

Compliments of Alicia Duffy

Good to Be HOME

issue 06

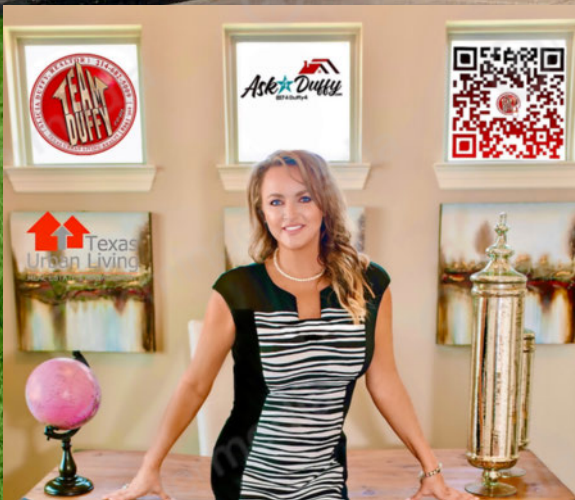
PLANTS TO BOOST YOUR LANDSCAPING

*Easy to grow and
easy on the eyes*

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ISSUE 6
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Front of Tear Out Card 1

cherry tomato, garlic,
AND BASIL PENNE

1¾ lb. cherry tomatoes
12 sundried tomato
pieces (optional)
10 garlic cloves
2 bunches basil
4 qt. water
½ c. kosher salt,
plus extra for seasoning
2½ lb. penne
1½ c. extra-virgin olive oil
1 tbsp. sugar
1 tsp. coarse-ground black pepper
2 pinches Cayenne pepper
(omit for children)
3 tbsp. white vinegar
3 tbsp. butter



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Back of Tear Out Card 1

(ingredients continued)

To serve (optional)
Freshly grated Parmesan

Excerpted from *Enjoy: Recipes for Memorable Gatherings* by Perla Servan-Schreiber, Flammarion, 2020. Photography by Nathalie Carnet. Images may not be reproduced or transmitted digitally without written permission from the publisher.

1. Wash, dry, and halve the cherry tomatoes. Thinly slice the sundried tomatoes (if using). Peel the garlic, remove the germs, and crush. Wash and dry the basil, reserve some leaves for garnish, and chop the rest finely.
2. Pour the water into a large pot, add the salt, and bring to a boil. Add the penne, stir, and cook according to the package instructions.
3. Meanwhile, heat two large skillet over high heat and pour just under half the olive oil into each, reserving a little for serving. Add a pinch of salt to each, followed by the sugar, coarse-ground pepper, Cayenne pepper (if using), garlic, cherry tomatoes, and sundried tomatoes (if using), dividing everything equally between the skillets. Cook for 1 minute, stirring regularly. The cherry tomatoes should be hot but still hold their shape. Add the vinegar and chopped basil and cook for an additional 30 seconds, still stirring. Remove from the heat.
4. Drain the pasta, leaving a little water clinging to it, and return it immediately to the pot. Over low heat, stir in the butter and the reserved olive oil, followed immediately by the tomatoes and any pan juices.
5. Taste for seasoning, add more salt, pepper, Cayenne pepper, basil, or olive oil as necessary, and serve at once. These penne are usually eaten without Parmesan. But if you really must. . .



SERVES 12



Dear Bill and Judy,

The transition from winter to spring is all about renewal, and there's no better time of year to turn your attention toward refreshing your living space. This issue of Good to Be Home is full of creative ideas to help you transform your home from the inside out.

New home construction and renovations have skyrocketed since the start of the pandemic, but a busy construction market makes for complex challenges. Whether you're looking to build new or make changes to your existing space, the enclosed guide can help.

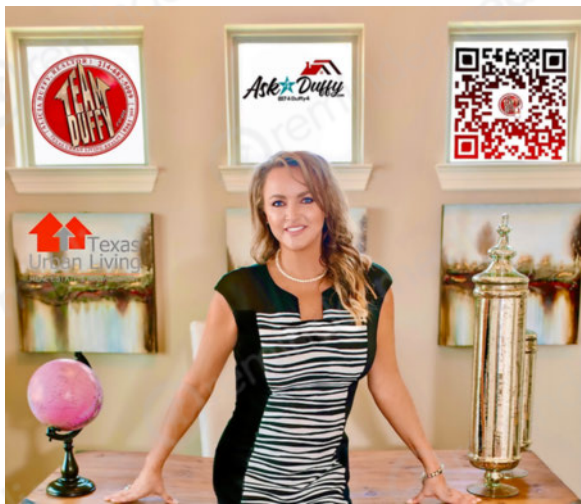
If you're looking to get a jump start on your spring-cleaning, a good first step is to declutter and organize your home's most heavily used spaces. This issue includes tips for cleaning up your home's catchall areas room by room, as well as ideas for simplifying your laundry room and wash-day routine.

This time of year isn't just for simplifying your cleaning routine; it's also a great time to go back to basics with your cooking. Instructions for preparing the perfect eggs and a pair of scrumptious soup recipes can help you do just that.

When it comes time to turn your attention toward your home's exterior, sprucing up your driveway and siding can go a long way. The pressure-washing primer and driveway-maintenance tips in this issue can help you prioritize your curb appeal just in time for the new season.

Wishing you a wonderful spring season! As always, it's a pleasure to send you this magazine.

Alicia Duffy



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HOME *sweet* HOA

written by: RACHEL STEVENS

Homeowners associations (HOAs) are becoming increasingly popular in neighborhoods across America. While opinions on living in a neighborhood with an HOA are divided, you don't need to shy away from your dream home just because it's a part of one. The best way to feel confident about your HOA is to understand the benefits of it.

THE PROS OF JOINING AN HOA

The primary purpose of an HOA is to create practical rules for your community and to enforce them. It's also responsible for the upkeep and finances of the development.

On the board

Most people's HOA hesitation comes from potentially strict rules. However, if you're a member on the board, you can propose improvements. Additionally, it's a chance to meet your neighbors and develop friendships with them. It's important to build a bond with community members you can rely on and trust.

Day-to-day perks

Some benefits of being part of an HOA are that it can improve your overall quality of life in your neighborhood in the following ways:

- There are usually well-maintained common areas.
- Typically, there is access to amenities like a community pool, gym, and park.
- It's common to have increased community pride and engagement with HOA-planned activities, which can be particularly nice for families with children.
- The property value will likely be stable because of deed restrictions that keep everything consistent across the neighborhood.
- There is an added layer of support for property issues, since most HOAs partner with municipal code-compliance departments.

Don't be quick to overlook the benefits of an HOA—you just might come to enjoy being a part of this important institution in your community.

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Organisation Tips FOR THE CATCHALL AREAS OF YOUR HOME

written by: NATHAN SMITH

No matter how organized your home is, there always seem to be certain rooms that attract clutter. However, through some simple organization, you can reclaim these spaces from the chaos.

OFFICE

Your office should be a realm of productivity, but clutter can quickly become distracting. Start by removing pens, papers, and anything else scattered on your desk. Shred documents you no longer need to reduce paper clutter, and opt to go paperless by switching to email statements.

Organization tips:

- Replace a large, clunky desk with a small corner desk or standing desk.
- Add tall pieces of furniture to save floor space and create vertical storage.
- Use in-drawer dividers to separate paperwork by category and date.
- Bundle and label your electronic cords, or set up a wireless keyboard and mouse.



PANTRY

Your pantry can become the catchall area for your kitchen without a proper organizing strategy. Before getting started, take the opportunity to go through your pantry and remove anything that has expired. Also, consider donating any nonperishables you don't plan to use to a food bank.

