

Compliments of Stacey Shanner

Good to Be

issue 07

DID YOU KNOW:

The magazine is typically displayed in the home for 3–4 weeks per issue. Half of recipients rank it as the most valuable branded product they receive from businesses.



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a safe space **FOR YOUR PET**

*Make sure your home is a haven
for your four-legged friend*

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Front of Tear Out Card 1



roasted banana and sour cream WAFFLES



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57 percent of readers save these tear out cards to reference recipes and other helpful tips and pass along your contact info to referrals.



Back of Tear Out Card 1

**MAKES FOUR
6-INCH WAFFLES**

roasted banana and sour cream WAFFLES

ingredients:

3 bananas, peeled (2 broken into large pieces for the batter, 1 sliced for serving)
3 tbsp. unsalted butter, cubed
2 large eggs
1 c. sour cream, plus more for serving
2 tsp. baking powder
½ tsp. kosher salt
1 tsp. ground cinnamon
⅛ tsp. ground cloves
1 c. whole wheat flour
Cooking spray (my preference is olive oil spray, but use whatever you have)
Maple syrup, for serving

instructions:

1. Preheat your oven to 400°F.
2. Place the 2 bananas broken into large pieces and the butter in a small baking dish and roast until the bananas and butter are a little bit browned and the bananas are very soft when you press them with a fork, about 15 minutes.
3. Turn the oven down to 250°F and heat your waffle iron to its highest setting.
4. Using a fork or a potato masher, crush the bananas directly in their baking dish with the butter.
5. Transfer the mixture to a large bowl and whisk in the eggs and the sour cream. Whisk in the baking powder, salt, cinnamon, and cloves. Stir in the whole wheat flour. Be careful not to overmix—just stir it until everything is combined.
6. Spray your waffle iron with cooking spray. Add enough batter to your waffle iron to cover most of the surface area (the exact amount will depend on the size of your waffle iron). Close the waffle iron and cook the waffle until the iron has stopped steaming and the waffle is golden brown and crisp, about 4 minutes, but the exact timing will depend on the heat of your waffle iron and the size of your waffle. Transfer the waffle to a sheet pan and keep it warm in the 250°F oven while you repeat the process with the rest of your batter (spray in between waffles as needed).
7. Serve the waffles warm with the sliced banana, extra sour cream, and maple syrup.

Excerpted from *Simply Julia: 110 Easy Recipes for Healthy Comfort Food* by Julia Turshen. Harper Wave, 2021.
Photography and styling by Melina Hammer.



Dear Bill and Judy,

The saying “Home is where the heart is” is often used to describe the deep connection between home and family. And, as all pet owners know, there’s a special kind of love that comes from having a pet in the home. This issue of Good to Be Home offers tips for making your living spaces more fun and functional for all members of your household, including the four-legged ones.

As the weather warms, the backyard becomes a haven for playing, relaxing, and gathering, but you’ll want to make sure this space is safe too. The enclosed tips can help you prioritize the well-being of your loved ones and your pet while giving your lawn and garden a upgrade.

While you might be eager to spend time renovating your home’s exterior, it’s important not to neglect your interior spaces. This issue includes a myriad of ideas for giving your interior design a boost, such as the best practices for using wallpaper, a guide to perfect painting for your rooms, and a breakdown of the best sink type for your home.

Spring can be a busy time of year, especially in the realms of cleaning and organization. Whether you’re planning for a move or tackling some much-needed spring-cleaning, the tips in this issue can help you take control of your spaces.

Make the most of the positive energy that spring brings! As always, it’s a pleasure to send you this magazine.

Stacey Shanner



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Add a personal letter to the front inside cover that speaks to your connections. This personalization leads 77 percent of recipients to better appreciate the sender.



written by:
RACHEL STEVENS

When life gets busy, you still want to make sure your pets receive the love, care, and support they deserve. However, finding a qualified and suitable sitter can be tricky. By following the guide below, you can have peace of mind that your caregiver can keep your pet safe and happy while you’re away.

SEARCH THROUGH RELIABLE SOURCES

The first step is to make a list of potential candidates. To do this, you can find recommended sitters through loved ones, local pet-sitting agencies, or websites such as Rover.com. If you use a website, be sure to search using the correct filters for your budget, the size and breed of your animal, the time of day

you need services, and the qualifications you want your sitter to have so you don’t spend time looking at unfit matches.

OBSERVE THEM

Finally, once you have found a potentially good fit, observe the pet sitter with your animal. Arrange for the sitter to come over for a meet and greet. Be sure to tell them about your pet’s temperament beforehand, and let them play with each other alone in the backyard. If the sitter seems hesitant, they may not be the person for you, and that’s OK. However, if the sitter feels comfortable and understands your pet’s personality and your pet warms up to them, you could have your perfect pet-sitter match!

ASK QUESTIONS

Don’t be shy with your questions. A seasoned pet sitter knows that a potential client loves their pet like family, so they expect you to ask about their experience. Here are a few questions to ask:

1. How long have you been pet sitting, and what positive and negative experiences have you had?

2. Are you comfortable feeding, walking, cleaning, and administering medication to my animal?

3. Do you have any training in first aid and CPR for animals?
4. Do you have any time restrictions if I were to need you in an emergency?

5. Do you have pet-sitting insurance? Or is the company you work for bonded and insured?

Good to BeHOME

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Each issue is filled with feel-good content that engages your audience and makes 80 percent of recipients more likely to do business with you.



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issue 07



HOW TO CREATE *a backyard space* FOR PETS

written by: MATTHEW BRADY
photography by: GETTY IMAGES,
UNLESS NOTED

We all love our pets and want to give them the best life possible, and one way we show them love is by providing as much outdoor space as possible for them to roam. That's why living near a dog park or having ample yard space is often high on the list of must-haves for prospective pet-parent homebuyers.

Of course, having a dedicated backyard space is ideal as it can provide much-needed room for your four-legged friend to frolic in and a territory to call their own. When transforming your exterior square footage into a pet sanctuary, keep in mind safety, space, and shelter.



SAFETY

Gardens

Your yard may include some sort of garden, and if it does, you need to be wary of what you plant if your cat or dog will be spending a good deal of time outdoors. Azaleas, daisies, and hydrangeas, for example, are common flowers that can be toxic to both cats and dogs. Likewise, if you plan to plant fruit trees, avoid varieties like apple, peach, and plum.



To read more about safe plants for pets, turn to page 34. For a thorough list of toxic and nontoxic plants, a good resource is the ASPCA website.

Lawn care

Similarly, when you’re maintaining a yard that will be a pet oasis, you need to be intentional with how you go about doing it. Try to keep your lawn at a height that’s not too short or too high—shorter grass is more prone to be affected by heat, whereas longer grass is preferred by ticks. About three to four inches is ideal. And when maintaining your grass, opt for organic fertilizers and weed killers.

SPACE

A yard is a wonderful place for your pet, giving them the freedom to explore and be comfortable in their surroundings.

Of course, if you have a pet, building a fence around your yard to give them free rein is ideal—as long you’re not using it as an outdoor crib to keep your pet entertained for hours.

With a fenced-in yard, you should stay with your pet as much as possible to keep an eye on what they’re getting into that could be potentially harmful, such as the plants previously listed or critters. Also, they may be affected by the temperature if they’re outside too long, even in an insulated doghouse.

Finally, remember that, as much as your pet may enjoy their backyard stomping grounds, it isn’t sufficient space for daily exercise. For the best life, you should still take your dog on frequent walks—giving them virtually unlimited space to enjoy.



SHELTER

If you’re a dog owner, you should also consider installing a doghouse in your yard. Doghouses have long been popular outdoor habitats for our four-legged friends. Today, however, there are many more options to choose from, including premanufactured doghouses and custom-made versions carefully crafted for each size and breed.

And, of course, you could build one yourself. Alex Pijuan, the owner of Pijuan Design Workshop in Los Angeles, has been creating high-end doghouses since 2012. He offers advice to those who may want to take a stab at building their own.

