

Spring

April 2018
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Spring HOME



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the Oneida Daily Dispatch

730 Lenox Avenue, Oneida, NY 13421
Phone: 315-363-5100, Fax: 315-363-9832

Contact Us

Publisher

Kevin Corrado - kcorrado@digitalfirstmedia.com

Vice President - Sales New York

Edward Woods - edwoods@digitalfirstmedia.com

General Manager & Advertising Director:

Karen Alvord - kalvord@adtaxi.com

Editor:

Tony Adamis - tadamis@freemanonline.com

Business Manager/Circulation:

Diane Roache - droache@21st-centurymedia.com

Advertising:

Michael Bartell - mbartell@adtaxi.com

Jan Collins - jcollins@oneidadispatch.com

Graham Phillips - gphillips@oneidadispatch.com

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Pets and the planet:

How to become an eco-friendly pet owner

Pets provide much joy to their owners, who are often willing to do whatever it takes in an effort to reciprocate the unconditional love they get from their pets. While toys and treats make pets happy, one of the best things pet owners can do to express their love for their four-legged friends is to make an effort to be more eco-friendly in regard to caring for their furry, finned or feathered friends.

An eco-friendly approach to pet ownership can protect pets' health and the planet at the same time. Pet owners may be surprised to learn just how easy it can be to incorporate eco-friendly practices into their pet care routines.

Avoid using pesticides in the yard

The Pesticide Action Network notes that pets can absorb pesticides through their mouths, noses and eyes when walking through lawns

and gardens that were treated with pesticides. Powdered pesticides also may stick to pets' fur, and dogs may absorb chemical residues by chewing or eating plants that were treated with pesticides. Thanks to their grooming habits, cats allowed to roam free in yards may be especially vulnerable to lawns treated with pesticides. When tending to their lawns, pet owners who want to be more eco-friendly can embrace organic lawn care practices, such as composting and using organic fertilizers.

Be mindful of waste and waste cleanup.

The feces of dogs contain bacteria that, if left on lawns and/or walkways, can ultimately find its way into and contaminate bodies of water due to runoff. So it's important that pet owners routinely pick up their pets' waste. Biodegradable, plant-based pet waste bags are

eco-friendly options that can help reduce the environmental impact of pet waste.

Use natural cleaning solutions when cleaning up after pets indoors.

Chemical-based cleaning solutions may be especially effective at cleaning up pet stains and eradicating pet-related odors, but such products can have a negative effect on indoor air quality. Various consumer advocacy organizations have noted that chemical-based air fresheners and general purpose cleaners are major sources of volatile organic compounds, or VOCs, which the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency notes can produce various short- and long-term adverse health effects. When cleaning up after their pets, pet owners should use only chemical-free cleaners that won't adversely affect indoor air quality.



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The benefits of **child-safe** home improvements



All family members should be considered when home improvements are being planned, especially the youngest household residents who may not be responsible enough to avoid accidents and injuries.

According to a recent Vital Signs report from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, accidental injuries are a leading cause of death among the country's youth — with one fatality occurring every hour from something entirely preventable. The CDC notes that the leading causes of child injury include suffocation, drowning, poisoning, fires, and falls. More can be done to keep children safe, and many strategies start at home.

Anchor heavy furniture

The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission warns that unanchored televisions and top-heavy furniture can tip over onto children and cause severe injuries and even death. Everyday furniture can be tempting to climb; therefore, using anchors to secure furniture to walls for security is a must.

Install locking cabinets

Locking cabinets can keep medications, household chemicals, home improvement paints and solvents, and other potential poisons out of reach.

Install security systems

A security system can be just as effective at keeping little ones inside as it is at keeping unwanted guests outside. Alarms can be set to sound anytime a window or door is breached, which can deter curious children from trying to leave the house without permission. Pair the alarm system with secure locks and high latches that can also stop children in their tracks.

Erect fencing around pools and yards

Install fencing around pools to keep children from wandering close to the water's edge. Towns and cities may require certain fence heights or self-latching gates to keep little ones safe. Young children should never be left to their own devices around any source of water, whether it's a pool, tub or toilet.

Remove fall hazards

Safety devices installed on windows that are above ground level can keep children safe. Stair rails should be secure and in good working order. Temporary gates can block kids from getting on stairways. Improve lighting around staircases to help children and adults avoid falls, and remove any obstacles.

Test and replace smoke alarms

Smoke and carbon monoxide detectors are only useful if they are functional. Homeowners should inspect such devices regularly to ensure proper operation and promptly replace old or faulty detectors to improve safety.

