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# It's spring, time for project fun

**W**elcome to Prescott Newspapers' Spring Home Improvement section, in partnership with Yavapai County Contractors Association. For projects inside and outside your home, take a peek inside.

We all love Spring, the flowers, the greening of trees, the blue skies and, of course, those spring home projects – from freshening up that room with a new color, or replacing flooring or reupholstering furniture, adding art to walls, and how to hire a contractor, this is your go-to source.

**SPRING** – it's time to refresh, remodel, redo, and read our terrific Spring Home Improvement section. Enjoy.

**Sandy:** *Tim, we must make sure our readers preview the high-tech automated house on page 18 – so interesting!*

**Tim:** *That's right, Sandy, the possibilities are limited only to your imagination and, of course, budget.*

*Also, we all know the importance of hiring a licensed contractor and there is a very informative article on page 26, "Get It In Writing!" If anyone has a question about contractors, all they have to do is call the YCCA – 928-778-0040.*

**Sandy:** *Exactly. This publication is chock-full of informative info. From spring cleaning, automation (no, spring cleaning is not automated), the plumbing tasks, even light bulbs ... the landscaping versus maintenance, going vertical when garden space is limited, conserving water, and knowing what trees to plant ... it's about the project being a pleasure and getting it right, building houses into homes and neighborhoods into communities.*

**Tim:** *It is always a pleasure to assemble a publication such as this for our readers – information that is educational, interesting and helpful. And that's what Prescott Newspapers and YCCA are all about.*

We hope you enjoy this special section, and it is a pleasure working for the community. Happy reading.

And, don't forget the 39th annual YCCA Home & Garden Show coming up May 19-21 at the Prescott Valley Event Center.

See you there!

**Tim Wiederaenders,**  
community editor

&  
**Sandy Griffis,** YCCA  
executive director



Photo by Les Silkenberg

# CONTENTS

- 6** Just The Right Color!
- 8** Freshening Up Your Home
- 10** Stylish & Comfortable
- 12** Wood: A Fav Choice For Flooring
- 13** Allergies & Flooring
- 14** Choices in Countertops
- 18** The Automated House
- 20** Illuminate Your Life: LED's
- 22** Spring Cleaning
- 24** DIY Plumbing Fixes
- 26** Get It In Writing
- 28** Latent Defect
- 30** Going Vertical
- 32** Yard Art Flair
- 34** Outdoor Pavers
- 36** Water Conservation
- 38** Landscaping VS. Maintenance
- 40** Bugs Are BENEFICIAL!
- 42** Is Someone Eating Your Garden?
- 44** "Spot On" Trees For Our Locale
- 46** Know Your Property Lines?
- 48** Re-Level: Why It's Important
- 50** SMART CHOICE: Composite Decks





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# Choosing the right color

The color makes the mood

By Jason Wheeler

When it comes to choosing the right color for a painting job, there are a lot of different factors, said Sherwin-Williams Decorative Paint Specialist Suzanne Adams. The main factor is preexisting items on the house determining what the color should be, such as one person having to consider that their roof is a certain kind of shingle color as well as that their back yard had a coral or brick colored retaining wall as well as rocks.

"Those are just things you want to consider when choosing the color of your house," she said. "You want to make sure the colors you choose don't clash with that."

The heat of Arizona is another factor, Adams said, stating a darker color absorbs more light while a lighter color reflects more light.

A lot of people are choosing to stick with neutral colors, said Dunn-Edwards Professional Color Adviser Amy Garcia. They want their accessories to be the colors to change them out, she said, commenting that accent walls were quite popular

for a long period of time. It used to be that the red wall was popular and now people are going for a steel dark blue because gray is the new neutral, Garcia said.

"People want it to reflect their personality. Their furniture is like clothes, they pick their furniture first and then they back up and pick their paint color, which is fine because there's more paint colors than there are fabrics," she said. "They want it neutral. A low grade, no windows, you want light to bring light in. a lot of people in Prescott want windows, they're OK with going a little darker."

Helping someone pick a color can be somewhat of a challenge because people are dealing with those preexisting factors, Adams said. For instance, someone might not like that their roof is a certain color and they have to go with a color that fits with that, she said.

Colors are all about mood, Garcia said, remarking how a person usually doesn't say they want to look at a certain color.

"They say 'I want to be relaxed' or 'I want to be able to sleep' or 'I want it to be cheerful'





***"Helping someone pick a color can be somewhat of a challenge because people are dealing with those preexisting factors..."***

or 'I want it to be light.' They don't say 'I want to look at pink,'" she said. "It's a mood that they want. That's kind of what you have to listen to and how bold they want to go."

If all else fails, there's always the color of the year. Sherwin-Williams' color of the year is a Poised Taupe, also mentioning that the store has a color of the month. March had a brown color, she said. As for Dunn-Edwards, their color of the year is Honey Glow, Garcia said.

The honey glow was chosen by looking at trends for things like architecture and fashion, Garcia said.

"Even some Hollywood people, like the gals on the red carpet, were wearing yellow, which is an odd color," she said. "Most other companies did gray, a form of gray ... and we were the only one who did yellow."

People can get a free sample of the color of the year, Garcia said, noting that following Dunn-Edwards on Instagram will allow them to get a free sample of any color they want. «



Suzanne Adams, decorative product specialist at Sherwin-Williams, stands with color samples. (Jason Wheeler/The Daily Courier)

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# Freshening up your home for spring

By Scott Orr

Spring is the perfect time to re-evaluate your home's décor and color palette. After the long winter season, interiors often need a facelift.

"People are lightening up their spaces. An easy way to feel like you've had an entire home makeover is to repaint your home or add an accent wall in a bold bright color," said Stephanie Larsen, owner of Stephanie Larsen Interior Design. "People are lightening up on the interior wall colors and adding accent walls or wallpaper as fun fresh and new ideas. Heavy venetian plasters are taking a backseat to wallpapers which add texture, geometry and color to any space."

Or, apply modern morphing techniques. Morph a wide-open space together with bold colors and patterns that help bridge the gap between rooms. Accomplish this with a large piece of geometric artwork or by utilizing color-blocking techniques to paint an accent wall, which tricks the eye as to where one room ends and another begins.

Before painting an accent wall, it's important to tape off windows, doorways and trim to prevent splatter. One of the most important tools for any painting project is a premium painter's tape to help ensure your work looks seamless and to deliver the sharpest transition lines between the newly painted accent wall and adjacent walls.

"Paint with soft colors such as muted beiges rather than stark white, which appears harsh and unwelcoming," said Pat Mercurio, owner of Prescott's RE-do RE-new Interiors. "If your house has custom baseboards or trim, you might want to accent them with white. Otherwise, paint the baseboards the same color as the walls for a more casual, larger appearance."

Add timeless touches. Tasteful

updates can help create an elegant family room that will never go out of style. Display heirlooms and vintage-inspired items, such as traditional candle holders or a vase, and pair with a modern color scheme such as white or navy, to achieve a tailored and timeless look in your living room.

This trend is huge, according to Karen Brzys of Oohs & Aahs Vintage Antiques, Boutique and Home Décor in Prescott Valley.

Today's young homeowners "are doing a lot of re-purposing," she said. "They'll take an old dresser and re-paint it a light cream or light blue, they're chipping it up."

She said that, at trade shows, "everything is becoming lighter and happier in color.

"The younger people ... are minimalists. They kind of want less-is-more."

You can create luscious layers. Allow yourself to feel wrapped in luxury with this emerging trend. When creating a peaceful nest, immerse yourself in layers by integrating different textures and soft patterns in colors, such as blush pinks, creams and soft grays. Start by adding blankets and sheer drapery. Place a rug on top of carpet. Finish the look with ruffled pillows or a faux fur throw for a space that is cozy and chic.

Get started on your décor projects now so that you can ensure your home is up-to-date with the latest design trends. «



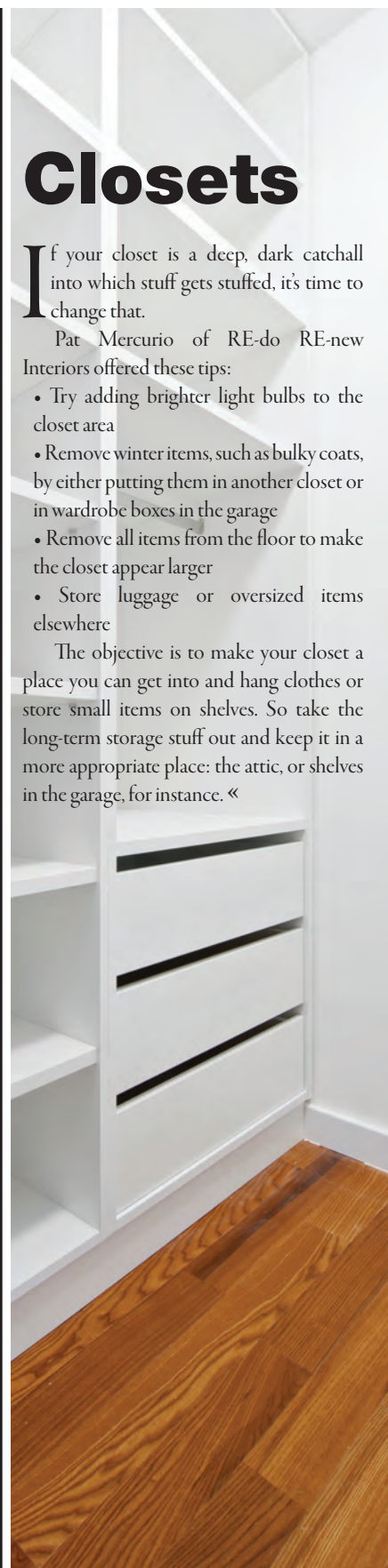
## Closets

If your closet is a deep, dark catchall into which stuff gets stuffed, it's time to change that.

