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- 12 PM Desiree Frantz, Fancy Frantzie's Crafts
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- 1 PM Jerry Amoroso, Week's Roses
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- 1 PM Lehigh County Humane Society
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- 11 AM Dan Sivco, Herbein's Lawn Care Specialist
Fall Lawn Care
- 11 AM Lehigh County Humane Society
Animal Care & Safety
- 12 PM Desiree Frantz, Fancy Frantzie's Crafts
Build Your Own Mini Garden (ages 5+ \$15 fee, preregistration required, see our website)
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Curb appeal is beneficial in various ways. Curb appeal can make a home more attractive to prospective buyers and give existing homeowners a place they want to come home to. In its study of the worth of outdoor remodeling projects, the National Association of Realtors found standard lawn care and overall landscape upgrades were most appealing to buyers, as well as the most likely to add value to a home. Although plants, grass and other items can improve curb appeal, homeowners should not overlook hardscaping. Hardscaping is an industry term that refers to the non-living features of a landscape. These features can include everything from decks to walkways to ornamental boulders. Introducing paths or paver walls to a property helps develop that home's hardscape. Hardscape and soft elements often work in concert to create inspiring landscape designs.

Defining Hardscape And How To Use It

DIY landscape designers can heed certain tips to make the most of hardscape features on their properties. CHOOSE MATERIALS. As with many landscaping projects, homeowners must first determine what types of additions they would like on their properties. Common hardscape features include patios, decks, walkways of pavers or bricks, and retaining walls. Hardscape elements can be functional or simply decorative features that add whimsy to the yard. CHOOSE A THEME. The right style allows hardscaping and softscaping materials to work together. For example, homeowners may want to give their yards an eastern feel, complete with a koi pond and decorative bridge or trellis. A formal English garden, however, may include manicured paths with stepping stones and ornate topiaries. Mixing too many styles together can take away from the overall appeal. The pros suggest looking at the overall plan of the design, even if all of the work can't be completed at once. This way the eventual finished project will be cohesive.

cues from the surrounding environment. This can help softscaping and hardscaping work as one.

Hardscaping refers to the elements in a landscape that aren't living, such as paths, walls and fences.



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Autumn Is A Prime Time To Tend Lawns And Gardens

Autumn is gardening season. That statement may not seem right to those who think of the spring as the peak time to care for lawns and gardens. However, autumn is an ideal time to get into the garden and ensure that flowers, trees and garden beds will over-winter successfully.

A number of things make autumn a prime gardening season. The cooler days of fall enable gardeners to spend ample time outdoors without the threat of blazing heat. In addition, soil harbors a lot of residual warmth in autumn. Also, the colder temperatures haven't yet arrived in autumn, nor have the leaves completely fallen, making fall a prime time to assess what's already in the landscape, what needs pruning back and where to address planting for next year. Gardening enthusiasts can focus their attention on these areas this fall.

- Pamper perennials. As annuals and perennials start to fall back, mark the spots where perennials are located so they can be easily identified later on. This way, when planning spots for spring bulbs or other spring layouts for next year, perennials won't be overlooked or covered over.
- Prune shrubs. Look at shrubs and trees and cut out dead or diseased wood.
- Clean up borders. Weed and tidy up borders and lawn edging.
- Install pavers or rock wall. Embrace the cooler tempera-

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- Prune hedges. Tidy up hedges, as they won't be growing much more this year.
- Clean and store equipment. Clean, sharpen and oil all equipment, storing lawn and garden tools properly so they are ready for spring and not lying out all winter.
- Remove spent summer veggies. Take out vegetable garden plants that have already bloomed and borne fruit. Tidy up vegetable gardens and start to sow cooler weather plants, such as onions, garlic, beans, and sweet peas.
- Rake and compost. Rake the leaves and gather grass clippings to add to the compost pile.
- Plant spring bulbs. Get tulips and other spring bulbs ready for planting so they'll burst with color next year.
- Dig up herbs. Relocate herbs like parsley or basil to indoor gardens. Otherwise, strip all leaves and freeze for storage during winter.
- Consider mums. Chrysanthemum plants are perennials. While they look beautiful in pots, if planted, maintained and winterized, they can bloom every fall.
- Fertilize the lawn. Fertilizing in autumn helps ensure grass will stay healthy throughout the winter.
- Add mulch and compost to the garden. Replenish spent soil with mulch and compost so garden beds will be revitalized for spring planting.

Autumn may not seem like gardening season, but there are plenty of lawn and garden tasks to tend to during this time of year.

