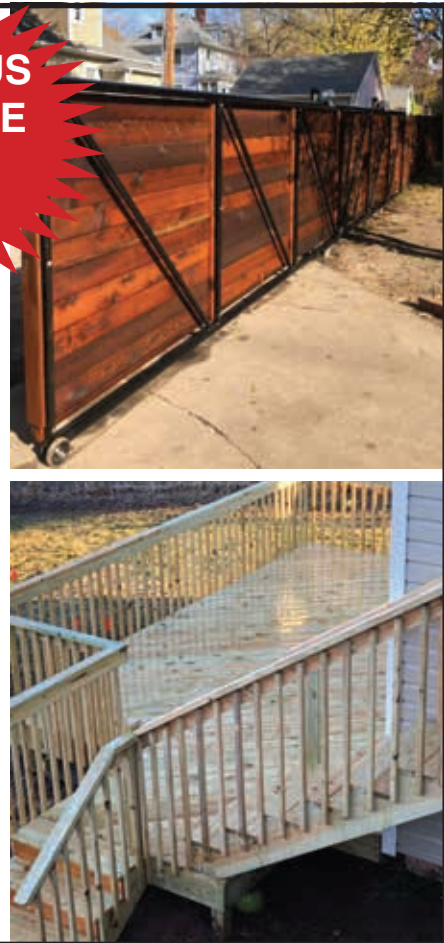
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Next, Moore explained when the best time would be to plant certain vegetables and fruits.

“Early (March), you’ll want to plant cabbage, broccoli, cauliflower,” Moore said. “They like cool weather; if it gets hot, it doesn’t grow right. Later on, I say about the 10th of May, you’ll want to plant tomato plants.”

Some of the other vegetables and fruits to plant early are potatoes, lettuce, radishes, peas and onions. These are vegetables that need to be planted when it is still cool outside.

A few weeks later, strawberries and asparagus will need to be planted. These are perennials, or a plant that can live for more than two years. Sometimes perennials can take a while to harvest.

According to Moore and the MU Extension planting calendar, some fruits and vegetables that should be planted at the same time as tomatoes are beans, cucumbers, peppers, cantaloupe, corn and melons.

After planting the fruits and vegetables comes the care to get them to grow.

“You got to water them and keep them cultivated and weeded,” Moore added. “That’s just normal maintenance.”

Moore also recommended for gardeners to put Sevin in their garden once the plants are established to keep insects from enjoying their plants before they do.

Moore also has tips for people who would rather plant some vibrant springtime flowers.

“If you’re wanting flowers, you’re going to want to do that after the last frost,” Moore said. “About May 10 to the 15 is supposed to be frost-free.”

One of the few types that can be planted when it is still cool is Pansies. Once the frost is gone, some of the most sought springtime and summer flowers (bedding plants) are Geraniums, Petunias, Marigold, and Hydrangea.

Moore added that some of the mistakes he sees from home gardeners are not watering their plants enough, not cultivating their garden and planting too early.

Skye Melcher can be reached at 660-530-0144.



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TIPS FOR NEGOTIATING WITH CONTRACTORS



Spring is the season for fixing up a home. Homeowners who aren't interested in doing the work themselves turn to contractors

to ensure the job is done not only to code, but on time and efficiently. After receiving an initial estimate from a contractor,

homeowners may wonder if there is any additional wiggle room in contractors' costs. Certain contractors are

willing to negotiate while others are firm in their prices. However, learning the basics of negotiation can put homeowners in position to save money on dream renovations.

Do your homework

Getting the best price typically requires shopping around and not settling on the first bid. Experts recommend getting at least three estimates on the same job — and be sure to let each contractor know that you are soliciting multiple bids. This alone may entice a specific contractor to give you his or her best offer up front. Avoid simply choosing the lowest bid. Look at quality of work, reputation and reviews. If you like a costly contractor

more than another, see if that contractor is willing to match a lower bid to win the job.

Pick the right season

As with other industries, home renovation work heats up during certain seasons or times of year. General contractors may be more willing to negotiate for a lower price depending on when their busy season may be. Jobs may slow down in winter, for example.

Talk about supplies

Even after getting a good bid, you may be able to speak with your contractor about lowering costs even more by choosing less costly supplies. Find out if contractors can source ma-

terials from a low-cost supplier. In addition, discuss if you can purchase your own supplies.

Ask to do a portion

Be honest with the contractor about your budget and figure out if there is any way for you to do some of the work to lower costs. The contractor can give you jobs that are within your abilities, which can shave dollars off the final price.

Know your rights and laws

Understand the laws governing contract language in your state or province. Contracts should also spell out the change order process so that expectations of changes and costs will be known in advance.

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DIY LANDSCAPING IS MUCH MORE ECONOMIC

By Faith Bemiss

fbemiss@sedaliademocrat.com

Landscaping doesn't have to be expensive, especially when one does it themselves. Billie Potter, the hardware and garden specialist at Menards Home Improvements Co. in Sedalia, offered money-saving tips for DIY landscapers.

Potter said doing it yourself is the best way to landscape. There are many ways to save money such as adding a walkway with river rocks or planting perennial flowers that bloom year after year. Raised beds are helpful as well repurposing items for planters.

Potter noted a perennial flower garden, while saving money, allows an opportunity for change each year.

"With the perennial garden, you plant your main ones in there and then you accent with annuals," she noted. "That way you can change your garden every year — so you'll get different beauty every year."

With raised garden beds, she said one doesn't have to worry as much about weeds.

"If you are going in-ground, no matter what you do, you're not going to be able to kill out all the grass and weeds," she added.

Potter is finding rock gardens are also popular.

"Plant a rock garden," she suggested. "A lot of times if you do that you can add accent barrels, like the old whiskey barrels ... then put those in your rock bed. You put the plastic sheeting underneath it — you're not going to get the weeds, and your flowers will be beautiful in your planters."

Potter said she made a flower container one year from a discarded toilet.

"My dad was a supervisor of a



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To save money when landscaping, plant perennial flowers, which will come up each year, and then add variety with annuals.

rental company," she noted smiling. "And he did maintenance and brought home an old toilet. So, I planted flowers in the toilet pot itself and in the tank and turned it into a 'flower pot.' For above-ground beds, you can find an old ceramic bathtub and it looks beautiful in any yard."

She added landscaping with lighting is a good idea also.

"I usually go around my flower beds," she said. "A lot of people do them down their walkways. And if you have multiple gardens, a walkway is always really nice."

Potter said when building a walkway, one doesn't have to purchase rock.

"Go down to the river and find rocks, and make a path," she suggested. "You can find rocks

on the side of the road and do a walking path."

If there are gaps in the rock walkway, they can be filled with various types of moss.

Potter said she doesn't care for adding window boxes to a home because they damage the siding. But she did suggest adding deck boxes that can be hung on the deck or patio railing.

Planting tree saplings is also economical, and Potter noted one doesn't have to buy those either.

"You can go out anywhere if you know anybody who has land, and as long as you know what kind of tree it is ... saplings are so easy to pop out of the ground," she added.

Growing an edible raised-bed garden can be money-saving also.

"A lot of people have been coming in and buying the above-ground gardens," she noted. "So that they can do above-ground beds with nothing but vegetables.

"You can start as early as the beginning of March if you are doing root plants," she continued. "Your onions, your radishes, your carrots and lettuce because they are all cold hardy — you have to wait a little longer for the other stuff."

Menards has wood kits for above-ground gardens, Potter noted.

"We have one set (where) you can buy three kits and make it as big as you want," she explained. "Any shape you want, because you just put it together

however you want to."

She suggested putting down black weed matting, planting the flowers or vegetables and then using Preen to stop weed growth before adding mulch.

Another money-saving tip Potter suggested was for growing tomatoes.

"At the end of the year, in the fall, you till that up and break the plants down into the ground," she explained. "Then the next spring, till it up again and you're going to start seeing little spouts. The seeds of the old tomatoes will actually (sprout) ... and it saves money — volunteer plants are nice to have."

Faith Bemiss can be reached at 660-530-0289 or on Twitter @fbemiss.



