

The ultimate

Fall Home Improvement

and contractor's guide!

SPECIAL SUPPLEMENT TO:

MARIES
COUNTY

Advocate



Inside: Over 30 Contractors and Businesses inside.

Local home businesses: order early to avoid long waits

Local furniture and construction businesses are warning their customers to purchase products from the sales floor or in advance because of interrupted supply runs and product shortages.

Paige Lasserty, co-owner of Becker Millwork in Freeburg said it best.

“We have extended lead times (the amount of time it takes to bring product in) and there is more cost to everything,” Lasserty said. “It is difficult.”

Kay Carpet in Owensville sells furniture and flooring. Michele Lowder, owner, said they have been working around the shortages and slow supply chains.

“We have just been ordering ahead — six months in advance for custom companies,” she said.

The business is also adding an addition to their warehouse to keep more products on hand.

“We haven’t experienced a whole lot of trouble ordering ahead, but it is taking twice as long to receive the product,” Lowder said. “A lot of times it comes in damaged.”

Kay Carpets already has a lot on the showroom floor and will sell the product it has in stock.

“Flooring hasn’t been an issue for us, mainly just the furniture,” Lowder said.

Stephen Thompson, owner of Winter’s Home Furnishings in Owensville, agreed.

“We haven’t had any monumental changes (in the

way we have run the business) since the shutdowns last spring,” Thompson said. “Everything in our supply chain has been disrupted. Product availability is at an all-time low.”

Thompson said the timeline to receive the product is “astronomically different than two years ago and production dates are off the charts.

“Everything in our supply chain has been disrupted. Product availability is at an all-time low.”

“Everyone blames it on the fact that no one wants to work anymore,” Thompson said. “People are having trouble finding truck drivers. The COVID card is used heavily and no one wants to come back to work. It has a huge effect on moving products from start to finish.”

Winter’s Home Furnishings doesn’t stock any flooring so they have no choice but to order. If a customer is interested in furniture, they could pick off the floor or order, but they are looking at a three to six months wait time.

“It is like that with everything and everybody — lumber yards, electricians, plumbers, drywallers,” Thompson said. “Every aspect of construction can’t get anything and it trickles from every corner of the spectrum. Everybody is affected and they seem to think the way to come back to recover is to raise prices. They are losing money

‘cause they can’t get products and as a result raise prices.”

In Gerald, Ottis Schulte with Gerald Home Center, agrees that some things are just getting hard to get.

“We have one supplier we buy cabinets through and their plant is 200 people short,” Schulte said. “Things are getting hard to get because people don’t want to work.”

Schulte said there is one product that seems to be more impossible to get than most.

“Windows was a three to four week wait time and is now 12 to 15 weeks out,” Schulte said. “People are ordering windows before they even dig a hole for their basement.”

Schulte said he knows of several home builders who have plastic covering window holes while they are hanging drywall.

“I tell my customers if they decide to build a house they need to order windows first,” Schulte said. “There is trouble getting plumbing pipe, electrical wire — this country needs to stop relying on other countries to make this stuff.”

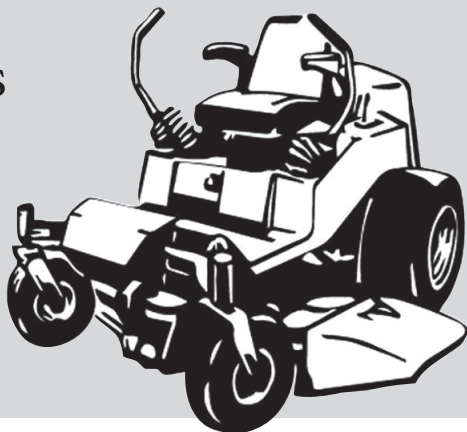
Schulte said he has the same amount of customers this year as he did last year. He attributes the shortage to workers and not the pandemic.

“People need to get back to work,” Schulte said. “If this keeps up, 10 years from now there won’t be anything left.”

If there is one thing they all can agree on, it’s that potential builders should order early.

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Popular renovation projects during the pandemic

Spending so much time at home during the pandemic led many homeowners to spruce up their homes. According to HomeAdvisor's 2021 State of Home Spending report, spending on home improvements increased by an average of \$745 per household in 2020.

In the face of travel restrictions and social distancing guidelines, many homeowners pivoted in 2020 and spent money they initially intended to use for vacations on home improvements. Though many such projects required the services of a professional contractor, others, including the most popular project among the 5,000 homeowners who participated in the HomeAdvisor report, were do-it-yourself endeavors. That not only gave homeowners' homes a new look, but also gave them something to do during quarantine. The following are the five most popular home improvement projects of 2020 according to the HomeAdvisor report.

1. Interior painting

Just under 35 percent of participants reported taking on an interior

Renovation - continued on page 5B

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Must-have features in your bathroom remodel

Veteran homeowners recognize the value of remodeling their kitchens and bathrooms. Kitchens and baths tend to appear dated more quickly than other spaces, such as living rooms and bedrooms, which can always be revamped with some fresh paint and new furnishings.

The home improvement pricing resource Home Guide indicates an average bathroom remodel costs anywhere from \$5,500 to \$15,000 depending on the size and scope of the renovation. However, a bath redo can increase a home's resale value and can return as much as 68 percent of homeowners' investments. As homeowners plan their bathroom renovations, it's a good time to consider improvements that will improve function and add design appeal for years to come.

- Floating vanity: Add an airy feeling to the room by creating space between the vanity and the floor. A floating vanity can be a counter with a vessel sink or even have cabinets, as long as the vanity doesn't extend to the floor.

- Freestanding traditional sink or tub: There's something elegant about a freestanding tub or pedestal sink. Such

features can lend a classic vibe to a space. However, freestanding fixtures also come in modern or eclectic forms, so there are options for any design style.

- Frameless showers: Switch to a walk-in shower option, which improves aesthetics and makes it easier to "age in place" in a home. Pair that frameless shower with clear glass shower doors so sightline in the space remains unencumbered.

- Natural textures: Create a calm and serene sanctuary in the bathroom with light, natural hues and materials. Nature-inspired colors on tiles, walls and vanities can add to the spa vibe.

- Dual sinks and vanities: With a double vanity, two people can share the space and easily use the bathroom without getting in each other's way. One vanity with two sinks works, but homeowners can create even more personal space by dividing vanities and mirrors.

- Small textured tile on shower floors: Small textures are appealing and add safety. The added texture and grouting will keep feet from slipping on wet floors. Also, opt for mold-resistant grout to make cleanup even easier.

- Special shower heads: Invest in shower heads that can run the gamut from

Bathroom - continued on page 5B

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This childproofing checklist can help keep kids safe

It's not long before newborns who need their parents to cater to their every need become toddlers who can't wait to go exploring on their own. The curiosity can come quickly, which underscores how important it is for parents to childproof their homes.