Organization tips:

- Store dry items like pasta and cereals in clear containers, and label them clearly along with their expiration dates.
- Use an over-the-door organizer to store canned goods and jars and clear shelf space.
- Move awkwardly shaped items like bagged foods to lower shelves.
- Keep produce, cans, and jars organized in baskets by category. For example, have a basket for fruits, vegetables, and beans.



BASEMENT

Your basement is an ideal storage space when suitably organized. It’s always a good idea to take inventory of this space before you start decluttering, and keep in mind that if you haven’t used an item in the past year, you can probably get rid of it or donate it.

Organization tips:

- Install metal or plastic shelves (moisture can easily damage wood shelves) to a sturdy wall to clear floor space, or add shelves under your stairs for additional storage capacity.
- Use clear containers, and label everything to quickly know what is in each box, bin, and bag.
- Use hooks to hang items like decorations and out-of-season clothing.
- Cover any unused furniture with a plastic drop cloth, and place the furniture on blocks in case of water buildup on the floor.

ATTIC

Your attic is a great place to store lesser-used items, but before you start organizing this space, you should deep clean it. Remove items from the floor, and sweep up as much dust as possible. Donate or toss anything you no longer want.

Organization tips:

- Move lesser-used objects toward the back and frequently used items near the entrance.
- Move off-season clothing to the attic to free up space in your closets, and use clothing racks and garment bags to protect the clothes.
- Utilize plastic storage bags and bins to quickly find specific items.
- Store items that could be damaged by water or sunlight in protective bins away from windows.

GARAGE

Organizing your garage can be daunting, but not if you have the right strategy. Begin by removing everything to clearly see how much room you have, and then determine what items to part with. Make sure to label everything in bins and bags.

Organization tips:

- Separate items into categories, and give each category its own space.
- Maximize the wall space of your garage by installing cabinets, shelves, and hooks—just make sure any storage you install can adequately hold the weight of the items you’re adding.
- Use ceiling hooks to keep items like bikes and ladders out of the way.
- Install a pegboard on the wall to keep small tools organized and easily accessible.





When it comes to cleaning outdoor surfaces, nothing beats a pressure washer—it's the sports car of cleaning tools. However, using one requires a certain amount of knowledge, technique, and safety precautions. This guide will help you better understand this cool tool, how to use it, and how it can enhance your curb appeal.

A PRESSURE-WASHER primer

written by: MATTHEW BRADY

AN FYI ABOUT PSI (AND GPM)

One of the first things you need to consider is the PSI (or pounds per square inch) of the unit, which tells you how powerful a stream of water it can produce—the higher the PSI, the more cleaning power you'll have. Most residential pressure washers range from around 1,300 to 3,000 PSI, and, in general, gas-powered machines will offer greater PSI than their electric counterparts.

Another important acronym in the pressure-washer world is GPM, or gallons per minute of water used. The higher the GPM, the more water you'll use. This is something to consider from both a financial standpoint and an environmental standpoint, especially if you're purchasing a machine rather than renting one.

TIPS ON TIPS

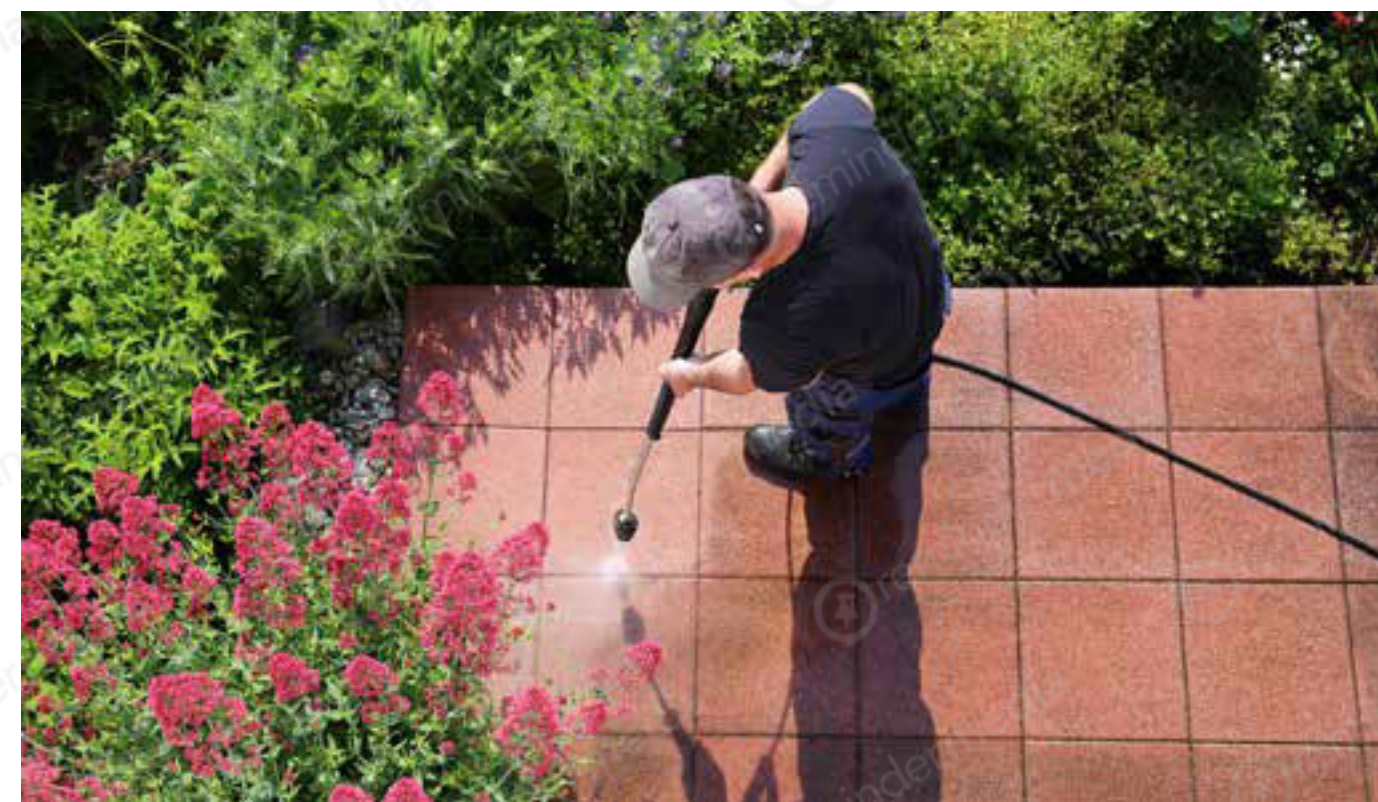
One final part of the pressure-washer puzzle is the number of color-coded nozzles that come in the box. Typically, the nozzles

are interchangeable and range from a red zero-degree nozzle up to a black 65-degree one. This allows you to choose your tip based on how concentrated you want your stream of water to be, with red being the most powerful and black offering a gentle wash. You should take this into account with the relative durability of the surface you'll be cleaning.

SAFETY FIRST

You've got a mighty machine at your fingertips, so before you start anything, read the instruction manual thoroughly.

Make sure to wear gloves, protective goggles, and heavy-duty boots to protect yourself. You should also consider wearing hearing protection since pressure washers tend to be quite noisy when they kick into gear, especially gas-powered versions. If you're using an electric pressure washer, ensure that your unit is plugged into a grounded outlet, and, if you're using an extension cord, that it's heavy gauge enough to handle the PSI.