HOW TO CREATE A SUNROOM

As fall inches closer to winter, it's not uncommon for people to look to the coming cold with a degree of lament. Spring, summer and fall provide ample opportunities to enjoy the great outdoors, but such chances are few and far between once the winter freeze settles in. Though winter might compel the masses to huddle up inside, there's still a way to take in the great outdoors on cold winter days and nights.

It might not prove an exact substitute for summer nights around the firepit, but a sunroom affords homeowners a chance to marvel at snowy winter landscapes without venturing out into the cold. Sometimes referred to as "all-season rooms," sunrooms can make for a great retreat on quiet summer mornings or crisp autumn afternoons. Sunrooms can be treated as blank canvasses, which makes decorating them more fun. But a few tricks of the trade can help homeowners turn their blank canvasses into welcoming spaces to take in all that nature has to offer throughout the year.

- Define the purpose. The experts at Better Homes & Gardens recommend homeowners decide how they want to use the sunroom before they begin decorating it. When the weather gets too chilly to dine outside, will the sunroom serve as an alternative dining space in the same way patios and decks do during the warm weather? Or do homeowners want to turn their sunrooms into reading rooms? Though it's possible to make sunrooms multipurpose spaces, it may be hard to create a relaxing vibe in rooms that are too crowded with furnishings or too busy. Defining how the space will be used also makes it easier when shopping for furnishings.

- Define when the room will be used. In addition to defining how the room will be used, homeowners should give ample consideration to when the room will be used. A year-round sunroom will need to be heated, while a three-season sunroom likely won't require heating. Cooling might be a concern on hot summer afternoons, but many homeowners will likely spend such days outside anyway, so cooling the room may be as simple as installing a ceiling fan and ensuring windows can be opened to let fresh air in. Homeowners who want a year-round sunroom should install insulated glass to keep the room even warmer when the mercury dips.

- Opt for bright colors. Bright colors can make sunrooms feel all the more inviting and make for a perfect match with all the natural light already in the room. The renovation experts at HGTV note that white walls and ceilings can maximize the warm illumination of the natural light that will be pouring in from the floor-to-ceiling windows. Better Homes & Gardens adds that brightly colored cushions, pillows and area rugs with similarly hued colors and patterns can add visual interest and texture to a sunroom.

- Make use of a view. Homeowners needn't direct too much of their focus on decor if their sunrooms come with a view. Art on the walls and other decorative items around the room are less important if a sunroom affords a view of the ocean or a lake or dense woods that attract local wildlife. In rooms with a view, arrange furniture so residents and guests can comfortably look outward and take in all the surround landscape has to offer.

Low-cost ways to revamp living areas

Home improvement projects require substantial financial investment. But just because a homeowner wants to bring a fresh look indoors doesn't mean he or she has to break the bank along the way.

Living rooms are some of the most frequently used spaces in a home, and they can use an update from time to time to stay on trend or to make the area more functional for a changing family dynamic. Here are some budget-friendly ideas for breathing new life into living room designs.

- **Establish the budget.** Homeowners should figure out how many dollars they can designate to a living room makeover before purchasing supplies or hiring out the work. Figure out the scope of the remodel, visit stores or suppliers to price out materials, get estimates from contractors, and then plan for some unforeseen circumstances along the way to determine if this type of renovation is affordable. If not, scale things back until the project more closely aligns with your budget.

- **Change the paint color.** Lighter and brighter colors are on trend. A can or two of paint can do wonders for updating a space without a large financial commitment. Pair that new paint color with new window coverings and complementary throw pillows to pull the theme together with minimal expense.

- **Update the flooring.** Tired, outdated carpeting or other flooring can use an overhaul. While solid hardwood flooring may be preferable, there are many types of laminate flooring that mimic the looks of popular wood colors and styles for a fraction of the cost. Plus, many are sold at home improvement retailers and even at warehouse clubs or online for reasonable prices. Laminate flooring also may be a potential DIY



job for a skilled homeowner, saving even more money.

- **Introduce a fireplace.** Fireplaces were once hot commodities, but that popularity waned in the 1970s and 1980s. Homeowners with chimneys may discover a fireplace was boarded over and the bare bones still exist that can be renovated to bring back character. There also are ventless freestanding units that are quite affordable that can mimic the look of a built-in fireplace.

- **Reupholster instead of replace furniture.** There's no need to throw away quality furniture if the fabric is the only thing impeding design.

New upholstery or even a slipcover can update designs.

- **Conquer clutter.** Rather than adding something to the living room, remove clutter to give the room a more airy feel. This can instantly change the look of the room. Use cord covers to tame plugs for electronics and remove unnecessary furniture from the room.

- **Improve lighting.** Another easy and often inexpensive fix is to change lighting fixtures, including using brighter, more energy efficient LED bulbs, and to assess lighting needs to eliminate dark corners of rooms that can make the space seem drab.

WHAT TO PLANT WHEN PRIVACY IS A PRIORITY

A backyard oasis can feel like an even more welcoming retreat when the area is private. Homeowners and their families often find that a backyard is most relaxing when they cannot hear or see their neighbors, and creating such an environment can be as simple as planting some privacy trees.

Fencing is an option when homeowners are looking to make their backyards more private. But HomeAdvisor reports that the average cost to install a privacy fence is just under \$3,000, and those costs can be considerably higher depending on where homeowners live and how big a fence they need. Privacy trees can be considerably less expensive, and homeowners can spread out those costs by planting over time, an option that's not possible when installing fencing.

When planting privacy trees, homeowners can consider these varieties that can do the job while also providing some aesthetic appeal.

- **Emerald arborvitae:** The Arbor Day Foundation notes that the emerald arborvitae is unique among arborvitae because it maintains its green color even in the coldest months of the year. The emerald arborvitae can grow to between 10- and 15-feet-tall and spread as wide as 4 feet at maturity. The tree features a pyramid shape and is considered slow-growing at less than 12 inches of growth per year. The ADF reports that full sun and partial shade are best for this tree.

- **Carolina cherry laurel:** Carolina cherry laurels are popular choices for privacy seekers. The Lady Bird

Johnson Wildflower Center notes the trees can grow very tall and boast a pyramidal shape. The Carolina cherry laurel require sun and thrive in moist, well-drained soils. Parents with young children should know that the leaves of this family of plant contain hydrocyanic acid and should never be eaten.

- **Boxwood:** The ADF notes that boxwoods are renowned for their use in formal gardens. That can make them an ideal option for homeowners seeking a traditional garden aesthetic in their backyards. Boxwood trees can grow up to 20 feet tall, but they can vary greatly in height. Homeowners purchasing them as privacy trees should speak with their local gardening center to ensure they're getting boxwoods that will provide ample privacy. Though they still have aesthetic appeal, smaller boxwoods may only reach a foot tall. Boxwoods vary considerably in terms of their growth rate, so homeowners should inquire about this as well before purchasing and planting any trees.

- **Privet:** Privets are dense privacy hedges that grow very quickly, with the ADF reporting they can grow up to three feet per year. Privets may reach 12 feet in height and spread as wide as six feet at maturity. Privets tolerate shearing well, which can make them ideal privacy options for those looking for a formal appearance. Privets require full sun for uniform growth. Privets are considered invasive in many areas of North America, so homeowners should consult their local garden center prior to planting.

How to cut costs on home renovations

Do you still have an avocado green kitchen? Is your living room dank and dark? Perhaps there is only one bathroom for a family of six? Answering yes to any of these questions could serve as the catalyst for a home renovation project.

Home improvement projects come in all shapes and sizes — some with huge budgets and others that are more cost-conscious. Regardless of what homeowners hope to achieve with their renovations, a common goal across any price point is a desire to save as much money as possible. Home renovations can be expensive, but there are ways to cut costs.

- Assess the merit of the project. Remodeling magazine annually publishes a “Cost vs. Value Report” that lists the average cost and return on investment homeowners can expect of various types of projects. If you’re planning to sell your home soon, it may be best to focus on repairs and renovations that will generate the most substantial ROI.