Childproofing is essential in the nursery where children tend to spend much of their time, but it's necessary elsewhere in the house as well. The Children's Hospital of Los Angeles says fractures are the most common injuries among infants and toddlers as they develop a sense of curiosity and gain mobility. Head and mouth/tooth injuries are some additional injuries curious kids may suffer during this period in their lives. This childproofing checklist can help reduce the risk of injury.

- Follow United States Consumer Product Safety Commission crib safety regulations, which include fixed sides, a firm mattress and slats that are no more than 23/8 inches apart.
- Install UL-listed carbon monoxide

detectors and smoke detectors on every story of the house and check batteries in detectors frequently.

- Install a temperature guard on the water heater and never set it above 120 F.
- Cover all sharp furniture edges and corners with safety padding or specialty bumpers.
- Block all open outlets with outlet covers or safety plugs.
- Place lockable covers on the garbage.
- Install stove knob covers.
- Use latches on any drawers, toilets, doors, or cabinets within the child's reach.
- Anchor heavy furniture, such as televisions, bookshelves and dressers, to the walls.
- Install safety guards on windows.
- Pull the crib away from other furniture.
- Use cordless window blinds.
- Place gates at the top and bottom of stairs and use them to prevent access to rooms that are off limits.
- Store cleaning supplies, tools and

breakable items out of reach or in a locked cabinet.

- When the child reaches 35 inches in height or can climb out of the crib, it's time to transition to a toddler bed.
- Choose toy chests or other furniture with spring-loaded hinges.
- Do not hang heavy wall art or shelving over cribs.
- Cover radiators, hot pipes, etc., with protective materials.
- Remove flaking paint and be sure to have paint tested for lead.
- Inspect the home for protruding nails, bolts or other hardware that can cause injury.

These are some childproofing measures parents can implement to keep kids safe. Parents can customize childproofing plans based on their needs and the designs of their homes. Consult with a pediatrician for other tips on making a home safe for young children.

Bathroom — continued from page 4B

creating steam showers to rainfall effects. Some showers will have multiple shower jets to offer an invigorating experience.

- Improve drainage: Increase the diameter of the drain pipe in the bathroom from the standard to a two-inch drain pipe. This will reduce the risk of clogs and overflow leaks.

- Install a window: Natural light and air flow can reduce the risk for mold and mildew growth, and windows add some aesthetic appeal to a space. Just be sure to choose frosted privacy glass.

Additional considerations for a bath remodel include heated floors, well-placed and attractive storage options and a toilet enclosure (water closet) for added privacy. These and other bathroom renovation ideas can add value and improve the appeal of the room.

Renovation — continued from page 3B

painting project in 2020. Interior painting projects can be perfect for DIYers, but homeowners also can trust this task to skilled professionals.

2. Bathroom renovations

Real estate professionals routinely report how much prospective buyers love updated bathrooms, so it's no surprise that roughly 31 percent of homeowners who took part in the HomeAdvisor report indicated they renovated their bathrooms in 2020.

3. Flooring

Floors took on a lot of extra traffic during the pandemic, so it shouldn't be too surprising that flooring projects were popular in 2020. More than one-fourth of participants told HomeAdvisor their homes were updated with a new floor during the pandemic.

4. Landscaping

With nowhere else to go to escape the daily grind in 2020, many homeowners took to their yards. Twenty-four percent of those homeowners reported making their backyard retreats more appealing by repairing or upgrading the landscaping outside their homes. In fact, the average homeowner reported completing 3.4 landscaping projects in 2020.

5. Kitchen

Another project that makes sense given the circumstances, kitchen renovations were the fifth most popular home improvement project in 2020. Restaurant closures and social distancing guidelines led many people to dine in more often than they otherwise would, and just under 23 percent of homeowners reported renovating their kitchens in 2020.

As the world gradually emerges from the pandemic, many homeowners who caught the renovation bug while in quarantine also will be emerging with what feels like an entirely new home.

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Real estate financing options

The decision to buy a home is significant. Real estate is the biggest investment the average person will make in his or her lifetime, which underscores just how significant the home buying decision can be.

The real estate experts at Zillow recently reported that the national median price of a home in the United States is \$272,446. However, since the National Association of Realtors reported a record low housing inventory late in 2020, the average house price has been rising rapidly nationwide. The Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis estimates the median home sales price at \$374,900, and certain states have much higher prices. WOWA, a real estate and finance technology company, says the average sale price of a home in Canada was \$679,051 in July 2021.

Most people do not have \$300,000 to \$600,000 in savings on hand to purchase a home in cash. That means



they'll need to rely on financing to pay for their dream homes.

Conventional lending

Conventional lending refers to when a bank or another

financial institution loans a home buyer money to buy a home. This is one of the most common ways to fund a home purchase. Personal credit score as well as credit history help determine eligibility and interest rates for conventional loans. Availability of assets as well as income level are some additional determining factors. Conventional loans are traditionally 10-, 15- or 30-year notes and will require a certain percentage as the down payment to secure the loan. The bank will determine the down payment requirement, which is typically somewhere between 3 and 20 percent.

FHA loan

A Federal Housing Administration loan is issued by an FHA-approved lender. These loans are designed for low-to-moderate-income borrowers, according to the financial guide Investopedia.

Financing - continued on page 9B

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Safety first when clearing land

New homeowners often see their homes as blank canvases. Looking at a home as a blank canvas is typically associated with its interior, but it also can apply to landscaping.

Homes are empty of furniture and decorative items like photos and art on the walls when new homeowners move in. That makes it easy to see the interior of a home as a blank canvas. But that's not always so easy in the garden or the yard, where brush, overgrown plants or trees and other eyesores might have been left behind by the previous owners. A landscape must be cleared out before it can be seen as a blank canvas. Though clearing land may seem like a straightforward process, no one knows what lies beneath overgrowth or neglected areas of a yard or garden. Do-it-yourselfers can typically clear land on their own, but some safety strategies should be kept in mind to ensure the process goes smoothly.

- Wear appropriate PPE. Personal protective equipment should be worn

when clearing land. The appropriate PPE when clearing land includes attire and other gear that many homeowners likely already have on hand. A long-sleeve shirt, puncture proof pants and gloves and slip-resistant work boots should be worn when clearing land. Homeowners also may want to invest in a hard hat if they will be cutting branches off of trees or cutting trees down. A face shield also may be a good bet depending on the scale and potential dangers of the project.