Pat Mercurio of RE-do RE-new Interiors offered these tips:

- Try adding brighter light bulbs to the closet area
- Remove winter items, such as bulky coats, by either putting them in another closet or in wardrobe boxes in the garage
- Remove all items from the floor to make the closet appear larger
- Store luggage or oversized items elsewhere

The objective is to make your closet a place you can get into and hang clothes or store small items on shelves. So take the long-term storage stuff out and keep it in a more appropriate place: the attic, or shelves in the garage, for instance. «





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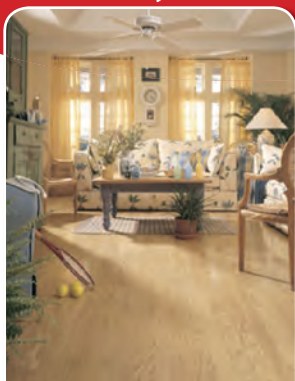
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# Stylish and Comfortable

**Decor upgrades are available without doing a major project**

**By Cindy Barks**

From a refreshing coat of paint to new flooring: Sometimes a whole new look is within reach without a major renovation.

Experts suggest looking for ways to make a big impact through simple changes that will add style and comfort to your home, but still have the staying power to last a long time.

Among the simplest ways to change the look of a room is through the colors on the walls. A paint change can transform a room – making it more intimate and warm, or more modern and roomy.

The Styleathome.com website suggests, for instance, establishing a more intimate space by painting the ceiling a darker color, which creates the illusion of a lower ceiling.

On the other hand, a tight space can seem larger and airier by painting the ceiling a lighter version of the color on the room's walls.

And for a more modern effect, designers suggest painting the walls and trim the same color.

Even if for homeowners who want to keep their white walls, a fresh coat can make a room feel brighter, cleaner and more comfortable. In addition, an accent wall or textured design can add some pop.

Experts also stress the importance of prep work. Sanding and cleaning the walls helps ensure the paint applies nicely and looks great for a long time.

Other ideas for room transformations:

## **REDO YOUR CARPETING**

While soft carpeting provides luxury and comfort, some homeowners who have children or pets might question the long-term value in the soft-carpet choice.

But according to the experts, there are new options that are durable, soft and easy to clean.

Among the new features available on the market: Permanent built-in stain and soil protection, which help to maintain a carpet's beauty.

The HGTV.com website notes that carpet dealers typically carry samples of various carpet lines from multiple manufacturers. The best approach, the website says, is to do your research beforehand and then visit showrooms to choose from among the various offerings.

Things to keep in mind include: the use of the room; the amount of traffic it will get; and whether it has direct access from outside.

## **REUPHOLSTER FURNITURE**

For a furniture facelift, new upholstery can add luxury and style to pieces that look a bit worn out, but are actually in great structural shape.

Whether a homeowner is a DIY-er or plans to have this task

done professionally, they should opt for scratch-resistant, hair-repelling leathers and fabrics – especially if children or pets are in the picture.

Experts suggest checking out the quality of the furniture's frame before taking on the re-upholstering task. Owners should look to make sure the frame is hardwood, and should also check that the corner braces and basic construction is all intact.

And when choosing the fabric, owners should take into account the expected use of the furniture. While bedroom chairs might not need heavy-duty fabrics, living-room furniture probably does, according to the BHG.com website. It suggests looking for the fabric's Weisenbeck rating, which is determined by an abrasion resistance test, and keeps track of the number of rubs before the fabric is worn out. «



Courtesy photo.






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# Wood...

## a favored choice for replacement floors, new construction

By Nanci Hutson

Time was when plush carpet was the flooring of choice in most homes. No longer.

Most new home owners, and many of those who are opting to replace their flooring due to age or simply a desire to update, prefer wood or wood laminate products over carpet. Not only is wood a more durable, aesthetically pleasing flooring material, but it collects less allergens and is easier to clean, according to local flooring experts.

Ceramic and linoleum tile is still preferred for most kitchens and bathrooms.

Desert Hardwood Flooring owner Sylvan Incao said carpet has fallen out of favor for some people because of asthma and allergy issues, or people who simply want a more environmentally sensitive and durable product. As a wood shop specialist, Incao said he has a lot of choices to sell. People with pets may also prefer wood floors because once an animal soils carpet, that stain and odor remain no matter how often the area is cleaned, he said.

In general, Incao said, wood flooring will last 25 years or more; carpet generally must be replaced within a decade. Wood flooring is more costly, but tends to offer more value for the dollar.

Carpet tends to cost on average about \$3 to \$4 per square foot; wood laminate products cost between \$5 to \$7 per square foot and hard woods tend to be the most expensive at \$10 to \$12 per square foot, flooring experts said.

Any flooring, wood or carpet, can be placed atop sub-flooring, but Incao said if there is cracking or uneven spaces, as can happen on concrete, those need to be remedied prior to any new installation.



Sylvan Incao of Desert Hardwood Flooring shows some of the many samples of hardwood flooring available to makeover your home. (Les Stukenberg/The Daily Courier)

As for maintenance, Incao and other flooring experts said it is a misnomer to think wood is more difficult to manage.

The notion that people must take their shoes off or leave scuff marks is a misnomer, Incao said.

Homeowners may elect to scatter rugs over their wood floors to add a decorative touch, or to enhance the comfort value, particularly in bedrooms, but Incao said they are not needed to protect against scratches.

Ron Barrett of Interior Logic, a local business for 35 years, said much of their business is new homes, and the preference today is far more wood than carpet.

As much as a decade or more ago, Barrett said two-thirds of new homes had carpet versus one-third wood; the trend today is just the reverse.

Part of that has to do with the fact this is a

big retirement community, and people are air-sensitive and hard surfaces are just easier to clean, Barrett said.

Wood also has a longer lifespan. Costs may be more at the start, but over time it costs less, Barrett said.

Homeowners, too, have a lot more flooring options than they once did, including ceramic tile that has a wood appearance but is more durable than an actual wood floor, Barrett said.

"I would choose wood every time," Incao said. "It increases the value in a home. It's easier to clean and care for. It's beautiful and rich, and so increases the elegance of a home."«

---

***"...carpet has fallen out of favor for some people because of asthma and allergy issues, or people who simply want a more environmentally sensitive and durable product."***

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# Flooring can help with allergies

## Pros, cons to hard surfaces vs. carpet

By Jason Wheeler

When it comes to figuring out whether to put carpeting or hard surfaces on your floors, the latter is usually going to cost double, said Prescott Flooring Brokers salesperson Annette Johnston, noting that sheet vinyl is the least expensive hard surface at about 30 percent more.

"It has a much longer life and you can replace little pieces of it," she said of hard flooring. "With carpet, you really can't do repairs in the carpet if something disastrous happened."

Hard flooring is also better for those with allergies, as are shorter and denser carpets, Johnston said. Older carpets have jute backings that allowed for mold and mildew to grow, she said, commenting that long carpets that aren't vacuumed regularly are also going to soak in some allergens and things that float around. Most of the problems are going to be the mold and mildew as well and the trick is keeping whatever is flying around out of the carpet, Johnston said.

Those floaters that get into the carpet can sit there and be hard to get out and with hard flooring, it's easier to sweep them out and maintain the floor in order to keep them out, she said.

"A hard-surface floor is going to be easier to clean and get all the stuff that's flying around out of your house," she said, also mentioning hard surfaces can be mopped without blowing all the allergens out into the environment.

However, for those on a budget that are getting carpet, it comes down to a getting a shorter and denser carpet as opposed to a longer and fluffier one, Johnston said. More stuff will settle into the longer and fluffier carpets, making it harder to keep the allergens out, she said.

In cleaning carpets, there are vacuum cleaners that have HEPA (high-efficiency particulate air) filters that are made to keep the allergens in there, Johnston said.

"Other vacuum cleaners, you vacuum and it kind of comes back out, the dust and stuff ... hard surface, it's going to be better to keep cleaned," she said, adding that vacuums made to keep allergens out are all differently rated.

Johnston also brought up the Rainbow Vacuum she has where everything that's vacuumed up goes through water and is trapped. Those vacuums run a few thousand dollars, she said, remarking she has the vacuum by way of her husband, who bought it with his late wife. «

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# Countertop choices

**Natural stone and engineered quartz are popular**

By Nanci Hutson

With the kitchen the heart of the home, and bathrooms a most necessary space, it makes sense that homeowners are likely to invest in those first when remodeling or building an addition.

