

'20 Fall Living

**The Peddler ADvantage's Guide to Home
Maintenance, Decor, & Lawn Care**



5 Seasonal DIY Home Improvement Projects



(Family Features)
The calendar pages may be turning fast, but it's not too late to do some work around the house. Now is the time to wrap up home improvement projects before the weather turns too cold.

Consider these five easy DIY tasks that can set you up for a warm, safe and pest-free fall:

Perform routine HVAC maintenance. Heating and cooling systems need regular service to operate at peak efficiency. Some tasks are best left to the pros, but there is plenty you can do on your own to minimize expenses and ensure your unit maintains its performance level.

With the breaker and gas off, wipe the exterior of your furnace with a damp rag then remove the access door and vacuum the burners, base and blower compartment. Remove and clean the blower with a vacuum and small brush then use a drinking straw to blow dust off the pilot. Also inspect the flame sensor, drive belt and air filter, and clean or replace as needed.

Air seal drafty areas. The gaps around windows and door frames give unwanted air an open invitation into a home. However, you can quickly and easily block the flow of air for greater comfort and lower

energy bills. If the doors and windows are already finished, start by removing the trim. Prep the area by removing dust and debris. Using a quality sealant like Great Stuff Window & Door Insulating Foam Sealant, apply the foam to fill in about 50% of the gap around the window or door and framework, allowing room for the foam to expand. Wipe away imperfections and let sit 10-15 minutes until it's no longer tacky. Gently press the expanded foam into the gap using a putty knife.

Check for damage to hardscaping. Walkways, patios and decks are all susceptible to wear that can lead to tripping hazards or

allow rain, snow and ice to seep in and create larger problems. Take time to thoroughly assess these hardscape features and identify issues like loose stones and cracks in concrete that need repairs. Securing materials, filling cracks and patching problem areas can help prevent further damage during the colder months while restoring aesthetic appeal.

Inspect your home's exterior. Many elements of your home serve essential roles in protecting your safety, regulating your home's efficiency and preventing damage. It's important to regularly check your roof for signs it needs repaired,

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such as missing or cracked shingles or noticeable sagging. Gutters can also accumulate a great deal of debris from falling leaves. Clearing these before cooler temperatures set in can help ensure rain has a clear path away from your house, protecting the walls and foundation. Also pay attention to other elements like paint that may require periodic updates to maintain its protective function.

Eliminate entry points for pests.
When temperatures start dropping, you're likely to see

some movement with creatures who want to enjoy the comfort of your home. Make it clear they're not welcome by sealing up places they may be creeping in. A solution like Great Stuff Pestblock Insulating Foam Sealant lets you fill gaps and openings with a quick bead of foam. If a rodent has an established pathway, try using a combination of steel wool and the foam to deter it from gnawing through the barrier.

Find additional tips for seasonal home projects at great-stuff.dupont.com.



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Tips to Enhance Your Backyard With Water Features

(StatePoint) Enhancing your backyard? Experts say that the sights and sounds of water features make them one of the most impactful additions to consider.

“Water features not only increase visual interest, but the bubbling sounds add a sense

of calm to any outdoor space,” says landscape designer, Doug Scott, of Re-deem Your Ground in Atlanta, Ga. “They also attract birds, butterflies and more, literally bringing life into your backyard.”

So, how do you select the right water feature for your

yard? According to Scott, here’s what to consider:

• FOUNTAINS:

With a wide range of shapes, sizes and options to complement any space or budget, fountains are one of the most common types of water features for homeowners across the coun-

try. They’re also relatively easy to install and maintain.

“Fountains create the sights and sounds my clients are looking for and they do it in a way that accommodates

their potential space and budget constraints,” says Scott.

• WATER GARDENS AND FISHPONDS:

Water gardens are gardens of plants that live in and

around water. Best when incorporated into a natural setting, they enable homeowners to add such vibrant plants as water lettuce, water lilies, horse tail, blue iris and sweet flag to their landscapes. Much

like water gardens, fishponds are best incorporated into a natural setting, and contain many of the same plants.

“The added bonus of fishponds is that you’ll be able to enjoy the beauty of



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koi and goldfish, while providing them a home,” says Scott.

Scott cautions that when compared to other water features, fishponds do add expense and necessary periodic maintenance. Beyond stocking the pond, you’ll need a pump to aerate and circulate the water, as well as vegetation to create oxygen and provide a natural food source. Additionally, you must provide adequate protection for the fish from the land and air predators

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that will likely pay your pond a visit. On the plus side, fishponds will attract an abundance of non-predatory wildlife to your yard.

“Although adding a pond or water garden is more involved than just buying a fountain and plugging it in, the life it’ll bring to your family outdoors is limitless,” Scott says.

