

HOME

Spring

APRIL 2011
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Northern Virginia
The Daily

THE DAILY'S ANNUAL HOME AND GARDEN GUIDE



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4 Once Popular Trends Losing Favor Among Homeowners

Housing trends come and go. Just think of those avocado-colored stoves from the 1970s or the formica bedroom sets of the 1980s. The woodburning fireplace was a must-have home accessory in the early 1990s, but now it is losing ground to pellet stoves and greener options. Here are a few other housing trends that are going out of style and making room for newer designs.

1. Kitchen desks: What used to be all the rage a few years back are now being passed over for larger desks in family rooms or bedrooms. Kitchen desks tend to be small and are more likely to collect clutter than provide a viable working space.

2. Carpeting: Although a little over half of all homes still have carpeting, wood floors, tiles and vinyl products are gaining ground over the once staple of interior design.

3. Skylights: The once desired windows on roofs have continued to decline in popularity. Many new home manufacturers have nixed skylights from their designs. Improperly installed skylights tend to leak and can be maintenance nightmares.

4. Living rooms: Homeowners who do not desire a formal living space are eschewing living rooms for all-purpose rooms that provide a better place for the family to gather. If a person prefers the TV be separate from a sitting area, then two distinct rooms still may be needed.

HOME *spring* inside:

spring greening

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SPRING CLEAN

your way to a healthier home

Spring cleaning is an annual tradition at households across the country.

Whether you live in a studio apartment or a sprawling mansion, the rejuvenating feeling of spring stems from more than just the warm air outdoors. It's also the opportunity to open the windows and let that warm air breathe some new life into your home.

Though spring cleaning is primarily about ridding a home of a season's worth of clutter, it should also be about making a home healthier for the months to come. Once the clutter has been cleared, the following cleaning tips can make your home a healthy haven when those inevitable spring showers arrive.

Protect against viruses and bacteria

Effectively cleaning a home can involve several preventive measures to keep everyone free from viruses and bacteria. It can take as little as 45 seconds to disinfect a surface of harmful bacteria, including those associated with food poisoning and even infections such as MRSA, and even less time to disinfect a surface against viruses while protecting a home's inhabitants from viruses including Influenza A2 and others that can cause the common cold and respiratory illnesses.

Clear the garage and basement of potentially harmful supplies

Garages and basements are often used to store paints, paint thinners, oils, solvents, and other potentially toxic supplies. If any of these toxic supplies are old, consult your local sanitation department to determine how best to discard such items. For those you want to keep, be sure the lids are tight and not leaking potentially harmful chemicals into the air.

Make up for lost time

For those who don't consider spring cleaning an annual tradition, it's never too late to start making your home a healthier place. Such was the case with Richard Tobias, who was responsible for cleaning his father's old apartment after his father moved to a nursing home. A smoker for 40 years, Tobias' father left behind an apartment with walls encrusted with decades of cigarette smoke. "I sprayed the walls, doors, countertops, ceilings, furniture, and anything that was going to be saved with Spray Nine, and the nicotine did not stand a chance," said Tobias.

Embrace eco-friendly cleaning

A healthy home should also be one that's healthy for the environment. Cleaners that utilize a water-based formula, are much more eco-friendly and offer a better choice over chlorine bleach or pine-based cleaning products, which can negatively impact air quality and cause discoloration and damage to surface finishes in some cases.

Tackle mold and mildew


Few homes can escape the wrath of mold and mildew during the winter months. In addition to being unsightly, exposure to mold can also cause a host of physical problems, including respiratory ailments, eye irritation, and nasal and sinus congestion. Highly effective at controlling mold and mildew, Spray Nine® Cleaner/Disinfectant (www.spraynine.com), an eco-friendly, water-based cleaner which can be used on your car, boat or RV, and in your office, is perfect for tackling existing mold and mildew around the house and preventing any future problems, such as those that commonly result from spring rains. It has also been proven effective in hospitals, schools, institutions, and restaurants.

Clean the filters, ducts and vents


Spring might be synonymous with warmer temperatures, but for allergy sufferers spring can be a difficult time of year. When spring cleaning, don't forget to thoroughly clean filters, ducts and vents to help decrease exposure to airborne allergens.


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 To foster a healthy lawn, do not cut more than one third of the blade off, and no more than one inch total at any one mowing. Keep grass at two to three inches.



For more information on ways to reduce yard waste and improve the environment, visit www.fcrecycles.net or telephone 665-5643.

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- fix those drafts.
- alternative landscaping.
- go low-flow.
- shop for sustainable materials.
- double it up.
- unplug the appliances.

Adopting an eco-friendly lifestyle is something many people do selflessly in an effort to protect the environment and ensure that the generations to come have a healthy planet at their disposal. But that same lifestyle can also pay instant dividends, helping homeowners save money and creating a healthier atmosphere in which to live.

As spring cleaning season gets set to hit full swing, what better time to do some "spring greening"? Homeowners can make the most of spring cleaning by making several manageable changes around the house that can protect the environment without disrupting one's current lifestyle.

spring greening

Manageable Means to Going Green Around the House

Instead of using harmful chemical cleaners when cleaning around the house this spring, choose green cleaning supplies that don't release harmful chemicals or toxins into the air.

Spring is a popular time to repaint rooms in the house. Homeowners with painting on their to-do list this spring cleaning season should choose no- or low-VOC (volatile organic compound) paints.

Chances are, after a long winter homeowners are well aware of which rooms were warm and which might have had drafts. Visit those colder rooms and plug any air leaks around the house. This will result in a lower heating bill next winter and could save substantial amounts of energy. For homeowners with attics, checking the attic for air infiltration should be done each and every year.

Xeriscaping, a style of landscape design that requires little or no irrigation, can save significant amounts of water. However, homeowners should consult a landscaping professional to determine if xeriscaping is a viable alternative to more traditional landscaping in their region. If xeriscaping can be done, then homeowners will save water while also reducing the use of potentially harmful pesticides and chemicals commonly used to keep lawns looking lush.

Spring cleaning isn't just for clearing

out the winter clutter. It's also a time when many homeowners fix up the house. If replacing showerheads, faucets or even toilets is on the to-do list, replace existing fixtures with low-flow models to save water and money.

Sustainable flooring is growing in popularity now that going green has truly taken off. Search for wood that has been harvested in an environmentally friendly ways.

Sustainable flooring materials include

bamboo and cork, which many homeowners find as aesthetically appealing as it is eco-friendly.



Single-pane windows not only allow lots of external noise into the house, but they also contribute to heat loss in the winter, forcing residents to turn up the thermostat and waste more energy as a result. Installing double-pane windows will keep more external noise at bay, and allow homeowners to minimize heat loss in the winter.

Perhaps nothing around the house silently uses energy as much as a plugged-in appliance that's not being used. Certain estimates suggest as much as 40 percent of a monthly utility bill is going toward powering home appliances that are turned off. While every home is different, it's a safe bet that most homes can save energy by simply unplugging appliances that aren't in use.

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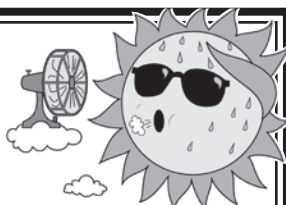
things to consider
**Before Buying
 a 3D Television**

With 3D programming on the rise, consumers must decide if 3D televisions are right for them.

The latest craze in technology appears to be 3D televisions. Whereas 3D was once a novelty at the movies once or twice a year, nowadays 3D technology is rapidly becoming the norm at home and in the theater. Select television networks have begun to broadcast in 3D, and consumers appear ready to embrace the next wave of television technology. But is 3D technology worth it for the average consumer? It helps to consider a few things before deciding if 3D should come to your living room any time soon.

See **3D TV**, page 8

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3D TV, from page 7

Cost

Many are aware of the sticker price of 3D televisions, which is still considerably high because of the relative infancy of the technology. However, it's the cost of the accessories that might be of greater concern. Much like in a movie theater, home 3D viewers will need 3D glasses to watch their television sets. While many manufacturers promise two sets of glasses with the purchase of a 3D television, others still only provide one pair. But consumers who enjoy hosting viewing parties or having friends over for the big game will need to ensure there are enough sets of glasses so their guests can enjoy the show as well. With glasses going for more than \$100 a pair, that can make a 3D television a considerable expense, one that extends beyond the initial sticker price.

Programming



While 3D enthusiasts love to hear that 3D programming is on the rise, the current slate of 3D programming is not nearly as extensive as it is for more traditional programming. This might only be a minor consideration, however, as 3D programming figures to grow in the years to come. Sports fans should also know that ESPN currently broadcasts in 3D, which is enough for many sports fans to dive right in.

Gaming

Gamers might find 3D television worth it regardless of the cost. 3D gaming brings gamers seemingly right into the game, offering gamers entry into the virtual reality they've been yearning for as games have grown more and more advanced. The 3D format figures to be integrated into gaming systems sooner rather than later, with some systems already promising the format is just around the corner.



Viewing Problems



Not all viewers can enjoy 3D technology. For example, viewers with astigmatism have found depth perception difficult with 3D televisions. Eye strain might also prove problematic, particularly for those people who must wear glasses when watching television. For that group, it can be difficult or bothersome to watch 3D programming with eyeglasses and the necessary 3D glasses.

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More and more people are taking cooking and baking into their own hands and equipping their kitchens with the necessities for churning out quality meals.

Possibly spurred on by the growing number of DIY cooking shows on television, individuals are experimenting with lavish cakes, cookies and other culinary treats. They want their kitchens to offer the amenities that will enable them to whip up delicious food items.

A lot of the prep work that goes into cooking and baking takes place on countertops in the kitchen. There are many durable counter surfaces, but not all of them are suitable for preparing foods.