One key choice when it comes to kitchens, and bathrooms, is the kind of countertops to be installed.

In the Prescott area, there are plenty of product choices based on preference, design and price tag. Those who specialize in the field say that the countertop trend, be it in kitchens or bathrooms, tends to the natural stone or granite products as they are durable, easy to maintain and likely will last longer than a homeowner's design taste.

Precision Marble is a 32-year-old local company that manufactures its own cultured marble product, Trustone, one that takes on the appearance of natural stone with similar durability, and is suitable for both kitchens and bathrooms.

Office Manager Rachel Mendoza said the company sells a variety of countertop products from porcelain to marble and granite, all of which are sold by the slab at prices that range from \$40 to \$250 per square foot.

The choice of countertop material, generally, boils down to a blend of personal preference and cost, with homeowners more likely to match countertops in kitchens and bathrooms if it makes economic sense, Mendoza said. Countertops are sold in slabs, and so if there is enough left over to complete a bathroom, a customer



Manager Rachel Mendoza shows granite kitchen countertops available at Precision Marble and Granite in Prescott. (Les Stukenberg/The Daily Courier)

might prefer that option. If they are going to need to purchase a separate slab, Mendoza said the customer might opt for a different material.

One of the newer products that is deemed ideal for outdoor patios and barbecue areas is porcelain that looks like concrete but is more durable and not susceptible to extreme heat or moisture, she said.

For kitchen products, crushed quartz offers a consistent pattern and granite offers more variation and veins that is preferable to those who like a ranch-style setting, Mendoza said. For those not worried about the same look in the kitchen and bathroom, they might select either porcelain or crushed quartz, she said.

MCK Woodworks Sales Associate Tina Edwards said there are lot of choices for people to choose from when selecting countertops, everything from a

plastic laminate to acrylic, tile, natural stone, granite, limestone and engineered quartz. As for popularity in this area, Edwards said she finds engineered quartz is the front-runner choice for contemporary homes because it is a non-porous product, very durable and offers an easy cleanup.

For the more rustic homes, Edwards said natural stone is a favorite, and again, it requires little more than mild soap and water to keep clean.

On the price front, Edwards said the quartz and granite are in the same price range, with granite offering a more consistent look.

Buyers of starter homes may still opt to do the plastic laminate because it is less expensive, and then opt for one that has a granite appearance on the surface. Most of the laminate manufacturers are offering selections that can offer

the natural look without the higher price.

When thinking long-term investment, Edwards said natural stone and engineered quartz are preferable choices because they will last a lifetime; the plastic laminates will wear within 20 to 25 years.

One recent trend Edward has noticed is a renewed preference for retro looks and colors. And almost every countertop product has a wide selection suitable to a buyers' taste.

Their business that dates back to 1998 offers an impressive showroom that will enable people to make selections whether they already have an idea or need suggestions, Edwards said.

"Cost always comes into a factor, but a lot of people understand that if you want something durable it is going to cost you a little more," she concluded. «



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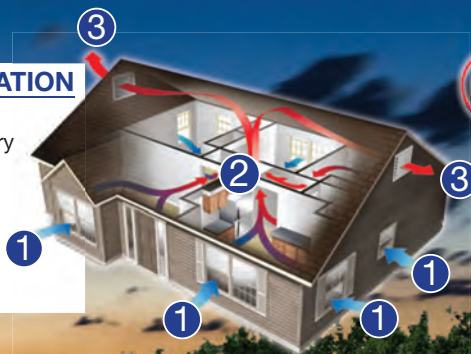
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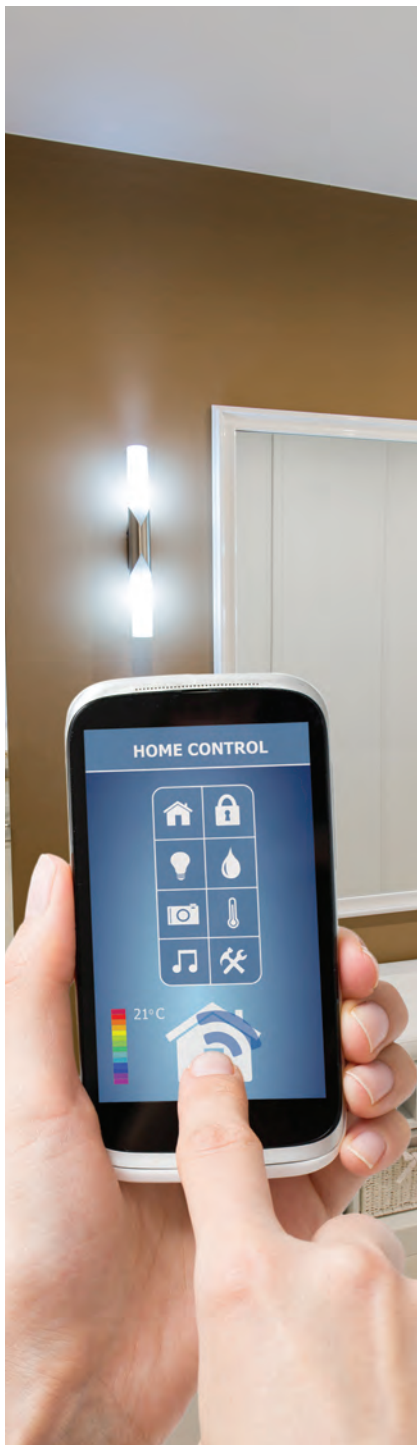




# The automated house

Save money, time; cost limited to your imagination and budget

By Jason Wheeler



The Jetsons" is becoming more of a reality than fiction with each passing moment as smart homes and home technology continue to make life easier for homeowners. In fact, saving money with an automated smart home is just one example of being able to do so, said Steve White of Lifestyle Home Technology. The homeowner can sign up with APS for their demand metering that makes it so using appliances or a lot of lighting is more costly during the day and then put in controllers that automate those devices, he said.

"I have a client, for example, their whole house is electrical because they're kind of remote and they don't have gas service out there," White said. "We have appliance controllers and lighting controllers ... and certain times of the day, it will not allow those devices to be powered on. You can override it, but then at least you know you're costing yourself money."

The savings one can experience really depends on a person's own habits, but it could be as much as 25 percent off an electric bill, White said.

There's also Z Wave Control, which White said he's been working on a house with the technology. It's wireless and with it, things like thermostats, door locks, lighting switches and dimmers can be controlled with a four- or six-button controller, he said, commenting that the person can select what they want, press a button and it sets everything in the

house to what they want.

"You can also control it from your cellphone or from your tablet and that can be done anywhere in the world as long as you have internet in your house," White said. "If Uncle Henry shows up at your front door and you're in Timbuktu, you can disarm your security and unlock your front door for him. You just have to know your code."

White said he's put in control stuff before, but it was hardwired to the switches that would carry the signal and there's a latency on the response time. With the Z Wave Control, the responses are almost instantaneous, he said.

Z Wave Control can also be set by programming, White said, using the morning as an example. The controller could have a good morning button and if pressed, it will start rolling up shades and turning on whichever lights are selected.

The cost of automating a home is pretty much limited to one's budget and imagination, but Z Wave Controls are a little less expensive than hardwired switches, White said.

"It's such a popular package, the price is coming down," he said, noting the controls can also be tied into an Alexa system where a person can tell Alexa to turn on the lights or watch television. "Then it would execute that. It would put the lights to where you like them and turn on your TV to your favorite channel." «

## What smart appliances are capable of

Picture the scene of having the main entrée in the oven and working on one of the night's side dishes. It's almost prepared and ready to start cooking, but one vital ingredient is missing and the dish won't taste the same without it. Now, the choice comes up of either scrapping the whole dish, which would make tonight's dinner less than perfect, or running out to the store to get that last ingredient, but if the oven is turned off, the entrée will be ruined. There is one way around this dilemma: a smart oven.

A lot of Jenn-Air's higher-end ovens are actually smart appliances and one feature is an app that can control the oven from wherever, said Terry Landreth at Quality Maytag, noting it also has a wireless meat probe and temperature settings.

"They have to run out to the store to get something, they don't have to worry about what if it starts burning while I'm gone," Landreth said of the hypothetical cook. "It has temperature settings that will notify you when you have the app. It gives you a little bit of control without having to hover over the kitchen."

There are also smart washers and dryers that can be set up to start via remote, Landreth said, stating it's all about convenience so a person isn't tied to the appliance in order to do what they need to do. «

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# LED lightbulbs

Energy-saving way to illuminate your life.

By Nanci Hutson

The choice of a lightbulb might not seem like a step to saving the planet, but environmentalists and lighting experts are likely to say every bit of energy saved is a step closer to protecting Mother Earth.

The move from the traditional, inexpensive incandescent lightbulbs to LED (Light Emitting Diodes) bulbs is as common now for routine fixtures as it might be to illuminate antique and elaborate fixtures.