• **WATERFALLS AND STREAMS:** Waterfalls and streams create a meandering setting that helps you

connect one space of your yard to another. Functionally, they also help manage draining. However, due to the engineering required for successful installation, Scott highly recommends most homeowners work with a professional on such a project. This minimizes the chances of things going wrong.

To learn more, check out the new Exmark Original video, “Done-In-A-Weekend Projects, Go With the Flow,” in which Scott discusses

the various benefits, maintenance needs and other considerations of each water feature type. The episode can be found by visiting Exmark.com/Backyard. Exmark’s Backyard Life is part of a unique multi-media destination focused on helping homeowners make the most of their backyard. While visiting the site, you can also access other Exmark Original Series, including “Prime Cuts,” “Done-In-A-Weekend Extreme Projects” and “Dream Yards.”



An advertisement for Bush Hog lawn mowers. The top half features a scenic background of a forest with tall evergreen trees and a mountain range in the distance. Three red Bush Hog zero-turn mowers are parked on a grassy field. The text "BUSH HOG® ... the name says it all!" is prominently displayed in large, bold, red letters. Below this, in smaller text, it says "From the finest yards to the roughest terrain ... BUSH HOG® has the right equipment for your job!". At the bottom, there is a logo for "ZT HEAVY DUTY" and a box that says "ZERO-TURN HEAVY DUTY LAWN MOWERS". A small text at the very bottom reads "Trust in a company whose name has become synonymous with the task. That's performance. That's reputation. That's Bush Hog®."

An advertisement for B&G Equipment. The background is a solid red color. At the top, there is a black silhouette of a bull's head. To the right of the bull head is the text "IF IT DOESN'T SAY BUSH HOG IT JUST WON'T CUT IT™" in white, bold, sans-serif font. Below this text is the website "www.bushhog.com". To the right of the text is a circular logo for "BUSH HOG E-STORE" with the website "www.bushhog.com" inside. Further right is a logo for "Built BUSH HOG TOUGH" with a QR code and social media icons for Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn, and YouTube. The bottom half of the advertisement features the text "B&G Equipment" in large, bold, white, sans-serif font, followed by "2816 Hwy. 54" and "Paris, TN" in the same font, and finally "731-642-1242" in a very large, bold, white, sans-serif font.

Home Projects That Don't Require a Professional

(StatePoint) While spending more time at home, you may have noticed the little things that need to be fixed, and small ways you can improve the appearance and functionality of your home. So why not use this time to test your skills with a few DIY projects?

Here are some easy, affordable tips to fix those items that have been nagging at you, as well as check off small projects that will boost your home's aesthetic.

1. First impressions are everything.

From your family and friends to the mail carrier, your front door greets everyone who comes to your home. But it can take a beating from weather and constant use, so revitalize it with a fresh coat of paint. Once the paint has dried, accent it with a new door



knocker, hardware or address plate. Worried about drilling into the door? Secure these items with T-Rex Mounting Tape. Mounting tape is a strong, weather-resistant tape for heavy-duty projects that replaces nails, screws and staples.

2. Trim the walls. Accenting a room with wood trim is a quick way to add another level of depth and detail to the interior of your home, and it won't cost a lot. Your local home improvement store can provide the best trim to fit your budget. For a smooth installation, ditch the nail gun and runny glues, and opt for a fast-adhering super glue tape, which sticks on contact and works just as well as traditional nails.

3. Bolster your security. Feeling safe at home is important, and security cameras are a quick and easy solution to deter unwanted visitors and offer you peace of mind. If you've been toying with the idea of adding smart devices and cameras to the

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exterior of your home, look to install them above high-risk entry points, such as the front door, back and side doors, and the garage. There are many great security cameras that can be easily mounted to the exterior of your home without professional installation.

4. Effortless gutter repair.

One project to check off your list is fixing that leaky gutter you've been ignoring. Don't worry, it's not as daunting a task as it might

seem. Simply wrap waterproof tape around the leak and smooth it around all of the gutter ridges for a tight seal. Formulated to withstand extreme temperatures from -70 to 200 degrees, the UV-resistant formulation will prevent the tape from breaking down under harsh sunlight. Now how simple was that?

During these uncertain times, staying active and checking those to-dos off your list will give both you and your home a much needed refresher.



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3 Ways to Build a Lasting Dream Deck with Steel Framing

(BPT) - A recent Houzz survey reports that 1 in 5 homeowners who underwent home renovations in the last year made exterior upgrades to their property. Breaking it down further, 1 in 8 of those weekend warriors funneled their energy into a complete deck

overhaul. With the rising popularity of DIY home improvement projects in today's ever-evolving landscape, these statistics will only continue to climb.

If you're like Houzz survey respondents, upgrading your outdoor space with a new

deck may be the answer to elevating your stay-at-home experience. A deck addition will help you maximize your usable square footage by extending your living area beyond the indoors. And not to worry, when it comes time to sell your home, deck renovations can recoup

up to 90% of their cost, according to HGTV's "Top 15 Home Updates."