Comfort

“There are always a few important factors to consider,” Pijuan says. “The first is comfort. How will the dog be using the house



photo by:
PIJUAN DESIGN WORKSHOP

and what climate is it in? If it’s really warm, they’ll need a cool, shaded area and a house with good passive ventilation to keep it cool.” In contrast, in typically cold climates, Pijuan recommends a cozy semienclosed or enclosed area, possibly with insulation, to keep your pup warm.

Materials

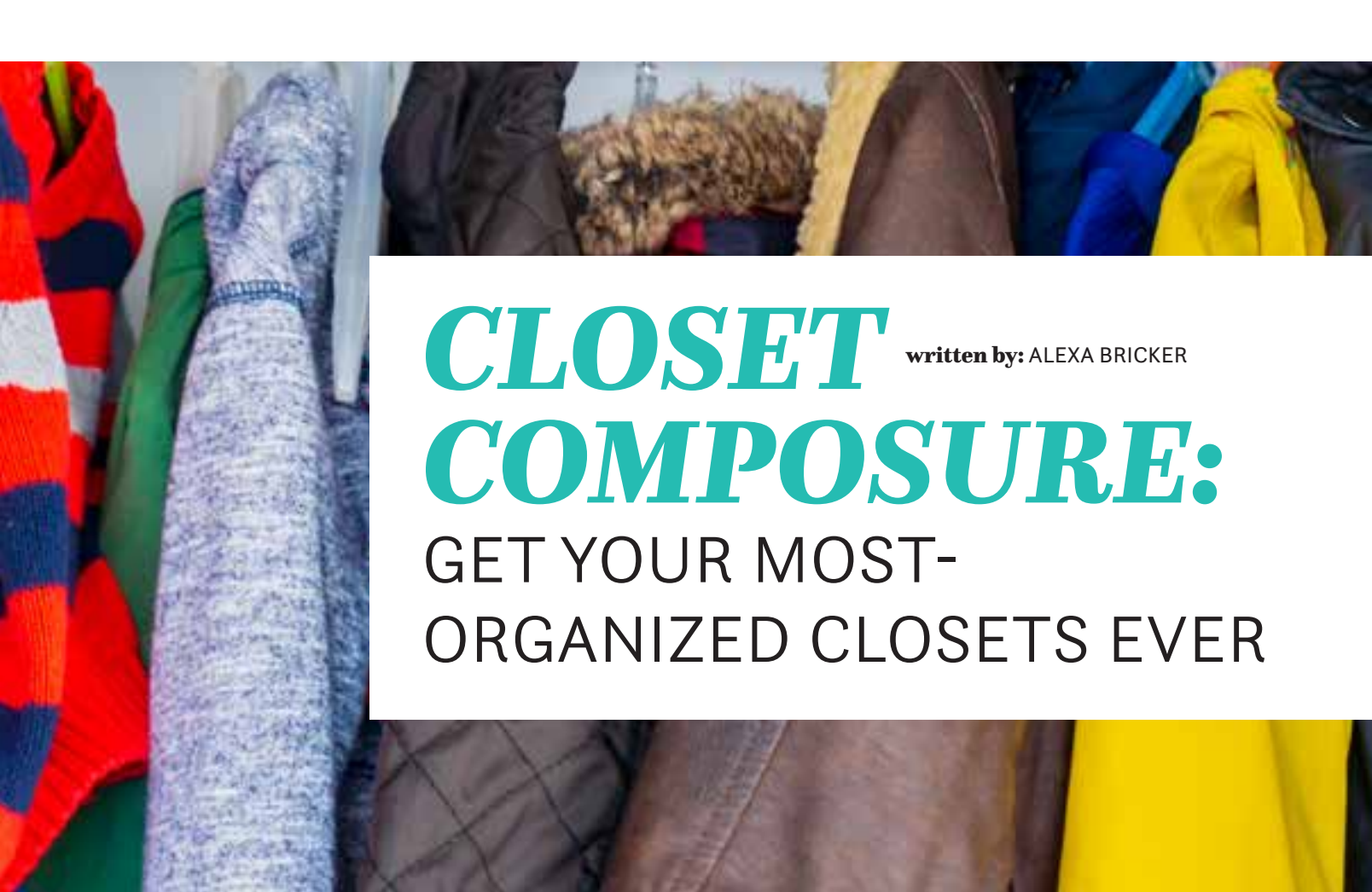
“Materials vary by type, though exterior-grade woods and waterproof sealants and finishes are typically pertinent to keep the elements at bay,” he notes.

Size

“All our houses start with breed type and kennel size,” Pijuan adds. “We use the AKC-recommended kennel size per breed to establish the enclosed/sleeping area of our houses. This is a foolproof method to ensure the house is comfortable for the dog. Our team then designs around those dimensions to develop the architecture and style for the house.”

Other considerations

“Shade and airflow are the two biggest components that people may overlook,” Pijuan reveals. “Most doghouses are really enclosed and dark. Our main focus is to create a house that provides a tranquil area for dogs to get away to relax but at the same time enjoy the backyard. The way we achieve this is by providing both an enclosed area with airflow to keep it fresh and an open deck area, where the pup can relax and enjoy their surroundings.”



CLOSET COMPOSURE:

written by: ALEXA BRICKER

GET YOUR MOST-ORGANIZED CLOSETS EVER



Most people have a closet or two reserved for the odds and ends they can't seem to fit anywhere else in their homes. However, closet space is valuable, and it shouldn't be taken for granted.

If you're looking to transform your closets into highly organized and efficient storage areas, then you've come to the right place. Follow these tips to give all the closets in your home a major upgrade without spending major money.

TAKE IT FROM THE TOP

Before implementing an organization technique, clear out your closet completely. Start from the top and work your way down, removing items as you go. Divide everything into piles to keep, donate, and throw away.



Of the items you're keeping, think about a strategy for where to place them. Perhaps you'll reserve this closet for extra linens and toiletries, such as sheets, blankets, towels, rolls of toilet paper, toothpaste, and shower products. Save the top shelf, which may be harder to reach, for any items you need less often. Organize the items on the remaining shelves by order of importance, with frequently used items toward the front at a level that's easy to reach. Keep anything bulky, like large packs of toilet paper or paper towels, on the closet floor so that they don't take up valuable shelf space.

CREATE A SYSTEM

It's imperative to have a system for the items in your closet; otherwise, you'll never be able to keep order and easily find what you need. This can be particularly helpful for clothing closets, but it's a strategy you can implement for any closet you have.

Start by taking stock of your items and putting them into categories. For example, organize clothing by color, season, and frequency of wear; separate linens by room, such as bedroom, bathroom, and guest bedroom; and sort decorative items or craft supplies by holiday, season, or activity. Keep everything that belongs in the same category together in one place, either in a clearly labeled box or bin, on the same shelf, or hanging in the same place.

If possible, cycle items through your closet depending on when you'll most likely need them. The end of fall, for example, is a good time to move your holiday decor to the front of your closet. Similarly, consider making space for your



cold-weather clothing as winter approaches by moving your shorts and T-shirts to the back of your closet or temporarily placing them into another storage space like your attic.

OPTIMIZE YOUR SPACE

You can use organizational tools to maximize every inch of space in your closets. Here are a few ideas to get you started, depending on what type of closet you're looking to organize and the size of the space you have.

Clothing closets

Keeping your clothes organized can be a particularly frustrating process, especially if you're working with a small closet. If this is the case for you, it might be helpful to install organizational tools to free up space, such as:

- Retractable wall storage
- Corner shelves
- Hanging shoe racks
- Floor racks

If you can, you should also try to raise the height of the rack or racks your clothing currently hang on to make room for more storage underneath. Install a short dresser or a shelving system for shoes and accessories. As previously mentioned, you can also rotate clothing out seasonally, but if you're unable

to do this, a standalone clothing rack can be a great alternative. If you invest in a stylish rack that matches the rest of your bedroom furniture, you can hang a few pieces you wear most often, making them easily accessible and creating more space for other clothing in your closet.