- Hire a contractor. Even avid do-it-yourselfers can sometimes benefit from a contractor’s expertise, particularly for complex tasks. Don’t waste money by trying tough jobs yourself; rely on an experienced contractor who can get supplies for less money and will do the job right the first time. Compare bids from several different contractors and figure out the best value.

- Refurbish existing fea-



tures. Rather than a complete gut and rebuild, figure out where you can revitalize existing fixtures and more. For example, refinishing existing cabinets can save you up to 50% compared with the cost of new cabinetry, according to Angi (formerly Angie’s List), a cost comparison and business review resource.

- Choose midgrade materials. Certain materials may be all the rage but they come with a higher price tag. Angi reports that granite counters could be \$60 to \$100 per square foot. However, a composite or laminate that looks like granite and wears well may be \$10 to 40 per square foot. Figure out where you can choose middle-of-the-road materials for maximum value.

- Avoid peak seasons. You’ll pay more to install a deck or a pool right before the outdoor entertaining sea-

son. There also may be a premium to get work done right before a major holiday. Therefore, consult the calendar to find an off time for a renovation and book it then to save.

- Do some prep work. You might be able to save by doing some of the demolition and preparatory work yourself. For example, you can tear up old carpeting before the installation of new tile floors. Perhaps you can mend and patch up walls before a paint job.

- Buy a display item. Former showroom kitchens and baths often are sourced at a fraction of their recommended retail prices, according to Real Homes, a home remodel guide based in the United Kingdom. Retailers often update their displays and you may score existing showroom items at a discount.

BUDGET-FRIENDLY DINING ROOM RENOVATION IDEAS



If the kitchen is the heart of the home, then the dining room may be akin to one of its arteries. The mood created in the kitchen spreads to the dining space where family and friends gather to eat and enjoy one another’s company.

Dining rooms can get lost in the home renovation shuffle, as many homeowners tend to focus on renovating kitchens and bathrooms instead. Homeowners do not have to invest a lot of money in renovations to give their dining spaces awe-inspiring makeovers. Here’s how to do so on a budget.

- Lighten and brighten. Dining rooms were once very formal spaces. Dark woods, large pieces of furniture, over-the-top chandeliers, and other details could be found in many homes. But now that houses are being built with open floor plans, dining rooms can blend with other spaces, which have moved to lighter colored walls, flooring and furniture. A fresh coat of vibrant paint can work wonders and it doesn’t cost much. If you can’t remove a floor, cover it with a brightly colored area rug.

- Switch things up with slipcovers. Slipcovers can be changed each season to dramatically alter the look of a dining room for little investment. Slip covers also protect chairs and can be easily laundered after spills.

- Add floating shelving. Floating shelves provide much-needed storage

or display space without the need to invest in another piece of furniture. Depending on the shelving, they can work in modern design schemes or even farmhouse dining spaces.

- Clear out the clutter. It might be time to say “so long” to that large curio cabinet and the knickknacks within it. Curio and china cabinets used to be de rigueur, but plenty of people now prefer more open and airy dining rooms. For those who want to keep the cabinet, try decluttering inside to only include the very best display pieces and see if the cabinet can be refinished with paint or a lightly colored stain.

- Improve lighting. Make the chandelier the statement piece of the space. Go for a bold color or an innovative design. Then add accessories throughout the space that coordinate with the chandelier.

- Add bench seating. Those who need additional seating may not have to get entirely new furniture. Swap out some chairs for benches, which can fit a couple more guests than chairs.

- Create depth with color. HGTV says that using various shades of the same color in a space can add depth. Coordinate drapes, walls, seat fabrics, and accessories for a cohesive design.

Renovating a dining room doesn’t require a large investment of time and money. A few simple steps can give dining spaces a whole new feel without busting homeowners’ budgets.

DID YOU KNOW?

It's no secret that a good-looking lawn can entice buyers when selling a home, but homeowners may not realize just how much they can benefit from even the smallest investments of time and money in their home exteriors.

According to the Top Agent Insights Q2 2019 Report from HomeLight, low-cost outdoor home improvements to a landscape provide sizable returns on investment. For example, the report found that a \$268 investment in a lawn care service can

lead to a \$1,211 increase in home value at resale. Similarly, \$340 worth of fresh mulch can increase home value at resale by \$769. More than 85% of real estate professionals who participated in the HomeLight survey recommended other small and simple projects, including removing dirt, grime and cobwebs from a home entrance and trimming trees and shrubs prior to putting a home on the market.

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How to pick the right trees for your property

Trees benefit a landscape by serving both aesthetic and utilitarian functions. A home surrounded by healthy green trees can be a sight to behold, and those same trees can benefit surrounding plants and wildlife at the same time.

As appealing as trees are, not all trees and landscapes make for the perfect match. The Arbor Day Foundation notes the importance of planning when designing a landscape. Planning ensures the trees homeowners ultimately choose for their properties will grow well in the soil and moisture present in their yards.

Careful consideration of a handful of variables can help homeowners determine which trees will make the best fit for their properties.



• **Height:** Homeowners must consider the projected height of a tree before planting it. Avoid trees that will bump into anything when fully grown, as that can adversely affect surrounding greenery and pose a safety hazard. The ADF's tree sizing guide can be accessed at www.arborday.org/trees/rightTreeAndPlace/size.cfm and serves as an invaluable

resource for homeowners who want to plant new trees around their properties.

• **Canopy spread:** Trees grow out as well as up, so it's important to consider their potential width at maturity as well. The ADF sizing guide can help homeowners get an idea of how wide a tree is likely to be at maturity. Trees that spread out quite a bit don't necessarily need to be avoided, but it's important that they're planted far enough apart so they don't adversely affect surrounding plants. In addition, wide trees that are planted too close together can make the landscape appear crowded, taking something away from its aesthetic appeal.

• **Growth rate:** Growth rate is an important variable because

it can affect how quickly homeowners will see changes in their landscapes. Homeowners who want to plant for privacy can consider trees with quick growth rates or purchase more mature trees that are already near full growth. Those who are not in need of instant transformation can try trees with slower growth rates, which the ADF notes typically live longer than fast-growing species.

• **Requirements:** Different trees require different amounts of sun and moisture and different soil components to thrive. Homeowners can have their soil tested to determine which trees will thrive in it. Local garden centers can be a great resource for homeowners who want insight as to which trees will thrive in their local climates.

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SIGNS OF WINTER LAWN DAMAGE

Mother Nature can be harsh on a lawn, and it's up to homeowners to nurse their lawns back to health after they endure the elements. That's often the case when winter ends and homeowners uncover signs of damage to their lawns.

Homeowners cannot begin to repair winter lawn damage until they learn to identify it, and the following are some telltale signs that winter took a harsh toll on a landscape.

- **Wilted grass:** Many things can cause grass to wilt over the course of winter, so homeowners may have to put on their sleuth's cap to determine why grass that was healthy as recently as late fall is now wilted as the spring bloom begins. Grass that's adjacent to walkways and driveways might have wilted due to the application of de-icing solutions. Such products can prevent the formation of ice on driveways and walkways. However, when they're tracked onto the grass by people or animals or blown there by winter winds, grass can wilt. A deep watering in spring

can flush any lingering solution from the lawn. In future winters, homeowners can be as careful as possible when applying de-icing solutions, making a concerted effort to avoid spreading any onto the grass and limited applications to areas of the driveway and walkways that are not close to the grass.

- **Brown patches:** The National Association of Landscape Professionals notes that brown patches in a lawn often develop after heavy snowfall. Such patches tend to develop where large piles of shoveled snow were deposited, so homeowners can inspect alongside driveways and walkways. The NALP advises homeowners to rake away part of the brown patches first. If green tissue is emerging beneath, then the lawn will likely be fine in due time. However, if the area beneath is not green and surrounding areas are already turning green, homeowners may need to rake up dead tissue before applying topsoil to the affected spots. Once topsoil is spread, some grass seed can be spread and the



grass should regain its green glory.