Mums are perennials. When properly planted and cared for, they can bloom every autumn.

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3 Pre-Winter Lawn Care Pointers

Winter weather can be harsh, especially on lawns. Homeowners who spend much of spring and summer tending to their lawns may fear the impact that winter will have on their once-lush landscapes, making the fall a great time to fortify lawns against any harsh conditions to come.

Homeowners must take grass type into consideration before taking steps to prepare their lawns for the winter. Some grasses are best fertilized in late-summer, while others should be fertilized in autumn. Cool-season grasses, including fescue and bluegrass, are best fertilized sometime between the months of September and November. Warm-season grasses, such as Bermuda or zoysia, should be fertilized between July and September. Once homeowners have gained a greater understanding of their lawns, they can begin exploring the various ways to prepare their lawns for whatever winter has in store.

1. EXPLORE WINTERIZING FERTILIZERS.

Homeowners who want to make their grasses more winter hardy can consult landscaping professionals to determine if winterizing fertilizers will work for their lawns. These specially formulated fertilizers, many of which are made exclusively for cool-season grasses, contain higher levels of potassium and lower levels of nitrogen than early-season fertilizers. Potassium helps strengthen and harden plants, and cool-season grasses may need extra potassium as winter settles in. Homeowners who are not sure if they should apply

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winterizing fertilizer can conduct soil tests to determine the potassium levels in their soil. If the test indicates the soil has sufficient potassium, then applying a winterizing fertilizer is likely unnecessary. In addition, homeowners who have fed their lawn a balance of nutrients throughout spring and summer likely will not need to apply winterizing fertilizer.

2. GET RID OF FALLEN LEAVES.

While fallen leaves may be integral components of idyllic autumn landscapes, leaves left on the lawn throughout the winter may lead to disease in the grass. Leaves trap moisture and block sunlight and air from reaching grass, and that can encourage the development of disease. In addition, leaves can

harbor insects that also may contribute to disease. While it might seem like common sense to delay leaf removal until the end of autumn when all the leaves have fallen, that, too, can prove harmful to lawns. Leaves left laying on lawns for long periods of time can contribute to the same types of damage as leaves left on the lawn throughout winter, so do your best to remove leaves as they fall.

3. TAKE STEPS TO FIGHT SNOW MOLD.

Homeowners who live in regions where snow falls into spring or where spring tends to be cold and damp may want to take steps to prevent snow mold. Gray snow mold typically looks fuzzy and gray, and lawns

infested with snow mold may develop unsightly gray or brown spots indicative of dead grass. Pink snow mold may be even worse than gray snow mold because pink mold attacks the roots as well as the leaves. To prevent snow mold, continue mowing into the fall, even as lawns grow dormant, clearing the lawn of grass clippings and leaves after each mow. Thick lawns may provide a breeding ground for snow mold, so homeowners whose lawns have a history of developing snow mold may benefit from mowing their lawns into the fall. Winter is rarely easy on lawns, but homeowners can take several steps to prepare their lawns for potentially harsh winter weather.

Finding The Right Fencing Fit

Homeowners choose to erect fences on their properties for various reasons. Parents may find fences provide peace of mind during those times when their youngsters are playing in the yard, while other homeowners prefer fences for the privacy they can provide.

Whatever compels homeowners to consider fencing for their



properties, those that have decided to install fencing will soon realize they have numerous options. Finding the right fencing material for your property requires considering a host of factors, including budget and personal style.

ALUMINUM

Aluminum fencing is ideal for those looking for something that's both ornamental and functional. Aluminum fencing may not appeal to those homeowners whose biggest priority is privacy, as aluminum fences are not solid walls. But aluminum fences are typically low maintenance, and they can be effective at keeping both kids and pets in the yard. Aluminum fences painted with a rust-inhibiting primer may require even less maintenance than aluminum fences painted without primer.

BAMBOO

Bamboo is a less traditional fencing option that may appeal to homeowners who want to do something that's both different and eco-friendly. Bamboo grows naturally, which should appeal to homeowners who want their homes to have as lit-

tle negative impact on the environment as possible. Bamboo provides ample privacy and comes in various styles. Homeowners should consult with a fencing specialist before choosing a style so they can be certain they choose the most climate-appropriate option.

CHAIN-LINK

Chain-link fences may not add the aesthetic appeal homeowners are looking for, but they are relatively inexpensive, durable and functional. Chain-link fences are low maintenance, though homeowners looking for fences to provide some privacy may need to get creative if they install chain-link fencing. Planting flowers, shrubbery or trees near chain-link fences can add some aesthetic appeal and a little privacy.