Bathroom closets

It's great to have extra towels, sheets, and toiletries on hand, but the number of items you store in your bathroom or linen closet can get out of hand quickly. Firstly, if you have any linens, medications, or beauty products that you don't use or that are expired, donate them or dispose of them accordingly. Once you know what you want to keep, fold and organize items by type, keeping any matching bedsheet sets together and matching hand and bath towels. Purchase bin dividers so that you can more easily separate and locate the linens you need, and label them with what's inside. You can also label each shelf to quickly identify what's in the bins you can't see. It can be helpful to install a pullout shelving system to be able to reach smaller items, such as cotton balls, shampoo, conditioner, and facewash, stored in bins at the back of the closet. Keep medications in clear plastic bins or boxes separated and labeled by need, such as children's medicines, pet medications, and pain relievers.

**FOLD AND ORGANIZE
ITEMS BY TYPE,**
keeping any matching bedsheet
sets together and matching
hand and bath towels.





A TASTE OF THE SEASON: written by: ALEXA BRICKER

growing tomatoes at home

Starting a vegetable garden can be intimidating, especially if you don't have much gardening experience. Thankfully, one of the tastiest vegetables—or, depending on whom you ask, fruits—the tomato is relatively easy to cultivate in your own backyard. If you're looking to fill your deck, patio, or yard with colorful tomato plants, follow this guide.

STEP 1: LOCATION CONSIDERATIONS

There are thousands of varieties of tomato plants, but not all will be well suited for one particular environment. It's important to consider the average temperature, both during the day and at night, and weather conditions like rainfall and wind. If you live in a cool climate, opt for tomatoes with short growing seasons, such as Early Girl, Sungold, and Orange Roma. For warmer climates, tomatoes with extended growing seasons, such as Amana Orange, Mortgage Lifter, and Ponderosa Pink, will do well.

STEP 2: GET PLANTING

Once you've selected your variety of tomatoes, you can begin planting them. First, decide whether you want to grow your plants from seeds or buy a starter plant. Seeds will need extra care and time to blossom; tomato plants that are already in the process of growing will need adequate space to root and nutrient-dense soil.

If you opt for seeds, keep in mind that they need full sun at least six hours per day. So if your garden is not in a sunny area of your yard, consider placing the seeds in large, moveable pots with nutrient-dense soil instead. They also need adequate heat, so if the ground temperature is not yet above 60 degrees, hold off on planting in the ground until the weather warms up.

Those who want ready-to-eat tomatoes a bit sooner or are less-experienced growing vegetables from seeds should consider buying a starter plant. If you are transferring your tomato

plant from a small pot into a larger one or from a pot into the ground, make sure you provide the plant with good soil to start (organic mixes like compost will work well) and leave enough space for the plant to grow. Tomato plants root from their stems, so be mindful to plant the stems deep, approximately twelve inches into the soil, to help them gain strength.

STEP 3: CAREFUL CARE AND HARVESTING

As previously mentioned, tomato plants need very warm, sunny conditions to thrive. Make sure that, wherever you plant your tomatoes, they are receiving full sun and the soil is warm and not oversaturated.

Seeds or seedlings need frequent watering before they begin bearing fruit, so try to keep the soil moist. Once your plants are sprouting fruit, they can be watered slightly less, but you should still aim for about one to two inches per week. It's OK to allow the soil to dry out in between watering, as long as you make sure you are being consistent and that you don't allow the soil to be dry for too long.

Tomatoes are ready to harvest when they're red or bright in color and a bit soft. Harvesting in the afternoon can help your tomatoes maintain the best flavor, especially if they were watered recently. A rule of thumb: never refrigerate tomatoes; it will make them mealy. If you want to preserve a big harvest of tomatoes, consider prolonging their lives by canning them, pickling them, or making them into a delicious sauce using the recipe to the right.

homemade TOMATO SAUCE

Ingredients:

- 1 small carrot
- 1 medium onion (cut into quarters)
- 1 celery stalk (cut into quarters)
- ¼ cup olive oil
- 1 clove garlic, minced
- ⅓ cup white cooking wine
- 8 cups tomatoes, diced (about 8 large tomatoes)
- Salt and pepper, to taste

Instructions:

1. Chop the carrot, onion, and celery in a food processor. You can choose to leave the mixture chunky or chop the vegetables more finely depending on your sauce preferences.
2. On medium heat, warm up the olive oil in a large saucepot, and then mix in the vegetables. Lower the heat slightly, and sauté for about 10 minutes. Add in the minced garlic, and allow to cook for another minute or so.
3. Turn the heat back up to medium, and add in the white cooking wine. Bring the sauce to a simmer, and cook for 4–5 minutes.
4. Add the tomatoes into the pot, bring the mixture to a simmer, and reduce the heat to low. Only cover the pot partially with the lid, and leave the sauce to simmer for 45 minutes. Stir every so often until the sauce is reduced and has thickened.
5. Season with salt and pepper to taste, and serve with your favorite pasta.

For more helpful growing tips, visit [ALMANAC.COM](https://www.almanac.com)

PAINT IT *Right!*

written by: ALEXA BRICKER

If embarking on a painting project in your home feels overwhelming, you're not alone. However, if you go in with a plan and the right tools, you can feel confident that your paint job will come out looking spectacular.

Use the following tips and tricks below to help you improve your painting skills, no matter what room you're looking to upgrade.

PAINTING TIPS FOR: THE LIVING ROOM

The living room is often one of the home's largest and most frequented rooms, so it's important not to rush the painting process here.

The first step is to choose a color you like that complements any existing furniture or pieces you plan to buy. A good idea may be to tape color swatches you like to your walls, and pay attention to how the color looks throughout the day. It can also

be helpful to paint a small test area of the wall to get used to the color and see if it's a good fit. Because of the frequency you use your living room, you should consider using a latex-based paint over an oil-based one. Latex paints are typically low-VOC, meaning they won't give off as much harmful fumes.

Once you're ready to paint, make sure to remove any furniture you have in the room or cover the furniture with a durable protective tarp. You should also consider covering the floor with drop cloths. Clean and prime the walls to ensure a smooth and even finish, and paint from the top down, starting with the ceiling.

PAINTING TIPS FOR: THE BEDROOM

Your bedroom is a place for rest and relaxation, so you'll want to choose a calming color for this environment.

Consider covering the floors and furniture with a durable drop cloth

If you want to create a cozy aesthetic, paint the ceiling a darker shade than the rest of the room, which can help evoke a more intimate feel. Or, if you want to open up the space and add brightness, soft shades of white, cream, or gray can help reflect natural light and distribute it around the room, making it appear larger. If you plan to repaint any trim, do so before you paint your walls. Tape off the edges of the trim with painter's tape, and paint carefully using a two-inch angled brush.

Are you painting a child's bedroom? Go with paint in a finish like satin or eggshell that's durable and can stand up to nicks and scrapes.

PAINTING TIPS FOR: THE BATHROOM

Bathrooms can be tricky to paint, since much of the hardware and structural elements are built in. However, if you're careful to protect these surfaces, you can ensure a clean and efficient paint job.

It's also important to consider the level of humidity in your bathroom. A full bath with a shower or tub will produce more moisture on a frequent basis, but the walls of any bathroom, regardless of its use, are bound to get a little wet. For this reason, a handful of paint manufacturers now make bathroom-specific paint that can combat mold and repel water. Semigloss finishes are also better at resisting mildew that can accumulate in these damp spaces.

The most important step of the bathroom-painting process is to thoroughly clean the walls before painting; you don't want to paint over top of any existing stains. Be sure to wear protective gloves and a mask while cleaning. Once your walls are cleaned and prepped for painting, ensure your tub, shower walls, and countertops are covered with a protective cloth to prevent damage from dripping paint.

get your home ready for summer

written by:
NATHAN SMITH



The days are getting longer and the temperature is increasing, which means summer will be here before you know it! However, before the season arrives, it is essential to get ready for the warm months ahead. Make sure your home is ready for anything summer throws your way by completing these maintenance tasks.

outside your home

You'll probably spend an extended amount of time in your yard this summer, so take the proper steps now to help you enjoy your outdoor space.