- **Gray or pink grass:** Another indicator of winter lawn damage linked to snow is gray or pink grass. The NALP reports that this is a byproduct of snow mold caused by lingering snow. Action may be unnecessary, as the NALP notes these circular patterns often go away on their own. If not, raking the affected areas might be enough to get the lawn on the road to recovery. If

the issue continues to linger after raking, a topsoil application and subsequent seeding may be necessary.

These are three common signs of winter lawn damage in areas where snowfall is significant during the coldest months of the year. Homeowners concerned about their damaged lawns are urged to contact a local landscape professional to correct any issues that linger into spring.

The background of the advertisement is a collage of three photographs showing the interior of a hair salon. The photos depict various styling stations with mirrors, sinks, and professional equipment, creating a sense of a modern and well-equipped environment.

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The logo for Fringe Hair Studio. It features the word "EST. X 2012" in a small serif font above the word "Fringe" in a large, ornate, cursive-style serif font. The entire logo is set against a dark purple background.

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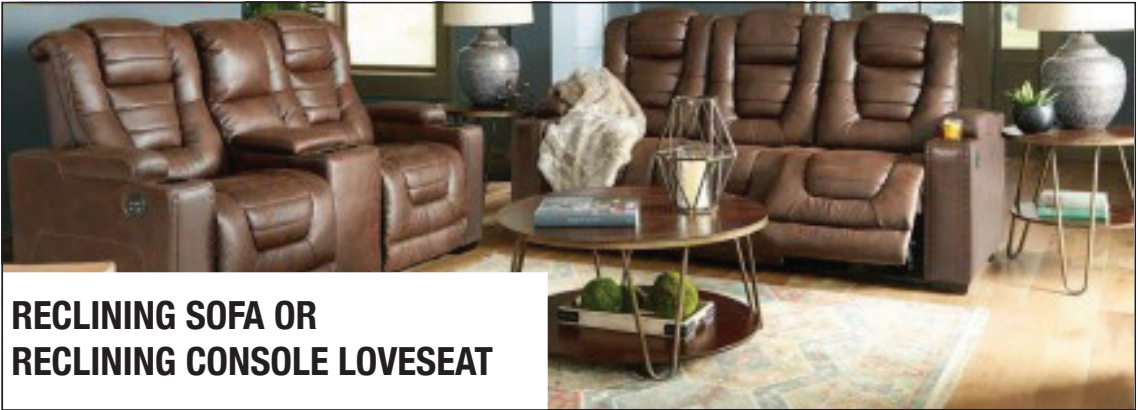
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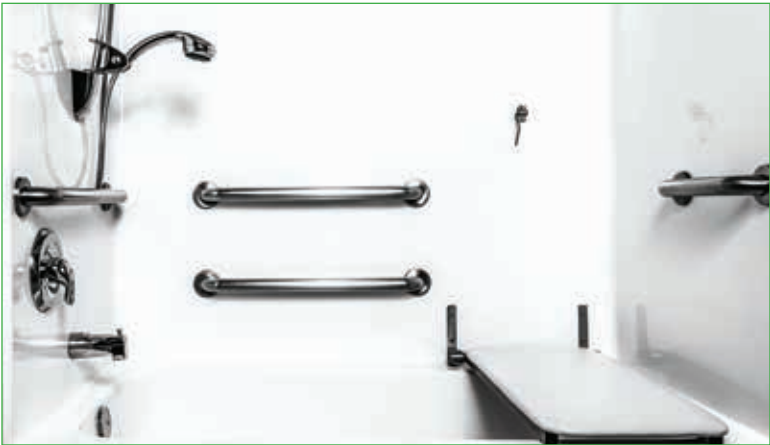
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UPGRADE BATHROOM SAFETY FEATURES

Bathrooms can benefit from updates that improve their form and function. While styles and color patterns may inspire bathroom renovations, improvements to safety also should be considered.

Bathrooms can be one of the most dangerous rooms in a house. Bath and shower areas account for about two-thirds of accidental injuries in these spaces. Many other injuries involve the toilet. In 2008, a thorough investigation of bathroom dangers conducted by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention found that mishaps near the bathtub, shower, toilet, and sink caused an estimated 234,094 nonfatal injuries in the United States among people aged 15 years and older.

Seniors are particularly vulnerable in the bathroom due to reduced mobility and flexibility, visual impairment and



other factors. However, some key modifications can make bathrooms much safer for aging populations.

- **Raised toilet seat:** Install an ADA-compliant raised toilet seat. Standard toilet seats are roughly 15 inches high, but elevated seats can raise the bowl an additional 2 to 4 inches. Another option is to invest in

risers that can be attached to an existing toilet.

- **Grab bars:** Seniors may use towel holders as grab bars, which don't have stability and can dislodge from the wall. Install secured side grip bars by the toilet and inside the shower to make maneuvering easier.

- **Water temperature:** Seniors may be vulnerable to hot water

temperatures. Lower the water temperature setting on the hot water heater. StaySafe.org recommends 120 F.

- **Faucets:** Change faucet handles to paddle-style handles rather than knobs. Knobs can be challenging to grip for those with arthritis in their hands. Also, handles that are easier for seniors to use can reduce the risk of the elderly losing their balance as they attempt to gain leverage to turn the water on and off.

- **Nonslip mats:** Nonslip mats or tape strips can be used in showers and tub bottoms, as well as outside of the shower to reduce the risk of slips and falls. Rugs should have rubberized, slip-resistant backing.

- **Rounded corners:** Choose counters and fixtures with rounded corners. Should a senior fall against something, the rounded corner may prevent

serious injury.

- **Shower benches and transfer seats:** Benches and transfer seats make it easier getting in and out of the shower. Also, sitting while showering reduces the risk of becoming lightheaded or losing balance.

- **Walk-in tubs/showers:** Minimizing the threshold to the shower or bathtub is an important safety feature. Some manufacturers make walk-in tubs with doors that secure and make watertight seals. Showers that don't have a lip or tub to scale also are better for seniors.

- **Lighting:** Eyesight weakens over time, so improve lighting with combinations of overhead lighting and softer side lighting. Night lights or soft-glowing toilet lights can make it easier to get around the bathroom in the middle of the night.

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Telling signs 3 common insects are infesting a lawn

Well-maintained laws are a byproduct of hard work. That hard work is a point of pride for homeowners who spend countless hours throughout spring, summer and fall tending to their lawns.

All that hard work can be compromised when uninvited guests, namely insects, show up in a lawn. Insect infestations can turn a normally pristine and lush green lawn into a brown and sickly eye-

sore. Identifying which type of insect is damaging a lawn is the first step toward returning that lawn to its green glory. These are three common lawn insects and signs that they're infesting a lawn.

1. Grubs

Grubs like to feast on the roots of grass right below the surface. Michigan State University Extension Turf & Landscape reports that grub damage can

appear from March to early May or from mid-September to early November. The lawn and garden experts at GardenTech note that wilted grass blades are often the first indicator of a grub infestation, which is followed by patches of brown turf and eventually death. Crows, skunks and moles eat grubs, so the sight of them in a lawn could indicate an infestation.

2. Chinch bugs

The experts at BobVila.com report that chinch bugs are not necessarily problematic when their populations are limited to around 10 to 15 bugs per square foot of lawn. In such instances, chinch bug populations are generally controlled by ants and ladybugs. However, extreme heat and drought, problems that have plagued various regions in North America in recent years, reduce the populations of bugs that feed on chinch bugs, thus increasing the population of these unwanted guests that feed on grass. GardenTech® indicates that damage from chinch bugs is most visible between

June and September. That damage begins with grass taking on a purple tinge before it turns yellow and then brown after wilting.

3. Cutworms

The lawn care experts at Scotts note that cutworms are moth larvae that hide in the thatch layer of a lawn during the day before emerging at night to feed on grass blades. Patches of brown grass between one and two inches in width is a sign of cutworm infestation. Homeowners who notice a growing number of birds pecking away in their lawns may have a cutworm infestation, which can be confirmed by peeling up a section of damaged grass and looking for cutworms, which are brown, gray or black and tend to be around two inches long.

The good news is that grub, chinch bug and cutworm populations can be controlled. Local turf specialists can recommend strategies to curtail such populations and help homeowners restore their lawns to full health.