A few final words of caution. Yes, people do buy pressure washers to wash their vehicles, but keep in mind that there's an inherent risk to your vehicle's paint if you use a lower-degree nozzle, especially with a higher PSI. Finally, these machines can weigh up to one hundred pounds, so never take one up a ladder to clean higher areas of your siding; purchase an extension wand instead.

USING YOUR UNIT

It may take some time for you to get used to your machine, so feel your way. Take your time to set it up correctly and connect it to an outdoor water source based on the instruction manual. After you do, here are some key things to consider:

- The engine may take a minute to fully kick in after you turn on your machine, so don't be surprised if the water pressure is initially low.
- Once it's revved up, start spraying around four feet from your surface, and then gradually move closer to determine how close you need to be to safely clean the surface without damaging it.

- To prevent damage, try not to get closer than six inches, especially on wood.
- Be wary of the zero-degree nozzle, which could potentially put a hole in your siding or injure you if you're not careful. (In fact, *Consumer Reports* recommends tossing this nozzle rather than risk using it.)
- Most units also come with a soap tank and an accompanying nozzle; these versions can make cleaning easier.
- Work intentionally. For example, for decks, go thoroughly board by board, and for siding, wash top to bottom to avoid sending dirty water over areas you've already cleaned.

With its ability to make structures like your porch, deck, sidewalks, and siding look like new, a pressure washer can be a valuable tool in your home-maintenance arsenal and can help maximize your curb appeal. With proper caution and maintenance, your machine can keep your home looking like new for years to come.



DON'T OVERLOOK *these home safety checks*

written by: NATHAN SMITH



Few things are more important than protecting your home from harm, and, while it might appear safe now, things can change quickly. Fortunately, you can help increase the security of your home by adding the following tasks to your maintenance schedule.

MONTHLY

Test your smoke and carbon monoxide detectors.

Check your devices by pushing the equipment's test buttons.

If a detector is not working correctly, change the battery.

You should replace your smoke detectors every ten years and carbon monoxide detectors every seven years; both devices have the date of manufacture printed on them. Clean the grilles during your inspection, as they can collect dust, which can hinder their performance.

Inspect your fire extinguishers.

Examine your extinguishers to determine the level of charge. There is a pressure gauge on standard home fire extinguishers, and the needles should be in the green zone. If they aren't, the fire extinguishers need to be recharged or replaced. Additionally, check your extinguishers for damage, and be sure to place them in a readily available, unobstructed location on each level of your home.

Test your home's locks.

Confirm that both the bolt and knob locks are fully functional on every exterior door. Also, test how well your keys fit into each lock, and replace any locks that are not working correctly. When testing your locks, be sure to look at the hinges for signs of rust or damage.

EVERY SIX MONTHS

Sharpen your knives.

Avoid using dull knives—they can be more dangerous than sharp ones. You need to apply increased pressure to cut with a dull knife, which may cause the blade to slip with more force behind it. You can hone your knives yourself after every two to four uses, but have them professionally sharpened twice a year.

Clean out your medicine cabinet.

Remove medications that are out of date by following the directions for disposal printed on the label. If there are no directions, the FDA suggests disposing of medication by mixing it with unpalatable substances like used coffee grounds

or dirt, placing it in a sealed bag, and throwing it in the trash.

Remove your personal information from any packaging before disposing of it. Never take expired medication, as it can be hazardous to your health.

Perform a fire drill.

Practicing your exit strategy in the event of an emergency can be an essential process, as you may have only two minutes to escape your home. Have each member of your household go to their bedroom, push the smoke detector test button, practice walking low, and meet at a predetermined location away from the house. Ensure that everyone can open all doors and windows in your home and that there are multiple ways to escape in case an exit is blocked.

Dispose of medication by following the directions printed on the label.

YEARLY

Clean your dryer vent.

Remove built-up lint by disconnecting the dryer from the power source, turning off the gas valve (if you have a gas dryer), removing the dryer duct, and using a vacuum with a hose to clean the lint from the dryer and duct. You can also use a dryer vent kit, available at most home improvement stores. Check the ventilation system behind the dryer for damage, and confirm the outdoor vent covering isn't blocked.

Update your emergency contacts.

Include both the work and cell phone numbers of your emergency contacts, as well as the numbers for poison control, local fire and police departments, and doctors. While you may have this information saved in your cell phone, you should have an updated list of contacts handy in case your phone is not accessible. Keep this list somewhere safe, like in a kitchen drawer, on your refrigerator, or close to a home phone.

Have your chimney swept.

Have your wood-burning fireplace checked by a professional chimney sweep once a year. A certified professional can clean the inside of your chimney to remove flammable materials, such as soot and creosote.



Diy Eco-Friendly BOOK NOOK

written by: RACHEL STEVENS

Every bookworm needs a comfortable spot in which to kick back, relax, and immerse themselves in a good story. Follow the steps below to create a unique and functional space that will motivate you to read more.

1. Purchase fake ivy from your local craft store to add a hint of green to the space.
2. Hang old books on your wall to set the tone. Use paint-safe adhesive strips on the fronts and backs to stick your books to the wall, and arrange them as you like.
3. Paint an accent wall a calming, neutral color; you can also use chalkboard paint to create a wall for jotting down your favorite books or making other notes.
4. Wrap plain-colored books with unused gift wrap for decoration.
5. Create a few plant holders from old mugs or food containers to fit in the openings of the pallet.
6. Utilize a comfy chair that may not match other furniture in your home as a stand-alone reading spot.
7. Upcycle pallets from a local warehouse into new plant and book stands. Sand, stain, and stand them on their sides. Don't forget to nail the backs into the wall for support.



THE BEST LOW-MAINTENANCE

written by:
NATHAN SMITH

Plants to Boost Your Landscaping



With the arrival of spring, you may have the itch to start working on your landscaping. If you're looking to avoid the stringent upkeep of some plants, try adding these low-maintenance varieties to your garden. Whether you have a green thumb or a long list of plant casualties, adding these flowers can provide an instant boost to your curb appeal with minimal effort.

Black-eyed Susan

This flower is a popular garden addition due to its eye-catching yellow petals and black center. Black-eyed Susans typically bloom from June through September, so plant them in spring or fall. However, be mindful of where you plant these flowers; they can be mildly toxic to household pets when consumed.

Planting tips

- Plant in full sun, though a few hours of shade each day won't hurt.
- Water them regularly throughout the first year; they will become drought resistant once established.
- Pruning dead flowers will keep them looking sharp and help them continue to bloom.
- Plan to divide them every three to four years.



Butterfly Weed

Don't let the word "weed" put you off—this variety of milkweed is a gorgeous addition to any garden, with its clustered flowers in hues of orange and yellow that attract bees and butterflies. However, it is toxic to humans and pets if consumed. The best time to plant butterfly weed is in early spring after the final frost, and it will bloom throughout the summer.

Planting tips

- Try planting them in areas that provide full sun—a few hours of shade is fine.
- Plant them in dry, clay, or rocky soil.
- Maintain moist soil conditions during the first year; they become more drought tolerant in future seasons.
- Be patient, as these plants take up to three years to fully mature.



Coreopsis

Despite being referred to as tickseed, coreopsis is a pleasure to grow in your garden, and it blooms in various colors, including pink, red, yellow, orange, and a combination of tones. Adding coreopsis to your garden in late spring will ensure it blooms into the late summer and sometimes into the fall. It also attracts birds, bees, and butterflies.

Planting tips:

- Plant them in areas that offer full sun.
- Choose soil that is well-drained and moderately moist.
- Water in moderation.
- Prune dead flowers to promote blooming throughout summer and fall.