Prep your air conditioner

Ensure your air conditioner is ready to go by removing debris from the condenser unit and cleaning or replacing the air filters. You may also want to schedule a professional tune-up.

Clean your gutters

Your gutters have the important job of directing water away from your home, but they can become clogged with leaves, sludge, and even small branches, so take some time to remove any debris that has built up or hire a professional for complicated gutter-cleanings.

Clean windows and screens

Pesky allergens can easily get caught in your window and door screens. Before opening your windows to let the warm air in, make sure you clean everything so that allergens don't make it inside your home.

Mulch flower beds

Add a fresh layer of mulch to protect your plants and make your landscaping look sharp. Weeds can quickly take over your flower beds, so use this time to clear away any unwanted plants before they grow out of control.

Pressure-wash your exterior

Pressure-washing your home and walkways can help cut the grime built up over winter and spring. While you can do this chore on your own by either buying or renting a pressure washer, you may want to hire a professional. If your home is particularly large, professionals have the equipment to do a more efficient job and get to areas you may struggle to clean.

Reseal your driveway

Extend the life span of your driveway by resealing it. It should be sealed every two to three years, depending on its material. However, you may have to reseal it more often than that, depending on where you live. Areas with rainy and snowy winters and regions with hot, steamy summers will need more frequent sealings.

Prep your outdoor space

It's time to set up your deck or patio. Wash your furniture cushions, furniture, and grill, and deep-clean your deck or patio. This is also an excellent time to reseal or restain your deck or patio to help give it a brand-new look.





inside your home

While it's important to clean up your exterior before summer's arrival, it's equally important to tackle some routine maintenance inside your home.

Add or replace insulation

Insulation keeps your home warm in winter but also cool in the summer. Add or update the insulation in both your attic and walls to keep your home comfortable year-round.

Reseal or replace weatherstripping

Don't let your cool air go out the door this summer. Check your windows and doors for drafts and damage to seals. Now is the time to take care of it. If it doesn't seem like something you can accomplish yourself, call a professional for assistance.

Check your ceiling fans

Most ceiling fans allow you to change the direction they spin. Blades spinning clockwise help heat rise during the winter, but you will want your fans running counterclockwise to circulate cool air in the summer.

Switch to lighter bedding

Most people want a cool place to sleep on a muggy summer night. Make sure to put away your flannel sheets or wool blankets and replace them with breathable cotton sheets.

before vacation

If you've already planned a summer getaway, make sure to ready your home before you leave for your trip.

Check the batteries

Check that all the batteries in your smoke detectors are up to date. These devices are crucial for early fire detection, and your neighbors are likely to hear them and alert the fire department.

Turn off the air

If you live in a warm climate, consider turning your air conditioner off. There's no need to keep it running unless you have pets or expect extreme heat, and it will save you money on your next energy bill. You can also install a smart thermostat that you can control from your phone, allowing you to regulate the temperature while you're away.

Clean out the fridge

Are you heading out for an extended trip? Clean out the refrigerator, and throw away anything that will expire while you're gone. This will help prevent unpleasant messes and odors in your fridge upon your return.

By taking care of these tasks now, you'll be ready to kick back and enjoy summer!





a safe space

written by:
ALEXA BRICKER

FOR YOUR PET



You would go to any lengths to make sure your home is a safe place for your family, but it's not always as easy to safety-proof your home for your pet. However, there are steps you can take to help prevent accidents from occurring and ensure your four-legged family member is just as secure and comfortable as the rest of your family.

LOOK HIGH (AND LOW)

It's important to think about your home from your pet's perspective. Depending on their size, your pet likely spends most of their time at or near floor level. Be mindful not to leave anything on or close to the ground where they can easily find it—especially items like food, cleaning supplies, or potential choking hazards. If your pet tends to chew on things other than toys, consider storing blankets away in a storage ottoman and opting for short-fiber rugs so they won't be tempted to gnaw on, and potentially ingest, anything harmful.

In addition, if your cat has a knack for climbing, keep an eye on objects left on your countertops, kitchen table, and desk. Curious felines are often tempted by half-full glasses and leftover food, among other items, so be mindful of what they may have access to when you're not looking.

CHOOSE TOYS WISELY

Not all pet toys are created equal, and if your pet is especially skilled at shredding or tearing, it's important to choose toys

that won't become a choking hazard. For dogs, avoid any chew toys that are overly hard, such as antlers and rawhide. Instead, go with a rubber toy with some give—preferably one that is slightly wider than your dog's mouth.

When it comes to keeping your cat entertained, it's best to avoid any toys that are smaller or have parts smaller than their mouth to prevent the risk of accidental swallowing. Also, refrain from using ribbon or string as a toy, which could also be accidentally swallowed. Go with climbing trees, cat tunnels, and chase-and-pounce toys like laser pointers instead.

GO HIGH-TECH

The pet industry has come a long way, and there are now a variety of high-tech tools you can use to help keep your four-legged friend safe both while you're home and away. Video technology, such as the Pawbo Interactive Camera and Treat Dispenser, can be used to monitor your dog or cat while you're out of the house; the tool even has a built-in laser pointer toy and treat system so you can keep your pet active and engaged from afar.

If you often take your pet for a walk after dark, or you've ever experienced the fear of losing your pet when letting them out into the backyard at night, you could consider purchasing a light-up collar. Retailers like Chewy and PetSmart sell both LED collars that light up completely and ring lights that can attach to your pet's existing collar.

Essential Tools for DIYers

..... written by: NATHAN SMITH



Whether you're planning some routine maintenance or a home renovation, you need the right tools for the job. Stock your toolbox with the following items to keep your home in tip-top shape.

THE BASICS

There are a few starter tools that every DIYer should own. This includes:

- Claw hammer
- Phillips-head screwdriver
- Flat-head screwdriver
- Needle-nose pliers
- Tongue-and-groove pliers
- Adjustable crescent wrench
- Tape measure

If you don't have these tools, you can purchase tool kits online or at your local hardware store that should include everything, or almost everything, you need to get started.

Additionally, a few other items will help you complete projects, including:

- Level: confirms that an object is perfectly straight
- Stud finder: locates vertical wall studs so you can hang heavy objects like mirrors and televisions
- Utility knife: an all-purpose tool to help with tasks like opening packages and removing painter's tape



POWER TOOLS

If you plan to tackle larger DIY projects, the following tools will make the task easier to accomplish.

Cordless drill

A battery-powered drill is helpful for a variety of projects, from assembling furniture to hanging shelves. Make sure you have metal, wood, and universal drill bits to handle any household material. Most homeowners will need a drill with a voltage between twelve and eighteen volts. A lithium-ion battery can hold a charge for weeks, depending on the drill’s use.

Circular saw

This saw is essential for making straight cuts in various materials, including wood, ceramic tile, and steel. A circular saw is a must-have for tasks like building a deck or trimming floorboards. However, you need to make sure you use the correct blade type for your project.

Miter saw

A miter saw helps you make accurate cuts at various angles and lengths, which makes it essential for woodworking. Miter saws are helpful in projects like installing crown molding or door trim.

Jigsaw

This lightweight tool is maneuverable, making it the right choice for projects like cutting curves to install a sink in a countertop.

Table saw

A table saw can help you accurately complete long, straight cuts and is helpful with jobs ranging from cutting trim to building furniture. Some models are relatively large, but there are smaller, portable versions that take up less space.

Nail gun

A nail gun replaces your hammer when you need to drive multiple nails quickly. Nail guns are useful for framing, roofing, and flooring projects.

Electric sander

These handheld devices create smooth surfaces before sealing and painting, and they are easier than sanding by hand. Be sure to use the right sandpaper grit for your job.

Rotary tool

This device comes with multiple attachments to help you complete tasks, such as honing, buffing, and grinding, faster than doing the same work by hand.