VINYL

Among the more expensive fencing options, vinyl can make up for that initial sticker shock thanks to its durability. In addition, vinyl fences require little maintenance, saving homeowners the expense of paying for upkeep such as repainting. Vinyl fencing comes in various styles, and homeowners can

choose the style that best suits their priorities with regard to aesthetic appeal and privacy.

WOOD

Of course, no discussion of fencing would be complete without mentioning wood fencing. Many homeowners love wood fencing because of its versatility with regard to design and color. The options are endless when it comes to crafting wood fencing, which also can be stained in any color homeowners prefer. Wood fencing can be designed not only for homeowners who prioritize privacy, but it also can be crafted for homeowners for whom privacy is not a significant concern. Wood is a relatively inexpensive fencing material, but the maintenance required to keep wood fencing looking great can sometimes be costly and time-consuming.

Options abound for homeowners looking to add fencing to their properties. Homeowners hesitant to choose a material and/or install their own fencing can consult local professionals to find the best fencing fit for their properties.

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3 Potential Trouble Signs For Driveways

Though they are often easy to overlook, driveways are durable parts of a home that can greatly impact a home's curb appeal. Driveways endure quite a bit of wear and tear over their lifespans, and homeowners who have not given their driveways much thought may want to start looking for potential trouble signs that indicate a need for some driveway maintenance. Driveway installation costs are influenced by a host of factors, including the size of the driveway and the material it's made of. Damaged driveways do not necessarily need to be replaced, as some may just need minor repairs. But homeowners who see any of the following trouble signs in their driveways may want to consult a professional contractor to determine what their next steps should be.

1. POTHOLES
Potholes might be most often associated with heavily trafficked roadways, but even driveways are susceptible to potholes. As the ground beneath the driveway expands and contracts, the pavement above that ground weakens and becomes more susceptible to damage. That damage may ultimately lead to large chunks of the driveway breaking down, creating holes as a result. Homeowners who live in areas that experience heavy snowfall may see their driveways develop potholes after they are shoveled or plowed. Potholes that are not fixed may damage vehicles that drive on the pavement, and potholes may even expand over time.

2. ACCUMULATION OF WATER
Puddles that form during a rainstorm may not be indicative of anything other than a rainy day. But water that pools or runs down the middle of the driveway may indicate drainage problems. Such problems may be the result of structural problems with the slope of the driveway, which can cause bigger issues down the road. When

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water is not absorbed into the ground or directed away from your home, it can then flow into the house, potentially making your garage or home susceptible to water damage.

3. CRACKS
Cracking is one of the more noticeable issues that can plague driveways. Many driveways experience cracking as materials inevitably succumb to the elements. Driveway cracks may develop for various reasons, including poor initial installation. Tree roots that grow beneath the driveway surface may also contribute to cracking as the driveways ultimately succumb to the pressure created by the growing roots. Some cracks may prove less problematic than others,

but homeowners should still speak with a contractor if they notice their driveway is starting to succumb to cracks. Driveways may not draw the attention of homeowners too

often, but damaged driveways that go ignored may ultimately lead to very costly problems. Surface cracks in a driveway may indicate a problem that requires immediate attention.

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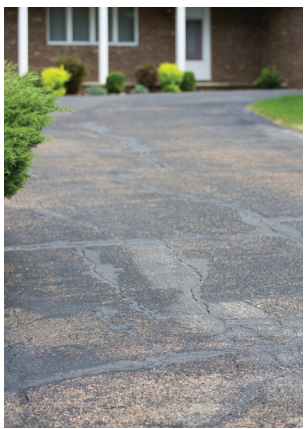
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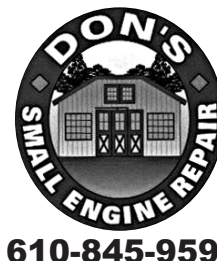
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5 Ways To Make Homes Safer

Injuries that occur around the home contribute to millions of medical visits and tens of thousands of fatalities each year. Falls account for the largest percentage of home accidents, with the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reporting that around 30,000 fall-related fatalities occur each year in the United States. Many home accidents are entirely preventable when proper caution is exercised.

As homeowners prepare for home-improvement projects, improving safety inside and outside the home should be a priority.