Why? Because they are now easy to find and convenient to use – no special sockets required – and in most cases last longer than the more

traditional bulbs.

Patrick Brady, the owner of Prescott-based VintageLights.com, said LED lights are becoming more and more common for household use.

On Black Friday, Brady said one of the local home improvement stores offered a sale on LED bulbs for 99 cents apiece; they can run as much as \$3 to \$5 a bulb depending on size. He said he stocked up and replaced all the lightbulbs in his own home fixtures, including for some of the vintage lamps he owns.

Unlike a 60 watt incandescent bulb, Brady said a comparable LED light would only emit 9 watts but still

shine just as bright.

They are more expensive, but Brady said the energy savings and longevity of the bulbs in his estimation make up for the cost difference.

LED lights now are made to fit just about any fixture. Indeed, Brady sells fancy vintage sconces and chandeliers to customers all over the world and he regularly relies on the LED lights for their illumination.

The Internet is full of information about this latest technological advance in the lighting industry. What they boast most is that these are small, solid light bulbs that are incredibly energy-efficient and last longer than traditional bulbs. LED lights tend to be about 80 more efficient than fluorescent or incandescent lights. The way they work is that 95 percent of the energy in LEDs is converted into light so only about 5 percent is wasted as heat, according to industry information.

The documented downside to LEDs is that they are now more expensive, but as Brady said often times there are sales discounts, or at the very least, the cost

difference is made up by not having to replace the bulbs as often as more traditional brands.

Some lighting companies that promote LED bulbs are making donations to organizations that provide homes and shelter for low-income families.

The federal Environmental Protection Agency is now operating a “Change the World Tour” intended to motivate people to purchase LED bulbs for needy communities.

“Swapping out traditional bulbs for energy-efficient alternatives is a simple home project that requires no special skills or tools, just a commitment to lowering one’s carbon footprint. Take an afternoon to make this simple swap that promises to have a long-lasting and major impact,” said a news release from ProVia, an Ohio manufacturer of home renovation and energy-efficient products. «



Patrick Brady, owner of Prescott-based VintageLights.com, installs an LED lightbulb in a vintage cast aluminum chandelier. (Nanci Hutson, The Daily Courier)

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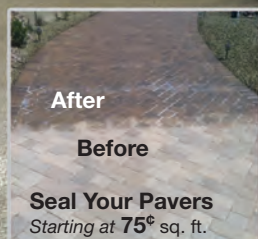
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# Spring cleaning

**Focus on hard-to-reach spots in your home**

**By Cindy Barks**

**W**hen it comes to spring cleaning, it pays to look high and look low.

Lucy Leyva, owner of Maid to Order in Prescott Valley says many of her clients need help with the hard-to-reach places – the ledge shelves near the ceiling, the ceiling fans and the baseboards.

And it is often those areas that need the most attention after a long winter of indoor cooking and fires in the fireplaces.

Leyva points to the ledge shelves that run along the ceiling in many kitchens. “If it is near the kitchen, there will be a combination of grease and dust,” she said.

And because people like to decorate the top shelves with plants and knick-knacks, those items also likely will need cleaning.

Leyva says Maid to Order offers a complete removal and cleaning of the items on the shelves, along with a de-greasing cleaning of the shelves. Because some of the shelves are located high above the rest of the house, she said special care is needed to do the cleaning.

Some people have a difficult time climbing ladders to reach the top shelves or ceiling fan and/or cannot no longer kneel to clean the baseboards. Leyva says hiring a professional cleaner is often the safest and most convenient option.



"We get it all done at once," she said of Maid to Order's spring-cleaning promotion.

Other important spots to consider cleaning in the spring include the window blinds, the windows, and the carpets, Leyva said.

Professional cleaners such as Maid to Order can send in a team of two or three cleaners and have the entire house complete in two to three hours, for a total of six to nine hours.

Every home is different, however, and Leyva points out that some homeowners need cleaning in just one area. "We customize for everyone," she said.

For those who like to do it themselves, many online resources are available, including [www.hgtv.com](http://www.hgtv.com). Among the areas to focus on:

#### • KITCHEN

Wipe down the cabinets; disinfect around the sink faucets; run a cleaning product through the dishwasher; wipe down the refrigerator, inside and out with warm soapy water; and clean the oven by spritzing ammonia on burned-on food, and then sprinkling baking soda and a few drops of white vinegar on the bottom and wiping away.

#### • BEDROOMS

Organize closets by getting rid of unused clothes and arranging the remainder by color and/or uses; washing pillows and comforters; vacuuming mattresses; and wiping down painted walls.

#### • PATIO

Wipe down patio furniture with warm soapy water and then hosing off the solution with a garden hose, and hose down/sweep the patio surface.

#### • BATHROOMS

Clean bathroom tiles, toilets and sinks with a cleaner or with a mixture of baking soda and water.

The experts advise that other areas to focus on in the spring include: wood floors, carpet, area rugs, windows and screens, window blinds, underneath furniture, kitchen pantries and garbage cans.◀



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# Plumbing

**From clogs to backups, a few simple do-it-yourself fixes**

By Max Efrein

Whether it's a leaky faucet, a running toilet or a flooded laundry room, we all encounter some sort of household plumbing issue from time to time.

When such issues come up, the all-important question arises: "Do I call a plumber?"

In some cases, an expert is necessary. In other situations, there are some simple do-it-yourself plumbing fixes to turn to.

Take a clogged drain, for example. Steve Stover, owner of Arizona All Service, said there's usually no need to waste your money on a plumber or clog-removing chemicals. All one needs is vinegar and baking soda.

"Just a little bit, not a lot," Stover said. "Don't breathe it in, because it's toxic, but it'll chew up stuff."

Toilets can commonly be a source of concern as well. If you suspect your toilet is leaking, an easy way to check is to dump dye in the toilet's tank, Stover said. If the dye shows up in the bowl, then it's for sure leaking and wasting water.

"It's usually a flapper, but it could be something else," Stover said.

Flappers can easily be replaced, he said. If that doesn't do the job, however, he recommends calling a plumber.

If the problem you're facing is a wobbly toilet, then Jett Montana, service manager at The Plumbing Store in Prescott, recommends buying



shims (thin strips of material used to align parts) at a hardware store and placing them in any gaps that may be at the base of the toilet.

"That way, when you sit on the toilet, it will ride on the shim instead of come down on the floor," Montana said.

This will prevent the wobbling, which can lead to serious plumbing issues.

Another quick plumbing tip for those with garbage disposals is if the disposal starts to block up or even smell bad, a way to deal with that is to dump a good amount of ice in it.

"Just put the ice in, flip it on and let it run in there," Stover said. "That cleans it out and takes out a lot of the smell, especially if you put just a little lemon in it."

A preventive plumbing measure that Jett Montana, service manager at The Plumbing Store in Prescott, recommends doing is making sure your personal washing machine's hoses are made out of braided stainless steel rather than rubber.

Apparently, older washing machines used to use rubber hoses, which are known to commonly burst. Braided stainless steel hoses don't have this problem and can be found at any hardware store.

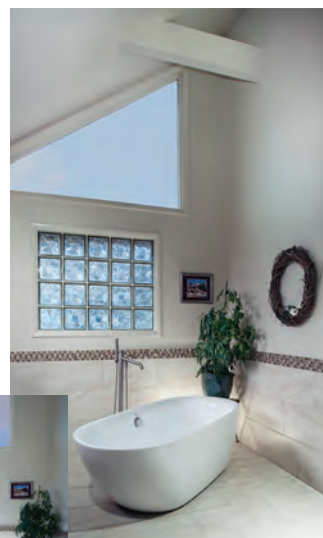
"That's definitely a do-it-yourselfer kind of job," Montana said. "It just takes any kind of wrench, preferably a channel lock." «



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- ▶The total dollar amount to be paid to the contractor by the owner

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The property owner has the right to file a written complaint with the registrar for an alleged violation of Section 32-1154, subsection A. Complaints must be made within the applicable time period as set forth in Section 32-1155, subsection A.

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The contract must be signed by property owner and contractor or contractor’s designated representative. Failure to comply with this statute constitutes grounds to suspend or revoke the contractor’s license and the ROC can issue a Citation.

Construction projects require flexibility. Flexibility means changes, changes which will have to be made to the initial written contract. These changes are made by written “change orders.” Unfortunately, a large number of disputes arise out of such changes: unfortunate because change orders are so simple to create and thus avoid the dispute. A change order must be in writing, state the date the change was made, the amount the change will increase or decrease the original



written contract amount, and the number of days that the change will expedite or delay the estimated date of completion. Most importantly, the change order must be signed by both the contractor and the owner.

If it becomes necessary to make a complaint with the Arizona Registrar of Contractors, investigators now require the written construction contract, written change orders and copies of payment checks. Payment should always be made by check made payable to the licensed company/contractor and never to an individual who is not the named contractor on

the business invoice or letterhead. Avoid paying by cash, but if you must do so, get signed and dated receipts from the contractor on a letterhead or invoice clearly displaying the contractor’s name.

