

# H 2017 HOME Spring & IMPROVEMENT LAWN CARE



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# STOP PESTS THIS SPRING WITH THESE SAFE, SIMPLE STEPS



(NewsUSA) - Spring is here, and that means not only getting a jump on your cleaning, but also having a reason to check all areas of your house and garage for signs of pests that might have made themselves at home over the winter.

Take a tour through your house and try these simple steps suggested by Kari Warberg Block, pest prevention

expert and founder of EarthKind and Stay Away natural pest-prevention products for a few pest-proofing techniques for each room of your house.

## \* OUTSIDE:

The best defense is a good offense when it comes to protecting the outside of your home from pests. Inspect the exterior of your house and patch any cracks or other

openings that may have developed over the winter.

## \* LIVING ROOM:

Keep ants from becoming unwanted guests in your living room by vacuuming the entry/living room areas thoroughly to get rid of any crumbs, and clean up any sweet, sugary spills which are the number one culprit for attracting ants

in this area. Also, try a non-toxic ant repellent such as Stay Away Ants pouches. All Stay Away products are made in the USA from essential oils and plant fibers, so they are eco-friendly and have no known risks associated with use in the home.

## \* KITCHEN:

Use natural ingredients to keep your kitchen clean and repel rodents and



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other pests. Be sure to clean under refrigerators, stoves, and sinks because these are the areas where rodents frequently make their nests. Dog food is the number one attractant to hungry rodents.

Try using a plant-based Stay Away Rodent repellent pouch, and you may avoid becoming one of the 21 million American homes invaded

by rodents each winter (according to the National Pest Management Association). After pest-proofing your kitchen, proceed to the pantry, where moths might try to make themselves at home. Prevent problems by storing food in airtight glass, metal, or plastic containers; cleaning and checking packages for signs of holes; and placing a non-toxic Stay Away

Moths pouch nearby.

### \* BEDROOM & CLOSET:

Moths also can consider closets a place to call home, but a Stay Away Moths pouch can keep them at bay. In the bedroom, the non-toxic Stay Away Spiders repellent offers a similar strategy. After vacuuming to remove any existing webs, use the

repellent to prevent additional infestations.

### \* GARAGE & BASEMENT:

These areas can harbor a variety of pests. To keep them out, avoid storing items in cardboard boxes, which can

attract rodents (they use cardboard to build their nests) as well as cockroaches (they like to feast on the glue). Also, repair any leaky pipes to prevent the development of mold and moisture.

Visit [earthkind.com](http://earthkind.com) for more ideas for safely pest-proofing your home.



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## A Simple Spring Cleaning Checklist

(StatePoint) It's the time of year to roll up your sleeves and do some spring cleaning. Experts point out that it's helpful to streamline the tools you use to do the job and the tasks you seek to accomplish.

“An all-purpose cleaner and a tough degreasing agent can be used in so many areas of the home,” says Jeff Devlin, a licensed contractor who's appeared on several home improvement television shows. Devlin's first tip: look to reduce the number of products in your cleaning arsenal. “Along with high-quality sprays and cloths, I use one all-purpose

cleaner that also contains degreasing ingredients.”

Devlin, along with Mean Green and its line of heavy-duty, all-purpose cleaners offer these different strategies for critical areas of your home.

### Stove and Range Hoods:

While you should be cleaning these areas regularly after food preparation, take this opportunity to conduct a more thorough cleaning. Spray cleaner directly on the mess for up to two minutes. Wipe clean with a sponge or cloth. Then rinse thoroughly with clean water.

### Sinks and Countertops:

Sinks and countertops can be a trap for food, grease, grime and soap scum. Generously spray non-porous surfaces with your cleaner then rinse with clean water.

### Stove Exhaust Filter:

The grease buildup that collects on the stove's exhaust filter can be a tough nut to crack. In a sink basin, mix 8 ounces of a concentrated multi-surface cleaner and 1 gallon of hot water and submerge the filter. Place the filter in a sink or dishpan and pour in concentrated cleaner to cover. Allow the filter to soak for 30 minutes. Drain the dishpan and rinse thoroughly with hot water.

### Floors:

Give your floors a mopping. Mix 4 ounces of cleaning solution with 1 gallon of warm water. Apply with mop or sponge.

### Garbage Cans & Diaper Pails:

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the bottom of the garbage can, which can easily be missed when quickly replacing the bag. Turn your cleanser's nozzle to spray and generously cover the can. Wipe or brush any areas that have any residue. Rinse thoroughly with clean water.

### Showers, Tubs and Tile:

Use your cleaning agent at full strength and generously spray surface

es directly. Allow it to penetrate the soap scum for up to two minutes. Do not allow to dry. Wipe away with a coarse sponge or cloth. Rinse thoroughly with clean water.

### Toilets:

Let's face it. This isn't anyone's favorite job but it has to be done. Turn that nozzle to spray and generously spray the outside of the toilet. Wipe clean with a paper

towel, then give a quick rinse.

### Patio:

For patios, outdoor furniture, concrete, vinyl fences and siding, use the same cleaner outdoors: simply spray, then wipe clean with a cloth or sponge and rinse surfaces with clean water. While you're at it, consider removing grease and grime from tools, engine parts, tires, sports gear and lawn equipment.