EXTRAS

Finally, while they aren't power tools, these items will help keep you safe and work more efficiently while completing home improvement projects.

- Safety equipment, such as safety glasses, dust masks, work gloves, and hearing protection, is essential to prevent injury.
- A toolbox will keep everything organized and prevent clutter in your garage or basement.
- A selection of screws and nails should be available for any project. Keep your hardware in a container with separate labeled compartments.
- An LED flashlight is helpful when working in dimly lit areas, and it is brighter and lasts longer than a standard flashlight.
- An extension cord can help with jobs throughout your home.

With the right arsenal of tools, you’ll be ready to tackle any home improvement project on your to-do list.

CREATE YOUR OWN *whimsical* Backyard Retreat

written by: RACHEL STEVENS

It's always nice to enjoy a cup of coffee, a good book, or a pleasant conversation outside on a deck or patio, but it can be difficult to put together a cohesive look to accomplish such a space. This list can inspire you to make your own backyard retreat to enjoy by yourself or with loved ones.

HERE'S HOW TO GET THIS LOOK!

Furniture and pillows:

- Dark wicker furniture and cushions
- Glass-top or bamboo coffee table
- Bamboo shades or a bamboo privacy screen
- 2–3 bright-colored and solid white pillows
- 1–3 dark-colored patterned pillows

Decor and plants:

- Round white paper lanterns
- Bright-colored flowers
- Large clay or cement planters or pots
- Large fern or plant of choice



1. Large plants can add privacy and an exotic flair.
2. A coffee table can hold your decor, snacks, and drinks.
3. Paper lanterns add a light and airy feel.
4. Bamboo shades are durable and provide sun protection for you and your furniture.
5. Potted flowers add a pop of your favorite color and can attract butterflies.
6. Dark furniture resists visible damage more than light-colored furniture.
7. Bold-colored and patterned pillows tie together dark or neutral-colored furniture.
8. Light-stained or unstained deck wood can reflect and diffuse natural light.



One of the best parts of spring and summer is the abundance of fresh produce available to experiment with. This pair of recipes from *The Fresh Harvest Cookbook* makes use of seasonal staples like corn and fresh herbs so you can get a taste of the garden in every bite.

chilled corn salad | SERVES 4–6

INGREDIENTS:

2 cups corn kernels (about 5 ears of corn)
2 tablespoons unsalted butter
1 jalapeño pepper, seeded and diced (add more if you like things spicy)
½ teaspoon salt
2 tablespoons mayonnaise
2 teaspoons garlic powder
3 tablespoons sour cream or Mexican crema
¼ teaspoon cayenne pepper
¼ teaspoon chili powder
2 tablespoons feta cheese
2 tablespoons Cotija cheese
2 teaspoons fresh lime juice
½ cup cilantro, chopped
Salt and pepper, to taste

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Preheat the oven to 400°F.
2. Place the corn on a baking sheet and bake in the oven until it turns a light golden brown, about 35 minutes.
3. Remove the corn from the oven, let cool slightly, and then transfer to a large mixing bowl. Add the remaining ingredients and stir to combine.
4. Place the salad in the refrigerator for at least 3 hours, although letting it chill overnight is highly recommended.

Note: The amount of jalapeño suggested in the ingredients is a safe amount of heat to serve to a broad spectrum of tastes. If you and yours like things spicier, feel free to include the seeds or another jalapeño.

from garden to table



recipes by:
KEITH SARASIN
AND CHRIS VIAUD

photos by:
KEITH SARASIN

Recipes excerpted
from *The Fresh
Harvest Cookbook*
by Keith Sarasin and
Chris Viaud. ©2021
Courtesy of Cider
Mill Press Book
Publishers LLC.

herb-crusted focaccia | SERVES 12

INGREDIENTS:

3¼ cups all-purpose flour
1½ cups water (78°F)
3 teaspoons salt
½ teaspoon active dry yeast
6 tablespoons olive oil
3 garlic cloves, sliced thin
Leaves from 2 sprigs
of rosemary
Leaves from 2 sprigs of thyme

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Place the flour, water, salt, and yeast in a large bowl and stir to combine. Mix well with your hands to ensure that all of the flour, salt, and yeast is incorporated.
2. Cover the bowl and let it sit in a naturally warm place for 24 hours, giving the dough time to come together and develop flavor. The dough should double in size after 24 hours.
3. After the dough has rested for 24 hours, preheat the oven to 450°F and grease a baking sheet.
4. Place the dough on the baking sheet and pat it into a ½-inch-thick rectangle. Brush the top with the olive oil and sprinkle the garlic, rosemary, and thyme all over.
5. Place in the oven and bake until golden brown, about 20 to 30 minutes. Remove and let cool slightly before serving.



12 Tips for an written by: MATTHEW BRADY **ULTRAORGANIZED MOVE**

Moving into a new home can be one of the most memorable experiences you ever have. But it can also be one of the most stressful. After all, you're essentially packing up your entire life as you take the leap from one home to another.

So planning and organizing smartly and intentionally is vital. The guide that follows can make your move go smoothly so you can thoroughly enjoy the experience—and your new home.

Prepacking

Choose to DIY or use professionals

Your first step should be deciding whether you want to take on the move yourself. If so, make sure to enlist as many friends and family members as possible to help you. It's not only a bonding experience but also a cost-effective one: buying pizza for your crew is less expensive than paying movers to do it all. On the flip side, a moving company will be more efficient and save you from a lot of headaches and back strain.



Calculate your costs

If you choose to use a mover, who will likely charge by the hour, shop around and get quotes from at least three businesses. Other cost considerations include packing supplies, a moving truck, mileage, gas, and a storage unit.

Collect supplies

Make an educated guess about how many boxes and packing materials you’ll need—remembering that you can never have too many. Ask family members and friends to save cardboard boxes for you, and ask grocery stores or big-box stores for large boxes. Regardless of where you get your boxes, make sure they’re sturdy.

Visit office-supply stores, big-box stores, or shipping stores for high-quality packing tape and bubble wrap. For eco-friendly packing materials, use corrugated cardboard or natural packing peanuts, or reuse the air pillows that come in your shipped products. You can also utilize your home’s pillows and blankets to wrap fragile items.

Use an organizer

Moving is usually a hectic process, so it can be invaluable to have a catchall

for your lists of items and to-dos, contracts, receipts, and so on. Create an online folder to keep tabs on everything, or use a notebook or binder with pockets.

Packing

Cut the clutter

Ask yourself what you really need to bring with you—moving is a great reason to cut down on clutter. Create separate piles of what you want to keep, toss, donate, and sell. Doing so will help make your new home tidier, and you’ll also potentially save on moving costs with fewer things to bring.

Color-code your boxes

Assign a color to every room of your home, and then organize your boxes accordingly. You can buy or print colored labels to tape onto boxes or use different-colored tape for the same effect. Another tip: create a number system to share with your movers, noting on the boxes which should be unloaded first and which can wait—the numbered boxes that should be unloaded first should be packed last into your truck.

Be specific with your labeling

It’s one thing to write DINING ROOM on a box, but what if you have three or four boxes that say that? It could take significant time to root through each box to know what goes where. Instead, note everything in the box, such as FINE CHINA, SILVERWARE, and so on. (This is also a great strategy for seasonal decor.)



Organize and label your cords

A tangled ball of wires will guarantee frustration when you start setting up your electronics in your new home. Make the connections much easier by labeling each cord with tape and keeping similar cords (e.g., all the TV wires or all the computer wires) tied together with twist-ties.

Keep hardware together

Likewise, keeping the screws, bolts, and nuts with their respective furniture is a time- and sanity-saver. For example, put your bed’s hardware in a plastic bag, label the bag, and tape it to the frame. And don’t forget to keep your toolbox handy for reassembly!

Keep valuables together

Be intentional with important items you want to keep close during the move, such as keys and phone chargers. Also, you may want to pack important items or documents separately and bring them with you in your car rather than loading them into the truck, even if you hire movers.

Planning

For all the effort put into packing, you also need to think ahead about your new place to complete your stress-free moving process.