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Home security for the do-it-yourselfer



Before getting started, homeowners and renters can ask themselves a few questions to help narrow down their options.

- What is your budget? Professional installation and monitoring will likely cost more than DIY kits.
- How large is the home?
- Are you tech-savvy?
- How frequently are you out of the home on vacation or extended trips?
- Do you desire emergency response?
- Do you want an entire package or just some deterrent devices?

Once men and women have answered these questions, it's time to start shopping. Here are some DIY security system items

Smart home security systems

These home security systems connect to a home's Wi-Fi network so they can be monitored and controlled using a smartphone app. Others may be accessed through an application on the internet. It is important to look for a system that has the extra security of technology that is not easily hacked.

Security cameras

Some people may only want to watch the inside and outside of their residences. It can take mere minutes to set up wireless security cameras around the house. These devices connect to a Wi-Fi network and give customers free access to a constant stream of video. Some systems make it easy for homeowners to listen in on what's going on at home and even talk to anyone within the camera's range. Others can be paired with cloud storage for recording video.

Professionally monitored

Residents who are away from home frequently or are too busy to constantly monitor security systems may like the peace of mind of professionally monitored kits. Services like Frontpoint®, Link Interactive® and Scout® are just three that have affordable starter kits and video monitoring. Monitored alarm systems can be set to call the police or other emergency services if necessary.

Entry-level or advanced systems

Entry-level systems typically include a few door and window sensors, a motion detector and a hub that communicates with these sensors. This may be enough for someone in an apartment or small house. More extensive systems may include additional sensors, door locks, garage door openers, surveillance cameras, lights, sirens, and even water and smoke detectors.

Do-it-yourself security systems represent a new wave to safeguard one's belongings and family. Kits continue to evolve and have become more seamless than ever.

Feeling secure at home is a priority for many people. Many people consider installing security systems in their homes to improve their sense of well-being. Whether one owns or rents, individuals may be surprised to learn that do-it-yourself security systems can be savvy investments.

The right system can help people protect their belongings and their families, but sorting through the various security systems on the market can be a daunting task. While full-service setups that include professional installation and monitoring are available, some homeowners may want to investigate the highly customizable DIY kits now available. Some include personal monitoring, while others are self-install technologies with professional monitoring.



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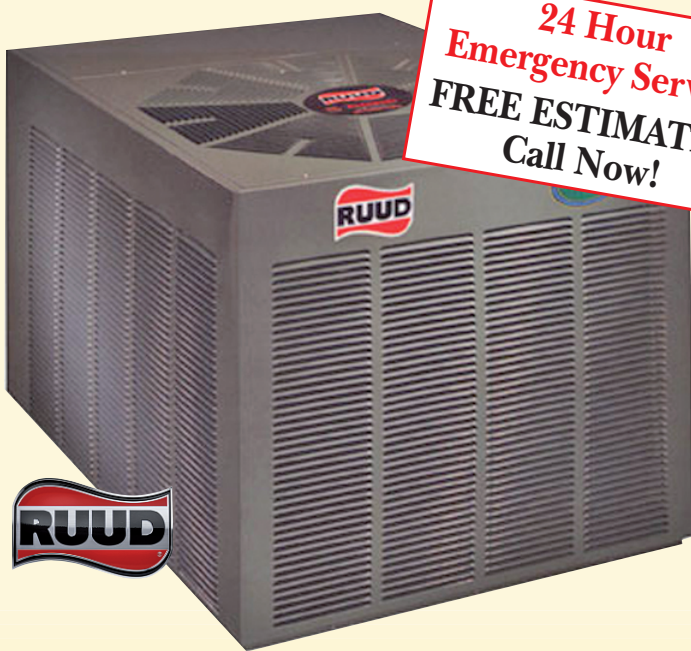
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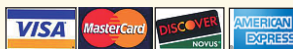


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How to recognize and prevent CO poisoning



Infants are among those most likely to get sick from exposure to carbon monoxide.

Many people are aware of the threat posed by carbon monoxide, or CO. According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, at least 430 people die from accidental CO poisoning in the United States each year, while the Canada Safety Council notes that carbon monoxide is the leading cause of fatal poisonings throughout North America.

The CDC points out that instances of CO poisoning are entirely preventable, which might surprise many of the estimated tens of thousands of people in the United States who visit emergency rooms to be treated for CO poisoning each year. Learning to recognize signs of CO poisoning and how to prevent it can help people avoid its harmful effects and potentially save lives.