1. IMPROVE LIGHTING & USE IT.

One of the easiest ways to reduce the risk of falls is to improve lighting around the home. The National Institutes of Health state that adequate lighting is important at entrances to the home, stairways, hallways, and other frequently traversed areas. Make sure lighting fixtures are using the highest wattage light bulb allowed. Artificial lighting sources become even more vital in fall and autumn, when natural light is less abundant in a home. In addition, install lighting outdoors by the front door, over the garage and where garbage pails are stored to facilitate safe passage.

2. ELIMINATE SLICK SURFACES

Improving traction around the house also can minimize falls. Throw rugs and runners can be made more secure with nonslip rubber backings. Bath rugs can reduce slipping on wet surfaces in the bathroom. Also, nonslip mats can be used inside of showers and bathtubs. Use shoe trays to reduce puddling from melting snow or rain runoff in entryways. Mop up spills quickly, and consider the use of matte- or textured-finished flooring to improve stability underfoot. Promptly remove snow and ice from driveways and walkways. For those who live in cold climates, heated concrete can help melt precipitation before it accumulates.

3. MAKE NEEDED REPAIRS
Repair loose floorboards and pull carpet taut if it has started to stretch out. Address cracks outdoors and ensure that patio stones, bricks and pavers are secure and level to reduce tripping hazards. Fix areas of the landscape where water may pool and freeze, creating potential hazards.

4. DECLUTTER ALL SPACES
Remove unnecessary items and furniture from rooms to free up more space to get around. Be sure there are no obstructions in walkways, entryways and near doors. Keep staircases clear at all times.

5. INVEST IN ASSISTIVE DEVICES
Handrails, grab bars, nonslip stair treads, and many other devices can make homes safer for people of all ages and abilities.

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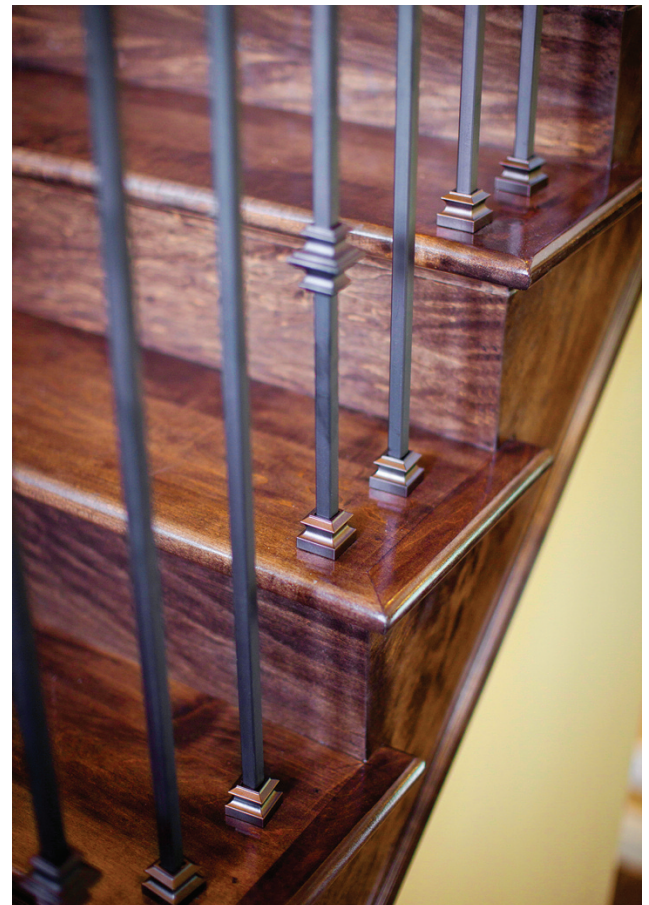


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Ties. Outfit cabinets and closets with organizers that put frequently used items within easy reach. A sturdy step stool can reduce the risk of injury while reaching for items stored on high shelves. Taking measures to reduce the risk of falling around the home is a worthwhile home improvement project. Stairs should be free of clutter and have sturdy railings.



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Hidden Hero: Outdoor Power Equipment Can Make You Very Popular
 FIVE THINGS YOU MAY NOT KNOW ABOUT YOUR LAWN MOWER, CHAIN SAW, GENERATOR, POWER WASHER, UTV AND MORE

(NAPS)- Fall is here. Having the right outdoor power equipment, like lawn mowers, chain saws, generators, edgers, trimmers and more, ensures you have the tools to get "backyard ready."

