

TIMES NEWS
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Fall HOME & GARDEN



2025
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LEHIGH VALLEY PRESS LVP
TIMES NEWS

Fall HOME & GARDEN Directory



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Yard maintenance: a short guide to fall chores

Summer vacation is a thing of the past and a few tidy-up jobs are waiting for you in the yard. That's right; your yard is in great need of some TLC at this time of year.

TAKE A WALK IN THE VEGETABLE GARDEN

After you've harvested your delicious homegrown vegetables, all the weeds and pests have to be removed from your vegetable plot. This is also the time to take stock and plan for next year. Evaluate the performance of your garden and take note of any problems you experienced during the growing season (insects, diseases, plants too close together, etc.). This will help you correct things next time around. If you didn't take note of the location of your various vegetables when you sowed them, you should do so now. That way, you can rotate your crop next summer. And if you want to enjoy garlic next year, now's the time to plant your bulbs.



Now's the time for garlic lovers to plant their bulbs for next year

...AND AROUND THE FLOWER BEDS

This is definitely not the time to sit back and relax as far as your flowerbeds are concerned. In fact, a good cleaning up is required. Dig up weeds, as well as any annuals that have been damaged by the first frosts. Trim the stems of plants susceptible to disease and the foliage of perennials. Fall is also the ideal time to test your soil and amend it where necessary. Divide your perennials and plant spring bulbs. Non-hardy bulbs should be dug up after the first frost. Leave them to dry and then remove the excess soil before storing them in a cool, dry, dark place for replanting next year.

TAKE CARE OF THE LAWN

Spoiling your lawn all summer is not enough for it to stay beautiful and healthy. Fall is the time to reseed bare spots, aerate the soil, add compost and spread a potassium-rich natural fertilizer. You should also remove any dead leaves, as a thick carpet of leaf debris deprives the grass of light and may cause it to die off. Shred the leaves and compost them, or let them decompose on the ground. In October, you should also mow the lawn for the last time, being sure to leave it at a height of two inches to protect it from temperature changes.



Make the most of cool fall weather to do maintenance on your deck.

CLEAN AND MAINTAIN THE DECK

Cool fall days are perfect for doing maintenance work on your deck. Remove any weeds and debris stuck between the planks and steps of the deck and then repair or replace damaged planks and wobbly posts. You should also sand any rough spots that may cause splinters and fill cracks with wood putty. A thorough cleaning is also a good idea. Use a pressure washer (on the lowest setting to avoid damaging the surface) and a cleaning product that's suitable for your type of wood. Then treat or stain your deck so it stays beautiful for as long as possible.

Raking up fallen leaves; cutting back perennials; mowing the lawn for the last time and maintaining the deck: there is a lot to do in the yard once fall arrives. Are you ready for this final blitz before winter arrives?



Fall is the ideal season to reseed any bare spots in your lawn

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Planting in the fall? It's not too late!

After the last of the season's harvest and before the first frost, there are still many ways you can use plants of all kinds to enhance the beauty of your outdoor space. On that note, get your trowels ready!

BULBS

Make sure to plant autumn bulbs (crocuses, tulips, lilies, hyacinths, snowdrops, etc.) in a rich and well-drained soil. Dig holes three times the height of your bulbs (with the exception of tulip bulbs that prefer to spend the winter one foot below the ground). For optimal results, make sure to leave a space three times as large as each individual bulb between each plant.

TREES

Dig a hole deep enough to accommodate for the tree's root ball with a diameter

After planting your bulbs, trees or plants, generously water them and cover their base with biodegradable mulch.

that's twice as large as the latter. Next, cut and remove the protective layer of burlap on the top half of the root clump. Place the tree in the hole, fill the cavity with quality soil and compact the earth. Psst! Did you know that garden centers offer worthwhile discounts on trees and shrubs in the fall? Take advantage before it's too late!

PERENNIALS

Autumn is the perfect season for planting potted perennials sold in store. You can also take advantage of a beautiful cool day to divide your existing perennials. To do so, use a round metal shovel and follow these three simple steps:

1. Plunge the shovel vertically into the ground to avoid severing the roots.
2. Loosen the roots on all sides using repeated movements with your shovel.
3. Separate the roots with a gardening tool or spreading knife.

Once you've separated and transplanted your perennials, you'll obtain new plants that will flourish in all their splendor come the warmer season!



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Exciting Changes at Dan Schantz Greenhouse: A New Era Begins!

Dan Schantz Greenhouse, the beloved garden center and farm market in the Lehigh Valley, is thrilled to announce a series of exciting changes and upgrades as we enter our second year under new ownership. This journey has been a rewarding blend of challenges and triumphs as we integrate Herr's Fruit Farm of Lancaster with Dan Schantz Greenhouse, two legendary family businesses with deep roots in the community.

At Dan Schantz Greenhouse, we have preserved our commitment to offering the finest selection of quality plants, including annual flowers, perennials, tropical plants, and houseplants. Our customers can still enjoy the exceptional horticultural expertise we've built our reputation on. Alongside this, we've proudly introduced Lancaster County's freshest fruits and vegetables, along with our renowned home-jarred preserves.

quickly become a sought-after item. Our selection of jams, jellies, pickles, preserves, and salsas is crafted using the freshest produce sourced directly from our local farms, providing customers with delightful flavors that reflect the true essence of the season.