Be wary of any contractor who is unable or unwilling to provide you with a written contract: it’s the law. Be wary of any contractor who is unwilling to give you a written change order: it’s safe business. «

*Provided by Sandy Griffiths, executive director of the Yavapai County Contractors Association. 928-778-0040; [www.ycca.org](http://www.ycca.org)*

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# Latent defect

**W**e are the second owners of a home and have been in our home for three years. The home was built for the first owner five years ago. Our stucco is now cracking and falling off in chunks. No one has been injured and we have no damage to the inside of our house. We are aware of the two-year complaint deadline in which an owner can file a complaint with the Registrar of Contractors, however we are beyond that deadline. Can we get the stucco repaired by the original contractor?

Your situation might involve a hidden defect, also known as a "latent" defect: there may have been an original problem with the application of the stucco that remained hidden until just recently. On the other hand, the stucco problem may be due to ordinary weathering, which is not considered a "defect."

Issues involving latent defects involve some of the most complex issues in Arizona law today. Most latent defects are discovered many years after the home is built and many are beyond the various time limits to make a claim for a repair. Many such defects are discovered by homeowners, often not the original homeowner. However, Arizona law recognizes that the effect of a latent defect, even discovered later by a subsequent homeowner, is financially damaging and under the right circumstances a homeowner may be legally entitled to a repair from the contractor.

Seeking a latent defect repair can be made in four general ways: (1) a contractual warranty claim under the original construction contract, (2) a complaint to the Registrar of Contractors, (3) an implied warranty claim and (4) simply ask the contractor to make the repairs. Keep in mind, if a complaint is made after the applicable time limits, the contractor is under no obligation to make the repairs.

- Repairing defects under option (1) Contractual Warranty Claim; most contracts limit the time period to make a claim for a repair to one or two years and in some cases three years. However, only the original homeowner who directly contracted with the builder is entitled to make a contractual warranty claim. Because you are not the original homeowner who contracted with the builder, you cannot make a contractual warranty

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## ***Issues involving latent defects involve some of the most complex issues in Arizona law today.***

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claim. A contractual warranty claim by the original homeowner against the builder must be brought up within the contractually stated period, or if none is stated within six years.

- Repairing defects under option (2) Registrar of Contractors; repairs of defective workmanship can be made provided the complaint is made within two years after (a) close of escrow or (b) actual occupancy, whichever occurred first. Because the complaint deadline of two years has passed, you cannot make a complaint to the Registrar. It is also important for homeowners to remember that when filing a complaint through the ROC, the complaints can only be made against a licensed contractor.

- Repairing defects under option (3) Implied Warranty; Arizona's appellate courts have over the past several decades applied the concept of "Implied Warranty" to construction defects. An "implied warranty" means that it is not a warranty appearing in a construction contract: it is "implied" that the home will be built within "workmanlike manner" and it will serve its intended purpose. The implied warranty doctrine applies to subsequent purchasers, i.e. not just the original owners who had the house built. And, this doctrine applies only to latent defects, i.e. those defects not discoverable during a reasonable inspection made prior to your purchase.

Whether a problem is truly a latent defect will be determined by looking at the age of the home, the amount of ordinary wear and tear, maintenance or lack thereof, changes made by prior homeowners, etc. The burden is upon you as the current homeowner to show that the newly discovered problems were defects in the original construction. Furthermore, the doctrine is limited: a contractor is not responsible for the house to be in good condition forever.

There are time limits within which the request for repair of a latent defect must be made. The time period is not indefinite. These time periods are called statutes of limitations. The statute of limitations is determined by the nature of the claim,

be it for breach of contract or implied warranty.

Your situation involves an implied warranty claim. Here the clock does not begin to run until the "date of discovery" of the defect. But

this does not mean that the clock runs indefinitely on your time to request a repair. In the mid-1980s, Arizona's appellate courts decided that the time limit within which to bring a claim was "reasonable time." This decision was not very helpful, and in 1989 the Arizona legislature passed a special type of statute of limitations called a "statute of repose." Under this statute, a contractor is only responsible for defects discovered eight years after completion of construction, or if the defect is discovered in the eighth year, the homeowner has one additional year to bring the claim. But you must bring the claim within two years after you discover it, or within one year if discovered within the ninth year of the statute of repose. However, be aware, a prior owner's knowledge of the defect starts the clock running and not with the current owner's discovery. The law involving implied warranties is evolving quickly and dramatically. It is therefore important for you to contact an attorney and discuss your specific facts and current case law. In your situation, if it is actually a defect, it is quite possible the contractor would be obligated to make the repairs because the defect was discovered by you and because the eight-year statute of repose has not yet expired.

Keep in mind, you also need to look beyond the law and look at real-life factors such as the recent economic crisis which had been particularly hard on the construction industry, and it is possible the contractor may no longer be in business. If the original contractor is unwilling to make the repairs and before you consider a lawsuit, you must also ask yourself whether the cost of repair justifies the cost of litigation, which is usually expensive.

This answer is intended to provide general information only and is not intended to take the place of consulting with an attorney, who will advise you based on the specific facts of your case and the most current Arizona law. «

*Provided by Sandy Griffiths, executive director of the Yavapai County Contractors Association. 928-778-0040; [www.ycca.org](http://www.ycca.org).*

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# Go vertical

## When garden space is limited

By Sue Tone

Photos taken at Watters Garden Center by Sue Tone

When gardeners run out of space and maybe hit a wall or two, vertical gardening and unusual containers could be the answer to their space constraints.

Creative gardeners are setting up ladders, towel racks, chicken wire and rain gutters to use as supports and receptacles.

Potted plants can be heavy, so making sure a vertical structure is well supported, either as a freestanding frame or attached to a wall or fence, is important.

Ladders, arbors and trellises are perfect from which to hang pots with an S-hook. Staple chicken wire to a large, sturdy picture frame and attach to a

pot slings will come in handy when hanging pots on a towel rack, rods or plumbing pipes attached to a wall.

Recycled rain gutters offer an appealing horizontal look to vertical walls. These are good for vegetables such as lettuce, or a variety of herbs or succulents.

Plant flowers in a hollowed tree stump and obtain a unique piece of yard art at the same time.

"I don't think the plant cares, but probably solid soil is better off for the plant," said Jeff Schalaus, University Arizona Cooperative Extension.

Water troughs, wheelbarrows, buckets, tool boxes – anything metal that might rust – shouldn't

---

***"I don't think the plant cares, but probably solid soil is better off for the plant..."***

---

fence for another way to hang pots.

For an even larger structure, attach chicken or wire fencing to 4-by-4-inch posts sunk into the ground and a length of 2-by-4 across the top. A series of these in a row still allows the attached plants to receive sunlight and some shade. Watering from the top benefits the lower levels as water drains through the containers. This method also provides a nice privacy fence as plants mature.

A little knowledge on how to make macrame

pose a problem for gardeners, Schalaus said. Plants don't take in rust off steel and iron.

Think creative containers: little red wagons filled with flowers, barrels, plastic-lined wine crates or baskets, colanders, birdbaths, shower caddies, boots, and recycled tires, toilets, sinks and bathtubs.

Even an old dresser bureau with drawers staggered open can create a stunning cascading garden of vegetation. «





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# Yard art

## Adding flair to your outdoor space

By Doug Cook

Looking for something special to brighten up your yard and/or garden and give it a quality unique to your own interests and personality?

If so, finding the right pieces of yard art very well could be your ticket to success.

The Yard Art Project, a website dedicated to discovering, documenting and exhibiting yard art, defines it as “any man-made aesthetic experience occurring in a private yard or garden, as well as those found in ‘yard-esque’ outdoor spaces such as pastures, nurseries, community gardens, and vacant lots.”

Yard art runs the gamut, the Yard

Art Project adds, “manifest[ing] itself along a continuum from painted surfaces and sculpted forms to compelling assemblages of objects brought together according to no particular plan.”

Several businesses in Prescott’s tri-city area sell pieces of yard art.

Earthworks Landscape & Garden Supplies, 2531 N. Highway 89 in Chino Valley, keeps its stock in its garden center.

Earthworks’ website says that its garden center offers “colorful Tala Vera pottery, birdbaths, fountains, metal yard art, bird feeders, and garden furniture.”

Nearby, Rustic Ironwerks in



Southwestern yard art, such as this owl, would probably fit in well in front of or in back of a home in Arizona. (Courtesy/kokopellioutlet.com)



Pieces of yard art, like this metal fish welded together with old wrenches, could add a personal touch to a yard or garden space. (Courtesy/weldinghelmetpros.com)





Yard art made from scrap metal, like this copper piece, is often quite decorative. (Courtesy/pinterest.com)

Chino Valley manufactures metallic animal and bird yard art. Among other products, the small business sells armadillos, “cowboy” roosters, coyotes, elk, horses, hummingbirds, jackrabbits, javelina, moose, quail, roadrunners and squirrels.