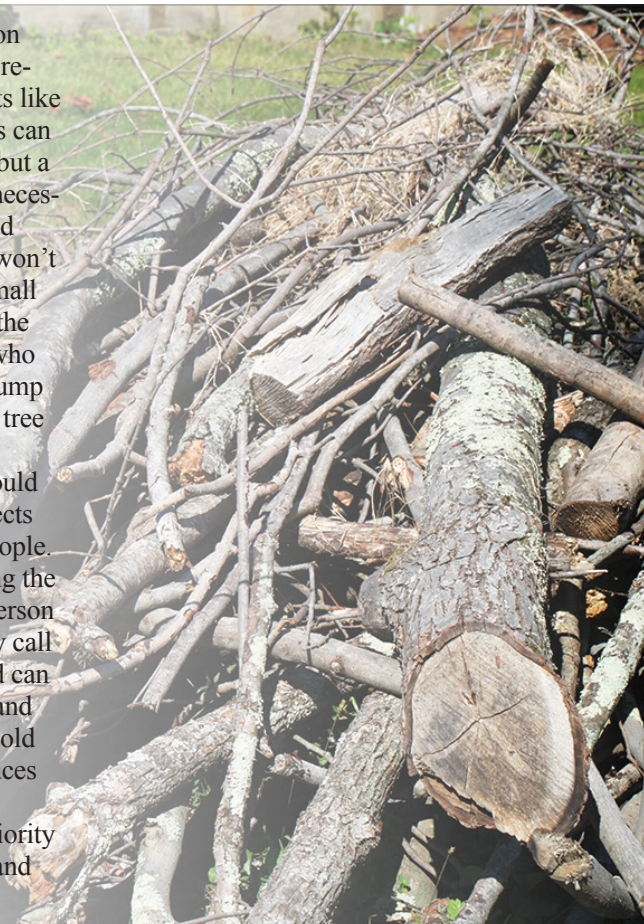
- Contact your utility company. Overhead power and telephone lines are visible to the naked eye, and homeowners should be conscious of those lines as they cut any high branches. But underground lines are not visible, and that can make clearing land dangerous. Homeowners are urged to contact their utility companies before they begin to clear any land so they can determine if any underground lines are beneath areas they intend to clear out.

- Get a lay of the land. Carefully inspect the area to be cleared prior to starting the project. Inspections can

reveal the density of any vegetation that may need to be removed and reveal if there are any harmful plants like poison ivy growing. Many DIYers can remove small trees on their own, but a professional tree service may be necessary for large trees or those located close to the house. Homeowners won't want to cut down a tree, even a small one, if it can potentially fall onto the house. In addition, homeowners who are unfamiliar with chippers or stump grinders may be better off hiring a tree service to clear trees.

- Don't go it alone. No one should clear land alone. Even small projects are best tackled by at least two people. Should someone get injured during the project, the presence of another person ensures someone can immediately call for help. In addition, clearing land can be more difficult than it appears, and having at least two people to pull old shrubs or carry tree branches reduces the risk of injury.

Safety should be the utmost priority as homeowners prepare to clear land on their properties.



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Don't miss a beat during a power outage

Short-term power outages can be a minor inconvenience. A long-term power outage can cause a major disruption to daily life.

The U.S. Energy Information Administration's Annual Electric Power Industry Report says interruptions in electric service vary by frequency and duration across the many electric distribution systems that serve the country. In 2016, the most recent year for data, customers experienced an average of 1.3 interruptions and went without power for around four hours.

When a storm strikes or an accident knocks out electric power lines or other infrastructure, it may take much longer for power to be restored. During Superstorm Sandy in 2012, more than eight million people lost power and outages lasted for days in some major cities. Outlying areas were without power for weeks, according to National Geographic. It's important to know how to handle a power outage to keep everyone safe and comfortable until power can be restored.

Invest in a generator



If you live in an area that is affected by frequent power outages, a power generator may prove a worthwhile investment. Generators come in two basic types. A portable generator can be rolled into place and uses gasoline as fuel. Plug in a set number of household items, depending on the amount of power the appliance can accommodate. A whole-house generator can be hard-wired to a home's electrical system and automatically engage should a power outage occur.

Prepare in advance

In anticipation of a power outage, stock up on battery-powered devices like flashlights, lanterns and radios. Charge mobile phones and other devices so they're at 100 percent power.

Keep a cache of nonperishable food available and plan to use any perishable items that are in the refrigerator first. A refrigerator can keep food cold for about four hours after power has ceased, states Ready.gov, while a freezer can keep the

temperature for about 48 hours if full. Packing these appliances with ice or frozen bottles of water can help.

Purchase books, board games and puzzles to have activities to pass the time until power resumes.

During a power outage

Report the power outage to the power company if it seems localized; otherwise, wait for updates to see who is affected.

Try to remain cool or warm if the HVAC system is not functioning. Pool resources by having everyone in the family gather in one room of the house. Older adults and children are especially vulnerable to extreme temperatures.

Maintain food supplies that do not require refrigeration, including two gallons of bottled water per individual. People who take refrigerated medications should only ingest drugs that have been at room temperature until a new supply is available, advises the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Power outages routinely occur and require planning and safety precautions until power is restored.

Six steps to organize your home office

Remote working has become popular in recent years, but the "working-from-home" economy bloomed exponentially as the world was forced to confront the COVID-19 pandemic. According to Stanford economist Nicholas Bloom, as of summer 2020, 42 percent of the United States labor force was working from home full-time.

The need for home office spaces has increased as more people work from home. Many people have retrofitted various spaces around their homes into areas to get work done. More organized home work spaces can increase productivity. Individuals can follow these guidelines to create effective, organized home offices.

Begin with the desk

The desk is the primary spot where work will take place. The right desk accessories can provide visual appeal and also serve practical purposes. Have cups for holding pens and pencils, baskets and bins for larger items, and store whatever you can elsewhere so it does not lead to clutter on the desk. Store wireless printers in a cabinet or even on a bookshelf so it



doesn't take up real estate on the desk.

Create a printing station

While you're moving that wireless printer elsewhere, designate a space to serve as the central printing hub. This way children who need to print assignments for school will know where to go as well. Printer supplies like extra ink cartridges

and printer paper can be kept in decorative storage boxes nearby.

Increase your shelving

Shelving can help keep items organized and off the desk in home offices without closets or drawers. Look for shelves that blend in with decor but are sturdy enough to be functional.

Organize paperwork

Figure out a system that works for you to help tidy up papers you choose to save. While some papers can be scanned and stored as digital files, color-coded file folders can organize statements and other important documents. This makes it easy to find the folder you need when looking for certain documents.

Establish a charging station

Repurpose certain items, such as a desk organizer, into an easily accessible electronics charging station where phones and tablets can charge at one time.