We are especially grateful for our friendly and knowledgeable staff, who are always ready to assist customers with their gardening questions and provide expert advice. Their passion for plants and commitment to customer service is our greatest asset.

We wish to extend our heartfelt appreciation to the enthusiastic support of our amazing customers, as we continue to deepen our roots in the Lehigh Valley community. Together, we are cultivating not just a business, but a vibrant hub for local gardening and fresh produce.

Thank you for being part of our journey!

Among the fan-favorites is Grandpa Herr's pure natural honey, which has

God bless!
Bob, Melanie, and the DSG Family

Is your home ready for the fall?

Fall doesn't just involve colorful leaves, rainy days and Halloween candy; it's also the time to close the pool, caulk windows, clean gutters and the list goes on. In fact, preparing for fall involves a great many jobs. Here are a few of them.

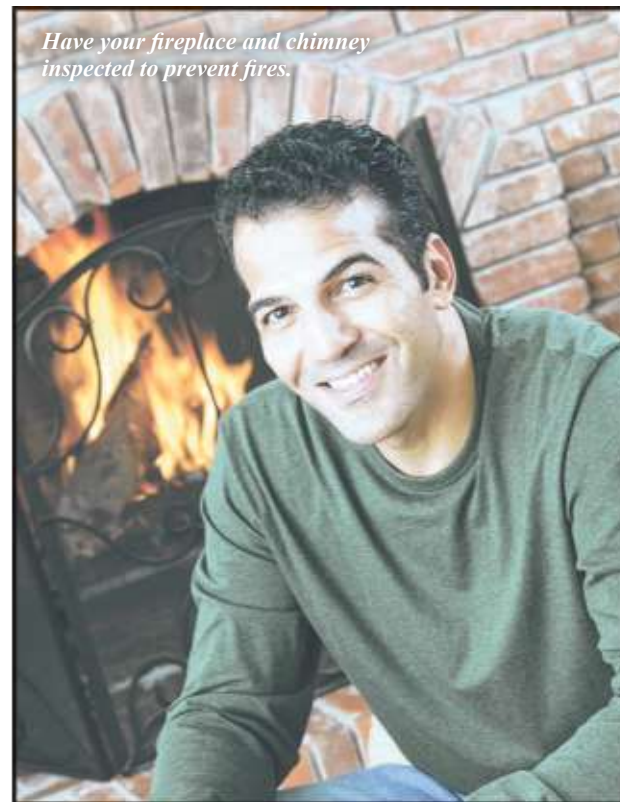
- Put away deck furniture and the barbecue, unless it's set up to be used year round. Drain and store garden hoses and turn off any outside taps.
- Close the pool. Drain partially, so the water level is about one foot below the skimmer basket. Disconnect and drain all the pipes and bleed the pump before storing it for the winter.
- Clean gutters and make sure they drain properly.
- Inspect the roof. Make sure skylights, roof shingles and seals on chimneys or vents are in good condition. Do any necessary repairs.
- Have your chimney cleaned and your fireplace inspected to prevent fires. Make sure smoke and carbon monoxide detectors are working well, and then change the batteries (they should be replaced every year).
- Examine the foundations and the exterior siding, and fix any cracks to prevent water or air infiltration.
- Check the slope of the ground and make any modifications to ensure that rainwater drains away from your home. Check the sump pump to avoid any unpleasant surprises during heavy rainfall or the spring melt.
- Check your deck or balcony. Make sure railings and steps are safe, and replace rotten or damaged planks. Check if the deck is adequately lit and take advantage of the mild weather to replace bulbs in outdoor fixtures.
- Inspect doors and windows. To keep cold and damp from entering the house, replace damaged seals and weather stripping. Take this opportunity to remove window air conditioners, if you have any. Remove bug screens to prevent condensation and maximize the amount of winter sunlight entering your home.
- Check all air outlets (central vacuum, dryer, range

hood, etc.) and make sure the vent covers close properly.

- Clean the filters of your air exchanger and heating system. Vacuum inside any furnace registers. It would also be wise to verify that the heating system is working properly. In fact, fall is the perfect time to have it checked out by a professional.
- Test your water if you have a well. This should be done every six months.
- Clean the garage floor catch basin. If it connects with the house plumbing, make sure the automatic valve closes properly.

Lastly, spring isn't the only time of year to do a thorough cleanup; preparing your home for the winter also requires some cleaning chores. For example, it's important to vacuum baseboard heaters and make sure furniture and curtains are well clear of them. Carpets, curtains and fabric-covered chairs should also be cleaned. This will greatly improve the air quality in your home during those long winter months when windows are seldom opened.

Have your fireplace and chimney inspected to prevent fires.



In the fall, make sure your deck or balcony is safe.



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Autumn checklist: how to winterproof your house's exterior

Whether or not you dread winter weather, one thing is certain: your home and garden need some protection. Here's a list of tasks to get your home's exterior winter-ready.

• **CLEAR THE GUTTERS.** Clean out the eavestroughs to enable good water drainage. Ideally, wait until the trees have dropped all their leaves.

• **SWEEP OUT THE CHIMNEY.** A thorough chimney cleaning is essential for preventing chimney fires.

• **INSPECT THE ROOF.** Ensure your roof is in perfect condition. If you see any problems, don't delay getting the necessary repairs.