Rock ‘n’ Earth, 6800 E. Highway 69 in Prescott Valley, sells “one-of-a-kind yard art” made by local artists. Its inventory includes “a large selection of metal, wood and stone art,” as well as “decorative concrete pots.”

Universal Ironworks, 8926 E. Long Mesa Drive, also in Prescott Valley, makes souvenirs and “funky home décor,” its website says. A family-owned business since 2001, Universal Ironworks’ motto is “We farm metal!”

The small business manufactures a line of ornaments, magnets, wall art, yard art and home décor from metal with a rusty patina, similar to Rustic Ironwerks.

Outside of the Prescott area, in Moab, Utah, Lema’s Kokopelli Gallery sells Southwestern-style yard art.

The gallery’s metal and copper hand-crafted art pieces include, but aren’t limited to, small quail, javelina, iguanas and owls; medium- and large-sized quail and owls; jackrabbits; mini and large roadrunners; metal butterflies; prickly pear cacti, barrel cacti and saguaro cacti; small armadillo garden sculptures; desert turtles and howling coyotes.

For more information about yard art, visit [windandweather.com](http://windandweather.com), [gardenfun.com](http://gardenfun.com), [uncommongoods.com](http://uncommongoods.com), [gardeners.com](http://gardeners.com), [gardenart.com](http://gardenart.com), [yardbirds.info](http://yardbirds.info), [dundecgardenart.com](http://dundecgardenart.com) or [uniquegardendecor.com](http://uniquegardendecor.com). ◀



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# Popular pavers

**Great for exterior flooring, paths and driveways**

By Max Efrein

**U**ndoubtedly you've walked or driven on them recently.

Given that pavers are an extremely popular form of surfacing, they're everywhere.

Simply put, a paver is a paving stone, tile, brick or brick-like piece of concrete commonly used as exterior flooring. It's most often used for walking paths, but is also commonly used in place of poured concrete for driveways.

Dane Prator, owner of Autumn Blaze Construction, uses pavers for projects all of the time. He said a lot of builders and general contractors he knows lean toward using the material because of its reliability.

"One of the primary reasons is the peace of mind," Prator said.

Easily installed:

Installing pavers is a simple task. For smaller projects, it's something

that can easily be done by a homeowner.

Once a compressed aggregate base is laid down and some form of border is set in place (either soil or metal lip), then all one needs to do is set the pavers and fill the cracks with sand, said Mike Hall, showroom manager at Arizona Stone and Architectural Products.

"For someone going to do it themselves, I recommend doing your research, because it is all about the preparation," Prator said.

However, depending on the desired size and quality of the project, a certified paver installer may be worth hiring.

"Especially if you are doing a driveway," Prator said.

Durable:

While not all pavers are

appropriate for driveways, thick concrete pavers handle the job well.

"A lot of people will prefer it to poured concrete because it won't crack or split or anything like that," Hall said.

Easily maintained:

Once set, pavers require almost no maintenance.

"Some people like to wash and seal them, but for all intents and purposes it's just like a concrete driveway," Prator said. "The sealing isn't necessary; it just gives them a different look and helps maintain the color."

And if a paver ever gets damaged, it can easily be replaced.

"You just pop it out and put in a new one," Hall said.

Seasonal tips

Pavers hold up well in just about any weather conditions, Prator said.

"One of the things that is asked often is 'will the snow clear easily given the texture of pavers,'" Prator said. "The answer is yes, it clears off fine, and it has better traction for walking versus a smooth concrete finish."

Hall said it's also fine to use ice dissolving salts on pavers as long as it's a salt that is paver-friendly.

"And that's really only for keeping the color," Hall said. «



Mike Hall, showroom manager at Arizona Stone and Architectural Products, shows off the various forms of pavers the company manufactures and sells. (Max Efrein, The Daily Courier)





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# Conserving water

## Tricks of the trade, inside and out

By Max Efrein

### INSIDE HOME

The first step to conserving water in a home is to look at its appliances and fixtures.

This means checking toilets, faucets, washing machines and dish washers to ensure they're low flow.

"A standard toilet does 1.28 gallons," said Jett Montana, operations supervisor at The Plumbing Store. "That's almost as low as they go and that's just about any toilet on the market now. Same with faucets, which do 1.6 or 2.1 gallons per minute unless you take out the little aerator to get more water flow."

After that, a homeowner can look at having a recirculating pump installed on their hot water heater, Montana said. This keeps hot water flowing continuously through the pipes so that when a faucet is turned on, hot water is instantly delivered rather than having to travel to that faucet from wherever the hot water heater is located.

"And it reads the temperature, so when the temperature drops below the setting, it will kick on, and vice versa," Montana said.

Going a step further, the gas required to heat the water can be saved by getting a recirculating pump with a timer on it, Montana said. With this, the homeowner can set the timer for the most common hours of water use during the day, such as between 5 and 8 a.m. and 6 and 9 p.m.

The only downfall to a timer is a lack of instant hot water during the off hours.

One in-home water conservation effort that Montana is particularly passionate about has to do with water softeners.

"Those things have to clean themselves by flushing themselves with water every couple of weeks, and they flush like 25 gallons down the drain each time," Montana said.

If softer water is desired without the waste of water, the alternative is a unit called a descaler.

"That requires no electricity and no regeneration cycles," Montana said.

Instead, it uses a form of media, such as sand, that water passes through before pumping into the home's plumbing.

The media essentially breaks down the hard water minerals such as calcium, magnesium and potassium into Nano particles, which causes them to lose their electric charge, Montana explained. This allows the minerals—which are good to consume—to pass through while preventing them from building up in the pipes. Softeners, on the other hand, remove the minerals completely.

Both systems require

servicing every few years.

The only limitation to a descaler is it is not rated to handle water with over 20 grains of hardness.

"To put that into perspective, the water that comes through the city is about seven to eight grains of hardness, which is considered hard water," Montana said.

### OUTSIDE HOME

For homeowners with yards, water conservation can be just as significant outside the home as it is inside.

The simple way of going about it is to make sure a property has climate-appropriate vegetation. In Prescott, this might be cacti and succulents.



Rodney Steidinger of Zebrascape Landscaping and Services checks the water drain at a home in Prescott. Runoff water collects in the grassy area from the house, downspouts and feeds through the drain and waters the pine trees in native areas of the property. (Les Stukenberg/The Daily Courier)

However, there are water-efficient ways to accommodate for more water-intensive plants or trees.

Rick Tinder with TLC Sprinkler Repair specializes in renovating existing sprinklers.

In his experience, there are a few major things people can do to save water in their yards. One is to install drip systems with timers. For those looking to water grass, Tinder recommends using sprinklers with MP Rotator heads, which deliver a lower volume and pressure than standard sprinklers.

"Therefore you water less often, but deeper," Tinder said. "It saves about a third of the water."

Along this same vein, Matt Keppel, owner of Guardian Landscape, said a rain sensor can be installed on irrigation timers. This measures rain fall to determine whether additional watering is necessary or not.

"So it actually shuts down when there is a certain level of moisture in the ground," Keppel said.

Additionally, for irrigation to be most effective, emitters need to be placed correctly. If the emitters are at the trunk of a mature tree or shrub, they need to be moved out to what is called the drip line of the tree, Keppel said. This is where the canopy of the tree or shrub ends and is, therefore, where most rainfall naturally reaches.

"That's where all of the feeder roots are that actually pull in nutrients and water," Keppel said.

Another tip is to create basins around trees and shrubs.

"For people who are sensitive to this, we run downspouts and have them come around trees," said Rodney Steidinger with Zebra Scapes. "We try to plant trees in lower parts of a property so that the water can easily flow to them and be reserved." «

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# Landscaping vs. maintenance

## Expertise a landscaping company offers

By Scott Orr

When it comes time to choose someone to trim your trees, install an irrigation system, or add plants that will thrive in the northern Arizona climate, you can choose a licensed landscaper or call a maintenance guy whose phone number you found on a bulletin board.

And while that guy may be cheaper up front, there's definitely truth in the old saying, "You get what you pay for."

"Most people just buy a truck and a trailer and they call themselves landscapers, but they usually don't know their plants, insects and diseases," said Rodney Steidinger, owner of Zebrascapes. "More than likely, they don't spend money getting educated."

His crew knows the ins and outs of plants.

"We take classes" from a horticulturalist at Yavapai College, who "comes out and teaches our guys about tree trimming, and pruning roses back, and plant care," Steidinger said.

They also spend the time and money to learn irrigation technology.

"We go down to Phoenix to learn about irrigation, so we can do the best at saving people's water and understanding the system and not guessing about it," he said.

And then there's licensing and certification.

"I would imagine there are" some companies in town working without certifications, said Eric Kochler, owner of K-Ler Land Works, "and I

don't necessarily know any names ... but it's a pretty intense (process) ... you've got to be registered with the state.

"You don't really have to have a certification to do maintenance, but we also have a spraying company... weed spraying and everything else, and you need certification to do that," Kochler said.

K-Ler is a full-service landscaping company, not just a pruning service.

"We do all installs, so we put down rock, put in irrigation, where a maintenance person is just going to

trim your trees, check your irrigation, and do those kind of chores," said Kochler.