Make essential binders

HGTV suggests making binders that can store the most important papers for easy access — even in an emergency. Set up a binder for automotive paperwork, including repair receipts, a medical binder where key medical records are kept, a binder for manuals for devices in the home, and one to store financial documents.

These organizational tips can help remedy common problems around a home office.

Financing — continued from page 6B

FHA loans require lower minimum down payments and lower credit scores than many conventional loans. FHA loans also require mortgage insurance up front, plus annually for 11 years or the life of the loan depending on the length of the loan.

HELOC

A Home Equity Line of Credit, commonly called a HELOC loan, borrows against the available equity in your home to create a line of credit, much like a credit card. These funds can be used for large expenses or to consolidate higher-interest rate debt on other loans, according to Bank of America. It may be possible to use a HELOC to secure funding to make improvements to a home for those who want to flip it as an investment property.

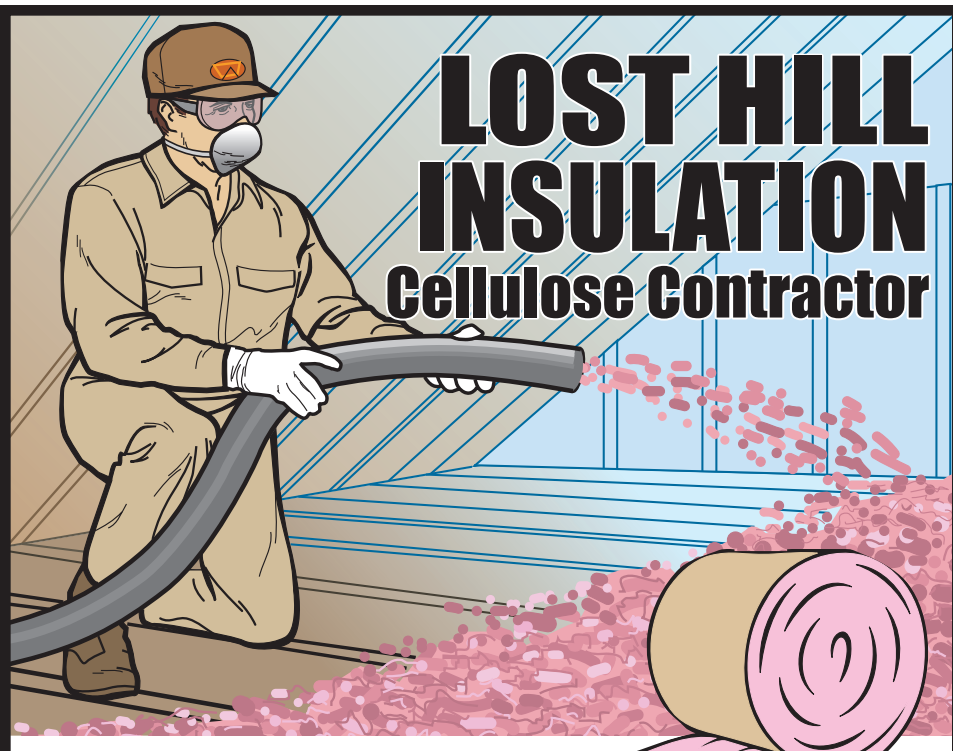
Private money lenders

Individuals investing in real estate who do not intend to use a property as a primary residence may turn to private money lenders. These investors can tap into capital from personal connections and lend at specified interest rates and payback periods, according to Fortune Builders, a real estate investing resource. Keep in mind the interest rate will likely be higher with a private lender than through a conventional lender. The repayment term also will be shorter.

VA-backed loan

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs has a program for acquiring loans through conventional lenders that will be partially guaranteed against loss through the VA. This enables a lender to give better loan terms, such as the option to pay no down payment. Interested parties need to qualify for a Certificate of Eligibility and then work with qualified lenders.

People have several options to finance the purchase of a home. These loans can help make the dream of home ownership a reality. Potential buyers are urged to speak with mortgage professionals or financial planners to consider their options.



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Signs it is time to overhaul your kitchen

Remodeling a kitchen adds value to a home. Remodeling Magazine's "Cost vs. Value Report" indicates mid-range kitchen remodels cost about \$66,000, and homeowners can expect to recover about 60 to 80 percent of that cost at resale.

Homeowners may wonder if remodeling their kitchens is worth the investment. But homeowners should not just consider cost, but also the current conditions of their kitchens when deciding if a renovation project is the right move to make. These signs indicate it may be time to renovate a kitchen.

- **Breakers are triggered:** If the lights go dark from a tripped circuit breaker every time you try to microwave and run the toaster oven at the same time, your wiring is likely not up to the task of handling the workload and could be out of date. A kitchen remodel will assess wiring load needs and an electric overhaul may be necessary.

- **Lack of storage:** One of the biggest hassles homeowners encounter in their kitchens is a lack of storage space. If making a meal involves a Jenga-like stacking



and rearranging of kitchen tools, or if an avalanche occurs whenever you search for an item, you might need more storage. A carefully planned redesign can achieve this, even in a smaller kitchen.

- **Outdated appliances:** Even if your appliances are not avocado green or mustard yellow relics of the 1970s, they might still need to be replaced. According to CRD Design, appliances are only expected to last around 10 to 15 years. If appliances have become unsafe or energy hogs, it could be time for a remodel.

- **Family is expanding (or shrinking):** Kitchens often are the heart of a home. They need to meet the needs of the family

that resides in that home. A remodel can add space as needed. On the flip side, when a couple becomes empty nesters, kitchens can be redesigned and downsized to reflect their new needs and desires, such as the addition of a wine chiller or espresso station.

- **Poor lighting:** Task lighting is essential in a kitchen, but older homes may not be equipped with lighting where it's most needed. A carefully designed remodel can improve lighting with under-cabinet lights, pendants, overhead lighting, and even natural light to make the space attractive and more functional.

- **Frequent run-ins:** The notion that you can have too many cooks in the kitchen

refers to having too many people trying to pitch in or offer their opinions. However, it also can apply to when too many people are gathering in a small space. Redesigning a kitchen can improve the efficiency of a space and make the room feel larger.

- **Aesthetic appeal:** Many kitchen remodels have been inspired by unsightly kitchens. Cosmetic changes can lead to big improvements.

Kitchen renovations can add instant appeal and help address issues that tend to plague outdated rooms.

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Signs your HVAC unit could be fading

A day outdoors soaking up the sun's rays is many people's idea of the perfect way to spend a summer afternoon. On such days, a periodic retreat indoors into an air conditioned home can offer some much-needed relief from the heat.

HVAC systems are worth their weight in gold during the dog days of summer. Of course, such systems must be replaced from time to time. Learning to recognize the signs of a fading HVAC system can help homeowners replace their units before they cease working, saving everyone the uncomfortable ordeal of being stuck at home without cool air on hot summer days.