• **SEAL UP CRACKS.** Sniff out any gaps in your foundations and walls and seal them up to prevent water from seeping in and doing some severe damage.

• **SCREEN UP YOUR VENTS.** Install screens on your vents to prevent small animals from taking refuge inside your home.

• **CLOSE YOUR POOL.** Lower the water level, clean the filter and put the ladder and other accessories in storage.

• **CLEAR THE COPING.** Remove any accumulated debris from your pool coping, and check that the drain is working well to prevent flooding.

• **WEATHER-PROOF YOUR PLANTS.** Wrap your shrubs in burlap or landscape cloth. Move potted plants indoors to protect them from the elements.

• **PRUNE YOUR TREES.** Trim away any tree limbs at risk of falling on your house in a violent gust. Likewise, get rid of any branches that could give pests access to your home.

• **PUT SEASONAL ITEMS IN STORAGE.** Put away patio furniture, barbecues, gardening tools and garden hoses. Don't forget to shut down water outlets.

• **PREPARE YOUR FLOWER BEDS.** Plant your fall bulbs, separate the perennials, remove weeds and annuals and then aerate and nourish the soil.



• **CLEAN THE GROUNDS.** Rake and bag your dead leaves and clear out dead wood and any other material that could serve as a hiding place for pests.

If you don't have time to do everything yourself, hire a professional lawn service in your area to help.



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Patriot Seamless Gutters Earns Community's Trust for Over 16 Years of Seamless Service

Kempton, PA – For over 16 years, Patriot Seamless Gutters LLC, a veteran-owned and operated company, has been the trusted partner for homeowners and businesses in Berks, Carbon, Lehigh, and Schuylkill counties. Established in 2009, the company has built its reputation on a straightforward principle: delivering exceptional, professional service that protects a customer's most valuable asset—their home.

Patriot Seamless Gutters is a full-service company committed to precision and quality on every project. Whether it's a custom seamless gutter installation, a necessary replacement, or the addition of durable gutter guards, their expert team handles every detail. The company stands behind its work with a 10-year workmanship warranty, giving customers confidence in their investment and peace of mind through every season.

"Our goal has always been simple: to provide our neighbors with dependable, long-lasting gutter solutions they can trust," said Kevin Garriss, Owner of Patriot Seamless Gutters. "We take immense pride in our work and the opportunity to help our community members maintain their homes and businesses with systems that are built to last. When you choose Patriot, you're choosing a partner who values your home as much as you do."

The company, originally founded in Hamburg, PA, has expanded its reach with its headquarters in Kempton, PA, and a satellite office in New Ringgold, PA. This growth reflects its continued dedication to serving the local area with expertise and care.

Ready to protect your home? Discover the difference that professional craftsmanship and a commitment to quality can make. Call Patriot Seamless Gutters today for your free, no-obligation estimate, (610) 737-7535.

Discover the lasting charm of slow decor

When it comes to redesigning your living space, you may consider the pure aesthetic value of your decor, as well as its sustainability. The “slow decorating” trend brings these two criteria together beautifully. Here’s an overview of this growing movement.

PRINCIPLE

Simplicity, consideration and moderation are what slow decorating is all about. This thoughtful approach aims to create warm and inviting spaces without contributing to the throwaway culture of fast fashion. In contrast to the frenetic pace of modern life, slow decor seeks to create a soothing sense of calm by decluttering the home.

APPLICATIONS

Do you want to incorporate slow decor into your space? Try these ideas:

- Sort through your furnishings and other belongings, keeping only the essentials.
- Visit flea markets and look for small decorative treasures in materials like rattan, wood, terra cotta or porcelain.
- Incorporate natural textiles. Fabrics like wool and cotton will enhance the serene look of your living room or bedroom.
- Add character to your space by choosing primarily handmade and locally sourced objects.
- Place potted or hanging plants everywhere to brighten up your home and purify the air.

Visit the home decor stores in your area to redecorate your space.

If you're good with your hands, you can give life to an old piece of wooden furniture. Using a little paint stripper and some paint or stain, you can help reduce your consumption of new goods. The charm of slow decorating also comes from repurposing old objects.



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Liam:

KC has put two stoves in for me. One replaced a coal boiler tied into a hydronic system. Emily and Kathy in the office are efficient and quick and what little they did not know about the products, they found out for me fast. Keith knocked out a survey very quickly.

Price was high-ish, but not insane for the amount of work the job took. I got what I paid for. Herbie and Kevin (the former owner, I believe) Kirk, and "the kid!" did a killer job. They got a complex hydronic system up and running after muscling the old boiler out of my basement and within a few hours I was stuffing splits into my new stove.

Had a few questions about some lingering issues with the hydronic system and Kevin called me back from his personal phone number the next morning; I had them ironed out quickly. A major change to my heating system up and running smoothly in well

under 24 hours for a price that wasn't inexpensive, but was an excellent value.

How often do you get that nowadays?

Joe:

Super happy with my wood insert, it does a great job heating my house, electrical usage way down, they were able to work around some challenges. I live close to a competitor and they weren't even willing to come to my house to assess the job, they wanted me to do my own measurements. KC came out and custom designed a plan, we love it.

Justin:

Top notch service and installation. Had a pellet insert installed in my existing brick fireplace. The two installers used care when inside my home by putting down drop cloths and blankets to protect the floor. The install was completed in a professional manner. They took the time to show me how to operate and clean the stove.