Zebrascapes does similar work, like "fertilizing and yard cleanups, firewise (clearing), and pond renovation and service," Steidinger said. "We're licensed to spray pre- and post-emergent" as well.

And one more factor that sets professional landscapers apart from maintenance workers who offer lower prices is liability.

"We are licensed and bonded and insured," Kochler said. "You've

got to make sure every company has insurance and workman's comp. And make sure they're licensed with the state."

Zebrascapes' Rodney Steidinger pointed out that accidents do happen.

"We're insured, and bonded, so we cover any broken windows, if anything happens.

"We're a licensed contractor and we take pride in our knowledge and training," he said. «



Juan Beltran of Zebrascapes Landscaping & Services trims a Redbud. (Les Stukenberg/The Daily Courier)

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# Improving landscapes in Spring

## Ladybugs & bees are beneficial

By Doug Cook

If you are planting a garden this spring or are merely interested in doing so someday, knowing which insects benefit the space can determine whether it thrives, stagnates or suffers.

So says Chris Welborn, 50, who has owned Vicente Landscaping for the past 13 years in Prescott. Welborn is a licensed contractor with a business degree whose uncle worked as a landscape architect.

Welborn said mid-May is the best time to plant spring vegetable gardens in the Prescott area to avoid late-winter frosts. Prepping garden beds in late March and April, therefore, is a good idea. Evergreen plants and trees may be planted during the winter, however, he added, before temperatures

and don't damage them. Welborn said nurseries, such as Watters Garden Center in Prescott, sell ladybugs designed for release into a landscape if none are there naturally. Some mail-order businesses sell ladybugs, too, he added.

"When we see a ladybug, it puts a smile on my face because it's a very beneficial insect for us in our gardens," Welborn said.

Bees benefit gardens because they are pollinators. They promote multiplication and growth of fruits, vegetables and flowers.

In recent years, perhaps due to the American Southwest's prolonged drought, there has been a "lack of bees," Welborn said. Other causes for a decline may include Colony Collapse Disorder

Last year we noticed that we had a lot of bees. Bees were back and forth. So, hopefully, we'll see the same this year."

Over the past several years, some Vicente landscaping crews have participated in Firewise community cleanups, which clear brush, pine needles and leaves from local neighborhoods to reduce wildfire danger.

If crews stumbled on beehives during these operations or during landscaping projects in the past, they would occasionally try to exterminate them. They viewed hives as nuisances. Not so anymore.

"We try to do everything we can to work around the bees," said Welborn, adding that beekeepers are



get too warm.

In northern Arizona's high country, two of the most helpful garden insects are ladybugs and bees. Ladybugs are "awesome in our landscape, in our gardens," Welborn said, because they eat harmful aphids, tiny insects which feed on roses and a variety of plants.

Ladybugs naturally enter into area landscapes

(CCD), the proliferation of herbicides and pesticides, and climate change, he added.

"It's been a problem throughout the country – lack of bees," Welborn said. "There is not one consensus as to what's causing the problem. A couple of years ago, some of our customers' gardens had very, very little fruits and vegetables. That year we had a lot of problems with not many bees around.

sometimes called in to relocate hives to safety.

To attract bees, Welborn encourages homeowners to plant spring-flowering perennials in and around their gardens. If you're allergic to bee stings, but still crave bees' benefits, Welborn says to avoid putting flowering plants in "common traffic areas," such as entryways, walkways and patios.

Besides aphids, another harmful insect is the

pinon pine scale, which feeds on pine needles, primarily in Prescott. When scales hatch their eggs each year, those eggs attach to these trees' new, healthy needles.

Welborn said that with the wet winter we had, he hopes trees will effectively fight off scales. Deep-watering native pinon trees on your property could save them, he added.

"When temperatures start getting warm over the next month or so [mid-March to mid-April], those eggs are going to hatch, they're going to crawl up the tree and attach to the new, healthy, green pinon needle on the pinon pines," Welborn said. "They suck the nutrients out of that needle and kill the needle. When you get a big population of them, which has been happening recently in our Prescott area, and you see a pinon tree that's starting to look brown, that's probably a good sign that that pinon has scale."

"If left untreated over a number of years, that cycle will kill that tree." «



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# Help!

## Animals are eating my garden

By Sue Tone

**H**ow many fences must gardeners build to keep javelina, deer and rabbits out of the vegetable patch?

For deer, the fencing may need to be six feet in height. For javelina, an electric fence is effective. And rabbits require fencing in a grid of less than 1 inch.

Gardeners are aware that certain flowers and herbs will repel wildlife.

In general, plants with strong odor, texture or taste will detract animals. Interspersing the garden with these plants may help keep animals away, but there are no guarantees that javelinas won't eat, nibble or dig them up.

To avoid attracting these animals, keep fallen fruit and nuts picked up, don't keep dog food or birdseed outside, and don't plant their favorite

food source: cacti, succulents, bulbs and tubers.

Javelina-resistant plants include alyssum, basil, chili pepper, chrysanthemum, cosmos, daffodils, dahlias, daylily, geraniums, hibiscus, iris, ivy, juniper, lavender, lilac, marigolds, onion, pansies, petunias, rose bushes, rosemary, sage, santolina, snapdragons, sweet William, yarrow and zinnia.

Deer and rabbits don't like many of the above javelina-repellent plants, in addition to catmint, dill, mint, parsley and thyme.

If you don't wish to place extra plants in your garden, try some short-term natural repellents: sprinkled red pepper, or rags soaked in ammonia.

One strand of electric fencing installed about one foot off the ground with 12-volts will give javelinas



a jolt they won't forget. Entice them with peanut butter placed every few yards. They won't come back for quite a while.

Two odiferous products on the market may help. Repels-All smells of a blend of garlic and rotten eggs. Some customers at Watters Garden Center report this repels javelina, cats and dogs. An organic fruit and berry food made with blood meal, meat meal, and bone meal smells of fresh kill and repels small mammals. Water breaks this product down; it requires re-application.

Gardeners are encouraged not to set out poison for pack rats and squirrels, which also like to snack on young plants. Owls are natural predators of pack rats, and can die from eating poisoned rodents. Keep old vegetation cleaned up, and watch for nests in air-conditioners and unused barbecues. Remove boxes from the carport.

Rabbits can decimate a garden overnight. They are curious and may sample even the rabbit-resistant plants. Chicken wire with less than one-inch openings works best, buried 3-6 inches underground and installed at least 2 feet high.

Rabbits are not fond of asparagus, leeks, onions, potatoes, rhubarb, squash or tomatoes. However, when food is scarce, rabbits will eat plants that usually repel them. «





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# Trees

**A number of trees do very well here.**

**Story and Photo By Sue Tone**

Prescott's mile-high-city status impacts what kind of trees homeowners want to plant in their yards – which ones will do well and are as

Bristlecone pine and Pinyon Pine both grow slowly to about 15 feet, and are hardy species. Austrian, Scotch and Japanese Pines are more



drought-tolerant as possible for the area.

Deciduous trees create the best shade, something homeowners can appreciate when summer temperatures breach 90 degrees. Planting these on the west and south sides of the house provides shade when needed during the hotter seasons, yet allows the sun to warm the house during the winter months after the trees have dropped their leaves.

Some trees are more drought-tolerant than others. The Black Locust has a medium drought tolerance rating. It grows to 60 feet in height and is considered an attractive and tough tree. The Purple Robe variety has pink or deep purple flowers and reddish-bronze new growth.

The Red Oak is a nice specimen, one of which can be found at Sharlot Hall Museum. It grows to 50 feet with a 30-foot width. Slightly smaller and more common in the Prescott area is the Bradford Pear with showy flowers in the spring.

moderate growers at 20-30 feet. The London Pine grows to 60 feet and is not suitable for most residential landscapes.

Quaking Aspens are popular and pretty, but native stands have some endemic diseases and they are not drought tolerant.

One spectacular shade tree, the Chinese Pistache, grows to 40 feet and is heat-, drought- and soil-tolerant. It is extremely pest-resistant, according to the Arizona Cooperative Extension tree guide.

Evergreen trees are good for edges of yards when the owner wants some screening. Spartan, Wichita Blue and Rocky Mountain junipers and Arizona cypress do well planted in rows.

Ken Lain, Watters Nursery, has a list of his top picks for landscape trees that thrive in Prescott: Autumn Blaze Maple, Colorado Blue Spruce, Honeycrisp Apple, Sweetgum, Smoke Tree, Jack Flowering Pear, Flowering Redbuds and Austrian Pine. «

## **Beware of trees that have propensity to disease**

Every location has trees that are better suited to the climate and altitude. In Prescott, there are some trees more resistant to pests and diseases. It's best to research the more hardy species before putting money and effort into residential landscaping.

The Arizona Cooperative Extension offers some tips on which trees are susceptible to disease and pests. Here are a few.

Box elders, a large deciduous tree in the Prescott area, grow to about 50 feet in height. The female trees attract box elder bugs, which also can damage nearby fruit trees. Mostly, however, these pests are a nuisance to homeowners as they can enter houses in hundreds of insects, hibernating during the winter and emerging in warmer weather. They are harmless, but exude a pungent odor when disturbed or crushed.