Hosta

If there is a shady spot in your yard where nothing else will grow, add some hostas. Depending on the variety you choose, hosta leaves come in various hues ranging from light green to blue, with flowers blooming in white, lavender, and pink. Add this plant to your landscaping in either spring or early fall when temperatures cool down, but use caution—hostas can be toxic to pets.

Planting tips

- Plant them in areas of full shade or spots with a few hours of sun throughout the day.
- Provide consistent moisture during their first growing season. Established hostas thrive with minimal watering.
- Avoid planting them in clay soil and areas with poor drainage.
- Remove dead branches after a hard frost in the fall.



Shasta Daisy

The Shasta daisy's white petals and sunny center offer a classic look that will help any garden stand out. It thrives best when planted in late spring or early fall, and it will grow up to three feet tall. Be mindful of where you plant them, as they can be toxic for pets.

Planting tips

- Choose an area of your yard that offers at least six hours of direct sunlight per day.
- Water regularly in the first season; established flowers should only need watering during long periods of drought.
- Plant them in soil that drains well, as excessively moist soil can cause root rot.
- Prune dead flowers to promote growth, and divide them every two to three years, if needed.





a guide to **NEW HOME CONSTRUCTION**

written by: ALEXA BRICKER

photography: PHOTOS COURTESY OF RILL ARCHITECTS

If you take a walk or drive around almost anywhere in the United States right now, you'll find new residential construction sites popping up. Low inventory during the pandemic has sparked a revival of new construction, including single home and townhouse construction, as well as home additions, renovations, and upgrades. The construction business is booming, and buyers and sellers are seeing the effects.

The tips that follow can help you better understand the benefits of buying new, as well as the steps needed to plan a new build on your existing property.

NEW HOME CONSTRUCTION: BY THE NUMBERS

Between June 2020 and June 2021, the number of permits issued for new, privately owned housing units increased from



1.2 million to nearly 1.6 million. In addition, there were 1,324,000 new units completed as of June 2021, up 6.1 percent from 2020. The phenomenon is nationwide, but the South is seeing the largest surge of new housing starts.

The inventory of new housing is growing year over year, and that means homebuyers are starting to see some relief when it comes to their options. However, current homeowners also have plenty of choices for upgrading their space through new construction.

Internet searches for “home remodeling” more than doubled from 2020 to 2021, according to the Home Improvement Research Institute (HIRI). The home improvement products market has also grown exponentially, from a little under \$300 billion in 2013 to roughly \$460 billion in 2020.

There’s no question that Americans across the country are turning their attention toward improving their homes both structurally and functionally. But what elements of a new construction home and projects on existing structures are homeowners focusing on most?

WHAT NEW CONSTRUCTION CAN DO FOR YOU

One of the most desirable aspects of buying new real estate is customizing various features in your new home. With new construction, you can work with your builder to ensure elements in your home are better suited to your needs. Examples of commonly customizable features for new construction include:

- Exterior and interior paint colors
- Lighting fixtures
- Placement of doors, windows, and outlets
- Colors of cabinets and countertops
- Hardware
- Flooring
- Floor plan



Another benefit to building new is that the modernity of your home will surpass almost anything else you can find on the market. New homes usually come outfitted with brand-new technology, modern construction materials, and contemporary finishing touches, so you can guarantee every feature in your new space is as current as possible. This also means that your appliances and electronic systems should not need to be replaced for years or even decades. Just make sure you consult with your builder and understand how your warranty covers you if something should break or needs replacing.



HOW TO NAVIGATE YOUR HOME RENOVATIONS

Jim Rill, founder and owner of the Maryland-based firm Rill Architects, notes that the number of people interested in interior and exterior renovations and enhancements has skyrocketed in recent years. This is great for both the construction industry and homeowners looking to add value to their space. However, it also poses some challenges.

If you’re thinking of planning any new construction project for your home, Rill suggests keeping your time frame in mind, and here’s why: “Materials are taking much longer to ship right now, in some cases fourteen weeks when it used to take three. Contractors are currently booking projects months in advance, so if you have a renovation in mind that you’d like done in the near future, you should book it now.”

Rill also recommends consulting with an architecture firm first, no matter the type of project you’re planning. These firms have resources and contacts at the ready to assist you, as opposed to seeking out individual contractors yourself for every part of the job. For example, if you are planning a kitchen renovation, an architecture firm may already have marble manufacturers, cabinetmakers, and tile installers it works with regularly and can recommend, saving you time, and, in many cases, money.

Once you are ready to start construction, Rill has a series of tips he suggests every homeowner keep in mind for a successful build:

1. **Ask questions.** Be direct with your contractors about your concerns, wants, and needs before any construction begins. It’s important to get honest answers about when they plan to start their jobs and how long you’ll have to be out of the house, if at all.



2. **Read the fine print.** There may be additional costs you weren’t expecting with your build, especially for a new home construction, like jurisdiction fees for tapping into water or electrical lines, impact taxes, and erosion-control fees. Make sure you have a thorough understanding of all costs associated with your project before you sign off.
3. **Create a master plan.** Before construction begins, work with your builder to formulate a highly detailed road map for your project. It’s better to spend more money up front on planning costs than it is to spend additional money later on avoidable problems.
4. **Communicate.** Rill says his firm spends about an hour to two hours interviewing new clients to get a feel for their wants, needs, and lifestyle. Make sure your builder has a good grasp on your household’s day-to-day activities and how this renovation will impact your quality of life at home.

These same rules apply whether you are planning an interior or exterior renovation, and keeping these points in mind can help your build run much more smoothly.

LET THE BUILDING BEGIN

Once you’ve settled on a contractor or firm for your renovation or a builder for your new-construction home, it can be helpful to run through expectations. Talk with your spouse and any other members of your household about time frames, likes and dislikes in terms of colors and style, and exactly what you’re looking to get out of this investment. Get everyone on the same page so you can avoid frustrations or concerns later on.

Finally, enjoy it. Buying a new home that is 100 percent your own or planning a renovation to give your existing space a major upgrade should be exciting! After all, you’re embarking on this journey to change your life in a big way, so be sure to savor the process.

written by: ALEXA BRICKER

EASY EGGS *6 ways*

How do you like your eggs? Scrambled? Poached? No matter your preference, preparing eggs the right way can be a complicated process, but it's a process that every home cook should work on perfecting. Use the six methods below to guarantee delicious eggs every time.

SCRAMBLED

Although you might think scrambled eggs are easy, it can actually be quite tricky to get the consistency just right.

To prepare:

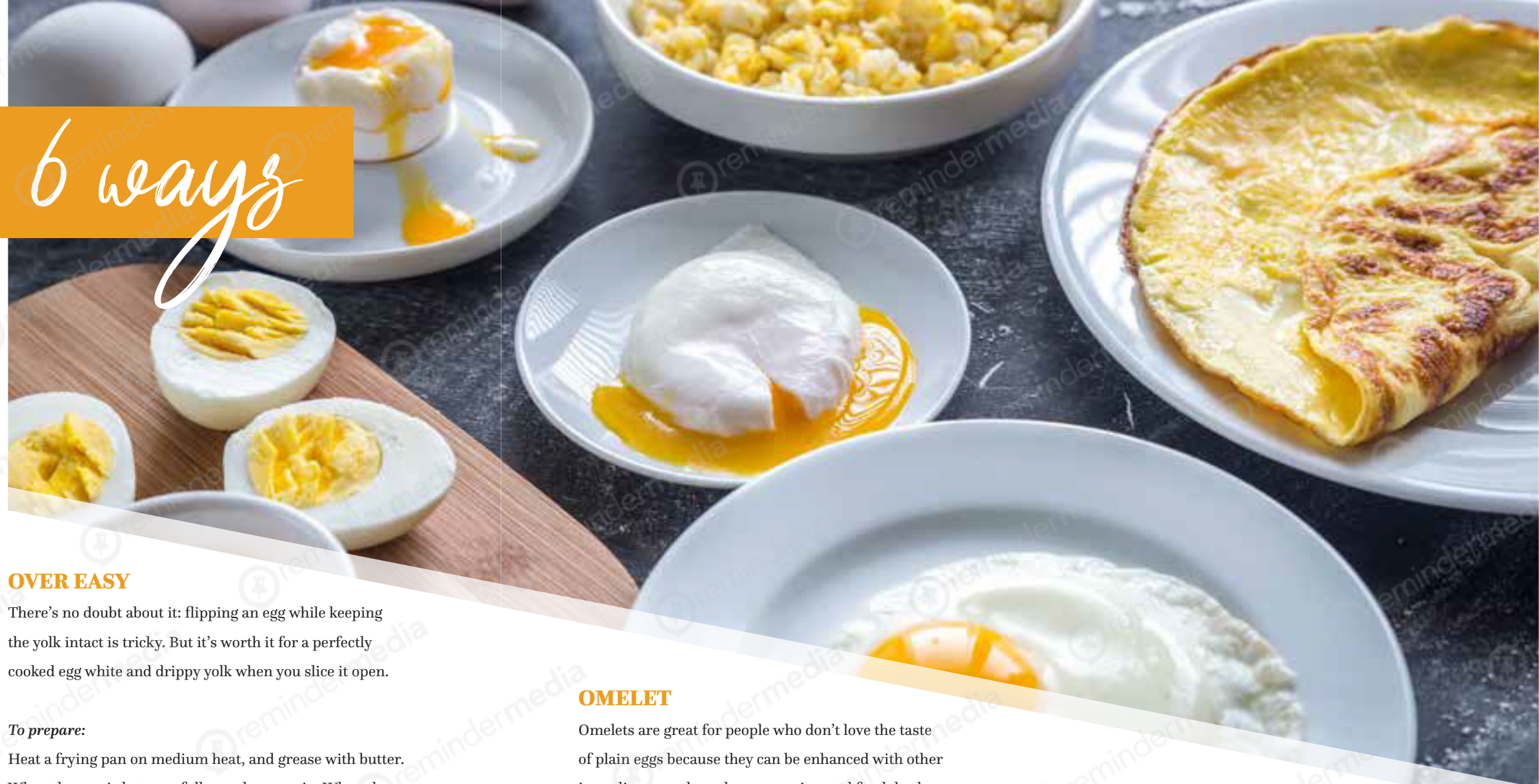
Heat a frying pan on medium heat, and grease with butter. Add in your desired number of eggs, and allow to cook for one minute. Add in salt, pepper, and any other herbs or seasonings you desire. Scrape the eggs away from the side of the pan with a spatula, and scramble until no liquid is left.

POACHED

Poached eggs have an elegant look, making them perfect for serving at brunch on top of a bed of greens or over toast. However, because of the sophisticated preparation process, they can be intimidating to make at home.

To prepare:

Fill a saucepan most of the way with water and ½ teaspoon of vinegar, and bring to a boil. Reduce the water to a simmer. Crack an egg into a bowl. Use a spoon to create a whirlpool in the simmering water, and gently pour the egg in. Cook for 3–5 minutes. Carefully remove the egg from the water with a slotted spoon.



OVER EASY

There's no doubt about it: flipping an egg while keeping the yolk intact is tricky. But it's worth it for a perfectly cooked egg white and drippy yolk when you slice it open.

To prepare:

Heat a frying pan on medium heat, and grease with butter. When the pan is hot, carefully crack an egg in. When the edges start to brown, gently flip the egg over, and cook for another 45 seconds.

SUNNY-SIDE UP

Sunny-side up eggs are the slightly easier counterpart to over-easy eggs. This time, there's no flipping involved!

To prepare:

Heat a frying pan on medium heat, and grease with butter. When the pan is hot, gently crack an egg in. When the edges start to brown, season with salt and pepper, and remove from the pan.

OMELET

Omelets are great for people who don't love the taste of plain eggs because they can be enhanced with other ingredients, such as cheese, veggies, and fresh herbs. They can also be made with just egg whites for a low-cholesterol breakfast.

To prepare:

Heat a skillet on medium heat, and grease with cooking spray. Crack about four eggs or egg whites into a bowl, and whisk with a splash of milk, milk alternative, or water. Pour into the pan, and allow a slightly crispy edge to form before adding in your filling ingredients, and then gently fold over. Flip, and cook for an additional minute before removing from the skillet and serving.

HARD-BOILED

Hard-boiled eggs are very versatile. They can be enjoyed in a variety of ways, including on sandwiches, in salads, or by themselves. And, as a bonus, they can be prepped ahead of time and stored in the refrigerator for a high-protein snack.

To prepare:

Place your desired number of eggs in a pot of cold water, and then bring the water to a boil. Once the water is boiling, remove the pot from the heat, and cover. Let the eggs sit in the hot water for 15 minutes before rinsing them in cold water and removing the shells.



written by: MATTHEW BRADY

DELVING INTO *driveways*



When we think of New Year's resolutions, we normally think about ourselves—diet, exercise, daily habits, and other personal goals. However, resolutions to improve your home can be easier to keep, especially if you plan ahead for them. What's more, they tend to pay dividends long after those other resolutions have fallen by the wayside.

That's the kind of impact a driveway can have on a home's curb appeal. Not only that, a driveway serves many purposes for a homeowner. It's secure outdoor flooring for your vehicle and a place for hopscotch, chalk drawings, and a basketball hoop for kids. Perhaps most important, it's the first thing that welcomes you home at night.

So driveway upkeep is vital, especially if you live in an area that experiences cold weather. Mother Nature can wreak havoc

on your home's exterior, so here are four considerations for taking care of this important piece of your property.

What causes driveway issues?

Most driveway problems are beneath the surface. Water from rain, snow, and thawed ice can seep through the ground under the driveway, causing it to shift. In addition, weeds and tree roots can break through. All of these can result in cracks, crumbling, pooling of water, and other problems.

Can the seasons cause different issues?

Rain and ice wreak the most havoc on driveways, so, other than making some driveway surfaces dangerously hot, summer tends to cause the fewest problems. Winter is another story. Areas of the country that dip below freezing are prone to thawing ice, which can widen driveway cracks. Come spring, make



sure that you (or a professional) take a good look at how much damage was left over from winter. Much like spring, autumn can produce heavy rains in many places, plus falling leaves and other debris can exacerbate driveway problems.

What types of driveway materials are available?

Two types of driveway materials dominate the market: blacktop and concrete. Blacktop is cheaper and erodes less, so it only needs to be sealed every few years. In contrast, concrete is more durable but usually requires more upkeep (including yearly seal coatings) and is considered a higher-end option. Similarly, brick driveways are long-lasting but tend to be quite pricey. Gravel driveway material is by far the cheapest option, but it needs constant maintenance and may impact your tires.



What can you do to protect your driveway?

The best way to keep your driveway in good shape is to keep a watchful eye over it, so inspect it monthly. The following tips can also help.