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POPULAR INSECT REPELLANT PLANTS

Homeowners choose plants for their properties based on a number of variables. Some may be into growing their own foods, while others desire their gardens to be an awe-inspiring mélange of bright colors and alluring scents. There's no wrong reason to plant a fresh garden, but some plants offer extra benefits, such as repelling insects.

Insects can be a nuisance and a threat to individuals' overall health. According to the American Academy of Family Physicians, insect-borne diseases are viral and bacterial illnesses that develop from insect bites. Mosquitoes, sand flies and fleas are some examples of insects that can pass on disease. Fever, chills, headache, and muscle soreness are just a few of the more common symptoms linked to insect-borne diseases.

The good news for avid gardeners is that certain plants can help repel insects and provide the additional benefits like fresh food and aesthetic appeal that so

many people love.

- **Basil:** The aroma of fresh basil is enough to compel any gardener to make a place for it in their garden. But there's more to fresh basil than its scent, as the Farmers Almanac notes it can be used to repel mosquitoes and moths.

- **Lavender:** Fleas, flies, mosquitoes, and moths are not fans of this aromatic and colorful member of the mint family. Bees tend to be drawn to lavender, a durable plant that many garden centers recommend in areas prone to drought or hot summers without much precipitation.

- **Mint:** Mint is another plant that is instantly recognizable for its aroma. But mint lovers may not realize that it's also great for keeping ants at bay. Mint also can be used to repel mosquitoes, but gardeners with no experience planting mint should plant it in pots. That's because the Farmers Almanac notes mint is an especially aggressive spreader that can quickly take over a garden. Separating

mint in pots can prevent it from bullying its way into other plants' domains.

- **Lemongrass:** Lemongrass is a tropical grass that's so fragrant it's often used in perfumes. Lemongrass contains citronella, which many people associate with repelling mosquitoes. A potted lemongrass plant can repel these unwanted guests, keeping them away from decks,

porches and/or patios all summer long.

- **Chrysanthemums:** The Farmers' Almanac recommends using chrysanthemums, which repel a range of insects from bedbugs to fleas to ants, as border plants around a home. That's because they contain the natural insecticide pyrethrin, which can serve as something of an insect-repelling boundary around a home.



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Kitchen remodel made easy

FINDING THE RIGHT CONTRACTOR IS KEY

By Chris Howell
chrish@sedaliademocrat.com

Cindy and Mike Travis were in a pinch when they looked for a contractor to re-

model their kitchen in Sedalia. They live seven hours away in Illinois, and had a hard time finding a contractor over the phone.

“Every contractor we called, nobody would call back,” Cindy said. “If they said

they would come, nobody showed up and then he finally got ahold of Dennis and he said no problem.”

Dennis Houk with The House Guys has years of remodeling experience and was able to begin the project right away, which was important as the Travis’s wanted to retire to the Sedalia home as soon as possible.

“Unless it’s a new home, the kitchen will possibly have old, dated, perhaps worn cabinets that were suitable 30 years ago, but they’re not very stylish now,” Houk said. “People frequently have an idea of what they really want it to look like, they’ve seen pictures or they’ve been to home shows, perhaps an open house or home and saw some things they really liked and said, ‘this is the direction that I want to go.’”

Cindy was exactly that type. In fact,

she had known what she wanted for three years.

“I had it drawn up three years before,” Travis said. “I knew exactly what I wanted. He said, ‘OK., I’ll come.’ He looked and said, ‘OK, this is what you want to do’ and I said, ‘this is what I want to do.’”

Houk knows many remodels are because of dated styles and suggests going with current trends.

“Painted cabinets are pretty popular now,” Houk said. “A little more expensive than stained cabinets, but that’s what people like. Usually, they gravitate toward either quartz or granite countertop.”

Prices for a remodel vary with the complexity and quality of materials.

“The cost of a kitchen remodel depends on the extensiveness,” Houk said. “Is it cabinets only or are we tearing out pretty much everything and starting over?”

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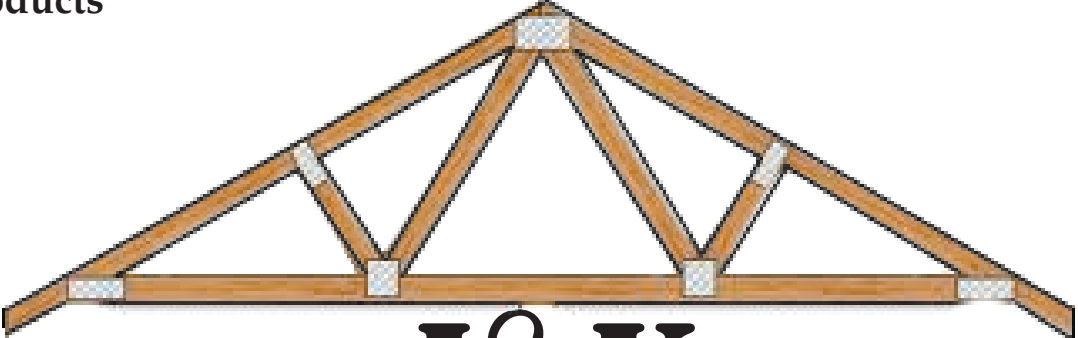
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PHOTO BY CHRIS HOWELL | DEMOCRAT

Dennis Houk, of The House Guys, Mike Travis and Cindy Travis in their newly remodeled kitchen.

Endless texts and photos were exchanged between Cindy and the work crews. Especially when some items were held up for months due to supply-chain issues. And the lights for the island were hung too low.

“If the guys had problems they would call and ask,” Cindy said. “With hours difference they would text me, ‘Cindy this is where it’s gonna sit?’ and I’m like ‘that’s too low! Remember my husband is over 6 feet.’”

With time and patience, the kitchen was remodeled and Cindy and Mike drove down last week.

“It’s pretty much exactly what I wanted,” Cindy said. “There’s only a few things that aren’t quite...I had thought the island would be a little bit bigger, but it can’t be any bigger because then I can’t get out the back door!”

Chris Howell can be reached at 660-530-0146.



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TIPS WHEN PAINTING SHUTTERS

There are many ways to give a home's exterior a new look. Though it might not be as grand as replacing siding, repainting shutters affords homeowners a chance to try a bold new color or simply replace fading colors, and each option can make a home more appealing.

Homeowners who have never before painted shutters can consider these tips as they prepare to begin the project.

- Don't go it alone. The most important step homeowners can take before beginning a shutter painting project is to enlist the help of a friend or family member. Someone to hold the ladder can make the project safer. Enlisting a third individual, working on the ground, who can take the shutters from the person on the ladder may be a wise move as well.

- Remove the shutters. When painting shutters, homeowners want to remove them from the house. It might seem easier to leave the shutters on and then paint them carefully with a brush, but that's both time-consuming and a potential safety risk. Some shutters are installed with fasteners that look like screws, but that

appearance is misleading and shutters installed in this way cannot be removed with a drill or screwdriver. Homeowners should determine which material their shutters are made from, and then look for a corresponding removal tutorial on YouTube. Homeowners who can't find one can contact the manufacturer or a contractor to determine the best way to remove the shutters.

- Clean the shutters prior to painting them. It's likely been years since the shutters were last painted, and over that time they've no doubt accumulated a lot of dirt and mildew. Homeowners can try a garden hose to clean them, and if that doesn't work a power washer may be needed. If using a power washer with wooden shutters, be especially careful, as the force of the power washer may damage the wood. Vinyl shutters, like vinyl siding, can typically handle a strong power washing without being damaged. Wooden shutters also will need to have old paint removed before they can be repainted. The experts at TrueValue note that paint can be removed from wooden

shutters with a sander or by applying a chemical paint stripper.

- Prime wooden shutters before painting. Though vinyl shutters won't need to be primed unless the old paint is peeling, wooden shutters must be primed before they're painted. Priming can be a tedious process, so homeowners should leave themselves ample time for this part of the project.

