

fall HOME & GARDEN



Autumn Is A Prime
Time To Tend
Lawns And Gardens

Autumn is gardening season. That statement may not seem right to those who think of the spring as the peak time to care for lawns and gardens. However, autumn is an ideal time to get into the garden and ensure that flowers, trees and garden beds will over-winter successfully.

A number of things make autumn a prime gardening season. The cooler days of fall enable gardeners to spend ample time outdoors without the threat of blazing heat. In addition, soil harbors a lot of residual warmth in autumn. Also, the colder temperatures haven't yet arrived in autumn, nor have the leaves completely fallen, making fall a prime time to assess what's already in the landscape, what needs pruning back and where to address planting for next year. Gardening enthusiasts can focus their attention on these areas this fall.

• PAMPER PERENNIALS. As annuals and perennials start to fall back, mark the spots where perennials are located so they can be easily identified later on. This way, when planning spots for spring bulbs or other spring layouts for next year, perennials won't be overlooked or covered over.

• PRUNE SHRUBS. Look at shrubs and trees and cut out dead or diseased wood.

• CLEAN UP BORDERS. Weed and tidy up borders and lawn edging.

• INSTALL PAVERS OR ROCK WALL. Embrace the cooler temperatures to work on labor-intensive projects, such as putting in a garden bed, retaining wall or walkway.

• REMOVE SPENT SUMMER VEGGIES. Take out vegetable garden plants that have already bloomed and borne fruit. Tidy up vegetable gardens and start to sow cooler weather plants, such as onions, garlic, beans, and sweet peas.

• RAKE AND COMPOST. Rake the leaves and gather grass clippings to add to the compost pile.

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• PLANT SPRING BULBS. Get tulips and other spring bulbs ready for planting so they'll burst with color next year.

• DIG UP HERBS. Relocate herbs like parsley or basil to indoor gardens. Otherwise, strip all leaves and freeze for storage during winter.

• CONSIDER MUMS. Chrysanthemum plants are perennials. While they look beautiful in

pots, if planted, maintained and winterized, they can bloom every fall.

• FERTILIZE THE LAWN. Fertilizing in autumn helps ensure grass will stay healthy throughout the winter.

• ADD MULCH AND COMPOST TO THE GARDEN. Replenish spent soil with mulch and compost so garden beds will be revitalized for spring planting.

• PRUNE HEDGES. Tidy up hedges, as they won't be growing much more this year.

• CLEAN AND STORE EQUIPMENT. Clean, sharpen and oil all equipment, storing lawn and garden tools properly so they are ready for spring and not lying out all winter.

Autumn may not seem like gardening season, but there are plenty of lawn and garden tasks to tend to during this time of year.

Mums are perennials. When properly planted and cared for, they can bloom every autumn.



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It's Good To Be Prepared For Bad Weather

(NAPS)- The hurricane season in the United States runs from June 1 through November 30, though the storms have been known to occur at other times. For 2018, experts at Colorado State University believe, the country can expect an above average storm season, with 14 named storms and seven hurricanes, three of them major. Regardless of whether these weather predictions come true, it's always a good idea for home and business owners to take the necessary steps ahead of the storm warnings and the inevitable rush for emergency supplies.

WHAT TO DO

Home and business owners can take a simple but proactive course of action. For example, preparations should start earlier than the issued hurricane warnings.

1. Getting a generator can be a good idea. They keep critical appliances running. Lights stay on, devices stay charged and weather updates are available on television, radio or online. Most tropical storms cause a disruption in electricity. Depending on the storm's intensity, damage to the electrical infrastructure can be extensive. Downed power lines, flooding, fallen structures, debris and other obstacles will affect the speed of power restoration, so it's important to prepare for an outage duration that may become uncomfortable.

A portable generator should be exercised every month. Schedule maintenance if needed. When you get a portable generator, use a sizing calculator to gauge your needs. Additionally, homeowners who seek greater peace of

mind from an automatic home standby generator should schedule an in-home assessment, as automatic home standby units take time to get installed.

"It's better to be ready for a nonevent than it is to be caught off guard by a strong storm," explained Russ Minick, chief marketing officer at Generac Power Systems. "We believe we can offer manageable ways to guide home owners and businesses through the storm season, but staying safe starts with preparedness."