Marble counters are one of the coveted surfaces for prepping foods and many baked goods. Although marble is also very attractive in the kitchen, it has many properties that make it conducive to the kitchen environment.

Marble is one of the most durable stones available. The price of marble clearly illustrates its enduring nature. Ancient civilizations turned to marble to make buildings and statues because of its durability. Most of these structures are still in good condition today.

Countertops of marble are heat-resistant and will not burn or catch fire. But it's best to place a hot plate between the marble and the pan or pot to protect the finish that may be on the countertop.

Due to the strength of marble, countertops made from this material are also highly resistant to scratches, cracks, and breakage. However, the sealant on the marble could become scratched or damaged and require stripping. Talk with a countertop installer about the use of the marble in the kitchen to determine the best ways to protect the stone.

Marble is often cool to the touch, making it an ideal surface to roll out pastry doughs and sugar pastes for baking. Many fine chefs also rely on a marble rolling pin to avoid sticking of doughs due to heating.

Because marble can be porous, it's suggested to seal it properly so it won't discolor or harbor bacteria.



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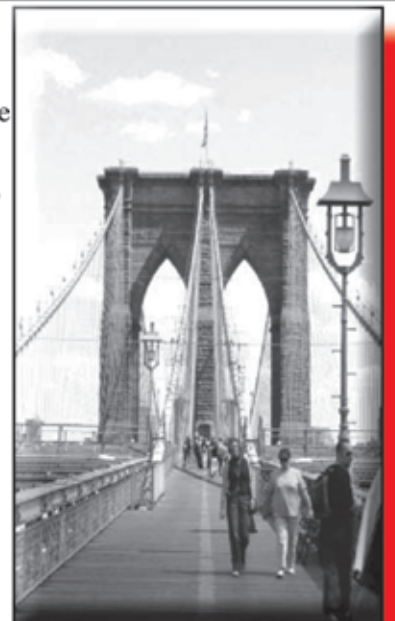
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New Curb Appeal products for 2011



This stunning home exterior was created with low-maintenance products that add curb appeal to the home.

Ready to spruce up your home's exterior this year? Several recently introduced products are designed to add curb appeal to your house while making maintenance hassles disappear.

Start by looking at the top of your home. If your roof appears old and dingy, or if it's leaking or wearing thin, then it's time to research options for a roof replacement. Start by considering synthetic slate or shake tiles. DaVinci Roofscapes (www.davinciroofscapes.com) offers 49 roof colors along with 28 standard color blends. Recently-hired national color expert Kate Smith is available to assist homeowners in deciding what color roof to install on homes.

"Selecting roofing colors that complement the rest of the home's exterior can be challenging for some people," says Smith, CMG and owner of Sensational Color. "That's why we've developed an online color design program to offer support, tips and one-on-one color counseling to help homeowners maximize their roofing investment by selecting a color they can live with for many years.

"Homeowners shouldn't be afraid of color. Contrasting colors, complementary colors and color accents on a home, when done right, can all add tremendously to the curb appeal of a house."

Once you've selected a roofing color — whether it's a Harbor Gray blend or solid dark clay — it's time to move down the exterior of the home to the windows. Vinyl replacement windows complement a home's external colors.

Available in Brick, Chocolate, Bronze, Cream, Driftwood, Pine, and Tan, The Decorum collection by Simonton Windows (www.simonton.com) can be married with impressive glass packages to create energy-efficient units. And, there are interior frame options of authentic Antique Cherry, Maple and Contemporary woodgrains. Color-matched sculptured grids and hardware complete the new window offering. Just imagine a brick red low-maintenance vinyl window frame set against the pure white clapboard siding on a Federal-style home in New England. With this picture in mind, you can immediately understand the growing trend of

selecting colorful window exteriors to enhance the home.

That imaginary home wouldn't be the same without a red front door with crisp white trim pieces surrounding it to create a stunning entryway. Therma-Tru (www.thermatru.com) and Fypon (www.fypon.com) have teamed up to create entryway solutions for every homeowner. The Classic Craft Canvas Collection entry door series means homeowners can select an energy-efficient front door, paint it red and gain the low-maintenance benefits of fiberglass. The smooth, paintable surface of the door, which features wide center panels and rich embossment details that rival high-end custom wood doors, provides security and durability in the home.

Try flanking the door with a set of easy-to-install decorative urethane pilasters. Next top off the door with a crosshead and pediment, and you have an eye-catching entryway. Resistant to moisture, insects, rot and humidity, both the urethane trim and entry door are the ideal low-maintenance solution to adding curb appeal to the home.

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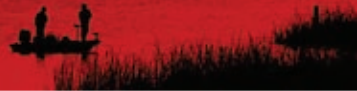
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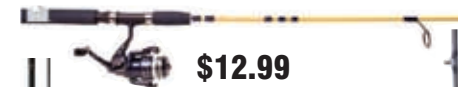


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• **Lawn mower:** To maintain a healthy lawn it will have to be trimmed to the correct height. A manual or powered lawn mower is the essential landscaper's tool.



Must-Have Tools

for the Outdoor Handyman (or Woman)

• **Various garden hoes:** Hoes can be used for breaking up soil, weeding, cultivating, aerating, and many other purposes.

• **Spading fork:** Another tool that loosens soil with straight tines that dig through dense soil.

• **Soil cultivator:** A multi-pronged tool that breaks up clods of soil and grass to provide easier planting.

• **Gloves:** Avoid blisters and insect bites with durable gloves that protect the hands.

Landscaping can add value to a home. The right tools make most jobs easier.

Spring has sprung for most areas of the country and the average homeowner's "honey-do" list likely has its share of outdoor landscaping tasks that need to be tackled. The right tools can make easier work of outdoor chores.

A report from the Associated Landscape Contractors of America titled "Economic Benefits of Landscape" states that landscaping can add as much as 14 percent to the resale value of a building and speed its sale by as much as 6 weeks. Homeowners looking to sell their home or just improve its market value will want to consider landscaping a viable investment. A March 2003 article in Smart Money noted that homeowners can expect to earn back 150 percent or more of their landscape investment through the value it brings to a property.

Whatever the landscaping project, the right tools will make any task that much easier. There are certain items every homeowner should have in his or her gardening arsenal.

See **MUSTHAVE**, page 14



• **Collection bags/bins:** To properly dispose of organic matter like leaves and branches, it pays to have recyclable or reusable bags on hand for transporting waste.

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MUST HAVE, from page 13



• Wheelbarrow:

Transporting gravel, rocks, mulch, shrubbery, and many other garden essentials is made easier with the help of a wheelbarrow or a garden cart.

• **Branch pruner:** A durable branch trimmer/pruner can cut through thick or thin branches and keep landscape items tidy. Pruning also helps promote growth of many flowers and shrubs.



• **Various garden hoes:** A multipurpose shovel can dig through dirt, gravel and the like.

• **Rake:** A steel-pronged rake will till soil and spread out mulch and other organic matter in planting beds. A flexible rake is good for collecting leaves and thatch.

• **Edger:** Available as manual or gas powered, an edger gives planting beds and the edges of lawns a clean look.

• **String trimmer:** Weeds can easily be trimmed with a string trimmer that can work around bushes and other hard-to-reach areas.

• **Hoses:** Drip irrigation hoses can deliver water right to plants' roots where they need it most. A regular nozzle-powered hose can be used for cleaning and misting plants and surrounding hardscapes.

• **Compost bin:** "Black gold" is the ideal landscaping supplement. By creating compost from discarded food, a homeowner can generate the prime fertilizer needed to keep plants healthy.

• **Overhead pruner:** Errant branches in hard-to-reach areas can be trimmed with an overhead pruner with an extendable arm.

Built Stronger to last longer

Durable vinyl windows and polymer roofing tiles help create a low-maintenance exterior for this home.

Building product manufacturers have come a long way over the past several decades when it comes to the creation of products for the home. Decades ago wood roofing shingles or wood millwork had a relatively short lifespan due to environmental conditions the products faced. In today's marketplace, homeowners can easily locate building products that have lifetime warranties and are constructed to withstand almost anything Mother Nature throws at them.

Says Mark Clement, contractor and host of radio show. "In particular, products like DaVinci Roofscapes slate and shake roofing tiles are made of polymer and have a 50-year warranty. And, fiberglass doors, urethane millwork and vinyl windows are all great examples of products constructed for low-maintenance ease combined with very impressive product warranties — plus they look great!"

If you're constructing a new home, start by paying special attention to the basement. By requesting precast wall panels you can add valuable living space to your

See **STRONGER**, page 31



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Delightful Herbs

Local organization enthusiastic about sharing knowledge of these useful plants

By **Josette Keelor**

Daily staff

jkeelor@nvdaily.com

MIDDLETOWN, VA

Last spring, the horticulture committee of the Shenandoah Herb Society started an herb teaching garden at Sunflower Cottage, on Reliance Road in Middletown, in hopes of teaching others about herbs.

Now that the garden is flourishing, committee members hope to offer monthly herb walks, said the committee's chairwoman, Phoebe Reeve of Winchester.

On a recent spring morning, she and two other members were preparing the garden for the season, weeding and beginning to harvest early herbs.

"We educated each other about the actual horticultural aspect of it" when first planning out the garden, Reeve said of the five-member committee. Other

members of the herb society also help keep the garden going through the growing season, she said.

Though they have not set up a schedule yet for garden walks, their upcoming schedule is pretty packed, with the Virginia Herb Festival just around the corner on the second weekend of June.

"We are a chapter of the Herb Society of America, which is a national organization," said Billie Clifton, founding president of the horticulture committee and owner of Sunflower Cottage, where the herb society meets.