- Rent an airless sprayer to paint the shutters. Many hardware or paint stores rent airless sprayers, and these can be the quickest way to paint shutters. Professionals typically apply two coats of paint, and the first coat should be allowed to fully dry before the second coat is applied.

- Re-hang the shutters after they have fully dried. Only after the shutters have fully dried should they be placed back on the house. Employ the same buddy system when re-hanging the shutters, having one person hold the ladder and another pass each one up one at a time.

Painting shutters can give a home a fresh look without costing homeowners a lot of money.

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Signs a roof needs repair or replacement

Many homeowners believe a roof is a once-in-a-lifetime investment. But roof damage can force homeowners to replace a roof regardless of how much time has lapsed since the roof was installed.

The average life span of a roof depends on when the roof was installed and the materials it is made from. According to Central Homes Roofing, three-tab shingles may last between 10 and 15 years, architectural shingles can endure for 15 to 20 years, and tile may last between 35 and 50 years. RPS Metal Roofing indicates a metal roof may last as long as 70 years. However, climate and color of the roof also will affect its longevity.

Homeowners would be wise to consider these factors when determining if a roof is in need of repairs or replacement.

• **Roof age:** The age of the roof is a major factor in determining if it will need to be replaced or if repairs can be made

to isolated damage. Individuals who live in neighborhoods where neighbors are now replacing roofs will likely find it is time to consult a roofing company. Homeowners also can check to see if they have any receipts that indicate the roof's installation date so they have an idea about its age.

• **Grain in gutters:** Roofing shingles are designed to overlap, and sealant keeps them steady. Friction, weather and atmospheric changes can impact sealant and cause degradation. Gutters with grainy material in them could indicate worn out sealant and shingles.

• **Ridge damage:** Ridges are spots where two separate areas meet and often are important to the structural integrity of the roof. If the roof ridge is showing signs of wear, it could be time to repair or replace it.

• **Curled shingle edges:** If shingle tabs are curled or cupped, the shingles may need to be replaced. But if curling is extensive, a whole new roof may need

to be installed.

• **Bald spots or lost portions of the roof:** Missing granules and missing shingles are reasons to consult a pro for a roof evaluation.

• **Leaks indoors:** Homeowners who find dark streaks or moisture in the attic may discover that water is penetrating the roof underlay. Water often comes in around chimney flashing. Other water

signs are blistering and bubbling in walls.

• **Incoming light:** Look up through the attic and see if any light is coming through the roof, which may indicate there are cracks or holes in the roof.

• **Aesthetics:** If a homeowner doesn't like the look of the roof from a design standpoint, a replacement also may be warranted.



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DID YOU KNOW?

Certain home improvement projects are more complex than others. Projects that involve working with gas lines are among the most complicated and risky undertakings, and even seasoned do-it-yourselfers are urged to leave such tasks to certified professionals.

According to Angi, the average cost to move a gas line is between \$15 and \$25 per linear foot, and homeowners can expect to pay an additional \$1 to \$10 per linear foot for pipe materials. A natural gas plumber can install, extend and repair natural gas lines and ensure that the project is completed safely, on time and within homeowners' budgets. Angi notes that the average cost to move a gas line is between \$250 and \$750 for the whole project. However, if a buried line must be excavated, that cost could run into the thousands of dollars.

Composting: the original organic recycling

By Sara Lawson
sara@warrensburgstar-journal.com

In the grand cycle of gardening, there is no true waste. Composting takes kitchen scraps and inedible vegetation from the garden and yard to create nutrient-dense soil through decomposition. Composted materials can be reintroduced to a garden space for the next growing season.

Field Specialist in Horticulture Kathi Mecham specializes

in consumer and commercial horticulture, including ornamentals, landscape design, vegetable gardening and container gardening. Mecham also serves as the coordinator for the Johnson County Master Gardeners chapter.

Mecham has worked with the University of Missouri Extension since 2014.

"(Composting) is actually the mixing of materials to break down and to form compost," Mecham said. "So you

mix brown materials and green materials."

Brown materials are high in carbon and include shredded paper, leaves, straw and sawdust.

Green materials are high in nitrogen and include vegetable scraps, grass clippings and coffee grounds.

"You combine those two, the carbon and the nitrogen ratio, and get the right ratio, it makes it breakdown faster," Mecham said. "You also need water and you need

air to make a good compost."

Mecham said composting is a science and art because the ratio of brown and green materials as well as water are important to the success of the compost.

"A simplified version for effective composting is a 2:1 ratio and that would be two parts brown material to one part green material," Mecham said.

Mecham said maintaining the amount of water is important for effective composting.



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“If it starts smelling really bad cause it’s too wet, just add dry brown ingredients,” Mecham said. “If it’s too dry, you add wet ingredients, the greens, or you might need to water it a little.”

Mecham said she also sprinkles in some dirt to the mix because of the microbes present that aid in decomposition.

Mecham said bones, meat, fat, dairy, grease and oil are not advised for compost as they take a long time to break down, as well as weeds seeds as that may lead to unwanted weeds in garden beds later on.

Composting can take place on

the ground, in bins or specialized barrels.

Mecham uses a mineral tub for composting.

“There’s lots of different composters you can buy or you can build bins and compost, however when you’re mixing food scraps in it, it’s almost got to be covered or you will end up with possums or maybe some critters you don’t want,” Mecham said.

Composting also requires air. Turning the mixture, using a shovel or pitchfork, incorporates air and allows the mixture to cool a bit.

As compost breaks down, it

becomes warm.

While not necessary, using a thermometer can help gardeners know when the mixture is becoming too hot, which can inhibit microorganisms that aid in breaking down the material.

“If you mix (brown and green) materials, it will decompose, even if you don’t mix them,” Mecham said. “If you just have leaves lying on the ground, eventually they are going to decompose, what we’re doing with composting is making that process go faster. We’re spreading up the process when you add the greens and the browns in a ratio. They

help each other to break down faster.”

Mecham said the timetable for when composting is done depends on the size of the composter and the materials used.

“Shredded leaves are going to compost quicker than non-shredded leaves,” Mecham said. “Eggshells take a long time to compost.”

Mecham said breaking, cutting or shredding material into smaller pieces can speed up how long it takes to compost.

“If you are continually adding compost, it’s going to take longer to break down,” Mecham said.

Mecham said compost takes about two months to break down

fully and is ready to be used.

Mecham said introducing material back into a container or garden space before it is fully composted can cause the root system of whatever is planted to burn.

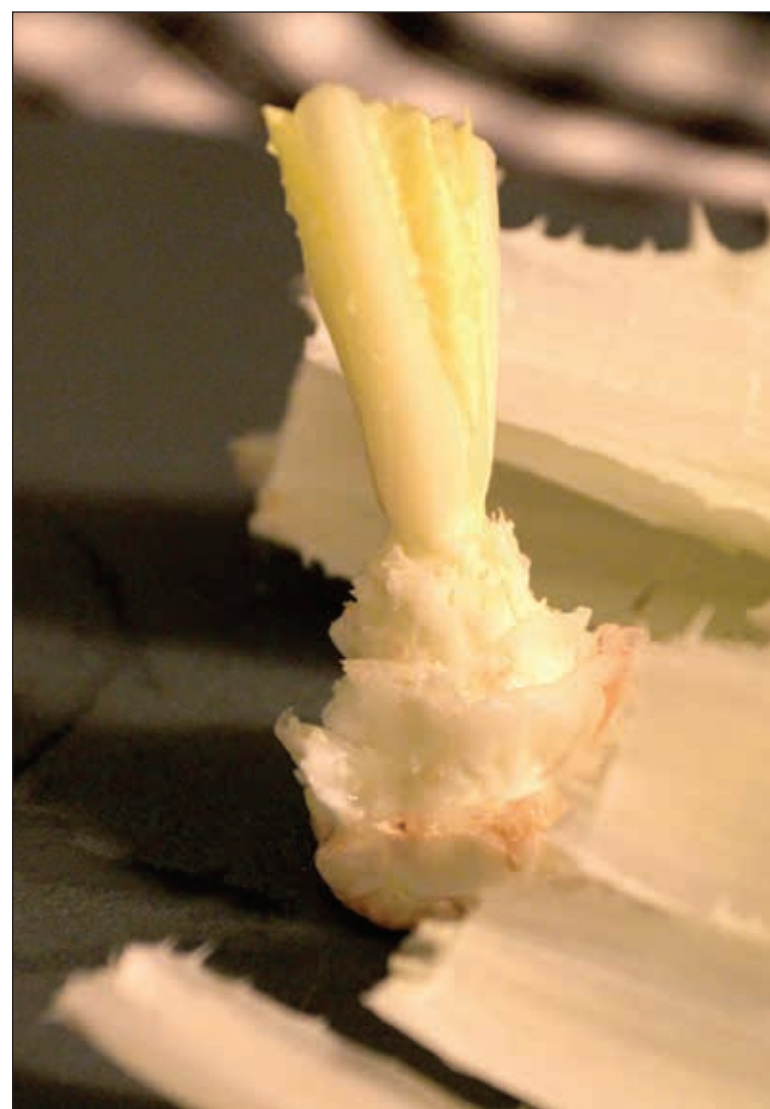
“That would be more if you were adding manures, so if you were adding cow manure or horse manure,” Mecham said. “I just always recommend that it’s aged manure because you can add horse and cow manure to your compost, but not pig and cats and dogs. You would not want to put compost that is too hot. It could burn the plant.”