- Clean vehicle spills, such as oil, with dish detergent before they set in, especially if you have a light-colored driveway.
- During winter, try to avoid using damaging rock salt on your driveway. Substances like sand and kitty litter can provide traction, and some people swear by the deicing power of sugar beet juice.
- Ask a professional to check that your driveway is graded properly so water drains away from it. You can also create crevices a few inches wide along the sides of your driveway to help with drainage.
- Make sure your downspouts don't have water traveling directly toward (and under) your driveway. Downspout extensions can help ensure it drains farther into your yard.
- Patch cracks, if possible, by cleaning them out and then adding filler and compound. If they're too large (more than a half-inch) for a DIY project, consider hiring a professional.
- Make sure to get your driveway inspected yearly or biennially, and have it sealed when appropriate—generally, every year for concrete and every few years for blacktop.
- Pay attention to the edges, which are most prone to damage. If possible, keep your vehicles parked more toward the center. Also, regularly check for weeds or tree roots growing through the surface; remove any weeds, and consult an arborist about tree roots.

a bowl of SOMETHING GOOD

recipes by: PATTERSON WATKINS

photos by: SHANA SMITH



There's a reason your mother gave you soup when you were sick and why there's an entire book series named for the soul-nourishing power of soup. It's a hearty, filling, and nutritious dish guaranteed to warm you from head to toe and make you feel good.

These two inventive soup recipes are no exception, although they do offer a taste of something you may not have had in a soup before. One is a Mexican-inspired and protein-packed pepper-based soup, and the other is a rustic lentil soup studded with an herbaceous oil—what could be better this time of year?

lentil, tomato, and **BREAD SOUP** | SERVES 4

INGREDIENTS:

Soup:

- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 4 garlic cloves, peeled and minced
- 1 shallot, peeled and minced
- 1½ teaspoons salt
- ½ teaspoon black pepper
- 1 teaspoon smoked paprika
- ½ teaspoon cumin
- ½ teaspoon coriander
- ¼ teaspoon crushed red pepper flakes (optional)
- ½ cup red wine

- 4 cups crushed tomatoes
- 1 cup vegetable broth
- 2 teaspoons brown sugar
- 2 cups lentils, cooked
- 3 cups Italian bread, cubed and toasted

Herb Oil:

- 3 tablespoons olive oil
- 2 tablespoons parsley, chopped
- 2 tablespoons cilantro, chopped

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. In a medium soup pot, heat oil over medium-high heat. Sauté the garlic, shallots, salt, pepper, paprika, cumin, coriander, and red pepper flakes for 3 minutes or until vegetables are tender.
2. Pour in the red wine, and bring to a simmer. Stir in the crushed tomatoes, vegetable broth, and brown sugar, and bring to a simmer. Reduce heat to medium-low, cover, and cook for 15 minutes.
3. In a small bowl, stir together the oil, parsley, and cilantro.
4. Ladle the soup into bowls, and add the cooked lentils and bread. Drizzle the herb oil over the soup before serving.

white bean chili verde

WITH SEARED SCALLOPS | SERVES 4

INGREDIENTS:

Soup:

- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 3 garlic cloves, peeled and minced
- ½ cup yellow onions, peeled and minced
- ½ cup poblano peppers, chopped
- 2 cups tomatillos, peeled and chopped
- 2 teaspoons ground cumin
- 1 teaspoon ground coriander
- 4 cups vegetable broth
- 1 cup fresh cilantro, chopped
- 3½ teaspoons salt
- 1½ cups white beans, drained and rinsed
- 1 pound scallops

Chipotle oil:

- 1 tablespoon chipotle peppers in adobo, chopped
- 3 tablespoons olive oil

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. In a medium soup pot, heat 1 tablespoon of oil over medium-high heat. Sauté the garlic, onions, peppers, tomatillos, cumin, and coriander until vegetables are tender. Pour in the broth, stir, cover, and reduce heat to medium-low. Cook for 15 minutes.
2. Remove from the stove, and let cool slightly. Carefully pour soup into a blender, and add in the cilantro and 3 teaspoons of salt. Blend until smooth. Return to the pot, and stir in the beans. Keep warm until ready to serve.
3. In a large skillet, heat the other tablespoon of oil over medium-high heat. Sear scallops on both sides for 3–4 minutes, or until golden brown, and season with remaining salt. Set aside.
4. Stir together the chipotle peppers with oil until blended.
5. Ladle the soup into bowls, add the scallops, and drizzle with the chipotle oil before serving.



wash, fold, and *TAKE CONTROL*

written by: RACHEL STEVENS



Is your laundry room more of a dreaded space than a happy one? More than 85 percent of Americans reportedly do their laundry from the comfort of home. As technology has advanced, there are more ways to make the laundry process hassle-free, but this is not often the case. Among the frustration of getting your laundry washed and dried, it's easy to forget about maintaining this space and managing a good laundry schedule.

While you can never completely eliminate this task, you can implement a few tips and tricks to make your laundry room a luxuriously organized and clean space that will encourage you to tackle laundry day with more pep in your step.

create a schedule

The benefit of a household laundry and laundry-room-cleaning schedule is that everyone can pitch in, helping keep everything organized rather than waiting until things pile up or get too dirty.

How often you wash your clothing is a personal preference based partly on how much laundry you and the other people in your household tend to accumulate. To find a good balance, consider the size of your household: would it benefit



you to have a designated laundry day or assign a household member to a day of the week? Whichever you decide, make a plan, and stick to it. And don't forget to designate days for items like towels and sheets.

store more

The key to maintaining your laundry motivation is to make your cleaning environment a polished and functional space. Utilize clear bins for your laundry room storage. If you don't already have a laundry organization system in place, try implementing these suggestions.

Washer items

Keep your regular detergents and softeners together in their own bin within arm's reach of your washer. Store a pack of wet wipes in the same space so that you can wipe your hands and the sides of the bottles to remove any leakage.

Dryer items

Similarly, keep dryer items within reach of your dryer. Products like dryer sheets help speed up the drying process, but you could also consider switching to reusable wool dryer balls as a more eco-friendly and economical option. Just be sure to store them in a place where they won't roll away and get lost.

Stain-removal items

Create a stain-removal station near your washer, with a small table or tray you can grab in a pinch. Practical items to have on hand for common stains include bleach, baking soda, vinegar, and any store-bought formulas you prefer.

deep clean your machines

It's of the utmost importance to maintain your washer and dryer so they can get the job done without damaging your clothing or your home. Implement these tips to prevent build-up and keep your machines running smoothly.

Washer

It seems counterintuitive that you need to clean your washer. However, even a washer needs a bit of TLC after normal wear and tear and an accumulation of water, hair, and mildew. Every few wash cycles, run your machine on the hot water cycle with two cups of white vinegar. After that, run it once more on the warm water cycle with half a cup of baking soda. You'll now have a sparkling clean washer that can effectively remove more stains and odors.

Dryer

You should always clean the lint from the lint trap between each load of laundry to prevent a fire. If you don't have the space for a small trash can nearby, stick an empty tissue box (or a similar-sized item) on the wall next to your dryer using an adhesive strip, and put the lint into the box. Remove the lint weekly, and throw it away. Then, make sure you or a professional clean your dryer hose annually.

The inside of your dryer can get stained from loose pens in pockets and other forgotten objects, which can transfer onto your laundry. Remove the marks from your machine with a dry rag, or, depending on the type of stain, with a small amount of rubbing alcohol.



ELEVATE YOUR HOME *with a* SCREENED-IN PORCH

written by: RACHEL STEVENS

Most outdoor remodeling projects are worth the expense, whether you want more return on investment (ROI) on your home or have a desire to enhance your living space. Screened-in porches are an outdoor remodeling trend that won't be going away any time soon. Here are just some benefits you can reap from this versatile home addition.

PROTECTION AGAINST BUGS AND OUTDOOR ELEMENTS

Arguably the most attractive feature of a screened-in porch is its year-round protection against bugs and weather, which means you never have to sacrifice eating or entertaining outside. However, it's important to customize it to best suit your needs.