"There are five chapters in Virginia, and we are the Shenandoah chapter," she said.

"We have all the perks and benefits of being in the national group," she said, and though the membership meeting has already passed for this year, she hopes to encourage others to join.

One local benefit of belonging to the Herb Society of America is receiving



Dennis Grundman/Daily

Phoebe Reeve looks over a rosemary bush at the herb garden at Sunflower Cottage

discounts at the Museum of the Shenandoah Valley, Blandy Experimental Farm at the Virginia State Arboretum in Boyce and at Sunflower Cottage. Members also receive discounts to national catalogs and garden stores.

The local chapter meets eight times a year, Clifton said — once a month, March through June and September through December.

Membership is \$75 a year and includes

See **HERBS**, page 34

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J.E.B. Stuart, White House, VA, June 29, 1862

by *M. Kunstler*

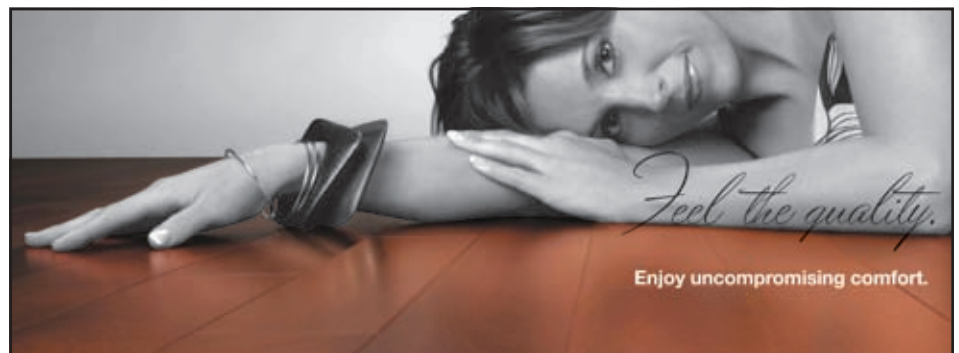
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Protecting Hardwood Floors



Homeowners can take several steps to protect their investment in timeless and attractive hardwood floors.

Roughly half of all homes have hardwood flooring, and industry professionals suspect more and more homeowners are looking to hardwood flooring for their homes.

When surveyed, 90 percent of real estate agents have said that hardwood flooring is a desirable feature in a home. Those agents also say property with hardwood flooring sells faster than one with carpeting or another flooring option.

90% 50%

of real estate agents have said that hardwood flooring is a desirable feature

roughly, of all homes have hardwood flooring and the number is on the rise

With hardwood flooring so prevalent in homes, protecting those beautiful wood floors is a major priority for homeowners. Caring for hardwood floors only takes some common sense precautions and minimal maintenance. Today's hardwood floors are often produced with durable sealants that protect the wood underneath or are comprised of composite or reclaimed wood products. But that doesn't mean precautions should be taken to further protect against potential damage to the flooring.

- Place area rugs or mats at the doorways entering the home. This way sand, dirt and other debris can be wiped off at the entryway and not carried onto the wood flooring where it can cause abrasions over time.
- Pay careful attention to which types of shoes are worn on the floors. High heels or cleats can damage the wood. Removing shoes prior to walking on the floor is a safer bet.
- Choose the right type of cleaner for the floor. Do not assume

just because a particular cleaner is adequate for wood cabinetry or furniture that it is also fine for wood flooring. Check the label.

- Use area rugs and carpet runners on areas of the floor that tend to be high-traffic areas. This will prevent these areas from being worn down unevenly from other areas of the floor.
- Do not allow water or other liquids to stand on the floor for a long duration. This can cause degradation of the wood and staining.
- Use felt or plastic protectors on the "feet" of dining room chairs or other furniture to prevent against scuffing or scratches. Wood flooring can be an expensive addition to any home, but one that is sought after for its aesthetic appeal. To ensure a floor remains in good condition over the long haul, take action to protect hardwood floors as soon as possible.

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Faux painting techniques are an economical and innovative way to transform any surface and can complement any decorating style. Dull concrete floors, both indoors and out, can be brought dramatically to life with a latex paint such as DRYLOK® Latex Concrete Floor Paint.

Planning and Preparation

Before choosing a design, look carefully at your surface and space. Some designs are useful for disguising flaws in a floor. For other designs you may need to patch and smooth flawed surfaces first.

You will also need to think about the traffic in the area you are painting. Is it worth doing an elaborate, time-consuming pattern in a high traffic area? Large, bold patterns may be out of scale for a small room. Equally, small, detailed patterns may get lost in large spaces.

Inspirations for Faux Painted Floors

Brick and Stone

Brick and stone finishes can add texture and/or color and can be effective indoors and outdoors.

Tiles and Mosaics

Faux terra-cotta tiles are a versatile option for porches, patios and dining areas. The earthy appearance creates a warm, earthy feel and goes well with the rustic Tuscan look and matches many decors.

Patterned and Textured Finishes

For a finish that isn't too busy, you can use paint to create subtle visual texture. With pattern, your choice is endless. Covering an entire surface is one option. Alternatively, you could paint a faux rug, perhaps with patterns inspired by oriental carpets.

The most important thing to remember is to follow the proper preparation and patching procedures from the product label. If you are using a pressure washer to clean the surface, do not use on a pressure setting above 1750 psi to avoid damaging the concrete. Remember concrete acts like a sponge. Pressure washing and cleaning in general may trap residual moisture in the concrete. To check for trapped



Depending on personal taste, homeowners can create a host of faux floor finishes and bring their patio to life with DRYLOK® Latex Concrete Floor Paint.



moisture, tape a 12" x 12" piece of 3 mil plastic or aluminum foil tightly on all four edges to the surface. Remove it after 24 hours. If the floor side of the plastic or foil is damp, allow additional drying and then repeat the test. It is very important not to have trapped moisture in the concrete; it is the number one reason why epoxy and latex concrete floor paints fail.

Protecting the Pattern

A clear protective coat, such as DRYLOK® WetLook Sealer is the perfect finish to protect the design from scraping of patio furniture, grease, weathering and washings. Remember to use a product that is made to be a clear protective coat, not a penetrating sealer. A penetrating sealer is designed to enter the pores of the surface and settle into the masonry. It will not penetrate the floor paint. The clear sealer is a protective measure that should be repeated every two to four years depending on the use and exposure of the surface.

Bold or subtle, bright or neutral, faux painting techniques can give your floor an expensive-looking makeover that won't break the bank.

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The best vacations lift us out of the frenzy of our lives, whisking us off to faraway places that relax and rejuvenate us.

Yet a great vacation can also be a great financial strain as well — and really, how relaxing is that? Especially since once the trip is over, there's typically little to show for all the expense beyond a few snapshots you can post on Facebook.

So how do you meet the pressing need for a stress-reducing change of scenery without wiping out your savings in the process? The solution may actually be simpler, and closer, than you think: Open your own back door, and begin imagining the leisure possibilities right beyond your doorstep!

Instead of throwing a bunch of money at a short-term getaway, consider investing a portion of it into transforming your back yard into a personal relaxation oasis.

Don't be put off by how big a task that sounds. Start out simple, making additional changes as finances allow, and inspiration strikes.

To begin with, your yard may need some degree of facelift. Hire a quality professional landscaper who can design around native plant species, for maximum benefit and minimal upkeep.

Yet landscaping is really only setting the stage — you still need some kind of show-stopper to complete your yard's transformation.

Pools and decks are whopping financial commitments. There is, however, a less bank-breaking path to backyard-relaxation bliss: Invest in the very symbol of relaxation itself. Invest in a hammock and hammock stand.

"Repeat customers are always telling me the best mini-vacation they've ever

bought has been a hammock and a hammock stand," says J.R. Pelletier, manager of TheHammockCompany.com, an international leader in hammock sales. "A good hammock can feel as if you've just caught a flight straight out of your stressful daily life."

Plus, a quality fabric hammock can make your yard look as pretty as a vacation postcard as well. Recent advances in all-weather synthetic textiles have vastly expanded design and color options for fabric hammocks.

"It used to be fabric hammocks were just drab," notes Walter R. Perkins III, CEO of The HammockSource, the world's largest manufacturer and seller of hammocks. "Owning one meant watching what little color it had fade like a flower by summer's end. But today, a quality fabric hammock can be a show-stopper for your yard, for many seasons to come."

Add an arc-style cypress or faux-wicker hammock stand, and your outdoor living space becomes not only a gorgeous relaxation destination, but also one that requires no checked-baggage fees or full-body scans to get to!

Your favorite patch of yard is finally the primo spot for unwinding, a personal relaxation space for letting your mind wander to all those distant getaway places you might one day like to go. But for now, you're pretty content right where you are, aren't you?



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What's the deal with all these **STINKBUGS?**

By Elizabeth Smoot

Daily Staff

esmoot@nvdaily.com

There are few things that unite crop producers, horticulturalists, business owners and homeowners like the *Halyomorpha halys*.

The brown marmorated stink bug is an equal opportunity pest – annoying homeowners grown weary of finding the bugs crawling across their floors and walls and also wreaking economic havoc in the agricultural community. Stink bugs indigenous to the United States have been around for decades, but the brown marmorated variety is relatively new. Native to Asia, it was first discovered in the United States in Allenton, Pa., in 2001 having arrived, it is suspected, in shipping containers. They were discovered in Virginia in 2005 and have been found in as many as 30 states.

The stink bug, which gets its name from the putrid odor it releases when squashed or stressed, doesn't bite, sting or pose a health risk to humans, but is an aggravation to homeowners and a financial disaster to growers. The infestation is so bad that agricultural researchers are working feverishly to develop pest management guidelines for growers. A discussion led by 10th District U.S. Rep.