Recognizing CO poisoning

The National Center for Environmental Health says that breathing CO can cause a variety of symptoms, including headache, dizziness, vomiting, or nausea. Infants, the elderly and people with chronic heart disease, anemia, or breathing problems are more likely to get sick from CO exposure than children, adults and people without the aforementioned conditions.

How can I prevent CO poisoning?

Even those people who do not lose their lives to moderate or severe CO poisoning can suffer long-term health consequences, including an increased risk of heart disease, as a result of their exposure. So it behooves everyone to take steps to prevent CO poisoning from occurring.

- Do not run a motor vehicle, generator, pressure washer or any gasoline-powered engine within 20 feet of an open window, door or vent. The exhaust from such items can vent into enclosed areas, increasing the risk of CO exposure.
- Do not leave motor vehicles running in enclosed or partially enclosed spaces, such as a garage.
- Do not run generators, pressure washers or gasoline-powered inside basements, garages or other enclosed structures, even if windows are open.
- Do not operate charcoal grills, hibachis, lanterns or portable camping stoves indoors or inside tents or campers.

CO poisoning can cause very serious consequences, including death. Fortunately, all instances of CO poisoning can be prevented.



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For Further information, please call: Madison County Dept. of Solid Waste and Sanitation at 1-800-721-2208, or call the Dept. of Public Health at 315-366-2361.



Did you know?

Debris from home improvement projects can often be recycled. According to Waste Management, the largest residential recycler and renewable energy provider in North America, common construction materials such as concrete, porcelain, tile, lumber, metals, masonry, plastic, carpet, and insulation can potentially be recycled. When recycled, debris from construction projects may ultimately be used in various ways to benefit the planet. For example, such debris may be used as inerts that become road base, while clear wood may be transformed into mulch or biomass fuel. Crushed concrete can go on to live a second life as gravel or become dry aggregate for new concrete. Homeowners who want to recycle as much of their home improvement project debris as possible can work with Waste Management and/or their contractors to ensure the materials they no longer need continue to be put to good use.

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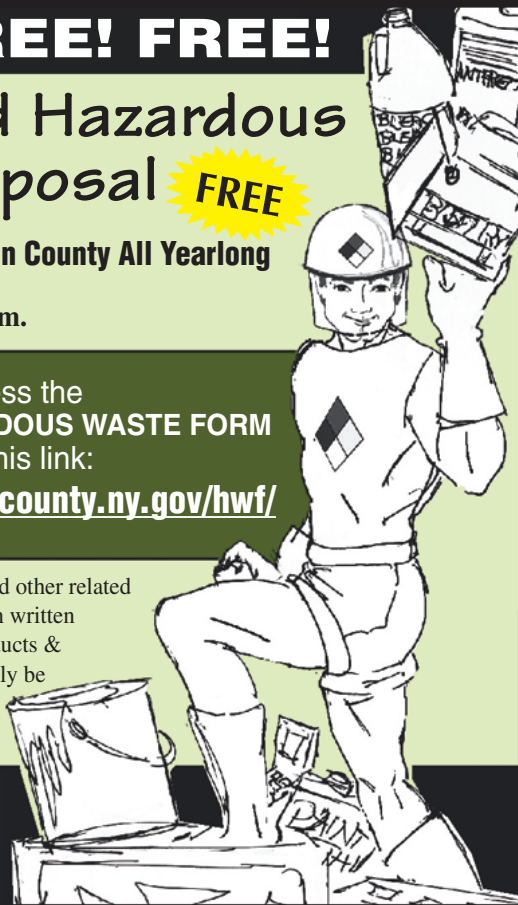
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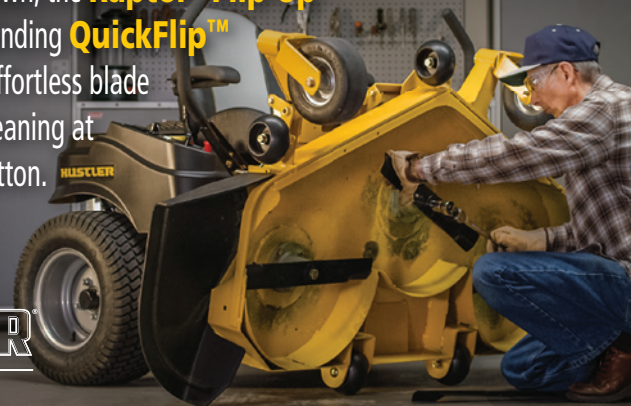


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Reduce injuries during DIY projects

Accomplishing a do-it-yourself home repair or renovation can elicit feelings of pride. DIY projects can be cost-effective and completed on homeowners' unique time schedules. Although people can do many repairs themselves, using the wrong tools or equipment, or having insufficient knowledge of the task at hand can increase the risk of injury.