2. An emergency hurricane kit for the family and any pets should be easily accessible within the home. In addition to food and bottled water, the kit should include a flashlight, first aid kit, battery-powered radio, a whistle to signal for help, and an assortment of hand tools. If someone in the home is dependent on electricity for life-sustaining medical equipment, review the family plan to access backup power or make arrangements to relocate when storm warnings are issued.

3. Outages and the need for fuel go hand in hand. During a power outage, you still might need to be out and about—maybe even evacuate the area—so ensuring that your car is fueled is important. In a worst-case scenario, your car can serve as a source of light, heat and electricity. A portable generator is far better suited to provide backup power, though, so make sure it has clean fuel, as well. And make sure any fuel you store is kept in approved containers. Learn More

For a more detailed list of power outage safety tips for homeowners and businesses, go to www.Generac.com/hurricane-prep. Get ready for rough weather with proper precautions.

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What You Need To Know About Your Ductwork

(NAPS)- Your health and your wealth. Those are the two major reasons you should have your HVAC system inspected by a reputable, certified professional. Consider this: YOUR HEALTH: Your heating and cooling system is essentially the lungs of your home. The system takes air in and "breathes" air out. Through normal living in a house, a great deal of contaminants and air pollutants - dander, dust, chemicals - get pulled into the HVAC system and recirculated an average of six times a day. Over time, this causes a buildup of contaminants in the ductwork.

While dirty ducts don't necessarily mean unhealthy air, they can contribute to health issues, especially for people with respiratory problems, autoimmune disorders or allergies.

YOUR WEALTH: According to the U.S. Department of Energy, 25 to 40 percent of the energy used for heating or cooling a home is wasted. Contaminants in the heating and cooling system cause it to work harder and shorten its life. Even though there are filters, the system still gets dirty. When an HVAC system is clean, it doesn't have to work as hard to maintain the temperature you desire. As a result, you save energy and money.

WHAT YOU CAN DO: A qualified contractor can meet your duct cleaning needs. Here are seven things to ask for:

1. Insurance and licenses.
2. An assessment and explanation of the service to be provided.
3. Information on which components will be cleaned as part of the service: air ducts (supply and return), coils, drains, registers, grilles and so on.
4. A limit on the amount of dust, dirt and debris released into your home during the cleaning.
5. Both agitation and vacuum collection while cleaning.

Must-Have Kitchen Remodel Features

Homeowners looking to renovate often see room for improvement in their kitchens and bathrooms. Before investing so much into their remodeling projects, homeowners should think carefully about the features that will improve their time spent at home. When planning a kitchen renovation, homeowners may want to consider the following upgrades to make the room more enjoyable while improving its functionality.

OVERSIZED SINK: Although high-efficiency dishwashers are popular, deep sinks to soak soup pots or woks are still useful. Deep sinks may be preferable to double sinks, especially for homeowners who use lots of kitchen tools when preparing meals. SOFT-CLOSING HINGES: When replacing cabinets (or just the hardware), consider installing soft-closing hinges and slides on doors and drawers. These devices eliminate slamming and caught fingers, reducing noise and injuries in the kitchen.

FOOT-PEDAL WATER OPERATION: When outfitting a sink, think about foot controls, which are popular in doctors' offices and hospitals. Turning on the water with the tap of a foot can reduce the transfer of pathogens to faucets from hands during food preparation. These pedals also free up hands for other tasks.

BOTTOM'S UP: People likely spend more time raiding the refrigerator than the freezer on any given day. Rather than having to bend down to seek out that favorite flavor of Greek yogurt, choose a model with the fridge on top and freezer on the bottom, especially if anyone in the household has mobility issues. When shopping for refrigerators, French-door style units may offer even more access, making it easy for homeowners



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Hidden Hero: Outdoor Power Equipment Can Make You Very Popular

Five Things You May Not Know About Your Lawn Mower, Chain Saw, Generator, Power Washer, UTV And More

(NAPS) You may be itching to get outside and spend time in your family yard yet this fall. Having the right outdoor power equipment, like lawn mowers, chain saws, generators, edgers, trimmers and more, ensures you have the tools to get "backyard ready."

"The right outdoor power equipment can be your best friend when you start to work in your family yard, not to mention the best friend of the neighborhood," says Kris Kiser,

president and CEO of the Outdoor Power Equipment Institute (OPEI). "If you have a yard, you have a playground, but only if it's ready for outdoor living and recreation."