Frank Wolf was held April 18 in Loudoun County and focused on ways to control the infestation and minimize economic damage in the region.

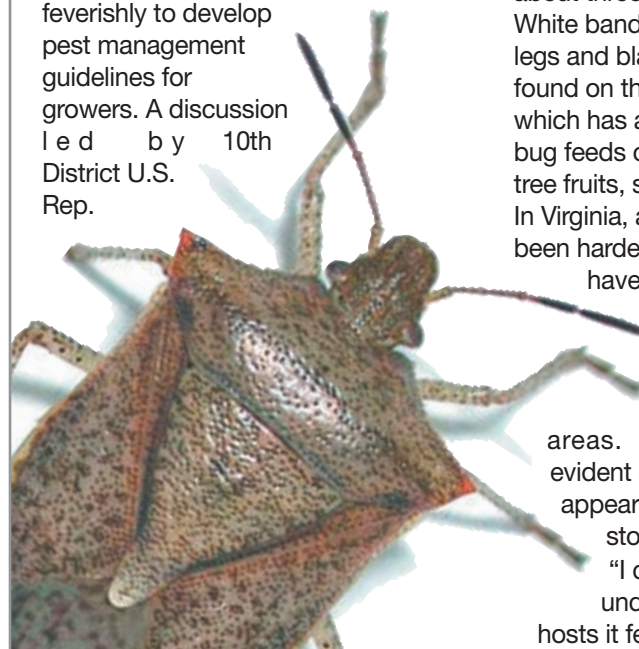
The stink bug “is the most invasive pest introduction fruit growers have seen in a long, long time,” said Dr. Christopher Bergh, associate professor of entomology with Virginia Tech's Winchester Agricultural Research and Extension Center in Frederick County and a member of the Brown Marmorated Stink Bug Working Group, a collaborative team of researchers, stakeholders, regulators and private industry representatives from around the country. Studying this pest “is going to dominate everything we do for a while,” he said.

Last year, the stink bug population “reached epidemic proportions,” Bergh said. The Northern Shenandoah Valley is a year or two behind West Virginia and Maryland in population size but still, some local peach growers experienced 100 percent loss of their crops last year and some apple growers lost half their fruit production, he said.

The brown marmorated stink bug is a grayish brown, shield-backed bug only about three-quarters of an inch long. White bands color its antennae and legs and black and white spots are found on the abdomen. Adults fly, which has aided their migration. The bug feeds on many foods, including tree fruits, seed pods and vegetables. In Virginia, apples and peaches have been hardest hit and high densities have been found in soybeans

and corn. The bug feeds by piercing fruits and vegetables, leaving discolored and sunken areas. Damage is not always evident at harvest and has appeared on the fruit in cold storage.

“I don't think we fully understand the full range of hosts it feeds on,” Bergh said.



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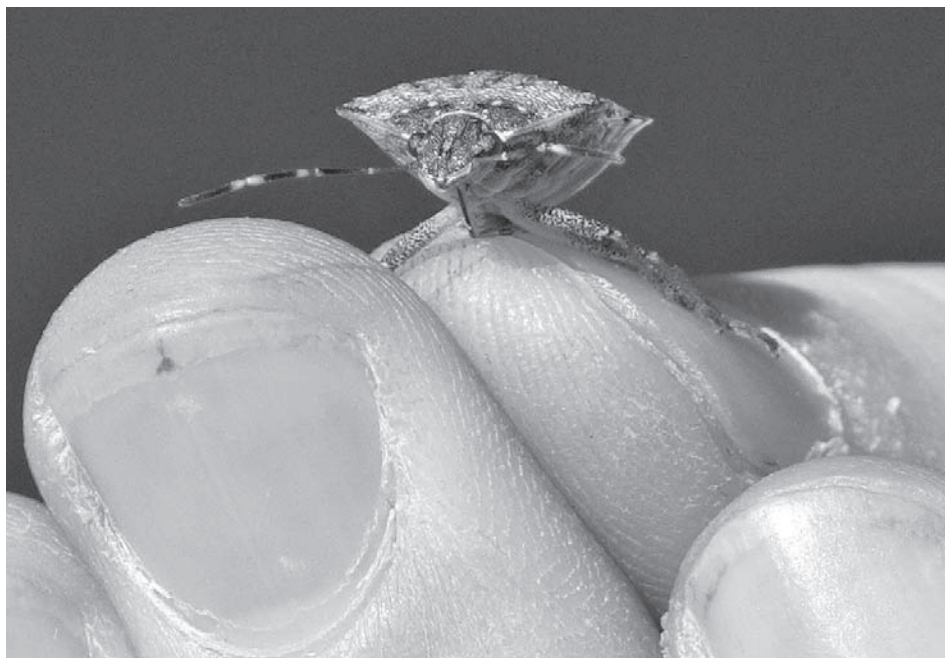
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Rich Cooley/Daily

The stink bug has no natural predators in the United States and, so far, pesticides haven't proven effective. "It's my understanding that most experts don't think we can spray our way out of this one," said Bobby Clark, Shenandoah County extension agent.

"We don't have a lot of hard data from the field on the effectiveness of one program verses another," Bergh said, but laboratory evaluations are proving helpful. Last month, Berg and his associates placed traps at four local farms and will monitor those throughout this growing season. A doctoral research associate at the lab has received a grant to determine when apple and peach crops are most vulnerable and will conduct a complex study throughout the summer as well.

Tracy Leskey, a research entomologist with the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Appalachian Fruit Research Station in Kearneysville, W.Va., and a founder of the stink bug working group, has screened more than 50 chemical compounds and has provided that data to extension agents and crop consultants as they brace for the onslaught this growing season. "As this insect rapidly established in the region, we all responded," she said.

The U.S. Apple Association estimates the damage in mid-Atlantic states last year at \$37 million. The four biggest apple-producing states in the region — Virginia, West Virginia, Maryland and Pennsylvania — were down in production 18 percent.

Jack Grove, a Clarke County extension agent, said damage for growers will multiply this year because of historically high food prices. "They're not picky, they feed on whatever,"

Grove said of the bug. With grain and bean prices higher than normal, any damage to a crop will be a significant blow to farmers, Grove said.

Cordell Watt, president of the Frederick County Fruit Grower's Association and owner of Timber Ridge Fruit Farm in Gore, first noticed the bugs four years ago "but last year they became a real problem," he said. Watt, a third-generation grower, thinks all damage estimates are low.

"With other pests, I feel we have a fighting chance. We don't see how we can tackle this thing."

**Cordell Watt,
President of the
Frederick County
Fruit Grower's
Association**

See **STINKBUG**, page 37

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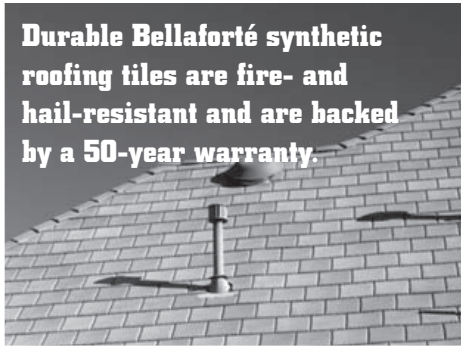
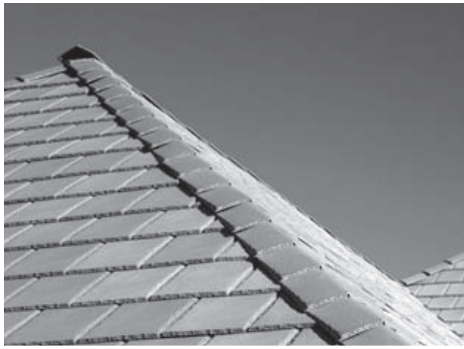
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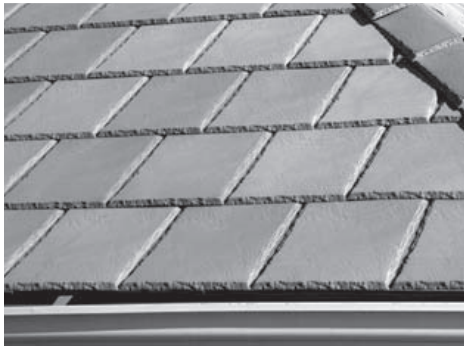
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In Italian, Bellaforté translates to beautiful and strong." In America, many homeowners are discovering that the translation means the exact same thing — especially when it comes to their polymer roofing tiles.

"We looked into many options when deciding to replace the asphalt shingle roof on our home," says Kathy Bradshaw, an Oklahoma homeowner. "Our research brought us to DaVinci Roofscapes. The Bellaforté roof that's now on our house is absolutely beautiful — it's the icing on the cake for our 3,800-square foot ranch-style home."

Bradshaws' decision to have the synthetic roofing tile installed on her home has impacted both her pocketbook and the neighborhood in a positive way. "Because these tiles are fire resistant and can stand up to severe weather conditions, we're able to save on our homeowners insurance," says Bradshaw. "And, our neighbors were so impressed with the look and quality of our roof that they've had synthetic tiles installed on their home."

The cost-effective, high performance roofing tiles are gaining in popularity due to their eco-friendly structure and ability to add both beauty and value to the home. Designed to complement a

wide variety of architectural home styles, Bellaforté tiles include a 50-year warranty. The patented snap-fit, self-locating roofing tiles feature a built-in rain gutter. Ideal for all types of weather situations, the 12-inch synthetic slate roofing tiles have achieved some of the strictest testing ratings in the country, including the Miami Dade Notice of Acceptance (NOA) and Florida Building Code (FBC) qualifications.

