

fall HOME & GARDEN

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UNEXPECTED SPACES

(Family Features)

Not all great things come in big packages, and home upgrades are an example of the truth in this wisdom. Unexpected, smaller spaces may not get the same attention as high-traffic areas like kitchens, bathrooms and living areas, but their impact can be just as powerful.

Get inspired to make improvements to the lesser-used areas of your home with these tips from the home decorating experts at Wellborn Cabinet, Inc.:

Entryway It's the impression that welcomes guests into your home, so even if the space is small, your entryway warrants some TLC. Focus on making it open and inviting by removing any unnecessary furnishings. Some functional storage, like a bench with integrated coat hooks, can serve a practical purpose, and if you have the space, some built-in cabinetry with an eye-catching countertop can incorporate stylish storage.

Laundry Room Getting motivated to do chores like laundry is easy when you have a beautiful setting for getting to work. Introducing pops of color in non-traditional places, like the cabinetry, adds a high-end elegance. Water-inspired and earthy hues like Midtown Matte Tidewater or Arcadia Chiffon Cypress are perfect for the laundry space. Both are options in Wellborn Cabinet, Inc.'s Aspire Series, which features concealed hinges with self-close functionality and matching interiors for a high-class look, even when the doors are open for business.

Closet A cluttered closet may not be the first thing a guest notices, but it's a space you visit daily. Improving the organizational features can streamline your morning routine and put you in a more positive

frame of mind to start each day. There's no right or wrong when it comes to closet design, but using cabinetry in place of open shelving and rods lends a more luxurious feel. Plan for adequate hanging and closed storage, and if space allows, be sure to plan for shoes and accessories since these items can easily contribute to a closet's disarray.

Mini Bar If you fear you don't have room for a mini bar, you may be surprised. Reimagining a larger cabinet, like the ones Wellborn Cabinet, Inc. offers in 30-, 33-, 36- and 42-inch widths, can create an instant bar out of just about any wall space where you can fit a cabinet. Install it as a coffee bar or traditional bar, or add the optional Appliance Pullout shelf for more versatility.

Pantry Guests may not find themselves in your pantry very often, but you likely use this space every day. Transform your pantry for heightened utility in simple ways like using clear plastic bins for small boxed foods or stylish wicker baskets to hide away snacks. For a more permanent solution, take advantage of unused space on the back of the pantry door with thin shelves for items like seasoning packets and smaller canned goods.

Guest Bathroom Swapping out a tired vanity and countertop is a relatively affordable upgrade that can completely change the style of a secondary bathroom. Be sure to also update the fixtures for a more contemporary look and, if budget allows, replace the flooring. Finish the project with a fresh coat of paint in a light, airy shade and add new textiles and a few decorative touches to complete the job.

Find more ideas for updating unexpected spaces in your home at Wellborn.com.



Hideaway Storage Spaces

One feature that enhances virtually any space is more storage. Having convenient places to tuck away all your stuff makes rooms feel more open and inviting. Hidden storage solutions are often better because you can enjoy the functionality they add to the space without interrupting your design aesthetic.

Here are some clever ideas for keeping necessary items tucked out of sight but within easy reach:

Built-in Step Stool: If you love the look of tall cabinets but struggle to reach the top shelves, a practical addition is a hidden step ladder in a pullout caddy. Specially designed ladders that fold down extra narrow and feature nonslip rubber treads make this a handy addition you'll reach for again and again.

Paper Towel Pullout: Keep paper towels hidden but close by hiding them in a pullout cabinet such as Wellborn Cabinet Inc.'s 12-inch-wide model, which features a built-in paper towel holder and bottom shelf ideal for organizing cleaning products. There's also a space behind the paper towels that's perfect for storing sponges and other kitchen supplies.