Here are several ways outdoor power equipment keeps life humming, prepares family yards to be useful and play worthy, and keeps homeowner associations happy.

1. Plain and simple, outdoor power equipment makes the yard. The right equipment makes it easier than ever to create and take care of a great living landscape. You might not even break a sweat with the right equipment. Make mowing, trimming and pruning a little easier with some of today's ergonomic, supercharged mowers, trimmers, edgers and chain saws.

2. Outdoor power equipment saves you time. Doing things outside is fun, and using some of the latest equipment will make sure grass is mowed, trees and shrubs are pruned, and borders are edged efficiently and quickly. After all, you have games and barbecues to attend and friends and family to meet (or invite over!). The right equipment can help you quickly take care of outdoor tasks, so you can have more time to enjoy your outdoor family room and relax.

3. The latest and greatest outdoor equipment innovation can make you the envy of neighbors and family. Today's outdoor power equipment is powered in a variety of ways, from solar to battery and

electric, from propane to gasoline. Your neighbors may be jealous if they see you lounging on the front porch with a cold drink watching your robotic mower trim the grass, but don't let it bother you. Enjoy the time outside and encourage them to check it out.

4. The right equipment at the right time can also win you the Most Popular Neighbor award. Be the person who can whip out a chain saw when the tree falls across the road, or fire up a snow thrower to clear driveways and cul-de-sacs with ease (be sure to use safety precautions, too). Your house will be the most popular one in the neighborhood during a power outage if you have a generator and let your neighbors charge their phones and borrow space in your refrigerator.

5. Storms may wreak havoc, but outdoor power equipment makes sure your life and work aren't interrupted. Engine-powered water pumps can help dry out homes after a flood or powerful rainstorm. When the lights go out, generators keep your house humming with light and power.

Outdoor power equipment not only helps you handle your personal green space, but it also supports our first responders. You can rest easy knowing they have the tools to get their important jobs done. Generators, chain saws, the jaws of life, utility terrain vehicles and more help those who are injured and hurt

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Follow hashtag #PoweringGood to learn more about people making a difference with their outdoor power equipment. Go to www.opei.org for safety tips and more information on outdoor power equipment. The right outdoor power equipment can be your best friend when it comes to working in your yard and improving your community.

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Though they are often easy to overlook, driveways are durable parts of a home that can greatly impact a home's curb appeal. Driveways endure quite a bit of wear and tear over their lifespans, and homeowners who have not given their driveways much thought may want to start looking for potential trouble signs that indicate a need for some driveway maintenance. Driveway installation costs are influenced by a host of factors, including the size of the driveway and the material it's made of. Damaged driveways do not necessarily need to be replaced, as some may just need minor repairs. But homeowners who see any of the following trouble signs in their driveways may want to consult a professional contractor to determine what their next steps should be.

1. **POTHoles:** Potholes might be most often associated with heavily trafficked roadways, but even driveways are susceptible

3 Potential Trouble Signs For Driveways

to potholes. As the ground beneath the driveway expands and contracts, the pavement above that ground weakens and becomes more susceptible to damage. That damage may ultimately lead to large chunks of the driveway breaking down, creating holes as a result. Homeowners who live in areas that experience heavy snowfall may see their driveways develop potholes after they are shoveled or plowed. Potholes that are not fixed may damage vehicles that drive on the pavement, and potholes may even expand over time.

2. **ACCUMULATION OF WATER:** Puddles that form during a rainstorm may not be indicative of anything other than a rainy day. But water that pools or runs down the middle of the driveway may indicate drainage problems. Such problems may be the result of structural problems with the slope of the driveway, which can cause bigger

issues down the road. When water is not absorbed into the ground or directed away from your home, it can then flow into the house, potentially making your garage or home susceptible to water damage.

3. **CRACKS:** Cracking is one of the more noticeable issues that can plague driveways. Many driveways experience cracking as materials inevitably succumb to the elements. Driveway cracks may develop for various reasons, including poor initial installation. Tree roots that grow

beneath the driveway surface may also contribute to cracking as the driveways ultimately succumb to the pressure created by the growing roots. Some cracks may prove less problematic than others, but homeowners should still speak with a contractor if they notice their driveway is starting to succumb to cracks. Driveways may not draw the attention of homeowners too often, but damaged driveways that go ignored may ultimately lead to very costly problems.