"The right outdoor power equipment can be your best friend when you work in your family yard, not to mention the best friend of the neighborhood," says Kris Kiser, president and CEO of the Outdoor Power Equipment Institute (OPEI). "If you have a yard, you have a playground, but only if it's ready for outdoor living and recreation."

Here are several ways outdoor power equipment keeps life humming, prepares family yards to be useful and play worthy, and keeps homeowner associations happy.

1. Plain and simple, outdoor power equipment makes the yard. The right equipment makes it easier than ever to create and take care of a great living landscape. You might not even break a sweat with the right equipment. Make mowing, trimming and pruning a little easier with some of today's ergonomic, supercharged mowers, trimmers, edgers and chain saws.

2. Outdoor power equipment saves you time. Doing things outside is fun, and using some of the latest equipment will make sure grass is mowed, trees and shrubs are pruned, and borders are edged efficiently and quickly. After all, you have games and barbecues to attend and friends and family to meet (or invite over!). The right equipment can help you quickly take care of outdoor tasks, so you can have more time to enjoy your outdoor family room and relax.

3. The latest and greatest outdoor equipment innovation can make you the envy of neighbors and family. Today's outdoor power equipment is powered in a variety of ways, from solar to battery and electric, from propane to gasoline. Your neighbors may be jealous if they see you lounging on the front porch with a cold drink watching your robotic mower trim the grass, but don't let it

bother you. Enjoy the time outside and encourage them to check it out.

4. The right equipment at the right time can also win you the Most Popular Neighbor award. Be the person who can whip out a chain saw when the tree falls across the road, or fire up a snow thrower to clear driveways and cul-de-sacs with ease (be sure to use safety precautions, too). Your house will be the most popular one in the neighborhood during a power outage if you have a generator and let your neighbors charge their phones and borrow space in your refrigerator.

5. Storms may wreak havoc, but outdoor power equipment makes sure your life and work aren't interrupted. Engine-powered water pumps can help dry out homes after a flood or powerful rainstorm. When the lights go out, generators keep your house humming with light and power.

Outdoor power equipment


personal green space, but it also supports our first responders. You can rest easy knowing they have the tools to get their important jobs done. Generators, chain saws, the jaws of life, utility terrain vehicles and more help those who are injured and hurt every day. The efforts of our firefighters, utility contractors and those who work with nonprofit organizations such as Team Rubicon and AmeriCorps Disaster Response Teams are all amplified with the help of outdoor power equipment.

Follow [hashtag #PoweringGood](https://www.instagram.com/PoweringGood) to learn more about people making a difference with their outdoor power equipment. Go to www.opei.org for safety tips and more information on outdoor power equipment. The right outdoor power equipment can be your best friend when it comes to working in your yard and improving your community.

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Antimicrobial Tiles Help Create Sanitary Spaces

Tile can be a worthy addition to rooms with potential moisture issues or areas in a home that may routinely necessitate quick cleanup. Because they are not damaged by constant contact with water, tiled floors and walls are often found in bathrooms, kitchens, laundry rooms, and entryways. Although tile is resilient, it is not impervious to the microorganisms that tend to proliferate in areas where moisture and humidity are commonplace. Microbes can grow rapidly in warm areas, especially if food is present. Mold or mildew issues also can become problematic seemingly overnight. But certain modifications can help

homeowners alleviate the proliferation of microorganisms. Various manufacturers have developed their own innovative tile that contributes to cleaner, and sometimes more eco-friendly, home environments. The application of certain treatments can make ceramic tiles even more impervious to water and moisture. Some tile may help reduce the spread of certain strains of bacteria, such as E. coli and staph, without requiring the application of potentially harsh chemical detergents. Others treatments may protect against yeast, molds and fungi that can cause stains and odors and result in the degradation of tile.

Antimicrobial products inhibit the growth of microorganisms and suppress their reproduction. For example, tiles with Microban® protection employ an antimicrobial agent built into the product during the manufacturing process. When microbes touch the product surface, the agent penetrates the cell wall of the microorganism. Other tiles are treated with micrometric particles of titanium dioxide (TiO2), which is activated by sunlight or artificial light. This causes a photocatalysis process, which is responsible for the product's antipollution and bactericidal properties. Examples of TiO2-treated tiles include Active Clean Air & Antibacterial Ceramic™. Antimicrobial ceramic tile can be advantageous in rooms where sanitation and hygiene are an utmost priority. This includes not only public places, but private residences. Worktops and floors where microbes can be transferred are particularly beneficial areas to install antimicrobial tile. A potential side effect of antimicrobial tile is a reduction in reliance on harsh cleaning products. Although regular washing is recommended, residents may not need to use odoriferous or strong chemical cleaners to sanitize their homes. This helps improve indoor air quality and reduce the potential contamination of the environment from chemical runoff. Homeowners thinking of installing antimicrobial tile in their homes should discuss their options with a tile retailer or contractor during the planning stages. homes. This helps improve indoor air quality and reduce the potential contamination of the environment from chemical runoff. Homeowners thinking of installing antimicrobial tile in their homes should discuss their options with a tile retailer or contractor during the planning stages.