Sara Lawson can be reached at 660-747-8123.



PHOTOS BY SARA LAWSON | STAR-JOURNAL

The size of a composter is largely determined by the amount of vegetative waste generated. A two-tray composter is suitable for a one- to two-person household.



Fresh from the garden or grocery store, food scraps can be thrown into a composter to become soil again, rather than in the trash or down the garbage disposal.

Tech to make gardening more fun

Many people take to the great outdoors to escape the increasingly tech-driven daily grind. Though that's an understandable perspective, gardeners who aren't deploying tech in their home gardens could be missing out on a host of benefits that could help their plants, flowers and vegetables thrive.

Devices like smartphones and tablets have made many aspects of life easier and more efficient, and various tech products can do the same when working in the garden.

- **Plant monitor:** Plant monitors are sensors that can keep tabs on the health of plants and deliver that information

to gardeners. Plant monitors often connect to smartphones via Bluetooth and can deliver information on the amount of heat, light and water a plant is getting. Sensors vary in price, and some will provide more information than others. But these sensors are ideal for gardeners who love their plants but often forget to check up on them each day.

- **Garden camera:** Critters and insects are the bane of many gardeners' existence. Determining just what is nibbling away at flowers and plants isn't always so easy, as many animals are savvy enough to restrict their dining to the mid-

dle of the night and insects are so small they can be hard to spot. Garden cameras can serve as the watchmen of a garden and gardeners can review footage to determine just who is compromising all of their hard work. They can then use that knowledge to remedy the situation and give their plants a better chance to thrive.

- **Weather station:** Even the most seasoned gardeners cannot document the conditions outside as effectively as a good weather sensor. Weather sensors track conditions such as temperature, relative humidity and air quality. This information can then be paired with irrigation devices to ensure plants get all the care they need to thrive throughout the season.

- **Garden hub:** Avid gardeners have traditionally had to arrange for neighbors or loved ones to tend to their plants when they leave home for vacation or weekend getaways. Garden hubs can take care of that by pairing with smart irrigation systems that ensure plants are watered even when no one is home. Certain hubs even gather and analyze local weather conditions to develop a watering schedule to ensure plants thrive. These hubs aren't just handy when on vacation, as they can be great for gardeners who want to know things about their plants that are not apparent to the naked eye.

People may see their gardens as welcome respites from their devices. But garden gadgets can help plants thrive and make time in the garden that much more enjoyable.



HOW TO CORRAL A CRABGRASS INFESTATION

A well-manicured lawn adds undeniable curb appeal to a property. Homeowners who take pride in their lawns should know that they can take that pride all the way to the bank, as investing in a pristine lawn can provide a significant return at resale.

A 2019 report from the real estate experts at HomeLight found that a \$268 investment in lawn care service can add \$1,211 at resale. That's a 352% return on investment.

Homeowners can capitalize on a pristine lawn even further by tending to their own lawns. Crabgrass is one lawn problem that can compromise the look of an otherwise lush lawn. Thankfully, crabgrass can be controlled without much effort.

Identifying crabgrass

Crabgrass is a weed that grows in areas of a lawn that are bare or where the grass is thin. Crabgrass gets its name from its appearance, as it grows from the center outward and mimics the look of crab legs emerging from the center shell.

The growth of crabgrass

The University of Minnesota Extension notes that crabgrass is an annual plant. That means a crabgrass infestation that's problematic once the mercury rises in the summer will die out in late fall or early winter. But crabgrass germinates in the spring, so homeowners will want to take steps to prevent it long before it becomes an eyesore in summer.

How to corral crabgrass

The UME notes that application of a pre-emergent herbicide before crabgrass seeds can germinate is an effective way to eliminate it. The timing of that application can be tricky, as jumping the gun and applying the herbicide too early can prove fruitless. The same goes for applying herbicides too late. Crabgrass will likely still grow if the herbicide is applied too early or too late. UME recommends applying a pre-emergent herbicide when soil temperatures approach 55 F.

Home Depot notes that a chemical treatment may be applied after crabgrass has already grown in, but this option requires careful application to avoid killing surrounding healthy grass.

Crabgrass can be pulled out by hand, but such an approach can be physically daunting. That's especially so because crabgrass thrives when the weather is hot and dry. So homeowners who intend to pull crabgrass by hand can decrease their risk of dehydration or heat-related illness by drinking plenty of water and pulling the grass during early morning or evening hours when the sun is lower and temperatures are more mild.

Crabgrass can compromise the look of an otherwise healthy lawn. But various strategies can eliminate crabgrass and restore a lawn without much effort on the part of homeowners.

The different ways to repair a driveway

Asphalt driveways do not last forever. Over time, weather and general usage can degrade the driveway surface, resulting in cracks, pitting and more. Ultraviolet rays, salt and automotive fluids also can affect the appearance and functionality of a driveway. An unsightly driveway can adversely affect curb appeal and resale potential.

Homeowners have to consider various factors when it comes to repairing driveways. They may have the option of getting the driveway resurfaced, resealed or repaved, and each project is unique.

Resurfacing

According to the home improvement price comparison site Kompare It, resurfacing is simpler and faster than installing a new asphalt driveway. With resurfacing, any cracks are filled in to create an even base. Then a new layer of asphalt is applied over the existing one. That new layer can range in thickness from 1.5 to 3 inches. A heavy rolling machine will then smooth and flatten the layers together. If the driveway has minor pitting or cracking, then resurfacing can be a cost-effective strategy, as it may be a \$3,000 to \$6,000 job as opposed to \$5,000 to \$10,000 with repaving.

Resealing

Resealing a driveway, also called sealcoating, is another repair strategy. HGTV says resealing can be a do-it-yourself project. Resealing helps the driveway last longer.

The driveway needs to be clean and dry, with holes and cracks filled prior to sealcoating. Start at the far edge of the driveway and seal that area by “cutting-in” by hand for a neat edge. Afterward the rest of the driveway can be sealed using a squeegee or broom. This project can be completed within two or three days if no precipitation is forecast.

Repaving

A project best left to professionals, repaving typically involves the removal of an existing driveway and the installation of a new one. The sub-grade layer is essential in the process for a smooth look. Contractors also will assess soil and grading when doing work. The construction blog Main Infrastructure says the new asphalt driveway can vary in thickness between 2 and 6 inches, depending on budget and need. The contractor also can advise if full-depth asphalt application or an aggregate base is practical.



Budget-friendly ways to upgrade a landscape

An inviting, well-tended landscape can add significant curb appeal to a home. Such a landscape also can serve as a point of pride and welcome homeowners each evening as they arrive home from work.

Landscaping projects run the gamut from simple changes that can be accomplished on a weekend afternoon to more significant and costly undertakings that require the work of a professional. Budget-conscious homeowners may be looking for simpler projects, and the following are some less costly ways to upgrade a landscape.