Weak air flow

An HVAC unit operating at peak capacity produces a strong flow of air through the vents of a home. The experts at Select Home Warranty note that when the air flow from the vent is weak, this could be a warning sign of a damaged AC compressor or blocked or damaged vents. Damaged vents might be replaceable, but issues with the AC unit might require a replacement. That's especially so if the unit is old. Repairs might be possible, but it might be more cost-effective to replace an aging unit rather than commit to costly repairs.

Excessive moisture around the unit

Excessive moisture around the unit may indicate that its refrigerant is leaking. In addition, Home Select Warranty



notes that large pools of water around the unit could contribute to mold growth and floor damage. Homeowners are urged to contact a qualified HVAC technician immediately if they notice any leakage or moisture issues around their units.

Interior temperature

If your home is not quite the respite from summer heat that it once was, despite the AC being on and running, then this could be indicative of a fading system that may need to be replaced. However, the home warranty firm American Home Shield® notes that hot interior temperatures also may be indicative of clogged ductwork. Qualified HVAC technicians may be able to fix clogged ductwork without replacing the AC unit. If the is-

sue persists even after ducts have been cleaned and unclogged, then a new unit might be homeowners' best bet.

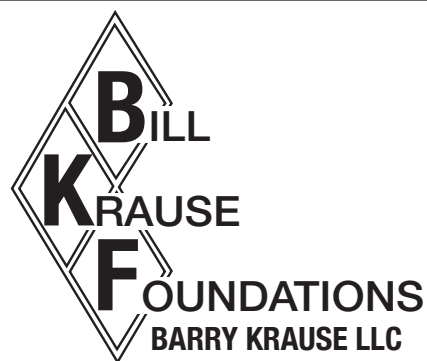
Foul odor

Sometimes the nose knows best when an AC unit needs to be replaced. Unusual odors emanating from the vents when the AC is on suggest that the unit is distributing mold or mildew throughout the home. The Florida-based heating, cooling, plumbing, and electrical experts at Cool Today note that a moldy or mildew-like smell coming from the vents could indicate a host of issues, including a dirty evaporator coil, a clogged drain line or leaky air ducts. Each of these issues can be fixed, but homeowners must weigh the cost of fixing them versus the cost of replacing an aging unit.

Come the dog days of summer, homeowners want a reliable AC unit to cool their homes. Recognizing signs of a malfunctioning

AC unit is a good first step toward ensuring homes remain cool, relaxing respites from the heat this summer.

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Tips to keep pests out of crawl spaces

Crawl spaces tend to be no-go zones in many homes. With little room to maneuver and no heating or cooling, it's no wonder people avoid crawl spaces. But pests may see crawl spaces in a wholly different light.

Rodents and insects that find their way into crawl spaces can do significant damage. According to the pest control experts at Terminix®, pests can destroy insulation, gnaw through wiring and air ducts and damage the wooden substructures of a home. Though many homeowners may go months if not years between trips to their crawl spaces, periodic visits to inspect for the presence of pests can help uncover any issues before they escalate into significant problems.

The discovery of pest problems in a crawl space can be unsettling. Some homeowners may wonder how long they've been hosting these uninvited guests, while others may wonder what

they can do to evict them once and for all. Fortunately, homeowners can employ various strategies to keep

pests from taking over their crawl spaces.

- Seal cracks and openings. Pests may enter a crawl space through small cracks or openings, much like cold or warm air can enter through similar cracks around windows and doors. Terminix® notes that homeowners can apply caulk or foam insulation around cracks or openings in their crawl spaces. No crack is too small to seal, as small insects like termites and ants don't need much room to maneuver their way into a home.

- Encapsulate the crawl space. Crawl spaces are dark and damp. Wet, humid



condi-
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tract
rodents and
insects, increas-
ing the risk
of infestation.

Encap-
and secures a crawl space with a thick vapor barrier that lines the floor and walls of the crawl space. Vapor barriers can keep moisture from condensing on wood, making the area less likely to attract pests.

- Run a dehumidifier in the crawl space. Dehumidifiers can help homeowners control moisture in a crawl space. In fact, many companies that install vapor barriers recommend running dehumidifiers after a barrier has been installed.

- Examine the perimeter of your home, particularly the exterior walls. Periodic

examinations of a home's exterior may reveal brush that can make for ideal shelters for pests. Pests sheltering along the exterior walls of a home will eventually try to enter the home, likely through the crawl space. Remove piles of brush during routine walk-arounds of the home and trim any bushes or shrubs that also may be providing shelter to pests.

- Keep an eye on the crawl space. Though crawl spaces can be difficult to access, homeowners should visit these spaces periodically. Inspections can help homeowners determine if dehumidifiers are still running and allow them to check for pests or other issues, such as cracks, that may be inviting unwanted guests into their homes.

Crawl spaces can become homes and breeding grounds for pests if homeowners don't take measures to prevent such issues.

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What to know before installing built-ins

After purchasing a new home, buyers often want to put their own fingerprint on the property. Homeowners anticipate the day when their homes are transformed into spaces that reflect their style and not the preferences of previous owners.

When deciding how to renovate interior spaces, homeowners will make some relatively temporary changes, but they also may consider some permanent adjustments. Built-ins fall into the category of permanent adjustments, and while realty professionals note that built-ins tend to provide a good return on investment, homeowners can learn more about built-ins before deciding if they want to install them in their homes.

What are built-ins?

Realtor.com defines built-ins as any feature that is built into the interior of a home. The term “built-ins” may immediately conjure up images of bookshelves, but built-ins also include benches and entertainment centers.

Why install built-ins?



Built-ins can be both utilitarian and aesthetically appealing. Built-ins are functional because they provide storage space that homeowners may otherwise find hard

to create. Built-ins are embedded in walls that may otherwise be useful only to hang artwork. This can provide much-needed storage space in homes with limited

square footage. Professionally installed built-ins also can transform rooms, making them appear more organized. Customized built-ins also can give homes their own unique character, though it’s important to note that prospective buyers may or may not appreciate that uniqueness.

Are there disadvantages to built-ins?

The permanence of built-ins may not appeal to some buyers. If buyers don’t like built-ins at all or are not fond of the look of customized built-ins, that may be enough to convince them to walk away from a property. However, Realtor.com notes that functional built-ins, like built-in bench seats with storage capacity, appeal to modern buyers and their preference for as much storage space as possible.

Permanent built-ins also can be costly. The home remodeling resource Fixr.com notes that built-in entertainment center installations can cost between \$8,000 and \$9,500. Built-in seating and bookshelves

Built-ins - continued on page 14B

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Should I DIY?: Three questions to determine if it's best to renovate on your own



A do-it-yourself mentality has taken hold in millions of households across the globe. Popular television channels like HGTV and DIY Network as well as accessible home improvement content on apps like YouTube has inspired many homeowners to tackle renovation projects around their homes. Taking such initiative is admirable, though it also can prove costly if homeowners end up biting off more than they can chew.