Screen choices

Depending on your budget and vision for the project, there are several different options for the screen material. The list that follows includes standard choices most contractors can offer you.



- Fiberglass is the most popular screen type because it's inexpensive, offers solid visibility, and has minimal sun glare. This screen is best for an entertaining area.
- Aluminum screens can be slightly more expensive but offer excellent visibility. However, some people forego this option because of its sun glare. This screen is best for a shaded porch or locations with extreme wind and other harsh weather.
- Vinyl-coated screens provide the best insect protection and the highest visibility, but they are also the priciest option on the list. This type of screen is best for a family space, as you can see well beyond the porch to keep an eye on children while maintaining protection against insects.
- Polyvinyl chloride, or PVC, is hands down the most durable screen on the market. Unlike the other options, which can be torn or rusted, PVC is rugged and ready for whatever weather comes your way. However, its insect protection isn't as strong as some of the other options. This material is best for a pool area, as it resists water damage well.

IMPROVED PRIVACY

Everybody needs a space to feel comfortable when at home. But all too often, backyards and outdoor spaces don't offer enough privacy. A screened-in porch provides a place for you, your family, and your guests to enjoy time away from the outside world.

Privacy tips

The easiest way to create more privacy with your screens is to install shades. They are also a way of setting the mood for your space. Bamboo shades are an all-natural, durable, and light option that can be installed easily and allow for good airflow.

Additionally, installing a screened-in porch is an opportunity to change the landscape around your exterior. Install tall hedges on the side closest to a neighbor's yard. Plant flowers and other greenery to improve the overall look of your exterior and attract birds and butterflies.

ADDED APPEAL AND VALUE

Improvements to your home can be beneficial regardless of your plans to sell it in the future. Upgrades can make your home more personal and can dramatically improve your quality of life.

Curb appeal

Screened-in porches look beautiful on almost any style of home, from colonial to modern, and, with the right paint color and landscaping, can easily elevate the overall look of your property. Traditional porches look great as well; however, screened-in porches have a luxurious and charming aesthetic that you'll love to come home to—and that potential buyers will love too.

Value of your home

The average cost of a screened-in porch varies depending on whether you're starting from



scratch or you're developing an existing structure. However, you are likely to see a 70–75 percent ROI upon resale. Just be sure to research whether adding square footage to your home will increase your property taxes. Call your municipality to ask about tax regulations before beginning the project to avoid overstretching your budget.

CREATIVE FREEDOM

From an entertaining space to an arts and crafts room or a home gym, the sky's the limit to what you can do with your screened-in porch. And it's easy to change the aesthetic from season to season. For example, in the spring and summer, you might incorporate a lot of plants and greenery, and during fall and winter you might add an outdoor space heater and some cozy blankets.

If you're considering a screened-in porch for your home, get in contact with a local contractor who can help you through the process so you can enjoy its benefits as soon as possible.





5 SOLUTIONS FOR *written by:* MATTHEW BRADY **SHARED BATHROOMS**

FOR MOST PEOPLE, HOME IS WHERE THE HEART IS. BUT THE BATHROOM IS USUALLY WHERE THE BATTLE IS.

Most of us have experienced the necessity of sharing a bathroom, whether in a dorm, an apartment, or a house. The experience can include such pleasantries as a cluttered vanity, disheveled drawers, and a regularly empty toilet paper roll, among others—any of which could result in bad moods, frayed nerves, and resentment.

But instead of getting endlessly frustrated, you can take some simple steps to make a shared bathroom workable.

1. Communicate

First and foremost, you need to have clear communication between everyone using the bathroom. Each person will have their own preferences and pet peeves for this sanctuary, and they must be respected and accounted for before you change or add anything. Once this happens, you can set mutually agreed-upon ground rules, responsibilities, and private spaces—and start transforming your bathroom.

2. Set schedules

Without a doubt, it can be stressful when people need to get ready at the same time, especially in the morning. An easy answer for this is to set a fair schedule and time limit for each person. For example, your spouse could have the bathroom from 6:00 to 6:30 on Monday mornings and from 6:30 to 7:00 on Tuesday mornings, alternating with you all week.

Likewise, equality and consideration are key for maintaining a pristine bathroom for everyone to enjoy. Creating an easy-to-access monthly cleaning schedule, with reminders for whose

“Your home’s bathroom doesn’t need to be a **BATTLEGROUND.**”



turn it is to do which task each week, can help. Be sure everyone keeps it on their phones or that it's printed out and posted somewhere prominent.

3. Look over and under for solutions

You've accounted for the people in your home; now it's time to make changes to the bathroom itself. The bathroom isn't always the most spacious room in the house, so it can help to think vertically. For example, an over-the-door towel rack can be hung from the top of the bathroom door as a space-saver. Similarly, ask yourself how you could use the space under the vanity. One way can be to divide the area under each side of the sink to store each person's toiletries and linens.

4. Utilize practical space-saving systems

There are a ton of items you can buy to maximize your space, such as a three-tier corner vanity caddy. The same holds true for the shower. If you have a shower caddy where space is divided or two dedicated caddies, it makes it easy for people to have a sense of their own space. Adding drawer organizers, such as a kitchen cutlery tray for toothbrushes, makeup, or hair accessories, can also keep things neat and organized.

5. Consider bathroom upgrades

If all else fails, you could change the structure of your bathroom to accommodate whoever uses it regularly. A relatively common example of this, space permitting, is installing an extra-wide vanity. Even better is a double vanity with separate sinks. Either way, you're creating room so that each person has their own space. You can also install an over-the-toilet shelf, which not only creates space for things like towels but also doubles as added decor.

Your home's bathroom doesn't need to be a battleground. With a little organization, communication, and dedication, this shared space can be the comfortable oasis it's meant to be.



9 TIPS FOR BUYING AND SELLING YOUR HOME AT THE SAME TIME

by Alicia Duffy, Realtor

Selling your home when you still need to shop for a new one can feel daunting to even the most seasoned homeowner--especially when the demand for new homes keeps rising, but the supply feels like it's dwindling.¹ You're not alone either if you're already feeling drained by the complex logistics of trying to sell and buy a new home all at once.

Here are some of the most frequent concerns we hear from clients who are trying to buy and sell at the same time.

"WHAT WILL I DO IF I SELL MY HOUSE BEFORE I CAN BUY A NEW ONE?"

Tip #1: Flex your muscles as a seller.

In a competitive market, buyers may be willing to make significant concessions in order to get the home they want. For example I had a seller in Plano that we negotiated for the seller to continue living in the home months after closing. This can be a great option for sellers who need to tap into their home equity for a down payment or who aren't logistically ready to move into their next home. However, many lenders limit the duration of a rent-back to 60 days, and there are liability issues to consider before entering into an agreement. A contract and security deposit should be in place in case of any property damage or unexpected repairs that may be needed during the rent-back period.³

Tip #2: Know Your Options

A good place to get your homes report card for how much equity you have, value and rental/selling prices is online. Not all online sites are the same. I advise have your Realtor look over the numbers but a pretty accurate one is the Homebot. I have a subscription so it makes it free for you here's the link <http://bit.ly/Homebot4sellers>

"WHAT IF I GET STUCK WITH TWO MORTGAGES AT THE SAME TIME?"

Tip #3 Speak to your Mortgage Advisor

You don't want to get into a situation where you are carrying dual mortgages for longer than you can afford, examine your budget and calculate the maximum number of months you can afford to pay both.⁴

If you simply can't afford to carry both mortgages at once, then selling before you buy may be your best option. (Go to TeamDuffy.com/CashOffer for details on a company that will buy your new house cash, move in then let us come in repair stage and sell). But if you have some flexibility in your budget, it is possible to manage both a home sale and purchase simultaneously.