Pack for day one

It’s essential to make sure everyone gets comfortable in their new surroundings, and a great way to do so is to make sure each person has clothes, toiletries, and any other necessities to get them through the first day. They can be packed in a backpack or a box and brought separately in your car so they don’t get lost among the other boxes.

Let your inner interior designer loose

Take a printout of your new home’s layout (or do a rough sketch on draft paper), and jot down where you’re going to put each piece of furniture in each room. This will make everything infinitely easier and everyone much happier when it comes to setting up.

Moving can be an exhilarating experience if done right. With these tips at your disposal, your move will be more organized and satisfying, creating a smooth transition into your new home.



The Best Plants for *pet owners*

written by: NATHAN SMITH

With spring in the air, you may be itching to upgrade your landscaping or bring some lively greenery inside your home. But if you're a pet owner, you must exercise caution when choosing plants, as some flora may be toxic to cats and dogs.

Luckily, there are numerous plants to choose from that are nontoxic to your four-legged friends.

While you don't want to let your pet chow down on any of your plants, the following varieties are safe to keep around dogs and cats.

Indoors

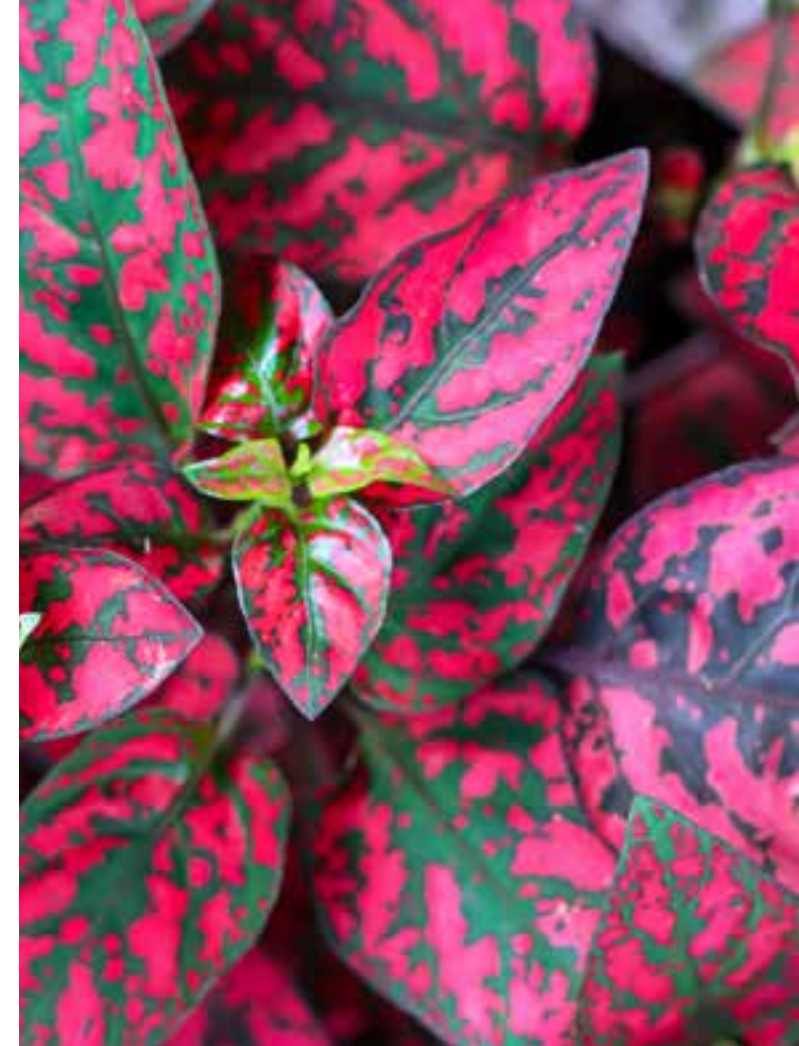
If you're looking to bring some greenery into your home, consider adding some of these nontoxic plants.

Areca palm

Also known as the butterfly plant, the areca palm adds a bit of tropical flair to your living space. While the palm's fronds can be enticing to play with for pets, the areca palm poses no threat to their health. Keep areca palms in areas that offer plenty of light, and let the soil dry between watering.

Boston fern

While its shaggy fronds may be a tempting toy for your pet, the Boston fern is no serious threat to your pet's well-being. Make sure to keep a Boston fern in a room with plenty of humidity in a spot with bright, indirect light. These ferns tend to be low maintenance and require fertilizing once a month in the spring and summer and every two months in fall and winter, but you'll need to keep the soil damp.



Polka-dot plant

Add a splash of color to your home with this plant that comes in pink, red, white, and green varieties. While it is nontoxic to pets, be aware that it can still cause a mild upset stomach if consumed in large quantities. Polka-dot plants require bright, indirect light and regular watering to thrive. Make sure to feed your polka-dot plant once a month during the growing season.

Spider plant

Spider plants are easy-to-grow indoor options that are nontoxic to pets. These plants can tolerate various soil and moisture conditions, although you'll want to avoid direct sunlight, which can scorch their leaves. Spider plants have also been reported to act as natural air purifiers in your home as they absorb airborne pollutants.





Outdoors

If you're planning some new plant additions to your yard, choose one of these pet-friendly options.

Magnolia

Magnolias come in both tree and shrub varieties, neither of which poses a threat to your pets. The white, yellow, purple, or pink flowers bloom in spring, providing a splash of color that will get you in the mood for warmer months ahead. Choose a spot in your yard that offers full sun or partial shade, and plant magnolias in moist soil with good drainage.

Pot Marigold

These orange, white, and yellow flowers attract pollinators like bees to your garden, provide no threat to your pets, and require minimal maintenance. Plant pot marigolds after the last frost in spring to blossom during summer. Choose an area that provides full sun, and water regularly.

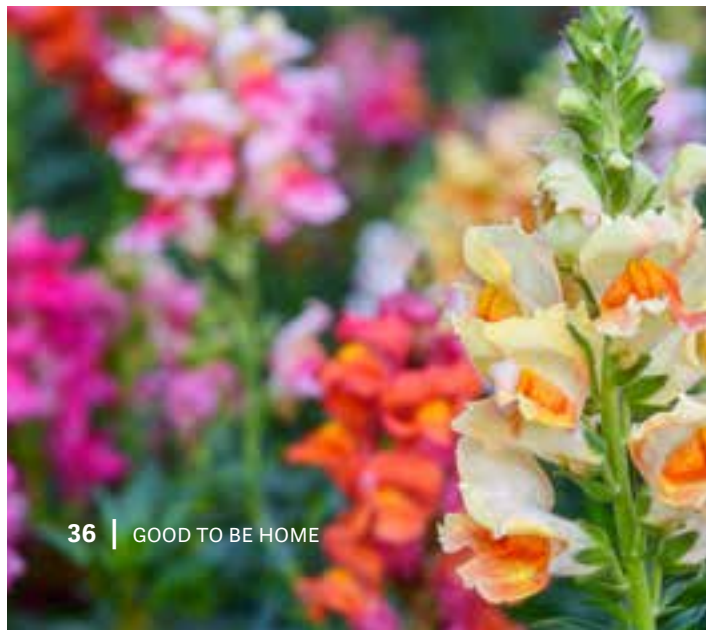
Snapdragon

These nontoxic plants come in various colors, including white, purple, pink, and orange. Make sure to plant them in a spot that offers plenty of sunlight and well-draining soil. Snapdragons can stand up to cool weather, making them a popular choice for spring and fall gardens.

Sunflower

These towering flowers are a sure sign of summer. While nontoxic, the fibrous shells of sunflower seeds may be too hard for pets to digest, so be careful your pet doesn't eat them. However, the seeds are an excellent food source for local wildlife such as birds. Plant sunflowers in areas with full sun, and water the plants deeply once a week when established.

By adding these plants to your living space or yard, you can keep your home looking beautiful while ensuring your pet's safety.