Before your project gets underway, it's necessary to consider the type of building materials you'll need to tackle this major upgrade. Your first inclination might be to track down deck board samples from your local home improvement store. While important, make sure not to overlook what kind of foundational materials

will support the decking system itself. At one point in time, lumber was the only type of product available for use. However, since lumber typically starts deteriorating after 10 years in service, builders and homeowners alike may want to consider an alternative solution. Light-gauge steel framing, a lasting alternative to short-lived wood framing, can help you create your dream outdoor living space. It will

also defend against a spendy deck-ing overhaul later down the road.

Here are three tried-and-true ways steel framing can help you build a dream deck on a foundation that lasts:

1. Lends to longevity

If you're looking to assemble a long-lasting deck, composite and PVC deck boards are likely at the top of

your list, and with good reason. Their UV- and moisture-resistant properties, for one, offer protection from the irreversible effects of weathering. In fact, a growing number of manufacturers now back the performance of their surface boards with impressive 25-year-plus warranties. But why install 25-year deck boards on a frame that is subject to deterioration?

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ache of replacing your entire deck structure when the wood frame can no longer serve as adequate support, look to steel framing. Light-gauge steel, used

in Evolution steel deck framing, offers commercial-grade strength and can last as long as today's enduring PVC and composite deck boards. What's more, steel

sidelines problems associated with moisture absorption, one of the most common reasons for lumber decomposition. And, because steel doesn't warp with

changes in temperature, the sturdy frame profiles remain straight and true over time. This makes for a more enduring, dimensionally stable solution that keeps

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deck boards flat and smooth underfoot.

2. Makes safety a top priority

With your deck in use for much of the year, lives are on the line if your deck structure

fails. With such high stakes, safety should be top of mind when building your dream deck. Fortunately, building with light-gauge steel allows you to avoid any risk of deterioration that can threaten the integrity of your deck system,

including rot and decay from water, fungi and pests.

“When built right, framing is the supporting structure that is unseen and unappreciated. But, if homeowners use an insufficient building material, their entire decking

project can be compromised,” said Toby Bostwick, VP of Product and Brand at Fortress Building Products. “The inherent strength and stability of steel framing will support a deck build and ensure a long-lasting foundation that will serve families for years to come.”

You can take additional “steps” towards ensuring the integrity of your deck framing system by integrating a steel deck staircase into your renovation. Steel framing deck structures with a compatible staircase sidelines safety challenges rampant in older decks, such as miscalculations, poor stringers to deck connections and inconsistent rises and runs. These freshly introduced steel stair components and brackets make it possible to marry your deck framing and stairs for one unified build.

ready-to-assemble steel framing system. Whether you’re a weekend warrior or hiring a deck builder, integrated framing products will make it easy for you to construct a dream deck without compromising your family’s safety.

To help you achieve your desired aesthetic, these steel deck framing systems can work with any type or brand of decking, including composite, PVC, aluminum, tile, wood and tropical hardwoods. With this amount of design flexibility, your backyard can look like a continuation of your interior hardwood floor, sweeping your family from indoors to out without interruption.

Dream big and build strong

Ready to turn your dream deck into a reality? Armed with steel deck framing, you can support those beautiful new surface boards for 25-plus years. And in building strong with steel, you will create a deck that invites you to stay home.

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TIPS FOR KEEPING YOUR HOME PEST-FREE THIS FALL

(BPT) - Autumn is a wonderful time of year - leaves show brilliant colors, there's a refreshing crispness in the air - but, unfortunately, more bugs and rodents are finding their way into your home. As the season changes, insects and other critters are searching for places to hunker down for the cold weather and scoping out new food sources. A recent survey conducted on behalf of Tomcat found that 73% of consumers said they would do whatever it takes to get rid of rodents. Over 21 million households see rodents in their homes every winter, and more than 60 million households experience insects indoors. Insects and rodents can be a real health hazard, bringing dirt and diseases into your house. While everyone is spending more time at home, they're also noticing signs of unwanted visitors in their homes more than ever before. According to a recent survey conducted by Ortho, the number one reason consumers moved away from a professional pest service in 2020 was COVID-19. For health and safety reasons, many were just not willing to invite new people inside their homes. Instead, they've opted to try to handle the problem themselves. Why wait to discover evidence of pests in your home to take action? If you wait until you see one insect or rodent, there are likely many more



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already lurking in the nooks, crannies - and walls - of your home. The best way to deal with these unwanted intruders is to be proactive, and keep them out of your house in the first place.