Drawer Dividers: While you can find many after-market options to organize the insides of your drawers and cabinets, choosing organizers designed to work seamlessly with your cabinetry creates a more polished look (and saves the headaches of measuring and guesstimating the fit). Tray dividers are useful for sorting cookie sheets and baking pans, while you can find dividers in a variety of heights to match drawers below the oven or where you store your cutlery. Another option that serves a similar purpose is pegs, which keep fragile items from shifting when drawers are opened or closed.

How to approach a basement remodel

A fully finished and functional basement is a dream for many homeowners. Such a space, when completed, can serve as an entertainment space, a man cave, an artist's studio, or any number of additional functions.

Despite their usefulness, finished basements are something of a rarity. In an analysis of data from the U.S. Census Bureau's Survey of Construction, the National Association of Home Builders® found that only around 24 percent of single-family homes built in 2018 have basements. Homeowners who do not currently have a finished basement but are considering such a project can approach the remodel with a few key factors in mind. Careful consideration of these factors can ensure the project is budget-friendly and worthy of homeowners' investments.

- **Investment value:** Conventional wisdom among home renovation and real estate experts suggests that a basement remodel is best if done to satisfy current inhabitants and not necessarily to appeal to prospective buyers once the home is put up for sale. Remodeling magazine reports that a midrange basement remodel costing around \$70,000 will provide a return of

around \$49,000 (or 70 percent) at resale. Though that's not a poor return on investment, homeowners who are remodeling a basement solely for the potential ROI at resale can find other projects that provide a greater return.

- **Foundation:** The foundation of the home must garner ample consideration before beginning a basement remodel. Certain foundation issues, such as soft concrete, cracked or curved outside walls and cracks in the flooring, are indicative of significant issues with the foundation. These issues can be costly to address, and they must be remedied before the basement remodel can begin.

- **Existing space:** Some homeowners may have bought their homes with partially finished basements or even finished areas that they simply want to remodel. In such instances, a pre-remodel inspection from a licensed home inspector can save homeowners lots of money and heartache over the long haul. Partially finished or even aging finished basements might not have been renovated in adherence to codes, which could lead to costly violations down the road. An inspection in advance of a remodel can give homeowners an idea



of what they will need to do to bring the basement up to code. Local officials also can provide a list of necessary permits and a detailed description of requirements to ensure the remodeled basement adheres to code.

- **Soil:** Soil surrounding the home should be tested prior to beginning the project. Radon is an odorless gas found in soil that the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency notes can increase individuals' risk for lung

cancer. Radon can seep into basements and increase that risk even further if it is present at elevated levels in the soil surrounding a home. Radon tests are simple and inexpensive, and no basement remodel project should begin without first conducting such a test.

Finished basements are valuable spaces. Homeowners who want to finish or remodel their basements should consider a host of factors before beginning the renovation.



Let's face it, caring for gutters is a headache for most homeowners. When it comes to protecting them in the most efficient manner, one locally owned company rises above the rest, offering year round solutions.

Gutter Cover Company's Gutter Topper guard system relies on a solid-cover slope design that's superior to

any screened products on the market. The locally owned company and its skilled team have been installing Gutter Topper for over 23 years.

"With a patented design, water flows through, but leaves, nests and organic debris do not," says owner Jim Carbone. "Our affordable product is extremely durable, made

of solid aluminum and can handle any weather Northeast Ohio will throw at it. They are installed directly over existing gutters, however, new gutters are available. Customers tell us the lifetime transferrable performance warranty makes a big difference in their decision to install these guards. We have jobs that were installed in the '90s that still protect gutters with the same effectiveness as the day they were installed." The guards come in a variety of attractive colors to complement any home.

Gutters that Survive Old Man Winter:

"Last year was one of the worst winters we've had in years for ice dams," says Jim. "Many homeowners had problems with ice melting, then

refreezing, then melting again and backing up into their homes." To save homeowners the pain of ice issues, Jim offers Heater Cap.

"This product offers options to property owners who may want to heat only certain problem areas of their gutters, not the entire system," he says.