GET A NEW LOOK with an Upgraded Sink

written by:
RACHEL STEVENS

Kitchen and bathroom sinks aren't always the most glamorous objects, but they are household necessities. If you've ever considered upgrading yours, you know there is an overwhelming number of sink styles and materials available. However, this guide can help you narrow down your choices.

STYLES

It can feel like there are endless styles of sinks on the market, but you can pare those down to a few basic shapes to narrow your search.

Farmhouse/apron-front

One of the most popular kitchen sinks is the farmhouse or apron-front style. Farmhouse sinks have deep basins, so water splashing onto the countertops is minimal and there is plenty of space for your dishes. However, they can be expensive and difficult to install on your own, so be sure to plan your budget accordingly.

Undermount

An undermount sink refers to the fact that the mounting is

underneath the cabinet or vanity, so there is no visible sink basin rim or lip, and the counter edge drops off to the sink basin. This mount creates a sleek look and makes it easy to wash debris directly down the drain. Be aware that heavier undermount sinks may require an internal support system.

Top-mount/drop-in

Top-mount sinks are the most popular kitchen variety because they are relatively inexpensive and easy to install on your own. A hole in the countertop holds the sink, and the rim is sealed to the counter with silicone. However, it can collect debris in the crevices of the rim edges and it may need to be recaulked after several years.

Double-basin

Double your dish-washing capabilities? Yes, please! Double-basin sinks are convenient in the kitchen because they have a divider in the center that splits the sink into two, which allows you to separate your dishes. The basins are typically deep, like a farmhouse sink, but you may run into the same difficult installation process and high cost.

Vessel/bowl

If you want to add a modern look to your bathroom, you should consider a vessel sink. These sinks sit on top of the counter and come in a wide variety of custom colors, shapes, and sizes. Plus, there is typically more counter space because the sink bowl itself is smaller than the countertop. However, the bowls are finicky to clean underneath, and they tend to create more splashing than is desirable.

MATERIALS

Now that you've thought about sink styles, let's talk about material options. Each material has its advantages and disadvantages, and they can vary in price and availability depending on current demand. So be sure to search for the materials available near you and within your budget before you set your heart on one.

Stainless steel

The most abundant and standard option for most kitchen sinks is stainless steel. Stainless steel is a very durable and somewhat budget-friendly option. Plus, it is resistant to stains and shows less wear than other kinds of materials.

Granite composite

Granite-composite sinks are an incredibly durable mixture of granite and resin. In its list of numerous advantages, granite comes in a variety of colors, resists heat damage and scratching, and can be configured into just about any custom shape to fit your counter or vanity.

Copper

Copper looks elegant, and it's a timeless material that matches a wide array of paint colors. It resists rust and normal day-to-day wear and tear—plus, copper has natural antimicrobial properties.

Fireclay

Fireclay is made by mixing clay and glaze in a hot kiln oven, which results in a hard ceramic-like material. It's nonporous, resistant to acid and heat, and chip resistant.

Bamboo

In contrast, bamboo is light, is durable against humidity, and has a gorgeous, naturally warm look that transforms your kitchen or bathroom into a serene retreat.



WILD ABOUT

interview with: SHARON LEE
written by: MATTHEW BRADY
photos by: AS NOTED

Wallpaper



photo by: MARGARET RAJIC

Wallpaper has a history of casually being dismissed by many. However, as is the case with most types of fashion, this form of decor is once again hot.

Sharon Lee, the founder of Dallas-based Krane Home, was ahead of the curve on this trend, having originally founded her business on artistic wallpaper ten years ago. She discusses the paper's practicality and impact.

What does wallpaper add to a home that paint cannot?

Well-designed wallpapers will add a level of depth and visual texture that you can't get from painting a wall. Wallpaper can make existing furniture pieces in the room appear totally fresh once installed, making it less necessary to buy all-new items. It is an immediate signifier of luxury, class, and sophistication.

You offer wallpaper designs specifically for nurseries. What does wallpaper bring to such a space?

Every nursery should have fun wallpaper! Babies love to look at it. My babies would stare and grab at the paper during changing-table moments. One Krane mom put one of our Birds patterns on the ceiling and says her son was so entranced by it, he wouldn't cry when he woke up—it kind of acted like a giant mobile!

You use your wallpaper designs in other products, such as fabric and pillows. What does this add to an overall aesthetic?

Anytime you're designing a cohesive space, it truly helps to cycle a pattern and/or color throughout the space or adjoining spaces. It looks finished and thoughtful. I love traditional decor where the wallpaper, curtains, and upholstery all have the same pattern. It gives such a grand, impressive look.

A recent trend is peel-and-stick wallpaper. What are your thoughts about it?

Sorry, not sorry. I must take

a stance on this—avoid! It may seem like a good idea; however, in practice, it's harder to install than regular wallpaper and can peel the paint off your wall when removed. Traditional wallpaper is more forgiving, which is important because no wall is perfectly straight and flat. All our wallpapers have been tested to ensure they can be removed with very minimal damage to the walls.

photo by: KARYN MILLET





What are the top three misconceptions about wallpaper, and how do you address them?

- 1. It's difficult to remove.**
As I touched on, traditional wallpaper is now very easy to remove because of the updated adhesives that installers use. I made an IGTV video with my removal expert in LA to show how easy it is and that the wall underneath wasn't damaged at all. We didn't even have to repaint.
- 2. It's bad for resale.**
These days, even spec homes and builder homes going straight to market must include wallpaper in a few rooms to communicate that they're custom, high-end homes. All luxury homes have bold wallpaper in at least two rooms. Our home in Santa Monica was covered in wallpaper, and the selling price set a record for the area. Wallpaper compels the right buyer to fall in love with a home and make an emotional purchase.

- 3. Large rooms call for neutral wallpaper.**
Bright, bold wallpaper looks spectacular in a large room. I chose Birds in Azure for our family room, which is the largest room in our house. It makes such a statement when you walk through it. There are so many elements in a room that break up the wallpaper—a fireplace, built-ins, a TV, artwork—which makes it so fun to see the bold wallpaper peeking through.

How has wallpaper changed during the ten years Krane Home has been in existence? A friend recently revealed that when I first told her I was going to design and manufacture wallpaper, she thought I had gone completely nuts. It wasn't really in style yet when I started. Since then, wallpaper has come back full force and I'm loving it.

For more info, visit kranehome.com

10 CREATIVE USES FOR WALLPAPER

from Krane Home

- 1. A feature wall**
Choose one feature wall, ideally a headboard or a room with a major element in it, to highlight with a bolder wallpaper design.
- 2. A half room**
Wrapping wallpaper onto two of four walls will create a cozy, enveloping feel. It's also a great opportunity to create contrasting moments within the room.
- 3. Applied within moldings**
This look is impossibly chic. No moldings? No problem. Hardware stores usually have plenty to choose from at very affordable price points. (Be sure to have them cut the pieces for you with their saw at 45-degree angles since this is usually a complimentary service.)
- 4. Inside a niche**
If you live in an older house with architectural details that might at first seem outdated, freshen them up by wallpapering them. This is also a great way to cycle color around the room and create a seriously unique and artistic moment.
- 5. The back of a bookshelf**
Bring your favorite bookshelf to life by paper-backing it. Anything you put in there is sure to automatically look 100 times chicer. Choose a fun pattern to masterfully disguise any clutter.