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Preparing Your Fireplace Or Stove For The Season

Fireplaces and wood-burning stoves not only can be beautiful focal points within a home, but they also provide an additional source of heat and can be used to keep rooms or entire homes comfortable without the need for additional and potentially costly heating sources.

Just like more modern home heating systems, stoves and fireplaces need to be maintained, and that maintenance includes readying them before winter when they are used more heavily. Ensuring a fireplace or stove is in good working order helps to guarantee efficiency of use and safety during the winter months.

Open-flame heating sources carry with them certain risks. The NFPA notes that the leading factor contributing to home-heating fires is a failure to keep things clean, principally from solid-fueled heating equipment. The following are a handful of ways to stay safe as you get ready for another cozy season around the fire.

- Start with the chimney. Begin by having your chimney thoroughly cleaned and inspected. Creosote can build up inside of the chimney. Creosote is highly flammable and becomes more difficult and expensive to clean the longer it builds up inside your flue lining. In addition, animals may have created nest inside of the chimney since the last time the fireplace was used. A professional chimney sweep should be hired in this situation. He or she will be able to effectively clean the chimney in a manner that is the least messy and disruptive to residents.
- Install or check smoke and carbon monoxide detectors. Operational alarms are essential to preventing injury or death resulting from smoke or carbon monoxide inhalation. Such

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detectors are inexpensive safeguards that should be installed on every floor of the house. Batteries should be replaced every six months, and the alarms themselves should be changed every five to 10 years.

chimney. It should be checked prior to the first use of a stove or fireplace so homeowners can be certain it opens and closes smoothly.

- Clear out flammable items. Move flammable items away from the front of a fireplace or stove. Be sure curtains or other home furnishings are far enough away that they will not catch fire from any errant sparks or flames.
- Order wood now. Be sure there is plenty of wood for the season. Ask a wood supplier to estimate just how much will be needed, and double-check that the wood will arrive in time for the start of the season.

By preparing for fireplace and wood stove use now, homeowners can ensure their winters are comfortable and safe.

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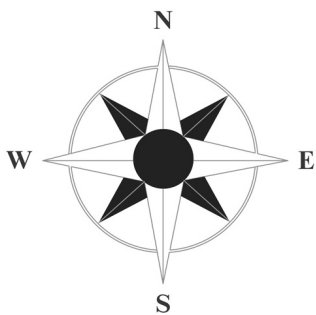
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(NAPS)- The hurricane season in the United States runs from June 1 through November 30, though the storms have been known to occur at other times. For 2018, experts at Colorado State University believed, the country can expect an above average storm season, with 14 named storms and seven hurricanes, three of them major. Regardless of whether their weather predictions come true, it's always a good idea for home and business owners to take the necessary steps ahead of the storm warnings and the inevitable rush for emergency supplies.

WHAT TO DO
Home and business owners

It's Good To Be Prepared For Bad Weather

can take a simple but proactive course of action. For example, preparations should start earlier than the issued hurricane warnings.

1. Getting a generator can be a good idea. They keep critical appliances running. Lights stay on, devices stay charged and weather updates are available on television, radio or online. Most tropical storms cause a disruption in electricity. Depending on the storm's intensity, damage to the electrical infrastructure can be extensive. Downed power lines, flooding, fallen structures, debris and other obstacles will affect the speed of power restoration, so it's important to prepare for an outage duration that may become uncomfortable.

A portable generator should be exercised every month. Schedule maintenance if needed. When you get a portable generator, use a sizing calculator to gauge your needs. Additionally, homeowners who seek greater peace of mind from an automatic home standby generator should schedule an in-home assessment, as automatic home standby units take time to get installed.

"It's better to be ready for a nonevent than it is to be caught off guard by a strong storm," explained Russ Minick, chief marketing officer at Generac Power Systems. "We believe we can offer manageable ways to guide home owners and businesses through the storm season, but staying safe starts with preparedness."