The home security resource A Secure Life says that more than 18,000 Americans die every year from injuries that take place in the home. Unintentional injuries can be traced to many factors, but making repairs around the house can contribute to accident risk. Falls, electrical shocks, broken glass, carpentry tools, and carrying overly heavy loads repeatedly result in injury, says The Home Depot.

Recognizing these potential hazards and always employing safe tactics can help keep DIYers stay healthy.

Ladder safety: A fall from even a few feet can cause severe injuries and even death. Ladders should always be put on a level, stable surface. Individuals should not climb higher than the second rung on a step ladder or the third rung on an extension ladder.

Tools: Every tool has the potential to cause injury. This injury risk increases when tools are not used properly. Before a tool is used, it's important to read the instructions.

Wear protective gloves: Gloves can help protect against burns, electrocution,

slippery grip, and even deep cuts or finger amputation when using sharp tools. Gloves also are essential when handling broken glass.

Power tools: Power tools have momentum and torque behind them to make fast work of various jobs. If using power tools, DIYers should ensure they are the right tools for the job, not something that is handy or a quick fix. Power tools should only be used if a person can devote attention to the task and stay focused. That means never consuming alcohol, drugs or medications that can impair function when using power tools.

Working with electricity: An electric shock occurs when a person is exposed to a source of electricity and the charge runs through the body. It can cause burns, cardiac arrest, changes to heartbeat, and even neurological injuries, according to the Mayo Clinic. DIYers should take precautions anytime they are working with electricity, including turning off the supply of electricity to the outlet or fixture being worked on.

Heavy loads: It is important to exercise caution when moving around heavy loads. A friend or family member can help with the transfer of building materials or to relocate furniture.

Distractions: Avoiding distractions is essential when doing home renovations. Keep pets and children away from work areas to focus entirely on the job at hand.

Transform bathrooms with technology



Technology is infiltrating every room of the house. Many new home buyers are millennials, and this tech-savvy demographic covets technological innovations.

A recent survey by *Better Homes & Gardens Real Estate* indicates 77 percent of Generation X and Y home buyers want their homes equipped with the tech capabilities they have grown accustomed to. Many of these involve smart innovations, including those that can transform one of the most private rooms in the house — the bathroom.

Automated home theater rooms and Wi-Fi-enabled home security systems have become the norm, but what tech improvements are available to make the powder room more in touch with today's digital lifestyle? According to the home improvement resource *The Spruce*, bathrooms have the most potential of any rooms to be improved with technology. The following are just some of the bathroom gadgets and gizmos no one should resist before giving a try.

Automatic faucets: Infrared sensors have been helping keep public restrooms more hygienic for years. The same technology can be used in home bathrooms to curtail water waste and keep faucets and sinks from becoming infested with germs. In addition, faucets with built-in timers can be programmed to set tasks for brushing teeth or washing your face.

Musical shower: Instead of having to blast the volume on the portable speaker you use in the bathroom, a wireless speaker is built into some showerheads.

This enables those who like to sing in the shower or listen to podcasts while washing up to enjoy this luxury effortlessly.

Smarter weight management: Bathroom scales have gone high-tech as well, with various options enabling users to measure weight, BMI and body fat percentage before sending the data wirelessly to a phone, tablet or computer. This can put you in greater control of fitness goals.

High-tech toilets: Borrowing ideas from bidets and trends around the world, modern toilets do not require hands or paper. These toilets have temperature-controlled water, spritzing wands and air dryers to clean and sanitize. Self-cleaning toilets help busy professionals save time and are ideal for those who always want their bowls as clean as possible. And if you desire extra comfort, toilet seat warmers are available, while LED lights can make nighttime restroom visits easier.

Soaking tubs: As fast as stand-alone showers were introduced to the modern bathroom, tubless designs have been replaced with streamlined soaking tubs. Tubs come with different features, including chromotherapy, which employs colored lights to enhance mood. Air baths are controlled electronically and provide different levels of sensation for those who are skipping the hot tub. Round out these innovations with automated lights, chilled medicine cabinets and aromatherapy, and your bathroom will indeed become a technological spa.

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Getting to know succulents



Succulent plants can enhance gardens, and they require minimal care and water.

Succulents can be just what indoor or outdoor gardens need. Even though succulents are becoming more popular, there are still some people who are unaware of their attributes. By learning more about succulents, people may become devotees of these unique plants.