Marc:

Hard to come across quality this good now-a-days. I'd give more than 5 stars if I could. Can't say enough about this place! I called with a few questions about my fireplace. Not only were they super friendly, but also took their time to talk to me explaining the answers to the questions I had. Instead of treating me like just another dollar for the business, they treated me like an actual human being who needed help. When I went into the store, they had my item ready to go, making it super timely and convenient. I went home with my new products to install, I installed them, and resolved all of my issues I was having. They really know what they are talking about and do a great job with their business. I recommend this business to anyone who is in need of the services and products they offer.



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10 things to do inside to prepare your home for winter

Don't wait for the first snowfall to scramble! Here are 10 ways to winterize the interior of your home:

- 1. **SEAL DRAFTS.** Drafty windows and doors are a significant source of heat loss. Use weatherstrip or caulk to seal any gaps and keep warm air inside.
- 2. **SERVICE YOUR HEATING SYSTEM.** Prevent winter breakdowns by investing in a professional tune-up for your furnace or boiler.
- 3. **REVERSE YOUR CEILING FAN DIRECTION.** Many ceiling fans have a switch to change the blade direction. In winter, set your fans to rotate clockwise to push warm air down from the ceiling.
- 4. **INSPECT AND REPLACE YOUR HVAC SYSTEM'S AIR FILTERS.** Clogged air filters restrict airflow and make your heating system work harder. Replace your air filters regularly for optimal efficiency.



- 5. **WINTERIZE YOUR PANTRY.** Create space for winter comfort food with staples like soups, stews and hot cocoa. Stock up on non-perishable items in case of bad weather.
- 6. **CHECK SAFETY DEVICES.** Test all your smoke and carbon monoxide detectors and ensure they have fresh batteries.

- 7. **DEEP CLEAN CARPETS AND RUGS.** Before tracking in winter grime, thoroughly clean your carpets and rugs with a steam cleaner or carpet shampooer.



- 8. **GATHER WINTER SUPPLIES.** Stock up on cozy blankets, throws and extra pillows for those chilly nights.
- 9. **WINTERIZE UNUSED ROOMS.** Reduce the heat in rooms that don't often get used in winter to save energy.
- 10. **PLAN WINTER MAINTENANCE.** Schedule any interior maintenance projects you've been putting off, like painting touchups or minor repairs. Winter is a great time to catch up on these tasks while staying warm and cozy indoors.

Consult the professionals in your area to ensure your home is warm and cozy this winter.

Smoke Alarms at Home

Smoke alarms are a key part of a home fire escape plan. When there is a fire, smoke spreads fast. Working smoke alarms give you early warning so you can get outside quickly.



SAFETY FIRST

- Install smoke alarms in every bedroom. They should also be outside each sleeping area and on every level of the home. Install alarms in the basement.
- Test all smoke alarms at least once a month.
- Current alarms on the market employ different types of technology including multi-sensing, which could include smoke and carbon monoxide combined.
- Today's smoke alarms will be more

technologically advanced to respond to a multitude of fire conditions.

- A smoke alarm should be on the ceiling or high on a wall. Keep smoke alarms away from the kitchen to reduce false alarms. They should be at least 10 feet (3 meters) from the stove.
- People who are hard-of-hearing or deaf can use special alarms. These alarms have strobe lights and bed shakers.
- Replace all smoke alarms when they are 10 years old.

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His son, James M. Potocnie, worked with his father for years and eventually became sole proprietor. The third generation, Michael and his younger brother Andrew, are a part of the company, working in sales for 21 and 19

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10 things to do outside to prepare your home for winter

As the leaves fall and a chill creeps into the air, it's time to turn your attention outdoors and winterize your home. Here are 10 tasks you should tackle:

1. **CLEAN THE GUTTERS.** Clogged gutters can lead to water backup, which can damage your roof.



2. **TRIM TREE BRANCHES.** Remove any tree branches that are hanging over your home, especially weak ones, as heavy snow can cause them to snap.
3. **SEAL LEAKS AND CRACKS.** Inspect your siding, windows and doors for cracks or gaps. Use caulk to seal openings and prevent drafts.
4. **INSPECT THE ROOF.** Check your roof for missing shingles, loose flashing and signs of wear and tear.

5. **PROTECT EXPOSED PLUMBING.** Frozen pipes can burst and cause major headaches (and expenses). Consider wrapping exposed pipes with insulation for added protection.

6. **DISCONNECT AND STORE HOSES.** Once the cold weather arrives, hoses left outside can crack or burst. Disconnect them from spigots, drain the remaining water and store them in a protected location.



7. **WINTERIZE YOUR SPRINKLER SYSTEM.** Most sprinkler systems must be winterized to prevent the pipes from freezing. Locate your shut-off valve and drain the system.

8. **PREPARE YOUR PATIO FURNITURE.** Move outdoor furniture to a protected area like a garage or shed, or cover it with weatherproof material.

9. **CLEAR DEAD LEAVES AND DEBRIS.** Rake up leaves around your foundation and flower beds to promote good drainage and prevent unwanted pests.



10. **STOCK UP ON WINTER SUPPLIES.** Create a stash of ice melt, snow removal tools and firewood before winter arrives to save you time and frustration when the snow flies.

If you complete these tasks, you'll be well on your way to a cozy and trouble-free winter season.