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Make Your Home A Safe Haven

by Scott McGillivray

(NAPS)- We think of our homes as our haven from the world. In it, we house the people and things that we treasure most. In time, we might also undertake to expand or modify our homes to better suit our needs through different life stages. Perhaps a previous owner has done the same. Remodeling a house can provide significant advantages and serve as an opportunity to make things better, especially if your home is getting on in years. It's also a good time to identify potential problems in order to ensure safety, comfort and performance. Here are five things to consider when remodeling:

What's behind the walls? Do you know what type of insulation exists or its current condition? It's worthwhile to find out. Some older homes contain outdated materials that could be harmful.

In basements and bathrooms, in attics and in areas where there's been some moisture penetration, it's not uncommon to discover moldy fiberglass or other insulating materials that should be removed. This can compromise air quality and be the source of potential health issues. When upgrading, opt for an insulation with an inorganic composition. Professional builders often favor a stone wool product such as Rockwool Comfortbatt or Safe 'n' Sound because it resists moisture, adds fire protection and is an excellent sound-absorbing material.

Consider a professional home inspection. The goal is to help identify any potential hazards within your home. These can take many forms. Think knob-and-tube wiring, overloaded panels or cracked foundations.

Lead paint. Older houses (pre-1978) may have base coats of lead paint beneath the newer ones. Lead can cause harmful effects if ingested or inhaled as dust. Be careful to avoid raising dust if scraping or sanding old walls or molding. Test for (and seal) exposed areas of lead paint.

Educate yourself about air quality. Radon is a particular concern. It's a radioactive gas that naturally accumulates in some houses—and the second leading cause of lung cancer after smoking. Use a radon long-term detector to measure the level of radon in your home to determine if you need to reduce it.

Pay close attention to combustion appliances. If not properly maintained or vented to the outside, combustion appliances, including your furnace, gas stove or water heater, can release pollutants such as carbon monoxide—a colorless and odorless gas. Ensure appliances are well maintained and inspected at least once a year. Install carbon monoxide detectors.

There's no place like home, so doing all that you can to ensure that it's a safe, healthy and comfortable place will give you the peace of mind necessary to enjoy it to its fullest.

• *Scott McGillivray is the host of the hit HGTV series "Income Property" and "Moving the McGillivrays," a full-time real estate investor, contractor, author and educator.*

Make sure your home's wiring and appliances are in good shape to avoid disasters.

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Remodel Unused Living Space To Maximize Your Home's Potential

(NAPS)- If the real estate market has you frazzled or if the notion of trading up leaves you with sticker shock, a home remodeling project may be just the right answer.

AN IDEA: A finished basement, for example, can offer a little extra room to give a growing family space to breathe or to create an income suite to offset mortgage costs. It can also offer the added benefit of bolstering the value of your home. With so many uses, a remodeled basement may be the exact solution to what your home is missing, whether it's additional storage space, a sound-proofed media room, craft room, guest room or home gym. The possibilities are practically endless.

THE ADVANTAGES: An unfinished basement, on the other hand, can be a source of energy loss, so with a remodeling you can expect to see savings on your monthly heating and cooling costs. Industry experts recom-

mend finishing the space with the proper framing, insulation and vapor barrier to guarantee cozy and inviting rooms. Insulation plays a key role in the comfort of your newly remodeled space and although hidden within your walls, it will make sure the basement stays cool in the summer and warm in the winter.

A PROBLEM: Unfortunately, moisture can be a common challenge in many basements. Starting with a dry space is important.

AN ANSWER: As a result, builders and contractors often favor an inorganic stone wool insulation that's resistant to mold and mildew growth, such as Rockwool Comfortboard and Comfortbatt products. Not only will they help protect indoor air quality, they're easy to install and won't slump in the wall cavity. This serves to ensure the comfort of your newfound living space, so you can count on long-term thermal performance for years to come.

Remodeling a basement can be very worthwhile, especially when you consider that moving to a larger home can add significant bulk to your mortgage. To get the most from the project, be sure to practice due diligence, obtain the right permits, and educate your-

self on building codes. If you don't have the know-how, it's worth the peace of mind to hire a qualified professional.

LEARN MORE: For further facts, go to www.rockwool.com. When you get down to it, remodeling your basement can be a great way to have a new home at the old address.

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