- 6. Above a wainscot**
Don't have a wainscot? Add a simple molding at 36-inch height, paper above it, and paint below it. Choose either white or light-colored paint for the wainscot and a contrasting darker wallpaper, or a patterned wallpaper with one of the colors within the design matching the wainscot paint.
- 7. A ceiling frieze**
Create one by using wallpaper and a thin molding painted with the same color as the cabinetry or other architectural details in the room. This can make a room appear taller and make a small room with a high ceiling more proportionate. Add a cool tray ceiling to finish off the look.
- 8. As a folding screen**
Whether you find a cool folding screen at a flea market or have one made, simple construction will suffice because, once it's wallpapered, the pattern will be the star. It will become a transportable piece of decor that can liven up any space and divide a large room into zones.
- 9. On the stairs**
Placing patterned paper on the front-facing side of a stairway is a sophisticated way to layer pattern and color in the room and create visual eye candy in a place that could have just been dead space.
- 10. On the ceiling**
This is an undeniably delightful and surprising way to use wallpaper. Also, many homes have an architectural element called a soffit where the ceiling is inverted in one area—and wallpaper is a great way to highlight this while making the room appear larger.



written by: RACHEL STEVENS

Landscaping Projects That **PROVIDE MAXIMUM ROI**



The outside of your home is the first thing your neighbors, guests, and potential buyers see. If you're considering investing in professional landscaping, you may be wondering what projects would be the most beneficial to the value of your home. Wonder no more! This guide highlights projects that positively impact your home's aesthetic and provide maximum ROI (return on investment).

How much should you spend?

Before you start any of these projects, consider your budget and goals. There is no one-size-fits-all price for landscaping efforts. The price will depend on your location and project needs, so don't be afraid to contact multiple contractors for quotes to compare. Also, consider what you paid for your home. As a rule of thumb, you should spend around 10 percent of your home's total value on landscaping and hardscaping. So if your home is valued at \$300,000, an appropriate amount to spend would be around \$30,000.

Consider the end goal for improving your landscaping. Do you want to attract potential buyers? Is this your forever home that you want to improve for your own benefit? The answers to these and other similar questions will impact the approach you take for these projects.



Low-maintenance water and fire features

The most common misconception about including water features in your landscaping is that a pool is the most beneficial project. However, that is not always the case. Pools can be out of budget for many people, and potential buyers may not want the commitment of a pool. When considering a water feature, the best project could be a small, low-maintenance pond.

On the opposite end of the element spectrum, firepits create a natural place in your yard to gather and relax.

A stone firepit is simple to install, long-lasting, and easy to remove or update if a potential buyer wants to customize it in the future. Firepits are relatively inexpensive and require little upkeep other than occasional cleaning.

Paving-stone walkways and patios

Walkways are almost always a valuable property addition because they make it easy to navigate through the backyard without having to step in wet grass, snow, or mud.



Patios can be another boost to your home's value since they create a more usable space to sit with family and host friends. If you're planning on selling your home, try not to customize your patio too much. You don't have to spend much to create a nice patio, just enough that you can lay down high-quality stones in a size that will fit a table and chairs.

Trees and shrubs

Trees and shrubs make great accents for your yard and can instantly improve its aesthetic. They can also be helpful when selling to potential buyers who may not want to take on planting greenery themselves. Also, if your home is near a busy road, trees and shrubs can act as a barrier for added privacy.



Be sure to think ahead and choose low-maintenance plants. It can be wise to consult a professional who knows the best plants for your region; they can arrange them in a way that will accent your home rather than detract from it.

Fencing

A high-quality fence can go a long way toward boosting your home's potential value. The key is to choose the best material to resist corrosion and breakage. Consider a sturdy fencing material such as PVC, wrought iron, or cedar, depending on the most aesthetically pleasing fit for your property.

Lighting

Improved lighting can be useful for any yard because of the security and visual appeal it provides. In-ground recessed lighting is relatively inexpensive and subtle, and it will make your house stand out at night. You can even invest in solar-powered lights, so you'll never have to change bulbs or batteries.

Improving your landscaping can be a challenging process. However, these ideas can be a starting point to help you reach maximum ROI.



written by:
NATHAN SMITH

BE THE *Best Neighbor* YOU CAN BE

From city apartments to suburban cul-de-sacs, having good relationships with your neighbors can significantly improve your living experience. If you’re worried about where you stand as a neighbor, use these tips to help create lasting bonds.

BUILD RELATIONSHIPS

You can positively impact morale in your neighborhood simply by being friendly. To establish a good rapport with neighbors, make sure to do the following:

- Introduce yourself when new neighbors move in
- Say hello if you see a neighbor outside
- Offer to help your neighbors with home projects
- Invite your neighbors to gatherings held at your home

DO YOUR PART

It’s a community effort to keep your neighborhood looking great, so do your part to keep your lawn and exterior well-kept. This includes basic upkeep, such as mowing your lawn, trimming your hedges, and removing weeds and debris, as well as simple tasks like bringing in your cans on garbage day. This not only improves the curb appeal of your home but also benefits the property value of surrounding homes.

KEEP NOISE TO A MINIMUM

If you’re planning to invite friends and family over for a party, be mindful of how much noise you’ll be making. You may want to notify your neighbors in advance that there will be a gathering at your home. If the party is outdoors, try to end it by a particular time or move the party inside to help limit the noise your neighbors can hear. If a neighbor asks you to turn the noise down, don’t be defensive. Instead, apologize and come to a peaceful resolution.

BE PROACTIVE

If you’re planning some home repairs, such as installing a new fence or cutting down a tree, it’s a good idea to let your surrounding neighbors know. Any project that could impact your neighbors requires advanced notice. While you don’t necessarily need their permission, a quick heads-up can help your neighbors prepare if need be.

MIND YOUR PET

Walking your dog can be an excellent way to meet your neighbors. Make sure to clean up any mess your pet makes in a neighbor’s yard or elsewhere in the neighborhood. Also, be aware of your pet’s noise—your neighbors won’t appreciate an early-morning wake-up call from your barking dog. Finally, be considerate of your neighbor’s pet, and avoid setting off fireworks or making other loud noises.

The inclusion of useful tips is one of the top reasons 58 percent of recipients have referred the professional who sent them the magazine in the past 12 months.


recommendations & referrals

are the core of my business and always greatly appreciated.
Thank you for your continued support!





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Front of Tear Out Card 2



sticky CHICKEN



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Back of Tear Out Card 2

SERVES 4

sticky CHICKEN

ingredients:

- 2 tbsp. water
- 1 tsp. cornstarch
- ¼ c. ketchup
- 3 tbsp. honey
- 3 tbsp. soy sauce
- 1 tbsp. chili garlic sauce (such as sambal), or your favorite hot sauce (optional)
- 4 garlic cloves, minced
- 2 tbsp. canola oil (or other neutral oil such as vegetable), plus more as needed
- 1½ lb. boneless, skinless chicken breasts or thighs, cut into bite-sized pieces
- Kosher salt
- Freshly ground black pepper

instructions:

1. Place the water and cornstarch in a small bowl and stir well to combine. Stir in the ketchup, honey, soy sauce, chili garlic sauce (if using), and garlic. Reserve the sauce.
2. Place the canola oil in a large nonstick skillet over high heat. Add half of the chicken to the pan and season generously with salt and pepper (about ½ teaspoon of each) and cook, stirring now and then, until browned all over, about 5 minutes. Transfer the chicken to a plate and repeat the process, adding another tablespoon or so of oil to the pan if necessary, with the rest of the chicken.
3. Return the first batch of chicken to the skillet along with the reserved sauce. Bring the mixture to a boil, then turn the heat to low and simmer, stirring now and then, until the sauce is thick and coats the chicken, about 5 minutes. Serve immediately.

Excerpted from *Simply Julia: 110 Easy Recipes for Healthy Comfort Food* by Julia Turshen. Harper Wave, 2021.
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Your back covers are a great place to draw attention to an upcoming seminar or community event of your choosing.

86 percent of recipients have taken an action as a result of receiving the magazine.



★★★★★
The Smith Family
Philadelphia

Stacey is the best of the best! Our family was very pleased with her services, especially Snowball, our little pup! She listened to all of our concerns, wants, needs, and dreams. Stacey is totally awesome! I will be sharing her information with everyone that I know.



★★★★★
The Miller Family
Manayunk

Stacey was very patient with us, even though we were very picky. She knew how important it was for us to have a great experience and great service. We would definitely refer Stacey to all of our friends and family.



★★★★★
The Austin Family
Manayunk

Stacey is truly a very impressive person. She works fast, efficiently, and effectively. Her services are top of the line and we were very satisfied with her work. We love Stacey!



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