Home improvement videos and television shows have a tendency to oversimplify renovation projects, potentially giving homeowners a false sense of confidence in their DIY abilities. A concerted effort on the part of homeowners to determine if it's best to renovate on their own or hire a professional should always be the first step of any renovation project. No two homeowners are the same, but the following three questions can help homeowners determine if DIY is their best option.

1. Can I afford to DIY?

Professional home improvement projects are costly for a variety of reasons. Materials can be costly, but so are the tools and labor necessary to do the job right. Homeowners may not have the tools necessary to complete complicated projects. Specialty tools can be expensive to purchase or even rent, and the cost of acquiring such tools should be included in any DIY project cost estimates. Labor also factors heavily into professional projects, and for good reason. Talented contractors have unique skills that have been developed and perfected over many years. Those skills can ensure projects are completed quickly and correctly. Labor may seem costly, but such costs may ulti-

mately prove to be a bargain compared to the cost of fixing DIY mistakes. Projects that are minor in scope and don't require the use of potentially costly specialty tools may be better suited for weekend warriors than more complicated renovations.

2. Do I have the time?

Homeowners must determine how much time they have to complete a project before deciding to do it themselves. No one wants to spend months staring at an unfinished renovation project. Homeowners who are already pressed for time may not be able to complete projects in a timely fashion, which can make homes less comfortable and even less safe.

3. Can I pull this off?

DIY projects can instill homeowners with a sense of pride in their homes, but it's imperative that homeowners considering the DIY option conduct an honest assessment of their skills. A lack of renovation experience does not necessarily mean a homeowner cannot successfully complete a DIY project. But in such instances, it may be best to start with small, straightforward projects and then gradually move up to bigger, more complicated projects as skills are fine tuned. And homeowners who have never been at their best with a hammer in hand should not be ashamed to leave the work to the professionals.

Television shows and online tutorials can make renovations appear easier than they actually are. Homeowners considering DIY renovations can ask themselves a handful of questions to determine if they're ready for the challenge of renovating their homes on their own.

Did you know?

When remodeling a home with the ultimate goal of making it more attractive to prospective buyers, homeowners can benefit from taking stock of current trends, including the style of home that's most popular. According to a 2020 Homes.com survey of more than 5,000 adults across the United States, modern farmhouse is the most favored house style. The survey asked participants to choose from a selection of styles, including mid-century modern ranch, Spanish colonial/southwest, bohemian craftsman, Italianate, French chateau, and Tudor. The modern farmhouse style was the most popular choice in 42 of the 50 states, proving that home style preference is not beholden to geography. Respondents gave a host of reasons for favoring the modern farmhouse look, including that the style is "aesthetically appealing but not boring" and that it looks "simple, cozy, and not too busy."

Built-ins - Continued from page 13B

are not as costly, but such projects still cost more than simply buying premade furniture.

Some buyers also may see built-ins as limiting what they can do with a space. That can be a major disadvantage as more professionals work from home and seek multi-functional spaces in their homes.

Built-ins can dramatically change the look of a room and provide some much-needed storage space. But it's imperative that homeowners give ample thought to built-ins before deciding to install them in their homes.



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 pat



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How to choose the right lighting inside your home

Lighting in a home serves both practical and aesthetic purposes. It's easy to maneuver around a well-lit home, reducing the risk of slips and falls, and the right lighting can help homeowners create their desired ambiance, which typically changes depending on which room you're in.

When choosing lighting for their homes, homeowners must walk a fine line between appearance and functionality. A fixture in the foyer that instantly impresses visitors likely won't prove as awe-inspiring if it's installed in the living room. When choosing lighting for a home, some general rules about what works in each room can help homeowners make the most informed decision.

Kitchen

Kitchens are often the busiest room in a home, so lighting here can be especially important. A kitchen often benefits, both practically and aesthetically, from different types of lighting. For example, pendant lighting above kitchen islands can make meal preparation easier and safer, but such lighting likely won't work in breakfast nooks and informal dining areas

in the kitchen. Recessed lighting works best in such areas. In kitchens with no island, under-cabinet lighting can be used to illuminate countertops and simplify meal preparation.

Formal dining room

Many people enjoy the look of chandeliers in formal dining rooms, and such fixtures can be installed directly above the dinner table. The interior design experts at Better Homes & Gardens advise hanging chandeliers roughly 33 inches above the table in dining rooms with eight-foot ceilings, adding three inches for each additional foot above eight feet. Darkened dining areas may be ideal in restaurants, but homeowners may want to split the difference at home and choose dimmable chandeliers for their dining rooms. This allows homeowners to dim the lights for romantic dinners but turn them up for family gatherings with lots of people around the table.

Living room

Adaptability also is important in the living room, where homeowners may host anything from movie nights to book clubs



to parties for the big game. It can be a tall order to accommodate such a wide range of activities, and many homeowners come down to deciding between recessed lighting and track lighting. If the living room currently has neither style, homeowners should recognize that it will cost considerably less to install track lighting than recessed lighting. Better Homes & Gardens notes that flexible track lighting provides ambient, task or accent lighting, and track lights can even be moved to change light-

ing schemes at any time, making them a budget-friendly option for homeowners whose living rooms are multi-purpose spaces. Recessed lighting also works well in living rooms, especially ones with low ceilings. That's because recessed lighting is installed into the ceiling, meaning it does not take up any visual space in the room. That can help living rooms feel bigger.

Lighting - continued on page 17B

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Craftsman home renovation ideas

Craftsman homes trace their roots to the late 19th century. An architectural style inspired by the Arts and Crafts movement that flourished in Europe and North America for roughly 40 years between 1880 and 1920, the American Craftsman home has endured into the 21st century thanks to its beauty and the unique feel its homes inspire.

Many craftsman homes were built nearly a century ago if not even earlier. That means these homes may be in need of some renovations that make them more functional in modern times without sacrificing their historic beauty.

- **Siding:** Craftsman homes are instantly recognizable from the street. Homeowners who want to maintain that authentic craftsman feel must carefully consider their choice of material when replacing the siding on their homes. The siding manufacturer Allura notes that fiber cement siding can be a great option for homeowners who want to replicate the original design of craftsman homes built with sported board-and-batten siding. Fiber cement siding gives the appearance of wood when installed and does not fade quickly or require significant maintenance.

- **Exterior color:** Homeowners need not feel beholden to certain colors when replacing siding or repainting their homes' exteriors. Nautical color schemes featuring navy blue exteriors with white accents can highlight features that are unique to craftsman homes, but more understated colors and tones can work

just as well.