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3 mistakes to avoid with your refrigerator

The refrigerator is one of the most important appliances in a home. Using and maintaining it correctly helps keep your food fresh and extends the appliance's lifespan. Unfortunately, many people make costly mistakes. Here are three to avoid.

1. OVERLOADING IT

Stuffing your refrigerator to the brim may seem convenient, but it hinders air circulation. When there's no room for air to flow, your food cools unevenly, which can lead to spoilage.

2. PUSHING IT UP AGAINST A WALL

Make sure you leave space between your refrigerator and the wall. This small gap allows proper air circulation, enabling the motor to dissipate heat and avoid overheating. A small five-centimeter gap is sufficient to help keep your fridge running optimally and reduce its energy consumption.

3. NOT CLEANING IT OFTEN ENOUGH

You should aim to clean your fridge every two weeks or at least once a month. Why? A dirty refrigerator encourages the growth of bacteria and mold, which could make you sick. Plus, cleaning the appliance regularly helps prevent unpleasant odors.

For best results, empty the fridge completely and wash any removable parts with hot soapy water. Wipe down the interior surfaces with a mixture of water and white vinegar.

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Yet, what truly sets them apart is their unshakable commitment to real, genuine customer care. With an expansive 80 year legacy and stores in Whitehall and Emmaus, Kleckner & Sons has outlasted many of the bigger names in the business. It's almost become a rite of passage in the Valley to make your first major appliance purchase from this locally-owned store, with many customers being the third or fourth generation to shop here.



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Lawn care: must-do fall chores

In the fall, you need to do several things to prepare your yard for the cold winter weather and ensure green and lush growth come spring. Here's what you need to know.



HEDGES AND SHRUBS

Cut away leaves and prune stems and branches so the hedge can breathe and absorb more light. You should also cut back shrubs when they begin turning yellow or their stems start to droop.

FLOWERS AND VINES

Bring potted plants inside and use burlap to cover plants that don't handle the extreme cold. Dig up non-hardy bulbs like dahlias and cannas and store them inside. Thin out your perennials and protect the roots by applying a generous layer of mulch. If you want a colorful garden come spring, plant tulips, crocuses, daffodils and other hardy bulbs.

VEGETABLE GARDEN

After your last harvest, compost your plants and till the soil. Fall is also the ideal time to plant certain vegetables, like garlic, leeks and Egyptian onions.

LAWN

Rake up dead leaves and mow your lawn to a height of at least five centimeters to promote light absorption and weed resistance. You can also use a potassium rich fertilizer that's low in nitrogen to strengthen the lawn.

Finally, turn off your outdoor water taps and drain any garden hoses. If necessary, remove the pumps from your pond.



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4 tips for improving your home's soundproofing

Is your home too noisy? Whether it's music from a bass-heavy sound system or dropped objects and heavy footfalls upstairs, excess noise can be stressful and frustrating. Do you want to minimize the auditory disruptions without doing extensive renovations that cost a fortune? Here are a few tips to make your home more soundproof.



1. **DECORATE WITH HEAVY TEXTILES.** The thicker the fabrics you choose to decorate a room, the more sounds can be absorbed and muted. Opt for a dense, soft rug, textured curtains or large cushions.
2. **APPLY CAULKING.** You can make your home quieter by filling gaps with silicone sealant. Apply it around door frames and light switches, as well as any other cracks. Sealing up the walls and ceilings will help reduce noise resonance.
3. **MOVE LARGE ITEMS AWAY FROM THE WALLS.** Pull your bed, sofa, washer, dryer and refrigerator away from the walls to minimize the transmission of vibrations. This is an effective way to minimize sleep disturbances caused by heavy walkers and loud appliances.
4. **CALL A PROFESSIONAL.** If your situation doesn't improve after making these changes, consider hiring a professional to soundproof your home. They may be able to install acoustic panels or place wool insulation in the walls or ceiling.

If you're renting, don't forget to consult your landlord before doing any structural work. Do you need help? Ask the professionals at your local home renovation or hardware store for advice.





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The importance of inspecting your roof: how to avoid unpleasant surprises

It's a good idea to inspect your roof to see if it withstood the year. This will help you identify any problems and take necessary action. Here's what you need to know when doing a thorough visual inspection of your roof.

SAFETY FIRST

Climbing onto your roof can be risky. Ensure you use appropriate safety equipment, including closed-toe, non-slip shoes, a sturdy ladder and a safety harness. Having someone help you stabilize the ladder and be available in an emergency is also a good idea.

Additionally, ensure the roof is dry before inspecting it. Choose a day with minimal wind and cool temperatures to avoid working on a screaming hot surface.

THINGS TO CHECK

First, remove any debris, such as leaves. Then, inspect all accessible parts of the roof to identify problems such as:

- Standing water
- A damaged or deformed membrane
- An uneven gravel layer
- Cracked sealing joints
- Rusted or flimsy flashing
- Protruding nails
- Missing, broken or lifted shingles
- Mold

It's also a good idea to examine your attic, walls and ceilings while you're at it. Check for signs of water infiltration or poor ventilation. Unpleasant odors, mold, excessive moisture and peeling paint are telltale signs that something's amiss. If you notice an issue, don't wait for it to worsen. Seek professional help. If you're uncomfortable inspecting your roof, call a local roofing professional to get the most accurate assessment of your roof's condition.



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This Fall Need Help? Spare Yourself!