Available in slate black and slate gray, along with six different blended color combinations, these synthetic Bellaforté tiles use 20 percent less material than traditional synthetic and natural slate shingles, saving resources and reducing the tile weight. A square of Bellaforté roofing tile weighs just 185 pounds, helping reduce both installation time and landfill load due to reduced construction waste.

Using the Color Design tool at www.davinciroofscapes.com, homeowners can create their own custom color blend from 49 colors. They can also view 28 standard color blends to make their selection process easier.

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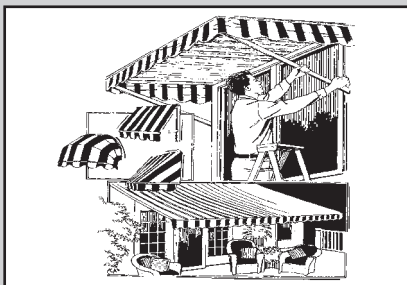
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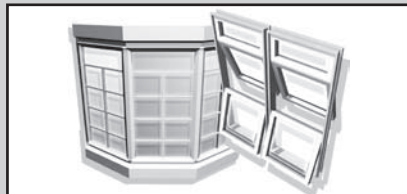
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advice from Color Expert Kate Smith



The warm mosaic of tan and gray colors on this synthetic slate roof is accentuated by striking purples reminiscent of provincial Tuscan hillsides.

Standard slate gray or bold terracotta? Solid brown or a blend of three warm brown tones? For some homeowners, the question of what color to cap off their homes is more challenging than the decision of what roofing product to use.

“Our research clearly pointed us toward DaVinci’s polymer slate roofing tiles for their durability and resistance to severe weather,” says Tim Wahl of Kansas City, Kansas. “But I was surprised that the decision of what color or blend to select sort of paralyzed me. I was afraid of making the wrong decision and then having to live with my choice for decades.”

According to color expert Kate Smith, CMG, Wahl’s experience is not unusual. “Selecting exterior building product colors can be daunting for some people specifically because of the long lifespan of those products,” says Smith. “Some roofing companies offer 50-year warranties on their products. That’s a long-term investment for a homeowner. So, while it’s fairly easy and inexpensive to repaint the interior of a room, you want to maximize your roofing investment by selecting a color you can live with for many years. Many people need some support and guidance when making those larger color decisions.”

See **ROOFING**, page 26

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ROOFING, from page 25

Smith, a nationally-known color expert and the owner of Sensational Color, offers these tips for homeowners determining what roofing colors to select.

After considering his options, Wahl selected an Aberdeen blend he felt was a good long-term solution. "I felt like the color blend offered me so many more long-term options than a single color," says Wahl. "This blend has rich, warm grays, stone, green and purples that combine to create a striking roof. I can choose several complementary colors for our home's trim, shutters and siding, so we can change our palate over the years as the home ages."

Wahl's home renovation was so impressive that it received the Remodel of the Year project award from Kansas City Homes & Gardens magazine.

"One hundred percent of the interior and exterior of this home was renovated, and the results are awesome," says Wahl, president with Develop KC, a company that remodels homes and apartment complexes throughout Kansas City. "The roofline really attracts attention. I'm glad we took the time to consider a color blend because the resulting look is truly outstanding."

Tip #1

Take time and do your homework. Don't rush a decision. Try to envision a home exterior that you will like next year, five years from now, and then 20 years from now.

Tip #2

Consider your options. While a solid color roof may work for some home styles, a blend of several colors may offer a "softer" look with more accent options. Pre-bundled roofing color blends can be made with two, three, four or five different color blends that complement each other.

Tip #3

Investigate the different roofing color options available to you online. Create your own custom color blends or go with an existing, more traditional blend. Use the Color Design tool at www.davinciroofscapes.com to create your own custom color blends from 49 colors or to see the company's standard 28 color blends.

Tip #4

Request life-sized samples of your favorite color roofing tiles to hold up against your current roof to see the change that a new color will make for your home.

Tip #5

Look at the other homes in your neighborhood. Your home should blend in or stand out from other homes, but never clash with the rest of the homes in your community. A roofing color can help achieve a harmonious look.

Tip #6

Get assistance from a professional. Just as selecting the roofing product is a big decision requiring assistance of a professional, so is the choice of the roof color. Consult a color expert and use the color tools offered by experts and product manufacturers to gain a strong comfort level for your color choice.

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See **REALDECKS**, page 31



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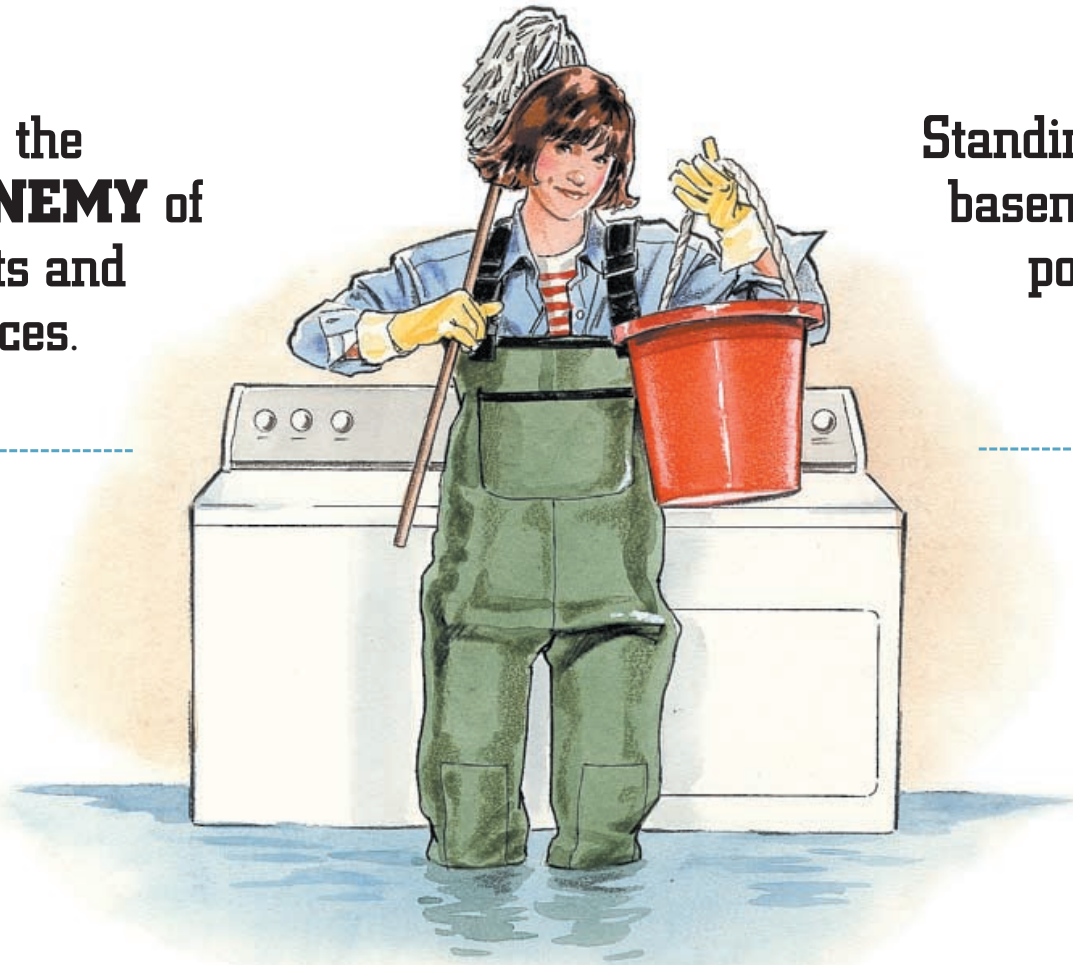
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Water is the NO. 1 ENEMY of basements and crawlspaces.

Standing water in a basement can also pose **HEALTH HAZARDS**



Keys to Fixing Wet Basements

A wet basement is something thousands of homeowners contend with but none look forward to fixing. Water entering the basement can be an expensive repair job, and it seems like few homes are impervious to water infiltration.

Water can enter a basement or crawlspace in a number of ways, seeping through the floor if the surrounding ground is constantly saturated or entering through cracks in the foundation walls. Leaky basement windows could cause water to enter, while improperly draining downspouts and gutters may cause water to pool around the home's foundation and enter the home.

A wet basement can decrease a home's value and potential damage what's in the home. Standing water in a basement can also pose health hazards, such as mold and mildew

growth, and can prove a breeding ground for insects that like moist conditions.

There are a number of techniques used to combat basement water issues. A waterproofing company can help homeowners ascertain what method will be best for the type of water issue they have.

- Find the source of water. Sometimes water remediation requires minimal effort or simple solutions. It may be a grading issue on the property or landscaping that is causing water to pool around the home's foundation. Fixing these issues can alleviate water in the basement.
- Create a barrier. A dampness or water issue may be remediated by creating a barrier between the water and the inside of the home. Waterproofing paints and sealants can be applied to both the outside and inside walls of a

basement. However, waterproofing application on the outside of the home may cause disruption to landscaping and the need for excavation to reach foundation walls. Inside application is easier, but eventually the product may need to be reapplied if water pressure causes the sealant to blister or peel off. A plastic vapor barrier can be installed in crawlspaces that have vented concrete or dirt floors. This will help to protect against moisture in the space.

- Install drains. Various drainage systems are designed to help with basement water issues. Depending on the drain, it may be installed at the perimeter of the basement interior or on the exterior of the home. The drains are designed to capture water from the ground and direct it far away from the foundation. Drains can gradually become clogged with sediment and dirt and may need to be cleaned or

replaced. Newer innovations in basement drainage systems that alleviate clogging issues are available through reputable businesses.