The word “succulent” brings to mind juicy, savory foods. But succulents aren’t meant to be consumed. In fact, they get their mouth-watering name from their uncanny ability to store water in fleshy stems or leaves. That means they do not require frequent watering like other plants might. Succulents also may prove more durable in the face of drought and are a handy plant for forgetful gardeners or those who travel often and want something more hands-off in their gardens.

According to the succulents resource Succulents and Sunshine, most succulents prefer warm temperatures and are not very cold-tolerant. However, there are some varieties that can survive freezing temperatures. Still, for most succulents, it’s best if they are kept in warm, moderately sunny conditions. The

DIY Network says succulents grow best in bright light, but not always in full, hot sun.

Succulents also may attract gardeners thanks to their diverse looks. Better Homes & Gardens says that color variations of succulents are quite varied and include green, yellow, burgundy, white, blue-green, pink, red, and variegated combinations. Their shapes can be just as diverse, with many having pointy, rounded, spiky, or ruffled leaves.

People may be particularly familiar with one type of succulent: cacti. These traditional desert-dwellers are prized for their water-retention abilities, but some seem downright scary with their prickly exteriors. While all cacti are succulents, it’s important to note that not all succulents are cacti. Less needle-like succulents include aloe, jade, snake plant, and agave. Hens and chicks (*sempervivum*) and wax plant (*hoya*) are other succulents to consider.

Searching for succulents online is another great way for gardeners to discover these wonderful plants

Gardening during a drought



Succulents are good drought-tolerant plants to include in landscape designs.

During the early and oftentimes rain-drenched days of spring, it can seem like there may never be a time when plants will struggle to get their share of water. But drought can affect any area, and arid climates in particular. Ensuring gardens can survive drought takes patience and forethought.

Drought can be particularly troubling for avid gardeners because it can wreak havoc on lawns and gardens. In addition to causing changes in the physical appearance, including wilted, dried out leaves and stalks, drought can weaken the integrity of plants. This makes plants more susceptible to disease and attacks from plant-preying insects, according to Better Homes & Gardens. In addition, it can take years for plants to recover from drought.

So what can gardeners do? While they may not be able to prevent damage to plants from drought, gardeners are not helpless.

- **Water well infrequently.** Get plants used to a thorough watering every week or every other week. This will help develop strong, deep roots rather than shallow ones that will need frequent watering to thrive.

- **Choose drought-tolerant plants.** Homeowners can work with garden centers and landscape professionals to

create gardens that are full of water-wise plants and flowers. Some examples of plants that can survive with minimal water include the blanket flower, Spanish lavender, *euphorbia rigida*, and kangaroo paw.

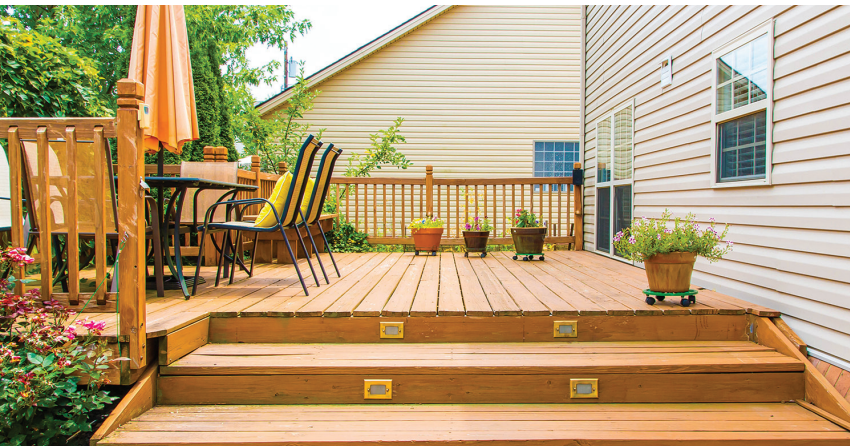
- **Apply a layer of mulch.** Mulch can protect delicate plants and the rest of the landscape by reducing the evaporation of soil moisture. Mulch will keep soil cool and moist.

- **Skip the fertilizer.** Since fertilizers encourage plant growth, it’s best to skip them during drought, as growing plants require extra water.

- **Invest in rain barrels.** When it rains, maximize the amount of water that can be collected by connecting rain barrels to downspouts on the house. This water can be used to water gardens when dry weather returns.

- **Use organic materials.** Amend the soil with organic materials, like compost. The Grow Network advises that light, fluffy soils with air pockets in between the soil particles route water efficiently during floods and retain moisture for plants. Therefore, such soils can perform very well during drought.