With the holidays fast approaching, many people often throw themselves into a frenzy of house cleaning in order for their homes to look at their very best. But what price do they have to pay? This year, why not save yourself all that work and hire cleaning specialists to do it for you.

We always imagine that we'll save money by doing all the heavy work associated with house cleaning. However, at this time of year, with lots of shopping to do, running from one store to another, work to think about and all those other personal responsibilities to maintain, we don't gain very much by doing it ourselves, except perhaps the consolation of having done things in our own way, but even then...

The heavy chore of cleaning a home thor-

oughly includes washing walls, ceilings, floors and windows; cleaning carpets, furniture, blinds and the ventilation system; getting rid of the dust behind and underneath household appliances and big pieces of furniture. To these chores are added the cleaning of kitchen cabinets, chests of drawers and closets.

A professional cleaning service will provide all the necessary equipment and cleaning products, as well as being covered by liability insurance. While you would have to spend a week or more slaving to do all this work and exhausting yourself just before the holidays, a cleaning service would involve a team of people working together who could complete the same work very quickly. So, save your energy for celebrating with your family and have your fall cleaning done by a team of professionals!





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Turn Your Back Yard into Your Own Personal Oasis

The change of season brings new opportunities for outdoor enjoyment and there is no better time than fall to install a new fire pit. Soak in the warmth by the fire while you relax with family and friends. AB Natural Stone has all you need to get started. We have different designs and models to complement any décor. We also have everything else you will need including patio pavers, stone and mulch to turn your back yard into an extension of your living space.

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AB Natural Stone is a family-owned and operated company with over 27 years experience in our respective fields. We continually strive to bring you the best quality products, at competitive pricing, with a fast delivery time. Our help extends to you, the do-it-yourself homeowner or the seasoned contractor looking for quality materials.

I'd like to thank you, our customers for your continued support. If we could be of any service to you (even for advice), we are here and more than willing to help. We are conveniently located at 4337 Hamilton Blvd., Allentown, PA 18104 or by phone at 610-398-7200.

Stubborn mold in the bathroom?

Get rid of it with these tips!

The bathroom is undoubtedly the most humid room in your home. That's why it can easily become a breeding ground for mold. If you've spotted mold on your grout or walls, follow these tips to get rid of it.



WEAR PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT

Before you start cleaning, ensure you have suitable protective equipment. Scrubbing mold can release harmful spores into the air. Purchase a face mask, safety goggles and rubber gloves.

GATHER ESSENTIAL SUPPLIES

Collect the following essential cleaning supplies:

- Baking soda or unscented detergent
- Cloths
- A vacuum cleaner
- A scrub brush or old toothbrush
- White vinegar for stubborn stains

Remember, contrary to popular belief, bleach isn't an effective way to get rid of mold.



CLEAN METHODICALLY

Start by vacuuming around and directly over the mold stain. Next, scrub the surface using baking soda or detergent. Wipe the area with a damp, clean cloth. Then, dry it with a new dry cloth. Repeat this process until the mold is gone.

If the mold has deeply penetrated the grout, apply baking soda followed by white vinegar. Allow the mixture to sit for a few minutes, then scrub it away with a brush. Repeat this technique until the stain disappears.

Is your mold problem out of hand? Has it spread over a large area? Contact a professional cleaner. Additionally, consider installing a strong extractor fan to better manage humidity levels in the future.

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Preparing your soil for winter

After the hard work of tending to your vegetable garden all summer, you might just feel like letting the garden go. But if you're willing to spend a day putting the garden to bed properly, your next year's crop will get more nutrients and a better chance at growing delicious vegetables.

1. **CLEAN UP.** Pull up all unproductive plants; burn or send to the landfill any infested or diseased ones. You can either leave the dead plants on the soil to be tilled under or place them in your compost heap.
2. **ADD COMPOST.** Highly decomposed compost amends your soil with valuable nutrients. The organisms and insects in the compost will also improve the microstructure of your soil.
3. **ADD LEAVES.** Run over your leaves a few times with the lawn mower to chop them up, and then spread in a thin layer across the garden. You can also use some wood chips or sawdust. The material will compost over winter and improve your soil.
4. **TILL OR PLOW,** if possible. If the season hasn't been too rainy and if you have a chance before the ground freezes, till under the organic materials



you've added to your soil. This will let you start working the garden sooner in the spring.

5. **SOW A GROUND COVER.** If you don't mind

tilling in the spring, sow a good ground cover that will sprout before the first hard frost. It will add nutrients to the soil and prevent winter and spring erosion on slopes.

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Tips from WHITEHALL TURF EQUIPMENT

Serious health problems may result from snow shoveling and snowblowing, including heart failure from overexertion. Many people are simply not physically fit enough to move heavy quantities of snow. Those who are may not treat snow removal as they would a strenuous exercise, which would need a warm-up period so as not to strain muscles. Furthermore, improper body mechanics can put undue stress on the lower back and cause herniated discs or degeneration in the spine.

To reduce the risk of injury when shoveling snow, consider the following tips.