- Use a sump pump. For other water issues, a sump pump can help gather groundwater in a sump pit and pump it out and away from the home. It's a good idea to have a backup source of power for the sump pump because if the power goes out, the sump pump will be rendered useless.

Water is the No. 1 enemy of basements and crawlspaces. It behooves the homeowner to take fast action to correct water issues in the lowest part of the home to ensure comfort and safety.

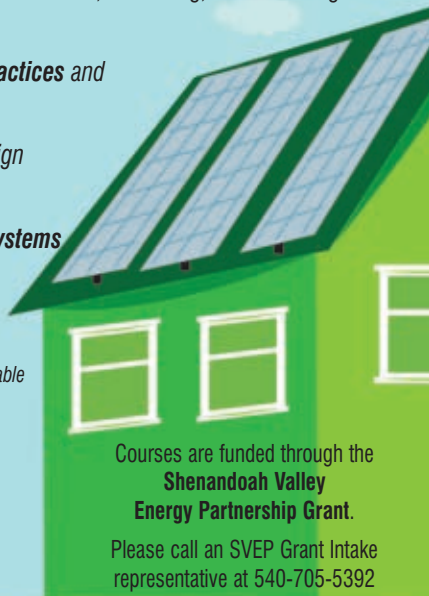
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“Basements are like ‘found space’ in the home because they’re so versatile that you can make a well-built basement an extension of your living areas,” says Jim Costello, president of Superior Walls. “To maximize basement space, it’s critical to construct the area below

ground with a pre-cast insulated foundation system that’s energy-efficient and damp free. This way the basement area is a welcoming, active part of the home rather than a ‘dump all’ storage area.”

Costello recommends constructing a basement with Xi wall panels. Each precast foundation panel is constructed with a concrete face shell, backed by 2 1/2-inches of DOW Styrofoam insulation. Steel reinforced concrete walls create a permanent barrier against sidewall water penetration, making the

basement system damp-proof.

“These foundation systems are very popular with homeowners because you can create door and window openings in them to access natural light,” says Costello. “By making the right decisions at the time of construction to use pre-cast insulated foundation systems, homeowners are making a long-term investment in their family’s happiness and in the resale value of their house.”

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STRONGER, from page 15

home. Xi insulated concrete wall systems from Superior Walls (www.superiorwalls.com) are custom created for homeowners and installed in less than 24 hours by certified crews. The energy-efficient walls, which received the first National Association of Home Builders Green Approved rating for foundation systems in the country, help lower energy costs for homeowners.

The Xi wall panels feature steel reinforced concrete and 2 1/2-inches of insulation to create a permanent barrier against sidewall water penetration. The sturdy panels are designed and constructed in a factory-controlled setting using steel rebar inside the studs and beams for strength. Built to last, Xi foundations systems are backed by a 15-year warranty.

Moving up the house, vinyl windows are crafted for maximum energy efficiency and low maintenance. Why vinyl? Because vinyl windows and doors offer excellent thermal performance for year-round comfort and help lower utility bills. Vinyl is an effective insulator, and combined with a strong glass package, provides optimum energy efficiency.

“The energy-efficient features of the Simonton Windows products are very impressive, which is why I selected them for my own home,” says Clement. “I’ve found that a glass package that includes Low E glass, an Argon gas fill and Simonton’s Intercept spacer system really outperform other windows I’ve seen.”

Select a fiberglass entryway system married with urethane millwork and you’ve chosen more building products meant to last. Backed by a limited lifetime warranty, Therma-Tru fiberglass doors (www.therma-tru.com) create the tightest seal possible, creating an energy-efficient envelope that stabilizes interior temperatures and helps decrease the home’s energy costs. Each door is constructed of durable fiberglass with a polyurethane foam core, can be

ordered ENERGY STAR qualified and provides five times the insulation of a wood door. Best of all, fiberglass doors will not rot, split or crack, plus they will not rust, dent or ding.

Decorative trim around a fiberglass entry door creates a winning combination. The crisp, architecturally-correct details on Fypon’s (www.fypon.com) urethane products are crafted from tough, weather-proof, high-performance materials. Pilasters, crossheads and door pediments are all impervious to decay, insect infestation and water damage. Other exterior urethane pieces, such as column wraps, louvers and brackets, are also crafted for long-lasting beauty and low maintenance. Also appropriate for interior application, the urethane pieces are backed by a limited lifetime warranty and are ideal for high humidity areas of the home such as the kitchen, bathroom and laundry room.

While all areas of a home’s exterior can take a beating from severe weather and harmful ultraviolet rays, the roof is easily the building product that is most subjected to the elements. To make sure your roof overhead can protect your family and home, investigate the benefits of polymer roofing tiles.

“The DaVinci slate roofing tiles on my home resist fire, impact, wind and other weather conditions,” says Clement. “These tiles have their colors blended completely throughout each piece and will resist fading over time because of the UV protection built into each tile.”

“Products like polymer roofing tiles, which are a good environmental choice and are guaranteed to last for 50 years, are a smart choice for a home. All of these products are a sound investment for a new home and when remodeling an older, cherished home. Doing your research up front to find the best products in the marketplace will result in many savings — on long-term maintenance, utility costs and repair or premature product replacement.”

REAL DECKS, from page 27

It’s natural, real — and it looks fantastic.

Resurfacing a deck. If you already have a wood deck but it’s more than 20 years old, consider a resurfacing project. This is where the decking surface is replaced, while the substructure remains. (It’s always a good idea to have a decking professional check the entire deck for soundness.) Resurfacing is easy, and it’s a great way to refresh your outdoor living areas without blowing your budget.

Maintaining a deck. Every building material designed for outdoor use requires maintenance; luckily, real wood decks are very easy to maintain. Once a year, check your deck to see if it needs cleaning or perhaps another coat of sealant. Perform the cup of water test: if a cup of water poured on the deck boards immediately soaks into the wood, it’s time to apply water repellent.

Why choose wood? Your deck should mesh with your backyard — be sure your decking material is an extension of nature, with all the beauty, strength and durability you’d expect. Pressure-treated wood is your most natural decking option: it’s easy to find, easy to use, requires no special tools, and it’s affordable. Wood doesn’t conduct heat like other decking materials can,

meaning no burned feet in the summertime. Treated wood is impervious to rot and pests and it’s proven to be people- and pet-safe.

Concerned about our forests? Choosing wood for any home improvement project is a very wise environmental decision. Thriving,

sustainably managed forests create a healthier environment for all of us. Choosing forest products — wood — encourages US landowners to keep replanting trees; the forest industry plants more trees than they harvest every single year, ensuring wood will be around for generations to come. Wood is one of the only naturally renewable building products available, and the only energy required to manufacture it comes from the sun. You can’t get much more green than that.

For more information on building or resurfacing a real wood deck, visit www.realoutdoorliving.com. Free information includes the Authentic Deck Guide, with complete information on wood deck upkeep, construction and building material selection; easy do-it-yourself free downloadable plans and podcasts; maintenance information; a fun and fast “Pressure-treated 101” video and much more. Check back frequently: we’re always adding new plans, new photos and new information.

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After older, lead-painted windows were replaced, this family now enjoys a healthier living environment with their energy-efficient vinyl windows.

Lead Paint Hazards and Older Windows

If your home was built before 1978 and you still have the original windows, it's time to seriously consider replacing your windows — especially if you have young children or a pregnant person living in the home.

According to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the routine opening and closing of windows in homes built prior to 1978 can disturb lead-based paint around the windows, causing paint dust and chips to be released into the air. These lead particles are so dangerous that the EPA now requires contractors to be trained and certified before they can perform any renovation, repair or painting projects that may have previously applied lead-based paint.

“Research indicates that the everyday activity of opening and closing windows creates friction that then allows lead dust to enter the air,” says Rick Nevin, a consultant to the National Center for Healthy Housing (NCHH). “This dust is invisible to the naked eye, yet it can contaminate the home and expose residents to this harmful substance.

“Young children, whose developmental skills and brain functions are subjected to the lead dust, can be especially negatively impacted. Children can absorb the lead dust from crawling on the floor where the dust settles. Toddlers put their hands in their mouths ... and after playing on the floor near a window, they can easily transfer the lead dust into their

mouths. The ingested lead travels through the bloodstream to a child's developing brain, causing many types of neurobehavioral damage.”

Nevin relates that the most common problem with lead in paint is not that a child is eating paint chips — it's that the child may be exposed every day to unseen contaminated lead dust particles that have settled in household dust. The lead-contaminated dust is often connected with the operation of the window.

According to Nevin, one of the most important long-term investments a homeowner can make for the overall safety of a family is to replace older windows, using the EPA-approved lead safe renovation guidelines. “If you live in a home built before 1978, and you have single-pane windows, replace them now,” says Nevin. “This is one of the only ways to reduce lead risks for your family. Make sure to use only a contractor that is certified in lead-safe work practices and strongly consider the use of ENERGY STAR® qualified windows, like the vinyl replacement windows offered by Simonton Windows. These windows are a healthy choice for replacing older single-pane units. They're energy-efficient and a good value for the investment.”

“At Simonton, we advocate that replacing older windows coated with lead-based paint with vinyl windows is a sensible step for homeowners who want to create a healthier home environment,” says Gary Pember with Simonton Windows. “We believe Rick's research substantiates the

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replacement of all windows coated with lead based paint as a way to dramatically help reduce lead dust within that home. As such, taking the next step of installing durable, energy-efficient vinyl windows offers homeowners peace-of-mind along with energy savings in the home."

Nevin explains that homeowners need to understand there are four key steps to completing a "lead-safe window replacement strategy" for the home.