Choosing materials for decking



Warm weather often gives rise to thoughts about spending time in the great outdoors. Decks can expand outdoor living spaces, making them popular home additions. However, when it comes time to map out a deck building plan, individuals may be unsure as to which deck material will meet their needs. Wood and composite decks are among the most popular choices today, and the popularity of aluminum is growing steadily.

Wood

Wood is a versatile and attractive decking material. According to the wood resource Real Cedar, some people think that wood is too expensive and requires too much maintenance. In fact, domestic softwoods can be very cost-effective decking options. According to *Remodeling Magazine's* "Cost vs. Value" report, wood decks retain considerable resale value.

In terms of maintenance, choosing a rot-resistant wood can result in less maintenance. Durable woods include cedar and redwood. *Popular Mechanics* says both species contain tannins and oils that make them naturally resistant to decay, rot and voracious insects. Periodic cleaning and inspection/repairs will be needed, but wood can be much more durable than people may think.

Composite

Composite decking and its close cousin, plastic lumber, are some of the fastest-growing decking materials on the market. Many products are made from polyethylene or polyvinyl chloride. Some composites will be comprised of recycled

plastic and wood fibers to create a weather- and stain-resistant material that doesn't warp, rot or splinter. Composite manufacturers continually experiment with manufacturing processes to duplicate the look of natural wood grain.

Homeowners are often drawn to composite decking because such decks require little maintenance. These decks do not need to be sanded, stained or refinished. However, mold and mildew can grow in shady, damp areas, so homeowners must realize that these products are not completely maintenance-free.

Aluminum

Although aluminum decks are not seen that often, there are reasons why this decking material is becoming more popular. According to LockDry®, a manufacturer of aluminum decking materials, power-coated aluminum does not need to be replaced due to rotting, cracking or warped boards. Most planks have interlocking edges that create gap-free, watertight decks. Aluminum also has the advantage of being a very strong but lightweight material.

Some people may think that aluminum decks would be hot underfoot, but the material actually stays cool in the sun because of its heat-dissipation properties. For those who have green goals in mind, aluminum is totally recyclable.

Various decking materials can meet the look, price point and maintenance level homeowners desire.

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Spring cleaning can alleviate allergies



Leave carpet and upholstery shampooing to the professionals, as excess moisture can contribute to mold and dust mites, which aggravate allergy symptoms.

Allergies affect people of all ages. The American Academy of Allergy, Asthma & Immunology reports that allergic rhinitis affects between 10 and 30 percent of the world's population. In addition, the prevalence of allergic diseases has risen in industrialized nations for more than 50 years.

Seasonal allergies tend to be the strongest in spring and autumn. Allergies can be exacerbated by many factors, including in homes where improvements are being made. Regular housecleaning can remove many common allergy triggers and help alleviate symptoms. Knowing which common home improvement mistakes can aggravate allergies can help homeowners avoid them.

Suit up

Before any cleaning begins, allergy sufferers should don face masks and rubber gloves to prevent themselves from breathing in allergens or having them touch their hands, where they can be transferred to the face or elsewhere. Those cleaning should also wear clothes that can be easily removed and laundered after a day's work.

Clean windows singularly

Prolonged exposure to outdoor allergens, such as pollen, mold or ragweed, can aggravate allergies. Therefore, if windows are being cleaned, do one at a time and then promptly close the window. Having the air conditioning running can help filter the air as well.



Use exhaust fans

The AAAAI recommends using an exhaust fan in the kitchen and bathrooms to reduce the levels of moisture in these rooms and filter out potential allergens and odors. Moisture

can eventually lead to the growth of mold and mildew, which isn't healthy for anyone, including allergy sufferers, to breathe in.

Invest in a HEPA filter

Vacuums with HEPA filters can trap allergens that are so small that they pass through regular vacuum filters. That means instead of containing them, these small particles are only being shot back into the air where they are easily breathed in. WebMD suggests vacuuming once or twice a week to keep carpets and floors as clean as possible. Plus, don't forget to vacuum upholstered furniture and drapes as well.

Launder with hot water

When it comes time to wash linens, do

so in hot water, which can kill dust mites residing in sheets and blankets. Employ mattress covers to further protect against dust mite allergies.

Shampoo smart

Shampooing a carpet may cause moisture to become trapped in the carpet fibers, leading to increased dust mites or mold growth. Spot-clean stains instead. Otherwise, hire a professional cleaner who will clean and dry the carpet as quickly as possible.

Damp dusting is better

When cleaning up dust or home renovation debris, use a damp cloth or a vinegar solution to wipe down surfaces. This helps trap small particles instead of sending them into the air.