The Leyland Cypress is extremely fast-growing, but also attracts bark beetles, which seldom kill healthy trees but can bring destruction to stressed trees due to drought.

Dutch Elms are subject to the devastating Dutch Elm Disease (DED), unless they are of the resistant variety. Most of those planted on the courthouse square are DED-resistant.

The Norway Maple is subject to aphids. The English Hawthorne can get cedar-apple rust. The Weeping Willow needs a lot of water, and when under drought stress, is prone to disease. «



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# Know your pins!

Ignore them at your peril

By Scott Orr

**Y**ou probably think you know where your property starts and ends. You may even have a fence that—supposedly—makes it clear.

But if you've not had a survey of your lot done, you may be in the 50 percent or so of homeowners who surveyor Tom Liuzzo says believe their property lines are accurate when they aren't.

"I've had property surveys where houses were over the (property) line," he said, and that spells real trouble.

"You hope that you have two neighbors who can come to an agreement, and then you'd do a property line adjustment, which is essentially an agreement to modify the line to accommodate what was built."

Smart homebuyers have a survey done as part of the buying process for their home. That way, they know exactly what they're getting and can make decisions before the check is signed if the survey doesn't match what the real estate agent is saying.

The property lines are designated by 18-inch lengths of steel reinforcing bar placed in the ground, known as a "pin." Each bar includes the survey number on it.

Surveyors use metal detectors and GPS to locate the pins.

"We start with our own research, and we come up with the property boundary based on that research," Liuzzo said.

"Pins get buried...and people don't bother to have their property surveyed before they purchase it, so they go on assumptions of where fences are built,"

he said, "or where someone looks like they assumed the line was, and they build a fence to it."

Most of the newer subdivisions have block walls built when the homes are built, so they are more likely to be properly placed.

But, Liuzzo said, getting a survey done when you buy is good for peace of mind, too.

"You're spending a lot of money, so why not spend a little bit more and be assured?"

He added that most cities and towns now require that you have a survey done if you want to build a new fence. That's because, many times in the past, when a fence was erected in the wrong spot, town or city government agencies were the ones an aggrieved home owner would call, even though government had nothing to do with drawing the property lines.

Empire West Title's Chief Title Manager, Tim Muse, said a survey is vital when someone is buying a house.

"Unless you can see your survey pins, you really don't know where your lines are," Muse said. "In Prescott, where you have areas that are older that have had houses built at different times, and property's been split up ... you have more problems."

Muse's horror stories include sheds that turned out to be on the wrong side of the property line.

"It's very important. Through the years, we've seen a lot of different things that can happen with a property line." ◀

Thomas Liuzzo of Granite Basin Engineering demonstrates the tools of his trade as a surveyor in Prescott. (Les Stukenberg/The Daily Courier)



## Where are your shutoffs?

*Info from the Department of Homeland Security*

**N**atural gas leaks and explosions are responsible for a significant number of fires following disasters. All household members should know how to shut off natural gas.

Because there are different gas shut-off procedures for different gas meter configurations, it is important to contact your local gas company for any guidance on preparations and response regarding gas appliances and gas service to your home.

Water quickly becomes a precious resource following many disasters.


Before an emergency happens, locate the shut-off valve for the water line that enters your house and label this valve with a tag for easy identification.

Make sure this valve can be completely shut off. Your valve may be rusted open or it may only partially close. If so, replace it.

Electrical sparks have the potential of igniting natural gas if it is leaking. Teach all responsible household members where and how to shut off the electricity.

Locate your electrical circuit box. For your safety, always shut off all the individual circuits before shutting off the main circuit. ◀

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# Re-level a mobile home

## Retains its structural integrity

By Doug Cook

To extend the life of a manufactured/mobile home, staying a step ahead of the ground beneath it could make all of the difference.

Mobile home repair and service experts say that the bases of these homes usually become unlevelled, or uneven, when the ground settles underneath the structures' blocking or foundation over time.

That's why manufacturers add that a periodic re-leveling of these homes every five to seven years is important. For a fee, usually several hundred dollars, certified contractors will readjust the homes' undercarriages, particularly if they were installed improperly.

Re-leveling is important, repairpersons say, because settling soils can create gaps between the foundation supports and the I-beams of a mobile home. When the ground settles underneath a mobile home, this can cause cracks in walls, doors not closing properly or jamming, and problems with windows. Floors may start squeaking and making creaking noises, too.

According to DuraSkirt, a Washington state-based company which has re-leveled mobile homes for nearly two decades, additional hazards may include carports, awnings or decks that are either attached to or next to the home. Awnings and



It is important to re-level a mobile home about every other year to keep it in top shape structurally, like the home shown here. (Courtesy/Jordan Mobile Home Service)

decks can add weight to these homes' "foundation components" over time, which stresses the supports and causes settling as well.

Re-leveling, says DuraSkirt's website, requires "adjusting the piers under the mobile or manufactured home." Doing this, the company adds, equalizes the pressure and weight distribution across the homes' metal frames to "distribute the load" of their "support pads."

DuraSkirt's re-level inspection includes checking whether the underside of a home's steel I-beams

are level. If the beams aren't level, DuraSkirt adjusts "as much as 25 percent of the home's square footage." If more adjustment is needed, DuraSkirt estimates the cost for a more complete re-leveling.

Building codes typically require that a mobile home's crawlspace height is at least several inches from the bottom of the I-beams. If codes aren't being met, re-levelers fix the problem for a fee. Part of the cost could include needing to buy new tie-down straps "due to the height changes caused by the raising or lowering of the home,"

DuraSkirt adds.

DuraSkirt inspectors who check a mobile home's crawlspace also look for proper ventilation, underbelly wrap, heating ducts, waterline insulation, sewer pipe slopes, groundwater drainage and a vapor barrier.

\*\*\*

For more information about re-leveling services for mobile/manufactured homes in the Quad Cities area of Prescott, Prescott Valley, Chino Valley and Dewey-Humboldt, call Home Tech Foundation Systems, Inc., at 928-759-2000.

Home Tech's hours go from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday at its Prescott Valley location, 4680 N. Wagon Way. «

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***...manufacturers add that a periodic re-leveling of these homes every five to seven years is important.***

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# Composite decking

## Can be a smart choice

Decks add character and functionality to a home, increasing outdoor entertaining space and oftentimes improving the resale value of a home. Homeowners have various options when choosing decking materials, but one such option, composite decking, is growing in popularity.

Decks used to primarily be made from pressure-treated lumber. While lumber remains a popular material, more and more homeowners are opting for composite decking products. As anyone who has pressure-washed, stained and sealed wood decks can attest, such spaces require lots of upkeep to look new year after year. Composite decks require much less maintenance, making them highly attractive to homeowners who would rather spend time using their decks instead of maintaining them.

Composite decking is any type of decking material that is formulated from different recycled materials. The majority of these materials include hard plastic and wood shavings of pulp. Unlike wood, which can fade, crack and rot, composite decking, which has been available for roughly a decade, does not degrade quickly and requires very little upkeep.

Available in a variety of wood colors to match outdoor decor, composite decks also can feature artificial wood grains to make

them look similar to wood planks. Although composite decks are not completely impervious to the elements, with some occasional washing to impede mold growth and new technology that has improved stain-resistance, many of the pitfalls of other materials can be avoided with composite decks.

Composite decking fits in with eco-friendly lifestyles. The planks are made from recycled materials that would normally end up in landfills. Products from Trex, a popular composite decking manufacturer, are made from 1.5 million shopping bags and wood mill waste. As composite decks do not rot away and are long-lasting, they will not need to be replaced frequently, which is another eco-friendly benefit.

When comparing composite decking brands, look mainly at the colors, materials used in the composition and the fastening systems. Many are fastened with regular deck screws, offers This Old House. The newer systems have channels for hidden fastening, and the

composite deck tiles snap into place.

Composite decks do have a few drawbacks. They can be expensive — nearly double the initial cost of wood decks. And although they don't rot, composite planks can scratch.

Without refinishing, damaged boards will need to be replaced. Harsh chemicals may fade color and damage the composite materials, so caution is needed.

Composite decking remains an in-demand choice for outdoor spaces. Low-maintenance and long-lasting, these decks have quickly become favorites among homeowners. « Metro Creative



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***Composite decking is any type of decking material that is formulated from different recycled materials.***

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# DON'T GET NAILED USING UNLICENSED ENTITIES!



## HERE ARE SOME WARNING SIGNS

- Unlicensed entities often go door-to-door claiming they “just finished a job down the street”.
- “If you act now, you’ll get a special price”.
- Often ask for a lot of money up front.
- It is illegal for an unlicensed person to perform contracting work on any project valued at more than \$999.99 in combined labor and material costs for the entire project.
- Besides being illegal, unlicensed entities are unfair competition for licensed contractors who operate with bonds, insurance, licensing requirements and you as a consumer have protection with licensed contractors.

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