- Add a pop of color with planters. Awe-inspiring colors can make a landscape stand out from surrounding properties. Flowers, bushes and plants may be the first thing homeowners consider when trying to add color to their lawns, but planters can provide a more immediate way to give exterior grounds some color. Bold planters won't lose their color in a matter of weeks like many flowers do, and homeowners can switch planters so the colors align with the season. For example, some pastel planters can evoke the spirit of spring, while orange planters can be filled with mums to give a landscape an autumnal feel.

- Plant perennials around the property. Well-maintained perennials grow back each year, making them ideal for homeowners who don't have the time or desire to map out new gardening

arrangements each spring. Planting perennials also is a great way to add color around the property without breaking the bank.

- Upgrade walkways. Though it's more expensive than adding planters and planting perennials, upgrading old and cracked walkways is a great way to give a property a whole new look. According to the renovation experts at HomeAdvisor, homeowners typically pay between \$6 and \$12 per square foot for new concrete walkway installation. Homeowners working on a budget can target spots where walkways have already cracked and fix those areas first before continuing the project piecemeal until all the old walkways have been replaced.

- Plant to create privacy. Homeowners spent more time at home than ever before during the pandemic, and some might have grown tired of seeing what their neighbors are up to. Fencing might be the first solution homeowners consider when looking to make their landscapes more private. But new fencing installation can be expensive, costing homeowners between \$1,667 and \$4,075 on average, according to BobVila.com. A more costly and natural solution is to plant trees around the perimeter. Speak with a local landscaping professional, who can survey the property to see which trees might thrive and provide the privacy homeowners want.



7 THINGS TO KNOW BEFORE REPLACING WINDOWS

The decision to replace windows often comes down to aesthetics and necessity. Drafty windows can reduce energy efficiency in a home, requiring HVAC systems to work harder to keep interiors comfortable. The harder the HVAC must work, the more homeowners will pay in energy costs.

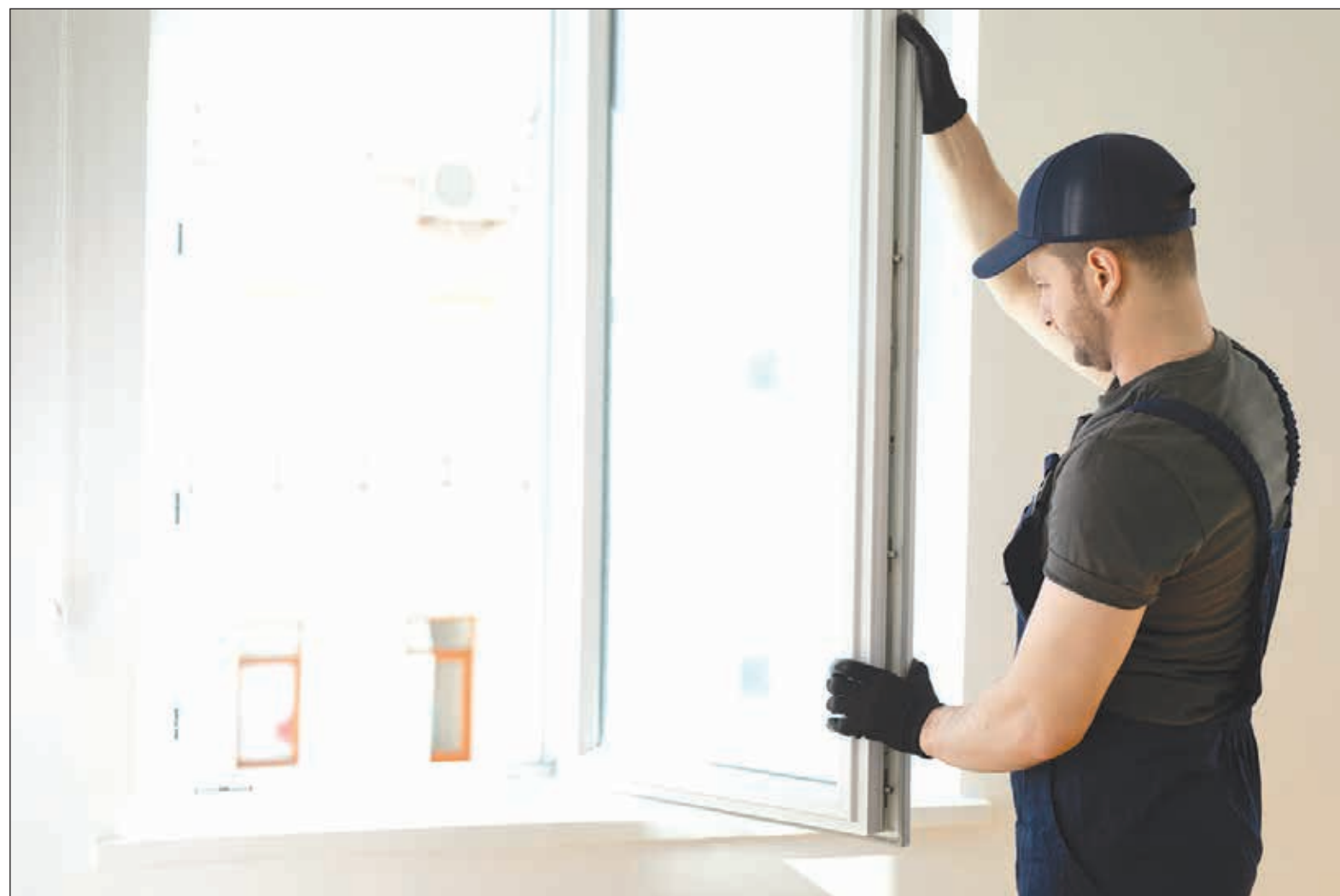
Old windows also may be points of entry for water and insects. Despite the importance of windows, Money magazine advises that new windows make up only a fraction of the home's total exterior "envelope," resulting in only about 5 to 15% of total energy savings.

But there are still plenty of reasons to invest in new windows.

1. Vinyl or aluminum may be best. Lumber is farmed rather quickly today and solid wood products may not stand up to elements as well as wood used a half-century ago. To avoid rot, vinyl windows often are an affordable and durable choice. Homeowners also have the option of wood windows with aluminum cladding, which are long-lasting.

2. Moisture problems indicate windows need to be replaced. Condensation that shows up as fogging between double-pane windows or on the inside of windows indicates that the windows are starting to fail. If installing a vapor barrier in the basement or crawl space, ventilating properly when showering or cooking, or using a dehumidifier indoors does not remedy the situation, it might be time to replace windows.

3. Windows add curb appeal.



Beyond functionality, replacement windows immediately update the look of the home and can improve curb appeal since they are one of the most prominent features on the exterior of a home. If a house needs an update, replacing windows can be a quick and affordable update.

4. Consider other energy-efficient upgrades. Sometimes older windows can be salvaged, especially if they are not damaged and only moderately drafty. Replacing panes, sash cords,

weather stripping, and even glazing may be less expensive than replacing a window. Plus, older homes with attractive windows complement one another. To keep energy bills down, think about adding insulation to the attic and basement — which is a good idea even if you are replacing windows.

5. The wrong windows can adversely affect home value. The National Association of Realtors says homeowners get about 73% of their replacement win-

dow investment back when they resell a home. But choosing the wrong windows might lower the value of the home. It's important to match the look of the original windows, including window material and the divided light pattern (the number of panes in each window) with the original windows.

6. Think about soundproofing, too. When upgrading windows, also think about how certain windows can cancel out noises and make homes more soundproof.

Some windows can help reduce outdoor distractions like leaf blowers or lawn mowers.

7. Proper installation is key to longevity. Replacement windows are only as good as their installation in many cases. Poor installation and orders of standard rather than custom sized windows could result in poor fitting and seals. Homeowners should carefully vet and review window replacement contractors to find the best professionals for the job.

Project 1: _____
Budget: _____
Supplies/services needed: _____

Project 2: _____
Budget: _____
Supplies/services needed: _____

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