Treat mold issues

Mold can trigger allergic reactions, so it is best to keep it out of a home. Solutions that contain at least 10 percent bleach can be effective at killing mold, but it's best to prevent mold from growing entirely. That means keeping tabs of any moisture issues and addressing them immediately.

Allergies can be problematic, but routine home cleaning in the right way can help alleviate symptoms.

Prepare HVAC systems for warmer days ahead

The arrival of a new season can be an exciting time. Homeowners may have renewed vigor to start home renovation projects or even tackle some cleaning and organization tasks. Before the weather starts to warm up too much, homeowners may want to evaluate their home cooling needs and ensure that all equipment is in good working order.

Spring air conditioning inspections and tuneups are essential steps in system performance. Homeowners should not take for granted that a system that performed optimally last year will do so this year when temperatures climb. Various factors,

including weather damage, dust and grime, mechanical wear and tear, and even rodent or insect infestations, can compromise HVAC systems. Since HVAC systems have so many moving parts, a thorough inspection of such systems can save headaches and money down the road.

According to Heating Ontario, the extreme weather conditions that come along with fall and winter can be especially taxing on homes and the systems that keep them comfortable. During a spring visit, an HVAC technician will perform maintenance on the air conditioner and make sure it is ready for the heat of summertime. This maintenance

may include cleaning the unit, checking controls, calibrating the thermostat, lubricating moving parts, checking refrigerant levels, tightening electrical connections, and clearing any clogs. Homeowners are urged to also change the filter at the start of the cooling season.

Correcting any issues in the HVAC system well in advance of the arrival of warm weather can help ensure comfort when air conditioning is needed. As an added advantage, homeowners should install programmable thermostats if they do not already have them to keep cooling as cost- and energy-efficient as possible.

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Complete these home improvements over the weekend

Home improvement projects ramp up when the weather warms up, as homeowners channel the rejuvenating feelings of spring and tackle their home to-do lists. Large-scale renovations can greatly affect a home, but smaller projects can yield impressive results and be completed over the course of a single weekend.

If time is of the essence, these weekend or one-day projects may satisfy homeowners' desires to fix up their homes.

Create an accent wall.

Painting a focal wall in a home can create a serious impact. The

bonus is it will not take as long or require as many materials as painting an entire room. Accent walls frequently feature a bold color, so decide on placement and tackle this project in less than a day.

Install stair runners.

Dress up hardwood stairs with decorative carpet runners. Runners come in elongated pieces of carpeting or individual pieces that can be placed on each step. If carpeting doesn't fit with the home's design, painting individual stair treads also can create visual appeal.

Dress up the entryway.

An entryway is a guest's first impression of a home. Many entryways can use a minor overhaul, both inside and outside. Paint the front door a different color so it pops from the curb. Install a new mailbox or decorative house numbers. A new welcome mat can change the look as well. Inside, consider laying a new floor. Resilient vinyl tiles come in many different patterns and can mimic the look of wood, travertine or marble. Installing a floor can take a day or two.

Create a gallery on the staircase.

Gather and arrange framed photos, artwork or wall accents so that they ascend the wall of a staircase. This creates a designer touch and can dress up an often barren area of wall space.

Install a fresh light fixture.

Improve drab spaces with a little illumination. *Better Homes & Gardens* suggests replacing an existing fixture with something new and vibrant. If hanging a new fixture is not within one's skill set, free-standing

table or floor lamps also can cast a new glow on a space.

Install a new faucet.

Instantly improve a kitchen or a bathroom with new fixtures. New faucets can provide aesthetic appeal and low-flow faucets can help conserve water.

Add molding. Molding can add instant aesthetic appeal to a room. Molding is appropriate near the floor, at the top of walls where they meet the ceiling, or even mid-wall as a chair rail. Some homeowners like to create framed molding on walls in formal living spaces.

Update kitchen or bathroom hardware.

Replacing hardware is a fast and easy project, but one that can have immediate impact. Swap out tired or outdated hardware for newer brushed metals and more impactful shapes and designs.

Home renovations do not need to take weeks or months. Many projects can be completed over the course of a weekend.



How to hang photos and artwork with ease



Personal touches turn a house into a home. Hanging pictures, whether they're personal photographs or artwork, can really change the character of a room.

Unfortunately, some people may not know the proper ways to display pictures on a wall. Design maven Martha Stewart advises that the first step is to gather all of the pictures that are in consideration for hanging. This will enable a person to see what is available and edit their selection based on the space available, theme or color scheme. Having the artwork there enables a person to move it around like a puzzle until the placement feels just right.