- **Porches:** An expansive, welcoming front porch that makes for the perfect place to relax and read when the outdoors beckons is a telltale feature of craftsman homes. Furniture options abound when homeowners are looking to upgrade the living spaces just outside the front door of their craftsman homes. Adirondack chairs can make a porch a relaxing place to enjoy a morning coffee or post-dinner digestif, while wicker furniture can help homeowners establish a relaxing vibe for summer. A porch swing or hammock can make that relaxing vibe resonate even more.

- **Real wood cabinets:** Cabinets are a popular avenue homeowners look to when they want to give their kitchens a new look without breaking the bank. When upgrading cabinets in a craftsman home, the home renovation experts at HGTV note that craftsman-style kitchen cabinets often feature straight lines and minimal ornamentation. Cabinets are typically made from heavy woods like quartersawn oak, hickory, cherry, or maple. HGTV notes that updating the cabinets in a craftsman home often requires custom cabinetmakers, so the project may be more expensive than it would be if replacing the cabinets in a different style of home.

Craftsman homes are instantly recognizable thanks to many of their unique features. There are various ways to renovate craftsman homes yet still maintain their authentic feel.

Lighting - Continued from page 16B

Bedroom

The home improvement experts at BobVila.com note that bedroom lighting should provide enough light when getting dressed, but also be able to be toned down as residents prepare for their bedtime routines. Both portable and installed lighting can be used in bedrooms to serve these various functions. Recessed fixtures that dim can ensure there's ample light to get

dressed in the morning, but they also can be dimmed at night as residents try to get ready to sleep. Portable nightstand lights can make it easier for couples sharing a bedroom, allowing one person to stay up and read while the other goes to sleep.

Homeowners have many options and many needs when choosing lighting for their homes. A professional consultation with a lighting expert or interior decorator can help homeowners find lights that provide both practical and aesthetic appeal.

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Design ideas to give your home a farmhouse feel



Farmhouse style homes are having a moment. A 2020 survey from Homes.com asked more than 5,000 adults across the United States about their favorite house style from a list that included bohemian craftsman, mid-century modern ranch, French chateau, and Tudor, among others. Modern farmhouse was the runaway winner, as participants in 42 of the 50 states indicated this simple, cozy style was their favorite.

Home renovation projects can help homeowners put their own unique stamp on their homes, and such projects can be both aesthetic and functional in nature. The following are some farmhouse design elements homeowners can consider as they look to transform their home interiors with this popular style in mind.

- **Exposed beams:** Exposed beams instantly evoke images of a farmhouse. The home improvement experts at BobVila.com note that this rustic renovation project can utilize real wood or faux beams that look like the real thing. Decorative beams that have nothing to do with a home's structural integrity can be installed by skilled do-it-yourselfers. However, even faux beams are heavy, and BobVila.com recommends homeowners have an engineer assess their existing structure prior to installation.

- **Distressed wood finishes:** Distressing is designed to make something look less than perfect. Distressed wood finishes can be found throughout many farmhouse style homes. Furniture and picture frames can provide the distressed look farmhouse fans are looking for. This is a relatively inexpensive project that many homeowners can tackle on their own after watching some online tutorials that recommend the right tools and techniques to get the job done right.

Farmhouse - continued on page 21B

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How to add shade to a deck or patio

Homeowners eagerly await the arrival of the warm weather so they can cast off the remnants of cabin fever and bask in the sunshine. However, as summer nears its dog days, the same sun homeowners once coveted can contribute to uncomfortable conditions in outdoor entertaining spaces.

Meteorologists at WHAS11 in Kentucky took to their neighborhoods in July 2020 to test just how hot surfaces can get in the sun during peak daytime temperatures. Concrete sitting in the sun almost all day reached a temperature of 134.7 F, while the same concrete in the shade clocked in at just under 80 F. When air temperatures are around 90 F, unshaded concrete and asphalt can be 125 F and 140 F, respectively. While wood decking may not be as hot as asphalt and concrete, it still can get steamy underfoot.

Homeowners who want to be able to enjoy their outdoor spaces in an array of temperatures can think about investing in shade solutions. Sun-blocking ideas like awnings, shade trees and large umbrellas can help people enjoy their yards all day long.

- **Canopy:** A patio canopy is typically a freestanding unit that can be installed over a patio or a deck. Some people prefer to bolt it down so it will not be knocked over in windy conditions. The fabric on the canopy can be removed during the offseason, helping to improve its longevity.

- **Awning:** Awnings may be stationary or retractable. Many are installed directly onto a home and can cast shade on specific areas of outdoor entertaining spaces.

- **Shade sail:** Similar to an awning but a bit less structurally rigid, shade sails are large pieces of triangular fabric installed over areas of a patio, pool or landscape, according to The Family Handyman. Shade sails are light and airy and can be customized.

- **Trees:** A natural way to increase shade in a yard is to plant more shade trees. If sun glare is an issue all year long, and it's not just the heat of the sun that is troublesome, think about planting evergreen trees. Deciduous cousins will drop their leaves in fall and only be effective during the warm weather.

- **Patio umbrellas:** Many umbrellas start at around \$25. Umbrellas can be paired with patio tables, while stationary cantilever umbrellas sit out of the way on their own heavy-duty stands. A cantilever umbrella tends to provide more shade than patio table umbrellas.

- **Curtains:** Homeowners can block sunlight outdoors the way they do inside, offers MSN. Hang curtains from the sides of canopies or between posts on a deck to provide shade and cozy spaces.

Shade is in high demand when the sun is hot. Options abound for making outdoor areas more comfortable.

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What to know about outdoor living spaces

Home trends come and go. What was popular as recently as a decade ago may have lost some luster in the eyes of today's home buyers. Though that's historically been the case in regard to real estate, outdoor living rooms are one relatively recent home trend that figures to have a longer shelf life, especially in the aftermath of a global pandemic during which people were encouraged to stay home as much as possible.

Real estate professionals and organizations like the National Association of Home Builders note the popularity of outdoor living spaces among prospective home buyers, and how that popularity has grown in recent years. Outdoor living rooms not only appeal to potential buyers, they also serve as a means for current homeowners to get more out of their properties. Homeowners mulling outdoor living space projects should consider various factors before deciding to go ahead with a project.

- **Cost:** The home renovation resource HomeAdvisor estimates that the average cost of an outdoor living space is around \$7,600. That cost can easily go up depending on where homeowners live and the features they want to have in their outdoor living spaces. For example, including a built-in fire pit in an outdoor living space will cost more than purchasing a stand-alone fire pit that can be picked up and moved. But many homeowners feel a built-in fire pit makes an outdoor living space even more special.