2. An emergency hurricane kit for the family and any pets should be easily accessible within the home. In addition to food and bottled water, the kit should include a flashlight, first aid kit, battery-powered radio, a whistle to signal for help, and an assortment of hand tools. If someone in the home is dependent on electricity for life-sustaining medical equipment, review the family plan to access backup power or make arrangements to relocate when storm warnings are issued.

3. Outages and the need for fuel go hand in hand. During a power outage, you still might need to be out and about—maybe even evacuate the area—so ensuring that your car is fueled is important. In a worst-case scenario, your car can serve as a source of light, heat and electricity. A portable generator is far better suited to provide backup power, though, so make sure it has clean fuel, as well. And make sure any fuel you store is kept in approved containers.

LEARN MORE

For a more detailed list of power outage safety tips for homeowners and businesses, go to www.Generac.com/hurricane-prep. Get ready for rough weather with proper precautions.



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Protect Your Home (and more) From Winter's Freeze

Freezing temperatures may be good for ice skating or building snowmen, but sub-freezing temperatures can be dangerous for the average person and his or her home. Cold weather often leaves people scurrying to do whatever is necessary to safeguard themselves from the big chill. But it's important homeowners also protect their homes in cold weather.

PLUMBING

Plumbing and pipes may be vulnerable to cold weather. Frozen pipes may burst and cause substantial damage to a home, potentially causing flooding and structural damage. Homeowners should disconnect and drain garden hoses before winter arrives. Water to outdoor hose bibs should be turned off, though the valves on these outdoor faucets should be left open to drain. Also, outdoor faucets can be covered with insulating foam covers.

The Red Cross says pipes that freeze most frequently include pipes in unheated areas, such as basements, attics, garages, and crawl spaces. Close vents to the outside in areas like attics and basements to limit the amount of cold air that gets indoors. Think about insulating unheated areas, as well as using pipe sleeves, heat tape or wraps on exposed pipes. By opening kitchen and bathroom cabinet doors, homeowners can allow warm air from a home to reach pipes under the sink. During extreme freezes,



keep cold water dripping from a sink to prevent pipes from freezing.

SERVICE HVAC SYSTEMS

It's important to ensure that heating systems are working properly prior to the cold-weather season. It may only take hours for the interior of a home to reach dangerously low temperatures without adequate heat. Homeowners should schedule annual checkups of furnaces and hot water heaters. Inspect the heat exchanger for cracks, install a clean air filter and make sure all thermostats are working properly.

HAVE FUEL READY

Homeowners who heat their homes with oil, wood or coal should make sure they have plenty of fuel on hand in advance of winter. Shortages can occur, and it may take some time for new fuel to arrive

in the midst of a cold snap. As a precaution, homeowners can rely on portable space heaters to fill in the heating gaps during freezing temperatures. Exercise extreme caution with these devices, turning them off when leaving the room and remembering to avoid overloading outlets.

PROTECT OUTSIDE

Drain birdbaths, clean out downspouts and remove water from other items where water can freeze and cause damage. Inspect roofing prior to the snowy season, but stay off roofs during freezing weather. Remove snow shovels and other winter gear from storage and make sure the items are easily accessible during snowstorms. Winter's bite can be severe. Homeowners can protect themselves and their properties when the freeze sets in.

7 Uses For Fallen Leaves

By the time autumn hits full swing, many trees will have shed their leaves for the season, and the last vestiges of red, yellow and orange magic will have faded to brown. Raking, blowing and collecting leaves becomes the primary chores of lawn and yard maintenance, and presents most homeowners with large piles of gathered leaves to tend to.

It is impossible to count just how many leaves fall to the ground each year, or just how many pounds of leaves get collected curbside, but the numbers are substantial. Cleaning up leaves is considerable work, but not all of those leaves need to be carted away. In fact, there are several different uses of leaves that can be beneficial.

1. Spread leaves as a protective mulch to cover tender perennials or root crops/bulbs in the ground. The leaves will form a natural insulating cover that keeps the soil and the plants within a bit warmer over winter.

2. Create a pile of leaves that will break down and form a crumbly, compost-like material called leaf mold. Even though leaf mold may sound like a

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WHAT IS A TOWN?

A town is a group of people.

- It is a school.
- It is a city government.
- It is churches.
- It is industry and jobs.
- It is retail businesses.

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blight, it's actually a good amendment to garden soil, improving its structure and ability to hold water. Leaf mold also attracts beneficial organisms that are vital in healthy soil.