- Consult first with a doctor to get a health assessment. If you are restricted from certain strenuous exercises, it stands to reason that you will be restricted from shoveling snow as well. Many people underestimate just how strenuous snow removal can be.
- Choose the right snow shovel or snowblower. Tools with a curved handle or an adjustable length handle will help you feel more comfortable and minimize slouching and arching of the back. Select a shovel or snowblower that is lightweight to reduce the amount of weight you have to move in addition to the weight of the snow.
- Dress appropriately for the weather by layering clothing. Layering enables you to remain warm, but then shed layers should you become overheated. Sweating and having damp clothing could put you at risk for hypothermia. Be sure to cover extremities to

guard against frostbite.

- Warm up muscles by treating snow removal for what it is -- a physical activity. Cold, tight muscles are more prone to injury, say experts. It is advisable to spend 10 to 15 minutes with moderate exercise to get the body ready for the workout ahead. Take a brisk walk and stretch your arms, legs and back. It is best to limber up to avoid injury.
- Begin shoveling slowly, lifting only small amounts of snow. Remember that it is not a race, and there are no prizes offered for getting the job done in record time.
- Keep your back straight while bending your knees to lift snow. Position your feet wide apart for the best distribution of weight.
- Carry the shovelfuls of snow to where you want them, rather than tossing snow to the side or over your shoulders, which can only injure your body. Try to keep your arms close to your body to reduce stress on the spine.
- If using a snowblower, always wear eye protection.
- Never reach into the blades of a snowblower to dislodge snow or another obstruction. Turn off the snowblower first and wait for a few seconds to let the blades recoil before attempting to clear the blades.
- Turn off the engine any time you are walking away from the snowblower.
- Keep tabs on the electrical cord so that you don't trip or accidentally run over it.
- Do not allow children to operate the snowblower.

Quick! Let's renovate before the winter!

Like it or not, for most of us the cold weather arrives good and solid by the first day of winter, on December 21. So you'd better get to work if you want to make your home warm and cozy before the winter season!

ADEQUATE INSULATION

For a home to be healthy and comfortable, it has to be airtight, well insulated, and well ventilated. If the walls and floors are cold, if the heat is not evenly distributed, if heating costs are exorbitant, or if there is mold on the walls then the home is not properly insulated. Consult a specialist in order to choose the right kind of insulation and consider hiring him or her to install the materials. For insulation to be efficient it should not be packed down and there should be no gaps around it.

SUPPLEMENTARY HEATING

Some homes are equipped with a secondary source of heating to fight off the rigors of winter. A wood, gas, or oil burning appliance can be a big boost in making your home more comfortable. Choosing the right location for this appliance is extremely important—if possible it should be located in the basement, in the middle of the home, or close to a staircase. That way, the heat will be distributed more evenly. Be sure to purchase an appliance with controlled combustion or one that is EPA-certified by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

A HEATED FLOOR

Heated floors are really appreciated in bathrooms, but they are also increasingly common elsewhere in the house. An electric heated floor can be installed under ceramic and stone tiles or floating floors. According to some experts, hardwood

flooring should be avoided, as it can warp with the heat. Heated flooring is installed on a plywood underlay or in an insulated concrete slab.



Make your home more comfortable before the cold weather arrives.



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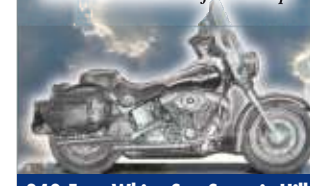
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Fall Yard Cleanup Tips from Lawn Care Experts

Fall means school is back in session, football season's beginning, and your lawn is going to need some extra care to stay healthy through winter.

"With the change in seasons, your lawn care routine is also going to change to include less mowing and more dealing with leaves and debris," says Nick Heiser, product manager at Exmark. "And if you've got a lot of debris and material to get up and off your lawn, you're going to want to do that by bagging when you mow."

In "Lawn Mowing Tips for Fall Yard Cleanup," a video on Exmark's Backyard Life site, Heiser explains that doing so might require switching out the type of blade you have on your mower. While most mowers come standard with high-lift notch blades, which are good for many cutting conditions, for heavy bagging, you should be using an extreme blade. This will do a few things for you:

- It will create an aggressive lift that creates the vacuum and suction needed to pull up debris.
- It will evenly cut up, break down and compact everything on your lawn to help the bagging system do its job more effectively.

Once you've cleared most of the debris, you should switch back to mulching for the last few cuts of the season to put nutrients back into the ground and allow the lawn to retain moisture. A micro mulch system, which is an easy-to-use and easy-to-install lawn mower accessory, provides an extra set of blades to break down clippings to a fine mulch, then directs the area of deposit, so you control where the mulch lands.

Finally, fall is the best time for aeration for cool-season grasses. Aeration is essential to ensuring that the roots of your lawn get plenty of air and the nutrients they



need before winter.

To view the video, visit Exmark's Backyard Life, a unique multimedia destination focused on helping homeowners improve their outdoor living spaces. There you can also download additional tips and view other Exmark Original Series videos.

Now that you're armed with these fall yard cleanup tips, you can head out to take care of your lawn with confidence.

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The inevitable slowing of activity in the garden during fall marks a time to shift attention from constant plant care to preparing the landscape for next season. It may be tempting to simply let Mother Nature take over, but a little pre-winter TLC can ensure gardens make it through winter unscathed.

Remove spent plants

Decomposing organic material is the basis for compost and other fertilizers. However, vegetable plants that are left to sit can lead to decay in the garden. Decaying plants can serve as hosts for pest populations and diseases. Rotting vegetables also can drop unwanted seeds into the soil, which eventually can strip nutrients that normally would go to next year's crops.