- **Return on investment:** Return on investment is another factor for homeowners to consider as they try to decide if they should install outdoor living spaces and how to design those areas. Much conflicting data about the ROI on outdoor kitchens can be found online, but many trusted real estate organizations report that such additions do not mesmerize prospective buyers. Data from the American Institute of Architects indicates that outdoor kitchens are routinely ranked among the least desirable home features, which means homeowners should not expect substantial ROI when selling their homes. But that built-in fire pit? Estimates from the National Association of Realtors suggest fire features recover around 67 percent of homeowners' initial investment. In addition, 83 percent of homeowners surveyed by the NAR who had installed fire features said they had a greater desire to be home after completing the project.

- **Space:** An outdoor living space may only be as relaxing as the space allows. The proximity of neighbors may affect privacy levels, which can make it hard



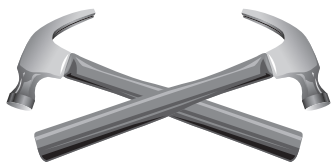
to enjoy movie night outdoors or curl up to quietly read a good book. In addition, landscaping also may need to be addressed if drainage is an issue in the

backyard. That can add to the cost, and drainage concerns may limit the materials homeowners can work with.

Outdoor living spaces are popular.

Homeowners must consider various factors before deciding if such spaces are for them.

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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.

Farmhouse — continued from page 18B

- **Kitchen sink:** Many components combine to create a truly classic farmhouse kitchen. But perhaps no component is more essential than the classic farmhouse sink. The renovation experts at HGTV note that a classic farmhouse sink features a deep, wide basin. Farmhouse sinks are large enough to handle all the dishes that come after a big family meal. Old-fashioned porcelain sinks are worth consideration by homeowners who want their kitchen sinks to evoke a traditional farmhouse feel.

- **Countertops:** HGTV recommends butcher block countertops for homeowners who favor European farmhouse style. Homeowners overhauling their kitchens to create a farmhouse feel should consider installing a large island with a walnut butcher block countertop for an authentic farmhouse feel.

Farmhouse style homes are wildly popular. Some simple renovations can help homeowners with a fondness for farmhouse style bring this classic look into their homes.

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Exterior lighting can add ambiance to a property



The value of the right lighting in a home is undeniable. Lighting can instantly transform a room and create the ambiance homeowners are looking to establish. Though it might be mostly seen as a way to create mood inside a home, lighting also can do much for lawns and gardens.

Backyards have come a long way over the last several decades. Once reserved as play areas for children and stomping grounds for the family dog, backyards have become oases for homeowners and their families. Outdoor living areas are wildly popular, and no such area is complete without exterior lighting. In fact, a recent report from the National Association of Home Builders found that 85 percent of home buyers want exterior lighting, making it the second most desired outdoor feature (patios topped that list).

Exterior lighting can have a dramatic effect on landscaping, and estimates from the online financial resource Kiplinger.com suggest such lighting is inexpensive, with installation averaging roughly \$67 per fixture.

When installing exterior lighting around their landscapes, homeowners can keep various tips in mind to create a relaxing, awe-inspiring mood on their properties at night.

- Consider uplights. Uplights are installed in the ground and direct light up at a tree, focusing on its trunk or canopy. This creates a dramatic effect that makes it possible to enjoy majestic trees at night just like you might when spending time in the yard during the day.

Lighting - continued on page 23B

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DIY strategies to deep-clean carpeting

What's underfoot in a home can go a long way toward making residences comfortable and aesthetically appealing.

A study of home buyer preferences using data from the National Association of Realtors® found that 54 percent of home buyers were willing to pay more for a home with hardwood flooring. But that doesn't mean that carpeting doesn't still have its devotees. In 2019, the real estate firm Opendoor installed nearly one million yards of carpeting in its homes. Houzz reports that, in 2018, 17 percent of renovating homeowners purchased carpets and 50 percent purchased indoor rugs.

Carpeting and rugs can offset some of the shortcomings of hardwood, providing a softer texture that makes for a better landing spot for active young children. However, carpets will require more maintenance than hardwood floors. Learning how to deep clean carpets can help homeowners, as vacuuming is not enough to keep carpets in top form.

Spot clean stains

Stores sell a bevy of carpet cleaning solutions. When applying such solutions, do so in an inconspicuous area of the room to ensure colorfastness of the carpet and that the solution does not adversely affect the fibers. If the spot is clean and the carpet is not adversely affected, you can then apply the solution to more visible areas.

Homeowners who prefer all-natural cleaning solutions rather than chemicals can use a solution of white vinegar, baking soda and salt to make a safe cleanser, according to The Spruce. Soak the stain, use a scrub brush to work in the cleanser and then blot up the liquid with a clean cloth. According to the lifestyle resource First for Women, club soda also works as a cleanser when it is sprayed on a stain.

Deep cleaning

Carpets periodically need to be revitalized, and that can be accomplished with a specialized cleaning machine. Many are available for purchase (a good investment for homeowners with kids and/or pets), while others can be rented as needed.

Remove all of the furniture from a room and vacuum to clean dust, dander and any other debris. Address any darker stains first by pretreating with a cleaning solution. Let sit for around 20 minutes. While waiting, learn how to operate the machine, fill it and clean out the soiled water. Never allow the machine to oversaturate the carpet with water, as it can get into the padding and subfloor, causing problems like mold or wood damage. Spray the water-detergent solutions, and then pass the carpet cleaner over spots repeatedly until the carpet feels only slightly damp. DoItYourself.com advises running the machine at the pace of one foot per second.

Removing shoes when entering the home can keep carpets clean and reduce wear and tear.

With frequent deep cleaning, carpets can maintain a like-new appearance for years.

Lighting — continued from page 22B

- Focus on trees. Many homeowners already have exterior lighting lining their walkways and patios, but focusing on trees can create an entirely different look. Though it's possible to install exterior tree lighting on your own, landscaping professionals with lighting experience know which fixtures will pair most effectively with the trees around your property and how to arrange them for maximum effect.

- Opt for warm light. Warm white light creates an inviting feel around the property. The exterior lighting experts at Utah Lights acknowledge that choice of lighting is up to homeowners but also note that, in situations with lower levels of ambient light, such as in exterior lights

around a property, people typically prefer warmer light. That's because warm light tends to be easier on the eyes and directs attention to the features of the landscape, which is many homeowners' goal when installing exterior lighting in their yards.

- Utilize a timer. Modern exterior lighting timers make it easier than ever to control the lights outside a home. Many such timers even adjust for the changing seasons and the shifting hours of daylight. That means homeowners shouldn't have to tinker with the timer once it's set.

Exterior lighting can add significant appeal to a property without breaking the bank.



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