"We can install them with or without our Gutter Topper or most existing gutter guards. We've all seen the prehistoric zig-zag style of heat wires and they simply don't work. We remove those all the time. Ours is different. It is virtually invisible and is operated by a light switch located inside the home. The heater is safe and emits the perfect amount of heat to stop ice from forming."

He reports that many of his clients install Gutter Topper for leaf protection and add Heater Cap where needed, which can be added at later date as well.

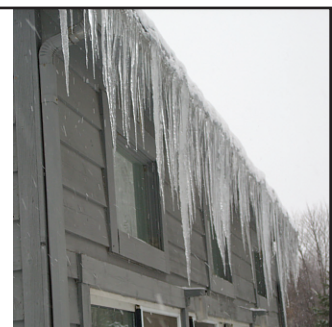
"It's an elegant solution to the problem," he says. "We're able to take a walk around the house and have a conversation with the homeowner to pinpoint exactly where the heaters are needed for optimum effectiveness. In addition to homes, we have installed Heater Cap on many local churches, schools, office buildings and even fire departments."

Five-star customer reviews tell the tale. David L. was dealing with

extreme icicles before he reached out to **Gutter Cover Company** to have Heater Cap installed. "The typical gutter warmers you buy from the store and install in zig-zag fashion were ugly and a nuisance. We needed a more permanent solution. Heater Cap has totally stopped the problem and is easily operated by a switch installed in the house. I recommend **Gutter Cover Company** and wouldn't hesitate to use them again," he says.

Jim has plenty of both products in stock, so give him a call, before the leaves or snow start to fall, so you can forget about your gutters. "We recommend getting a free estimate now for both Gutter Topper and Heater Cap, so when that first chilly autumn day hits and our phones are ringing off the hook, you'll already be on our install list," he says.

Gutter Cover Company at 440-366-0688 to schedule a complimentary gutter inspection. The company is proud of its A+ rating with the BBB and has received awards from Angi and Home Advisor. Gutter Topper is approved by all major roof manufacturers. The products used by Gutter Cover Company are manufactured in the USA. For more information visit GutterGuard1.com.



Gutter Cover Company's Heater Cap offers options to property owners who may want to heat only certain problem areas of their gutters, not the entire system. They can be installed with or without Gutter Topper or on most existing gutter guards.



Schedule a free estimate by October 31, 2022 and receive a \$300 discount on the purchase of either Gutter Topper or Heater Cap by mentioning this offer. Additional discounts are available for seniors and veterans.



Installing Bathroom Tile Like a Pro

(Family Features) Updating the flooring can help infuse new life into tired, outdated bathrooms. For an upscale, polished look that doesn't have to break the bank, consider installing tile flooring.

Before you get started, you'll want to make some decisions about the look and feel of your flooring:

Ceramic or stone? Weigh factors such as porosity, how slippery the surface may be when wet and how well it retains heat or cold. Ultimately, your decision hinges on the needs and uses of your family.

Complement or contrast? Define the overall style you want as well as the colors and tones that will help best achieve your vision.

Big or small? Generally, the larger the tile, the fewer grout lines, and too many grout lines in a smaller space can create the illusion of clutter. However, smaller tiles can eliminate the need to make multiple awkward cuts, and small tiles are perfect for creating accent patterns or introducing a splash of color.

When you've got your overall look and materials selected, keep these steps in mind as you begin laying the flooring:

1. Prepare your subfloor. Use a level to check for uneven spots; you need an even surface to prevent cracks in the tile or grout as well as rough spots that could pose tripping hazards. Use patching and leveling material to create a consistent surface. Apply a thin layer of mortar then attach your cement backer board with screws. Cover

joints with cement board tape, apply another thin layer of mortar, smooth and allow to dry.

2. To ensure square placement, draw reference lines on the subfloor using a level and carpenter square. Tile should start in the middle of the room and move out toward the walls, so make your initial reference lines as close to the center as possible. Mark additional reference lines as space allows, such as 2-foot-by-2-foot squares.