Tip #4: As you get ready to sell, simplify.

You can condense your sales timeline (speaking of time lines check out our building a home time line <https://teamduffy.com/buildingtimeline>) if you only focus on the home renovations and tasks that matter most for selling your home quickly. For example, clean and declutter all of your common areas, refresh your outdoor paint and curb appeal, and fix any outstanding maintenance issues as quickly as possible. We can advise you on the repairs and upgrades that are worth your time and investment.

Tip #5: Prep your paperwork.

You'll also save valuable time by filing as much paperwork as possible early in the process. For example, if you know you'll need a mortgage to buy your next home, get pre-approved right away, pull together relevant documentation about your current home, including appliance warranties, renovation permits, and repair records.

Tip #6: Ask us about other contingencies that can be included in your contracts.

Part of our job as agents is to negotiate on your behalf and help you win favorable terms. For example, it's possible to add a contingency to your purchase offer that lets you cancel the contract if you haven't sold your previous home. This tactic could backfire, though, if you're competing with other buyers. We can discuss the pros and

cons of these types of tactics and what's realistic given the current market dynamics.

Tip #7: Relax and accept that compromise is inevitable

Rather than worry about getting every detail right with your housing search and home sale, trust that things will work out eventually--even if it doesn't look like your Plan A or even your Plan B or Plan C. Perfecting every detail with your home decor or timing your home sale perfectly isn't necessary for a successful home sale and compromise will almost always be necessary. Luckily, if you've got a good team of professionals, you can relax knowing that others have your back and are monitoring the details behind the scenes.

Tip #8: Don't worry too much if your path is straying from convention

Remember that rules-of-thumb and home-buying trends are just that: they are estimates, not facts. So if your home search or sale isn't going exactly like your neighbor's, it doesn't mean that you are doomed to fail.

Tip #9: Enlist help early.

Which leads us to our final tip: If possible, call us early in the process. We'll not only provide you with key guidance on what you should do ahead of time to prepare your current home for sale, we'll also help you narrow down your list of must-haves and wants for your next one. That way, you'll be prepared to act quickly and confidently when it's time to list your house or make an offer on a new one.

It's our job to guide you and advocate on your behalf. So don't be afraid to lean on us throughout the process. We're here to ease your burden and make your move as seamless and stress-free as possible.

BOTTOMLINE: COLLABORATE WITH A REAL ESTATE PROFESSIONAL TO GET TAILORED ADVICE THAT WORKS FOR YOU

Buying and selling a home at the same time is challenging. But it doesn't have to be a nightmare, and it can even be fun. One of the best and easiest ways to do so is to partner with a knowledgeable .

Contact us at 214-682-5009 for a free consultation so that we can help you review your options and decide the best way forward.

Front of Tear Out Card 2

berry almond **CRISP**

1 lb. strawberries
14 oz. red currants
1½ lb. raspberries
Generous 1 c. superfine sugar, divided
2¾ c. all-purpose flour
1 tsp. ground cinnamon
2 sticks salted butter, diced and softened, plus more for greasing
Generous 1 c. ground almonds



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Back of Tear Out Card 2

1. Preheat the oven to 400°F and grease two 9½-in. round porcelain baking dishes with melted butter. Wash and dry all the fruit, and then hull the strawberries and pull the red currants off their stalks.
2. Put the berries and currants in a large bowl, sprinkle with a scant ½ cup of the sugar, and stir to combine. Divide the fruit between the baking dishes, spreading it in a single layer.
3. In a separate large bowl, combine the flour, cinnamon, remaining sugar, diced butter, and ground almonds. Rub the ingredients lightly together with your fingertips until coarse crumbs form.
4. Scatter a layer of the crumb mixture over the fruit in the baking dishes and bake for 40 minutes, until the topping is golden and crisp. Serve warm.

Excerpted from *Enjoy: Recipes for Memorable Gatherings* by Perla Servan-Schreiber, Flammarion, 2020. Photography by Nathalie Carnet. Images may not be reproduced or transmitted digitally without written permission from the publisher.



SERVES 12

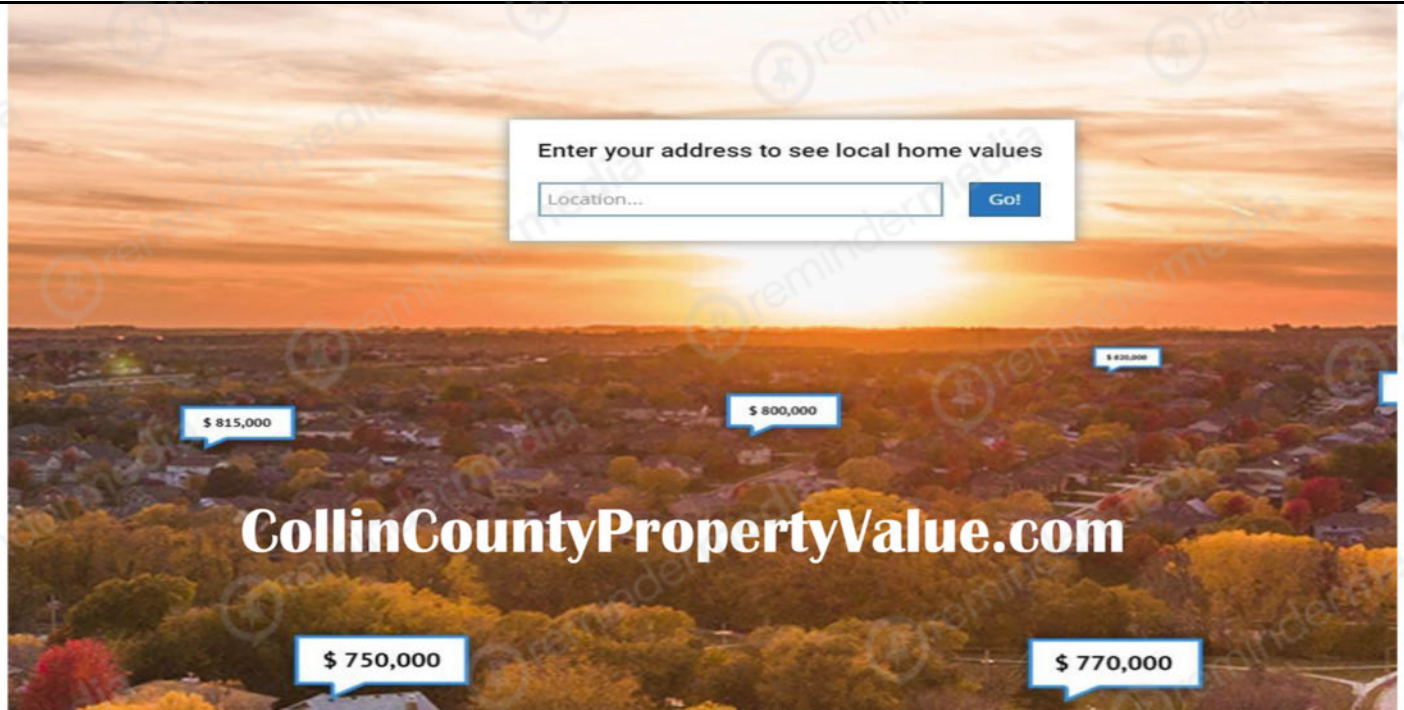
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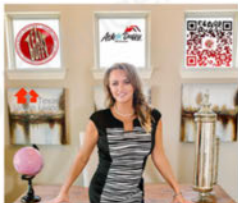
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