Ornamental plants and perennials can be cut back in fall. Cut down stalks and remove leaves.

Replenish mulch

Gardeners may have added mulch around shrubs and other areas of the landscape

early in the season because it is attractive. But mulch also does much to reduce water loss and protect the soil from erosion. It may inhibit weed growth as well. Replacing mulch when the mercury drops can insulate the soil, which helps to regulate soil temperature. A thick layer of mulch around root vegetables left in the garden can offer protection against hard frosts.

Prune dormant plants

Wait until plants are dormant to prune them and adjust their shape. Most shrubs and trees should be pruned in late winter, right before new growth.

Move potted plants

Bring delicate plants into a sheltered area, such as a greenhouse or indoor garage, so they can continue to thrive during the winter.

Fall and winter still provide opportunities to spend time in the garden. At this point in the year, gardeners can prepare landscapes for the next season.

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Fall in Love With Your Backyard This Fall - Here's How!

Just because fall is here doesn't mean your backyard fun has to end! Fall is the perfect season to breathe in crisp air, sip something warm under the stars, watch an outdoor movie, and make the most of your outdoor setup. With the right tools and a few seasonal upgrades, your backyard can stay the place to be long after Labor Day. Here's how.

BLOW AWAY THE MESS: "LEAF" IT TO THE PROS

Those golden leaves look lovely on trees, not so much on your lawn. A good leaf blower (especially a cordless or battery-powered model) like the Greenworks 80V Cordless Leaf Blower can keep your yard tidy and pathways safe. But to take it up a level, look no further than the Mammotion Yuka robotic mower with sweeper kit. It doesn't just trim your lawn, it also collects fallen leaves as it goes.

BRING THE HEAT: STAY TOASTY ON THE PATIO

With propane or electric patio heaters, you can keep the chill at bay and enjoy those al fresco dinners well into the season. Try the Dr. Infrared Heater Outdoor Patio Heater for electric convenience or the Hampton Bay 48,000 BTU Patio Heater for classic propane warmth.

COVER UP: FURNITURE THAT SURVIVES THE SEASON



Fall weather can be unpredictable, but with water-resistant covers for patio chairs, tables and lounge sets, your stylish setup won't suffer. Brands like Vailge and Duck Covers make highly rated all-weather options in multiple sizes and styles.

POOL DAYS AREN'T OVER YET

If you're one of the lucky ones with a pool, you might be able to stretch swimming season into September, especially with a pool heater. A reliable robotic skimmer like the Bublu BuVortex V5 will spin around your pool, clearing it of fallen leaves, bugs and branches.

ber, especially with a pool heater. A reliable robotic skimmer like the Bublu BuVortex V5 will spin around your pool, clearing it of fallen leaves, bugs and branches.

BACKYARD MOVIE MAGIC: OUTDOOR PROJECTORS

Cooler nights are made for blankets, popcorn and movie marathons under the stars. Outdoor projectors turn backyards into a private cinema. One of the best is the Valerion Vision Master Pro 2, which delivers ultra-bright, cinematic 4K laser projection even in ambient light.

FALL CLEAN-UPS ARE EASIER WITH THE RIGHT TOOLS

Pressure washers, trimmers and gutter vacs are great tools to prep your home for colder months. The Sun Joe SPX3000 Pressure Washer is a fan favorite. When paired with a gutter cleaner like the WORX Universal Gutter Cleaning Kit, you're ready for seasonal upkeep.

DON'T LET MISHAPS AND MALFUNCTIONS RUIN YOUR FALL FUN

Outdoor gear works hard all year—but colder weather puts added stress on everything from leaf blowers

See **BACKYARD** on Page 23

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Bringing in your plants for the winter: a delicate process

Once the temperature borders 50 degrees Fahrenheit at night, you should seriously start thinking about bringing your favorite plants indoors. But be careful: simply grabbing them by the pot and repositioning them in their usual spot within the home is a risky bet!



A sudden change in temperature can shock your plants and make them lose their leaves just days after they've been transferred back into the home. Therefore, it's important to remain prudent when bringing your precious houseplants back indoors.

The solution? Acclimation! For one week, bring your plants in at night and take them back out during the day. After this period of adjustment, they'll be more readily capable of surviving the winter inside your warm and cozy home.

Wash and inspect

Before bringing in your plants, clean them with lukewarm water to get rid of stubborn debris (pollen, dirt, animal hair, etc.) and eliminate unwelcomed pests. Next, inspect them carefully, paying particular attention to each individual leaf. Cut and throw away any leaves that look infested or manually remove visible bugs, larvae and eggs to ensure they don't spread to neighboring healthy plants.

BACKYARD

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 22

to lounge chairs. When something breaks, it can be expensive to replace. The good news? Many of these items can be protected. The surprise? Most Americans don't know it.

An Allstate Protection Plans survey found:

- Only 9% know patio tables can be covered
- Just 7% know about patio chairs and umbrellas
- Only 6% realize lounge

chairs qualify

And awareness is also low for leaf blowers (34%), robotic pool cleaners (28%) and patio heaters (22%)

Don't wait for a breakdown. A protection plan helps keep backyard essentials working longer

and saves you from surprise repair costs. Visit www.allstateprotectionplans.com for more fall outdoor living tips.

By performing a few maintenance tasks and protecting your gear, you can stretch backyard season into sweater weather.




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