3. Do a test run with your chosen tile by laying it out on the floor. There are color variations in most tile patterns, so you'll want to verify each tile blends well with the next.

4. Mix tile mortar and use the thin side of a trowel to apply mortar at a 45-degree angle. Use the combed side to spread evenly and return excess mortar to the bucket. Remember to apply mortar in small areas, working as you go, so it doesn't dry before you're ready to lay the tile.

5. When laying tile, use your reference lines as guides. Press and wiggle tile slightly for the best adherence.

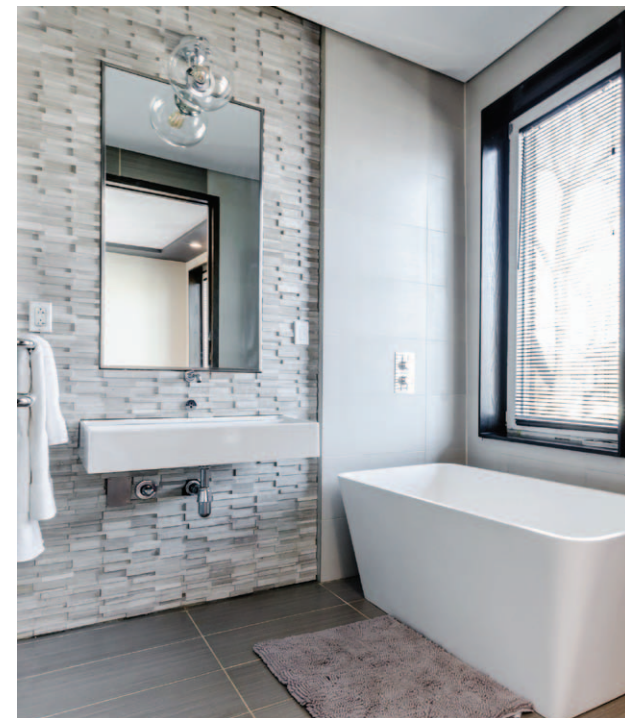
6. Use spacers to create even lines between one tile and the next, removing excess mortar with a damp sponge or rag.

7. As you complete a section of tile, use a level and mallet to verify the tiles are sitting evenly.

8. Let mortar dry 24 hours before grouting.

9. Remove spacers then apply grout to joints, removing excess as you go.

10. Allow grout to dry per the manufacturer's instruc-



tions then go back over tile with a damp sponge to set grout lines and clean grout residue.

11. Once grout has cured - usually at least a couple weeks - apply sealer to protect it.

Find more ideas and tips for updating your bathroom at eLivingtoday.com.

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Gift ideas for the family do-it-yourselfer

Home improvement projects enable homeowners to transform their homes into their ideal living spaces. According to iProperty Management, most homeowners in the United States spent between \$5,000 and \$10,000 improving their homes in 2018. And it doesn't stop there, as home improvement sales are projected to reach \$465 billion in 2022.

Various renovation projects are best left to the professionals. However, many homeowners are eager to get their own hands dirty with various projects, large and small. Having the right tools and gear on hand can make projects go all the more smoothly. Holiday shoppers can consider these ideas as they seek to ensure DIYers have all they need to get the job done.

- **Painting time-savers:** Painting requires some basic essentials, from paint trays to rollers to brushes. Projects can be made more efficient with innovative products that help save time and reduce mess. One such item is a paint brush cover, which snaps over wet paintbrushes between coats so they won't dry out or require rinsing. Brushes that cut in easily and others with flexible handles for getting in tight places also make painting projects that much easier.

- **Cordless drill:** A mechanical drill makes easy work of assembly projects and general renovations that require screws as fasteners. A cordless rechargeable drill will be easy to maneuver when handling projects away from outlets. Going cord-free also reduces the risk of trips and falls on errant cords.