Next, plan on hanging artwork at 57 inches on center, according to the renovation experts at Apartment Therapy. "On center" means the middle of the photograph or painting will always be at 57", as this measurement represents the average human eye height. This height is regularly used as a standard in many galleries and museums.

When the goal is to hang multiple

pictures, treat the entire grouping as a single unit. This means creating the layout and finding the center of the middle piece of the grouping. To make picture grouping easier, use paper templates with arrows to indicate whether the artwork will be hung horizontally or vertically. These templates can then be easily taped to the wall and rearranged until the grouping is ideal.

There are no hard and fast rules concerning frames, meaning they do not all have to match. But placing framed artwork side by side can give a person a feel for whether the images and the frames work together in the space. Some people like to use frames of similar colors and sizes. Others want the eclectic mix-and-match appeal. It's ultimately up to the homeowner.

Measuring is key to hanging a picture correctly on the wall. Take into consideration the type of attachment, whether it's D-rings, sawtooth hangers, wire, or other fasteners on the back. Measure from the top of the frame to the hanger. Measure the wall to achieve the

57" on center location, and then calculate where this falls within the height of the artwork and frame top. Adjust accordingly and mark. Then measure the distance from the frame top to the hanger location on the wall.

Be sure to take the weight of the picture into consideration when selecting hanging hardware. Wall anchors may be needed if measurements determine a wall stud will not help secure the artwork — to keep the frame sturdy in the drywall. Home improvement resource Today's Homeowner also suggests using self-adhesive rubber bumpers to the bottom corners on the back of the frame before hanging so that the picture will not damage the wall and will help it hang level.

It can take a few attempts to hang pictures correctly, but with practice it should come with greater ease. The good news is there are new products constantly being evolved to make picture hanging easier, including those that enable removal and relocation of artwork without damaging walls.



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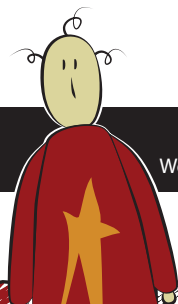
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How to control common **spring pests**



Ants are a nuisance that become more active as the weather warms.

Several flea control products are available to control fleas on cats and dogs. There also may be powders and sprays to alleviate flea infestations in the home. Vacuuming is also very effective in killing larvae in the carpet and at picking up adults.

Wasps

An errant wasp, hornet or yellow jacket may have survived winter and ridden out the colder temperatures within a home. Once the weather warms, queens will begin to look for places to lay eggs and establish colonies. Treating areas where wasps are seen entering and leaving the home is key. Seal holes as soon as possible.

Although wasps help control other insect populations, their painful stings and potentially aggressive nature can make them challenging to have around a home. If a nest is found, hire a professional to remove it.

Just when winter thaws out and people are anxious to enjoy the blooming flowers and luscious lawns of spring, pesky pests can appear and impact comfort levels and safety.

Many pests resume their levels of activity as spring draws closer and temperatures warm up. The presence of these insects and rodents may cause problems in and around a home, which makes it essential to recognize them and avoid issues. The following are some of the more common spring pests and how to remedy infestations.

Pavement ants

Pavement ants are some of the most common pests residents encounter inside and outside of their homes. These ants are light brown to black with appendages that are lighter than the rest of their bodies. Small in stature, pavement ants have parallel lines on their heads and thorax, according to pest extermination company Orkin.

Although pavement ants nest outdoors, they can enter homes through small crevices in search of food scraps. Their large colonies may not disappear until treatment is introduced. Keep foods in tightly sealed containers, clear counters and floors of crumbs, and address water sources, such as leaks. Pesticides may be needed in extreme conditions.

Fleas

Fleas are tiny, jumping, biting pests that must find a host upon which to live. As ectoparasites, they feed on blood while living on the body of living hosts. Pets can bring fleas inside the yard and home in warm weather. According to the University of California Statewide Integrated Pest Management Program, flea larvae develop more quickly at higher temperatures. At normal room temperatures, the entire life cycle of a flea is about 18 days.



Spiders

Many spiders are not harmful enough to humans and pets to be much of a problem. In fact, spiders can be helpful to have around to control the populations of other insects. Still, many homeowners would prefer these web-slinging friends remain outdoors. Therefore, sealing cracks in a home's foundation and repairing small openings around windows and doors can help keep spiders out. Also, alleviating moisture issues in basements, garages or attics may keep out other bugs that would be prey to spiders.

Homeowners can take the steps necessary to cut down on pests in and around their homes.

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