To help you better prepare to prevent bugs and rodents from entering your home this fall, Ortho and Tomcat's Gretchen White, Home Pest Scientist, has shared the following tips:

1 KEEP YOUR HOME CLEAN

INSIDE:

- * Clean up food crumbs or spills promptly. Avoid leaving pet food out overnight.
- * Store food in containers that can't be chewed through. Especially pet food.
- * Use a trash can with a lid in the kitchen.
- * Keep pipes and

drains in good repair, as bugs and critters also need sources of water.

* Clear out piles of debris, newspapers or cardboard that could be used by rodents for nesting material in garages, attics or basements where rodents might take up residence.

OUTSIDE:

* Keep trash containers tightly closed, and store bird food or seeds in sealed containers.

* Check around your home for piles of leaves, debris or wood where insects and rodents can nest.

* Remove any standing water.

* Make sure your chimney is capped.

* Seal any openings in the exterior of your home.

* Cut back any vegetation touch-

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ing the exterior that pests could climb to gain access to any openings.

2. BLOCK THEM FROM ENTERING

INSECTS:

According to the Ortho survey, the most common pests homeowners try to get rid of are:

- * Ants
- * Crawling insects
- * Spiders
- * Flying insects
- * Termites
- * Carpenter ants
- * Bed bugs

Unfortunately, it's hard to keep small insects from entering through holes and cracks you may not even see.

barrier product like Ortho Home Defense Max Indoor Insect Barrier against all common household insects. It kills and deters ants, cockroaches, spiders, fleas, ticks, scorpions, beetles, earwigs, silverfish, centipedes, millipedes and more. The fast-drying formula has no fumes and leaves no stains, so you can use it with confidence indoors. People and pets can reenter the space once the product has dried. It spreads easily into cracks, crevices, under appliances and into hard-to-reach places where insects hide. This is the perfect product to use before you even see any insects - putting down a preventative barrier to keep bugs out.

RODENTS:

Rats and mice can enter your home

through small holes, cracks or crevices - even as small as a dime. Check your home's exterior for holes or cracks and seal with caulk, expanding foam, or weather-stripping depending on the size and where you find the holes. When possible, use these flexible materials in combination with those that rodents can't chew through, such as steel wool, hardware cloth, galvanized sheet metal and cement.

Those measures aren't fool-proof, however. You can also keep rodents from even trying to come inside by spraying potential points of entry like doors, windows, pipes, cracks, crevices and vents with Tomcat Repellents Rodent Repellent Continuous Spray, which uses essen-

tial oil technology to give off a smell and taste rodents naturally hate, but is safe to use around kids and pets when used as directed. It's easy to apply, and features a no-stink, long-lasting rain-resistant formula.

Following these tips will help give you peace of mind so you can enjoy your home this fall - and year-round - without the constant worry, annoyance and potential health risks insects and rodents can bring.



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Kitchen

Bigger functional
spaces. Not only do
many kitchen reno-
vations result in
added square foot-
age, they also add
practical features
to make living and
entertaining more
comfortable and
enjoyable. When it
comes to physical
space, a popular
choice is removing
or relocating walls
to make the room
larger.

This added space
can be instrumental

trend is a kitchen
designed for two,
complete with a
second full-size
sink, dishwasher
and microwave
drawer, along with
a larger island.

Clever storage.
Making the most
of storage space
has always been
a top desire, and
homeowners are
getting increasingly
clever about how
to maximize their
cabinetry. Drawer
organizers are
in high demand,
along with pull-out
waste baskets that



hide recycling bins within. Another popular approach is large base cabinets with pivoting shelving mechanisms for storing large items like mixers and other taller countertop appliances. Making use of every inch of space is common; even the toe-kick area for drawers are proving useful to hold smaller items or put kid-

friendly essentials in easy reach.

Feature-rich appliances. Appliance manufacturers are adding all kinds of bells and whistles, and those features are increasingly attractive to homeowners. Upper-end appliances are becoming more mainstream as homeowners discover features the more expensive models

offer for ease of use and comfort. Larger freezer and column-style refrigerators are especially growing in popularity.

Bathroom

Spa-like setting. One long-term trend that is still

in top demand for the master bath is design that mimics a serene spa. This plays out in cooler colors like white, blues and grays. Glass tiles are taking on a bigger role with many homeowners using them as artistic focal points in showers or opting for pebble-like

tiles that spill from walls onto the floor.

Upscale practicality. Little touches that may have once gone unnoticed are now trending as opportunities to add elements of style. For example, curbless showers

with offset lineal drains are preferred to traditional centered circular versions. Similarly, homeowners are upping the ante with lighting such as fixtures integrated with fans and mirrors, and even below float-

ing vanities for ambient light at night. One more place you might find lighting: on the bidet, which is also an increasingly hot addition in the master bath.

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to control smart features or simply add entertainment like TV or soothing music, technology has a permanent place on the list of bathroom trends. The available features make it easy

to make a full escape from the daily grind of life.

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