"First, replace all single-pane windows with ENERGY STAR® qualified windows," says Nevin. "Second, stabilize any significantly deteriorated paint. Third, perform specialized cleaning to remove any lead-contaminated dust. And finally, perform dust wipe tests to confirm the absence of lead dust hazards after the clean up."

Nevin, the NCHH and the New York University School of Medicine have been awarded a National Institute of Health challenge grant for "Preventing Child Residential Lead Exposure by Window Replacement." The project includes the launch of a "Windows of Opportunity" website to promote the many benefits of lead-safe window replacement. For additional information, visit www.simonton.com/leadsafe.



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Homeowners can now let light and fresh air into their homes without sacrificing energy efficiency or style. Therma-Tru's vented sidelites (available in the Fiber-Classic Oak Collection and Smooth-Star product line) provides ventilation without the inconvenience and obstruction of storm doors or sliding screens.

These vented sidelites are continuous systems comprised of either one-hinged door and two-hinged sidelites, or two-hinged French doors and two-hinged sidelites. Sturdy door stile edges and a wide patio mullion provide additional strength when doors are open. For more details, visit www.thermatru.com.



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HERBS, from page 16

all eight meetings and club programs, \$50 of which goes to the national organization.

"It's a real good group of people," she said. Members are not required to have experience in gardening, she said. They need only have an interest.

"They don't know much, but they want to learn," she said of some members. Other members, though, have built their careers around gardening, and some even are Master Gardeners.

"The horticultural society has been going for two years," said Reeve, who has a master's degree in herbal horticulture and degrees in therapeutic herbalism and aromatherapy. She has trained at the National Herb Garden in Washington. Committee member Sondra Johnson, of Warren County, has been an herbalist for more than 30 years. She began working with skin issues and making plant products when her son developed psoriasis about 10 years ago.

The herbs didn't cure his psoriasis, since topical solutions don't solve the problem, she said, "But you can take them to look and feel better."

Johnson used borage from the garden last year to make what Reeve calls a "fabulous borage balm with lovely oils." The society sells the borage balm at \$5 for a 1-ounce tin and \$8 for a 2-ounce tin.

"And we intend this year to do more projects like that," Reeve said.

A pesto event is also in the works.

"We grow a ton of basil here at Sunflower Cottage," Clifton said. "It's an extra party we're planning," where they will make pesto from fresh basil "and eat and drink and play and take it home with them," she said.

The garden, meanwhile, is divided into four sections, the learning garden offers mints and thyme, culinary herbs, healing herbs and scented herbs.

Reeve pointed out herbs like chamomile, whose white flowers are used in making tea, and sage, "which we all know and love, especially around the holidays."

Sage, chives and rosemary are some herbs she indicated as being culinary herbs.

The uses of rosemary are something "we of European extraction know well," she said of the herb that spread across Europe and is used with eggs, meat, candies, cakes and pies. It's used very

potently and therapeutically, she said, and formerly was used with salt and pepper to cure meats so they would keep longer.

"It affects the hypothalamus," she said, explaining that rosemary sends a message to the brain to halt sweating and also can be used as an alternative to caffeine.

Horseradish, the designated herb of the year for 2011, is an ancient plant used around the Middle East, she said. One of the five sacred herbs of Passover, it's a bitter herb, whose root is mixed with cream and vinegar and used with meat like beef, she said.



Dennis Grundman/Daily

**Sondra Johnson cleans out dead stems
at the herb garden.**

"Rue is a very highly therapeutic plant ... It's actually tonic to the female reproductive system," Reeve said, but she cautions never to touch it with bare hands. "It actually causes the cells of your skin to become sensitive to sun." A 32-page book the Shenandoah Herb Society published this year could help those interested in learning about the uses of herbs. Simply called "Herbs," the 32-page book is \$7.50 at Sunflower Cottage or online at the society's website, www.sunflowercottage.net/shenandoah_herb_society.php.

The society currently has about 25 members, but they always hope for more.

"It's an opportunity to meet people who love to garden, who love to cook, who love that the plants are healing for us, who love to craft with them," Reeve said.

For more information about the Shenandoah Herb Society, call Sunflower Cottage at 869-8482.



This bedroom showcases how furniture should be kept away from windows to prevent young children from climbing up and potentially getting out the window.

Window safety tips

How often should family fire drills be held? What type of glass should you have in windows to help prevent noise penetration and discourage intruders? The experts at Simonton Windows® offer fast tips for staying safe in your home and enjoying your windows.

TIP #1 — Practice safety drills regularly. Small children tend to “hide” from fire, so make sure children are familiar with escape routes and know how to move quickly out of the home.

TIP #2 — For homes with bedrooms on second floors or higher, make sure safety escape chain ladders are under the bed in every room. Practice operating the window with older children and show them how to use chain ladders.

TIP #3 — If a door is not safe to exit through during a fire, exit through an open window or use an escape ladder. Do not break the glass of the window, because it could cause injury.

TIP #4 — If you live in a neighborhood with lots of active children, or one that is prone to crime, install windows with laminated glass — at least for the first floor of the home. In these units, two panes of glass are adhered to a durable plastic interlayer, much like a car windshield. So, if a stray baseball hits a window, the glass will shatter, but broken pieces remain adhered to the interlayer, preventing glass fall-out inside the home. The plastic interlayer is also puncture-resistant, frustrating potential intruders.

TIP #5 — Remember that window screens are only designed only to keep insects outside — they will not support the weight of a child or family pet.

TIP #6 — Looking to protect your home from the sun’s harmful ultra-violet rays? Request Low E glass in your windows to help reduce the fading of carpet, furniture and window treatments.

TIP #7 — When windows are opened for ventilation, only open what young children cannot reach, such as the top portion of a Simonton Double Hung window.

TIP #8 — Keep furniture (including cribs), or anything children can climb, away from windows.

TIP #9 — Before ordering windows for your home, make sure to examine the unit’s locking system. Multi-point locks provide more protection against intruders and make it more difficult for curious young children to operate.

TIP #10 — If you need to use window guards on the interior of your windows, make sure they are operable and can be easily removed. Practice detaching the guards with children in case they need to exit through a window in an emergency. For more helpful window tips, visit www.simonton.com.

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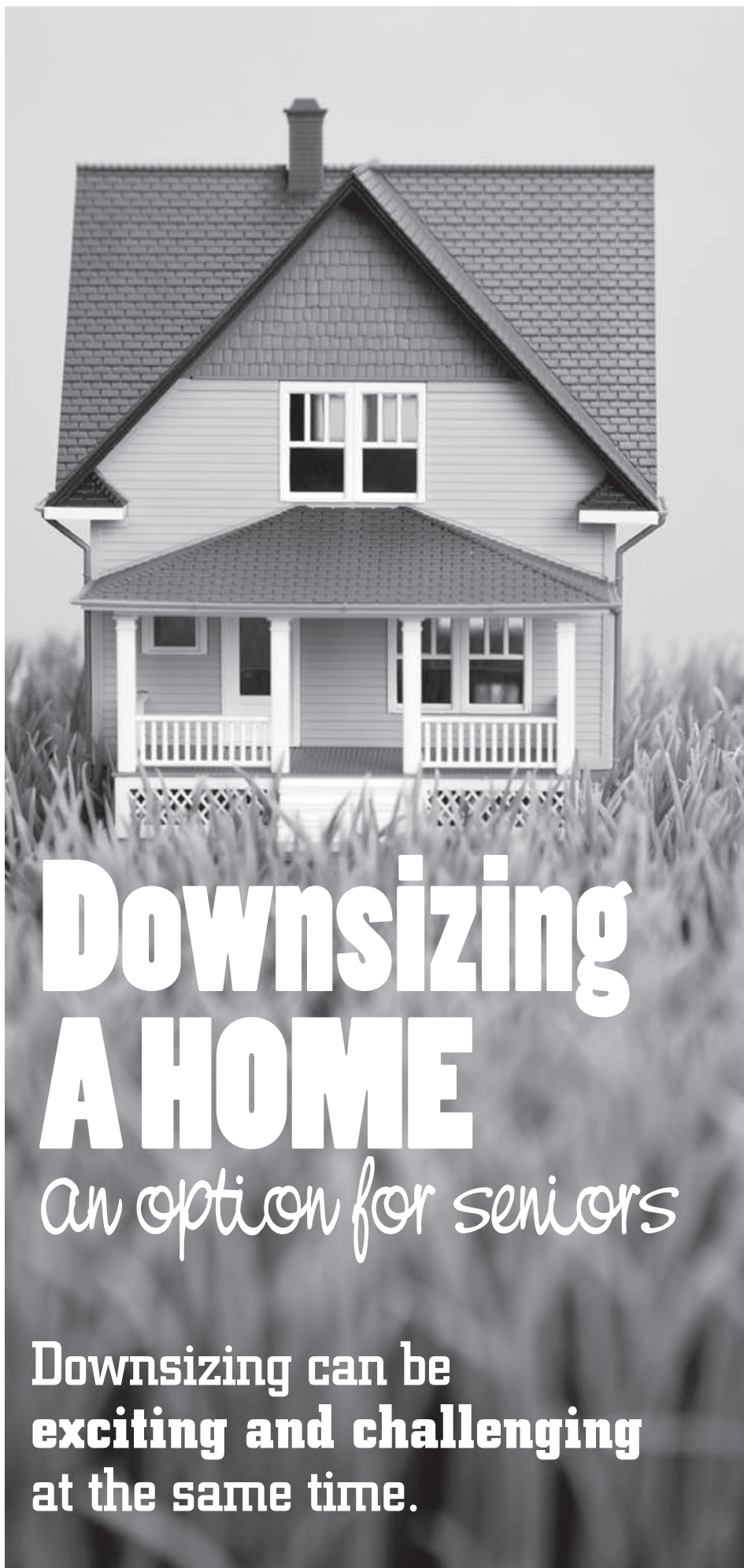
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When a person comes to a certain age and the children move out and on with their own lives, a home may become too big for its occupants. At this point, residents may feel it's time to downsize to a smaller home.