- **Lawn care subscription service:** Home improvements extend to the exterior. In addition to mowers, trimmers and garden shears, DIYers may benefit from subscription products that improve on property care. These formulations are customized to the specific needs of homeowners' lawn or landscaping greenery and are shipped right to their door.

- **Rotary tool kit:** This is one of the most versatile tools homeowners can have on hand. A rotary tool can engrave, grind, sharpen, polish, cut, carve, and more depending on the accessory attachment.

- **Multi-use ladder:** A ladder is a necessity for various projects inside and outside the home. One that can transform into an A-frame, scaffold system, staircase ladder and other configurations helps ensure maximum safe reach for the job at hand.

- **Composter:** Whether you use an



indoor kitchen composter or one designed for outdoor use, being able to generate one's own compost is great for avid gardeners. Compost, often called "black gold," is made from kitchen scraps, leaves and other items that break down into a rich fertilizer.

- **Tool box/tool organizer:** Tool storage is a market all its own. It runs the gamut from rolling metal storage containers to plastic or metal boxes to canvas bags to plastic molded curated kits. Tool organizer kits also come at various price points, so

it's easy for shoppers to choose one that fits their budgets.

- **Organizing units:** Organizing units are available in prefabricated kits that are easily assembled when needed, as well as custom-made products that are installed by a professional. They may be an option for a handy person looking to organize tools and other items for home repairs.

Do-it-yourselfers can be even more handy with tools geared toward their interests and repair needs.

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Protect landscapes from wildlife and more over the winter

Landscapes are vulnerable to the elements during the cold weather months. Everything from de-icing products to hungry animals to the weight of snow can affect trees, shrubs and other plants.

Just because certain greenery will go dormant during the winter doesn't mean landscape maintenance ends when the mercury dips. Homeowners can take certain actions to winterproof their properties and safeguard landscapes so they recover more readily when spring arrives.

Utilize barriers and deterrents

When resources are scarce, animals will be on the hunt for anything that's edible, and that includes whatever greenery is growing on a landscape. Physical barriers in garden beds and around trees can help prevent damage caused by moles, voles and deer. Line the bottom and sides of garden beds with garden cloth to prevent ground-burrowing animals from getting in from beneath, suggests the gardening resource I Must Garden.

Wrapping shrubs in burlap or covering them in temporary netting can deter deer, who will seek accessible food sources over the winter. Erect fencing around new trees to keep deer away from the bark and

lower branches.

Make the yard less attractive to deer and burrowers by opting for fat-based suet cakes to feed birds rather than loose seeds and berries in feeders, which herbivores will enjoy. Also, don't overwater or mulch landscapes too early. The loose soil and warmth of the mulch may entice moles and voles and other rodents to stick around in those areas and feed on plants.

Use a safer melting product

Investigate options in snowmelt products, as traditional rock salt can injure buds and branches and kill lawns. In addition, avoid piling salted snow in one area of the landscape, as it will concentrate the salt in that spot. Spread out snow piles to help minimize the damage to delicate plants.

Secure saplings and juvenile plants

Harsh winds and battering snow can damage young plants. Use stakes and lattices to secure them so they'll be better able to withstand the weather, suggests Total Landscape Management, a commercial and residential landscaping company.

Promptly remove snow from branches to help trees and shrubs; otherwise, the weight of ice and snow can break off



branches and cause irreparable damage.

Erect a snow barrier

Prior observation tends to educate homeowners about which areas of the landscape are most vulnerable to snow drifts and blustery winds. During the winter, winds often blow in from a north-easterly direction, but each homeowner can make his or her own assessment. Put up a tarp between two stakes to serve as

a "snow fence" that protects vulnerable areas of the landscape from blowing snow.

Keep plants cozy

Wrap plants in burlap, garden blankets and plant domes to insulate them from cold weather and some animals. Move container plants into a garage or shielded area for the winter.

Winter can place landscapes in peril. A few strategies can provide protection.

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