3. Brown leaves can be added to green materials in compost piles to improve the health of the compost being formed. According to the healthy living resource Care2, the ideal ratio is 75 percent brown to 25 percent green materials in compost. Turn compost piles regularly to aerate them.

4. Store dried, mulched leaves in a dry spot so they can be used in the spring as a weed barrier for spring plantings. They will keep weeds at bay and help retain soil moisture to ensure small sprouts have the resources to grow.

5. Use shredded leaves as a lawn supplement. Pass a lawn mower over leaves left on the lawn to break them down into pieces too small to rake. This will help keep the lawn healthy throughout the winter without blocking out needed sunlight.

6. Bag dried leaves and pack them tightly together in cold areas of the home, such as basements or garages. They can act as added insulation. Bags of leaves also can be placed around planting containers to protect them from frost.

7. Gather a few of the best-looking leaves and preserve them. Use an iron on a low setting and press leaves between two pieces of waxed paper until the waxed paper seals together. Or use clear contact paper to achieve the same effect. Fallen leaves can be used in many different ways throughout the year.



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What You Need To Know About Your Ductwork

(NAPS)- Your health and your wealth. Those are the two major reasons you should have your HVAC system inspected by a reputable, certified professional. Consider this: Your Health

Your heating and cooling system is essentially the lungs of your home. The system takes air in and "breathes" air out. Through normal living in a house, a great deal of contaminants and air pollutants—dander, dust, chemicals—get pulled into the HVAC system and recirculated an average of six times a day. Over time, this causes a buildup of contaminants in the ductwork.

While dirty ducts don't necessarily mean unhealthy air, they can contribute to health issues, especially for people with respiratory problems,

autoimmune disorders or allergies.

YOUR WEALTH

According to the U.S. Department of Energy, 25 to 40 percent of the energy used for heating or cooling a home is wasted. Contaminants in the heating and cooling system cause it to work harder and shorten its life. Even though there are filters, the system still gets dirty. When an HVAC system is clean, it doesn't have to work as hard to maintain the temperature you desire. As a result, you save energy and money.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

A qualified contractor can meet your duct cleaning needs. Here are seven things to ask for:

1. Insurance and licenses.
2. An assessment and

explanation of the service to be provided.

3. Information on which components will be cleaned as part of the service: air ducts (supply and return), coils, drains, registers, grilles and so on.

4. A limit on the amount of dust, dirt and debris released into your home during the cleaning.

5. Both agitation and vacuum collection while cleaning.

6. Information about any chemicals used as part of the cleaning, including a safety data sheet for the products used.

7. Proof of National Air Duct Cleaners Association (NADCA) membership and certification. NADCA members follow the industry standard for HVAC system cleaning and must:

- Have at least one NADCA-certified Air Systems Cleaning Specialist (ASCS) on staff.
 - Maintain general liability insurance.
 - Agree to clean according to ACR, the NADCA standard.
 - Comply with NADCA's code of ethics.
 - All ASCS-certified individuals must acquire continuing education credits to maintain certification each year.
- It's this dedication to quality and a higher standard of performance that can mean peace of mind for you.
- Learn More
For further information, visit www.BreathingClean.com. There, you can also find the professional directory of NADCA members.

Beware Of "Blow-And-Go" Scams

(NAPS)- For their own peace of mind, home owners should get their heating and cooling systems cleaned by members of NADCA, who must comply with a strict Code of Ethics. Some homeowners have been taken by what's known as "blow-and-go" air duct cleaning—but you don't have to be. These companies charge what seems a nominal fee but do a very poor job. They may ask you to pay extra for unneeded services and even pretend to be members of NADCA.

Protect Yourself Six Ways

1. Ask the contractor which components will be cleaned.
2. Verify that the contractor will limit the release of dust, dirt and debris into your home during the cleaning.
3. Make certain the contractor will use both agitation and vacuum collection.
4. Ask the contractor to inform you if any chemicals will be used and to provide a safety data sheet for them.
5. Have the contractor provide proof of proper licenses.
6. To ensure that the company you hire is indeed a NADCA member, look it up in NADCA's Find a Professional Directory or verify membership at info@nadca.com.

To be NADCA members, companies must:

- Have at least one NADCA-certified Air Systems Cleaning Specialist
- Maintain general liability insurance
- Clean according to NADCA Standards
- Comply with NADCA's Code of Ethics.

Learn More - For further facts and tips, visit <https://nadca.com/homeowners/why-hire-a-nadca-member>.

Knowing the right questions to ask can help to ensure a quality duct cleaning.



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