Downsizing can be exciting and challenging at the same time. Going through and packing belongings can be a trip down memory lane. But chances are a smaller space will mean that a person will have to part with a number of his belongings collected over time.

To make the process easier, first assess how much space there will be in the new home. Many times floor plans or room dimensions are available. First measure large items, such as furniture, to be sure they will fit in the rooms. Then think about storage possibilities.

Next, make a running list of what items can be discarded and where those items will go. Some belongings can be



donated to charity, while others may be given to family and friends. Many other things could end up in the trash or recycling bins. Knowing where things will go will make them easier to sort.



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For those doing a major clean-out of the home, it could be efficient to hire a dumpster to be placed on-site. This way, larger bulk items can simply be tossed inside. Some municipalities restrict what can be placed in the regular trash or how much garbage can be collected, so this alleviates the stress of dealing with excess trash.

When actually beginning to get rid of things, start with the areas that receive the least amount of use. Belongings stored in the attic or basement may be simply taking up space and hold less sentimental value. People can then work their way toward items that are used on a regular basis. It can be cathartic to clear out clutter and get ready to start anew.

Some people find they have to downsize because of financial reasons. In these cases, thinning out belongings can also be a way to earn a few extra bucks. Selling or auctioning off seldom used items may produce a little extra cash that can help finance moving expenses or even bills.

STINKBUG, from page 23

"With other pests, I feel we have a fighting chance. We don't see how we can tackle this thing," he said. The local research lab is using Watt's farm to test the new trap that might possibly provide a glimpse into how to control the bug. "They're trying to accumulate data to see if we can pick up anything" that would help, Watt said. "They're kinda baffled. There are so many unknowns."

Watt likened the pest to the 17-year locust only "this is like fighting them every year for six months. This is a tough beast to tackle."

Researchers in Newark, Del., are studying the effectiveness of four species of wasps from Asia, but more information is needed before they will be approved in the United States, Leskey said. Releasing the wasps to combat the stink bug could disrupt other systems.

Desperate homeowners have turned to extension agents and pest management experts for help. Grove said his office was "inundated" last year with calls from homeowners. "We had folks who

wouldn't even go outside" last year. "There's not a lot they can do because they feed on everything and nest everywhere."

Jeff Fortune of Pest Management Services Inc. in Winchester expects the calls from frantic homeowners to pick up once warm weather sets in. He recalls one customer last year who had so many bugs in her house that her wall resembled mold.

"In the last year, (stink bugs) have been Biblical in proportion," he said. But there's only so much that can be done. Pest management companies can spray chemical compounds but it appears they must apply it directly to the bug to be effective. "They are flying insects so you can never completely stop them," Fortune said.

Homes in wooded areas have it worst, according to Harriet Harris, owner of Best Exterminating Services in Front Royal. Barbara Gimber, who lives surrounded by trees in the High Knob Subdivision east of Front Royal, turned to Harris for help when the bug first showed up about four years ago. "They have consistently been getting worse year after year. They are driving me out of my house," Gimber said.

Gimber learned quickly not to squash the bug and bought a hand-held vacuum to best deal with the nuisance once they get inside her home. Chemical compounds sprayed outside minimize the population some, Gimber said. "I love the spring months, to open windows and doors but that's not possible anymore."

Adult stink bugs begin to emerge from their winter shelter in the spring, laying eggs in May. Those nymphs emerge and become adults and lay eggs in July. The second generation appears in late August. As summer turns to fall, the adults begin seeking shelter again inside homes and other structures and begin the cycle again the following spring.

Homeowners are advised to seal up as many crevices around windows, doors and other openings as possible.

While the infestation of 2011 may end up worse than last year, people can take heart in knowing that researchers are working hard on solutions. "There's going to be a tremendous amount of effort and creative energy going forward," Bergh said. "After this season, we'll know more."

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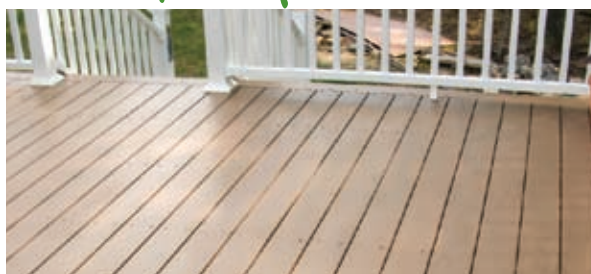
Few industries have grown as much in the last decade-plus as the home improvement industry. Whereas it was once commonplace for homeowners to have a handyman on speed dial, nowadays homeowners handle not only the routine upkeep necessary to maintain a home, but many home improvement projects as well.

Home expert Danny Lipford, host of the nationally syndicated TV show, Today's Homeowner, and radio show, Homefront, said, "Today you've got not only an amazing selection of tools to help with every project, but they also shorten the time it used to take to complete the project. When you couple that

with all the DIY instruction and programming out there, it's no wonder we have the confidence to do more on our own."

As popular as home improvement projects have become, many homeowners still find themselves pressed for time when it comes to tackling projects around the house. For homeowners without much time during the week, Woodcraft offers the following projects tailor-made for weekend warriors.

Regardless of individual skill level, user-friendly tools like the Fein MultiMaster make home improvement projects safer and easier for homeowners.




Ready The Deck For Summer Fun

With spring on the horizon, the season to relax on the deck and soak up the sun is right around the corner. Homeowners can upgrade their deck and create an incredibly strong wood-to-wood bond with the Kreg Deck Jig System. Compatible with composite deck boards and ACQ treated lumber, the Kreg Deck Jig System can help homeowners create a beautiful and functional deck surface that's completely free of exposed fasteners and painful splinters. The Kreg Deck Jig System's easy grip handles help DIYers gain a secure hold and completely control each and every joint, while the system's three separate drill guides allow for easy installation of deck boards in a variety of hard-to-reach areas. When combined with a few simple tools homeowners already own, the Kreg Deck Jig System ensures homeowners can vastly improve their deck no matter how pressed for time they might be.



Paint A New Look Inside

Spring is often seen as a season of rejuvenation, so why not give your home a brand new look by repainting the interior? Veteran DIYers can no doubt recall when painting took as much elbow grease as it did time, but times have changed. Thanks to the new Fein MultiMaster, the tedious and time-consuming job of scraping old paint with a putty knife and sanding tight spaces with paper wrapped around your finger is a thing of the past. The MultiMaster's profiled sanding pads make scraping old paint easier than ever before, while its multiple user-friendly accessories that scrape, cut, shave, sand, polish, and remove grout make the MultiMaster an ideal companion for homeowners with several projects on tap this spring.



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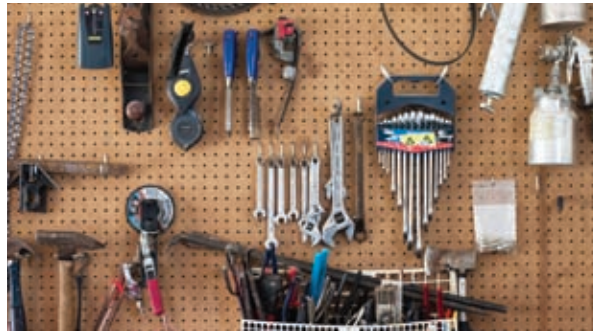
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Tackle Indoor Projects On Rainy Days

Spring might be synonymous with feelings of rejuvenation, but it also brings spring showers. On rainy weekends, tackle interior projects with the Rockwell BladeRunner. Whether you want to cut and install base molding, chair rails or hardwood flooring or frame and trim windows and doors, the lightweight, portable BladeRunner is your go-to tool. This precision cutter's variable-speed motor control and simple blade changing mechanism allow you to easily cut wood, metal, ceramic tile, aluminum, and plastic using a T-shank jig-saw blade. You can operate the BladeRunner on a benchtop or use the convenient wall mount bracket. Attach the tool's dust port to your shop vac for easy cleanup.



Prepare Tools In Advance

While there are several projects homeowners can complete in a single weekend, no project is likely to be successful without properly maintained tools. Homeowners should take inventory of their tools before beginning any projects to ensure the tools won't cause any delays. The Work Sharp® Knife and Tool Sharpener can bring tools back to life in a matter of minutes. This handheld, motorized tool sharpens any knife as well as scissors, tin snips, garden shears, and even lawn mower blades for green thumbs. The sharpener's patented Flex-Tek™ belt technology conforms to the shape of any blade, practically guaranteeing a sharp edge and ensuring your next home improvement project will start off on the right foot.



Work Smarter

Tackling a home improvement project in a single weekend might not be easy, but DIYers can take steps to make such projects easier. For example, Vibe-Away Anti-Slip Pads are made from recycled tires and designed to reduce the transfer of vibration that occurs in most woodworking tools and stationary equipment. This shock absorption pad helps reduce sound, vibrations, and pulsating of router tables, scrollsaws, table saws and other benchtop or stationary machines, making it easier to complete a project mistake-free and in less time.

LOC-Blocks Interlocking Material Gripping Blocks grip both the work surface as well as your project without the use of any clamps. The nonslip pads support work during assembly without leaving marks, while the non-marring pads allow homeowners to lift work above the surface while finishing edges.

To learn more about products that can help you successfully complete your home improvement projects this spring, visit www.woodcraft.com.

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