For efficiency, consider cleaning solutions that don't require pre-cleaning, such as Mean Green Super Strength Cleaner & Degreaser, the strongest all-purpose cleaner available. More tips for getting your spring to-dos completed can be found at [meangreendegreaser.com](http://meangreendegreaser.com).



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# Creative Gardening Tips for the Spring Season

(StatePoint) Gardeners often focus on the science of their hobby: how much water and sunlight their plants need and how to improve soil quality and

keep pests at bay. But there can be a lot of artistry behind the craft as well -- from how you harvest and enjoy flowers to how you convert unused spaces of

your home into a viable indoor edible garden.

Put your creativity to good use this spring season by gardening with style.

## INDOOR GARDENING

For those who don't have an outdoor garden or yard, the dream of enjoying your own freshly picked

fruits and vegetables may seem out of reach. However, the nooks and crannies of your home can be creatively rendered into productive growing zones. And experts

say that nearly all homes can support indoor gardening.

“Whatever the size of your home, there will be a selection of edible plants you can grow indoors,

as long as you have some natural daylight filtering in,” says Zia Allaway, author of “Indoor Edible Garden: Creative Ways to Grow Herbs, Fruit and Vegetables

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in Your Home.” “The areas where plants will grow can be windowsills, beneath a skylight or even in a dark, unlit area if you install grow lights.”

In “Indoor Edible Garden,” a highly visual guide full of practical tips and stylish ideas, Allaway offers step-by-step directions for everything from creating suspended shelves and hanging jars



for growing herbs to mounting edible orchids onto bark and displaying them on walls. She points out that those embarking on indoor gardening should first evalu-

ate the level of time they can commit.

"Just remember that unlike other projects in the home, such as decorating and cooking, all gardening

projects require some aftercare. So, if you have a busy schedule, choose crops that will tolerate less watering and feeding and are more resistant to pests and diseases."

## FLOWER ARRANGING

While your flower garden is likely a beautiful work of art in and of itself, you can spread the joy by harvesting your flora and bringing the beauty indoors. Floral arrangements add vitality to any interior space.

"For me, every arrangement starts with the container. Think about what mood or style you want to evoke, and remember, anything can be a container as long as it can be made watertight," says Rachel Siegfried," author of "The Flower Book: Natural

Flower Arrangements for Your Home," which explores 60 flowers, bloom-by-bloom in portraiture, including quick-reference profiles and tips.

Siegfried recommends that, when selecting flowers for your arrangement, pay atten-

tion to shapes, textures and colors to achieve good balance. Start with a primary focal flower and build out with a couple of secondary focals, a final flourish, and foliage.



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# Which Home Upgrades Really Pay Off?



(NewsUSA) - Sponsored by GAF - If you don't care about blowing tens of thousands of dollars on upgrades that add little or nothing to your house's value, you might as well stop reading this and go Google "Pokemon Go" for updates on the latest weird

mishaps to befall distracted players. But if you do care -- and you'd especially better if you intend to ever sell -- then Remodeling magazine's annual Cost vs. Value Report for 2016 is must reading. Still there? Thought so. So let's begin by acknowledging

what's perhaps the report's biggest takeaway: All the academics and real-estate pros are right to "tout the value of projects and upgrades that promote curb appeal." Read on to see why, and where else your money is or is not well spent.

## \* WORTH IT: A NEW FRONT DOOR.

You're looking at returns on investment of 91.1 percent for a steel one and 82.3 percent for a more upscale (and expensive) fiberglass one. Of course, a fresh coat

of paint on your existing door can help spiff things up too.

**\* NOT WORTH IT: UPSCALE BATHROOM REMODELING.** You may think everyone shares your



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dream of a huge bathroom with a whirlpool tub, heated towel bars, and stone countertops. Not so, warns Patsy O'Neill, a sales associate with Sotheby's in Montclair, New Jersey: "You could spend \$60,000 or so on it, and it still might not suit a buyer's taste. Which helps explain why it has

one of the worst returns on investment.

## \* WORTH IT: FIBERGLASS ATTIC INSULATION.

A huge win for greenies. The magazine finally agreed to add an energy-efficiency project, and it topped the list by recouping 116.9 percent of its cost.

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**\* NOT WORTH IT: COMPOSITE DECK ADDITION.**

Another also-ran -- and, no, Alaska didn't skew the re-

sults. But be aware that sometimes even the seemingly coolest upgrades may simply be out of whack for a particular neighborhood. "You can turn your house

into a palace, but the payoff will be small if it's the only mansion on the block," Craig Webb, Remodeling's editor-in-chief, tells Time.com.

**\* WORTH IT: A NEW ROOF.**

Buyers pay a premium for one already in place according to Credit.com. No kidding. A perennial Re-

modeling magazine A-lister, it's the ultimate curb appeal enhancer when you consider that your roof is the first thing prospective buyers notice even before exiting their cars.

"And if yours looks like something out of 'Twister', It's a huge turn-off," says O'Neill, "and makes buyers predisposed to find even more things they don't like." If your roof needs replacing, check out the Value Collection Lifetime Designer Shingles from GAF (gaf.

com), North America's largest roofing manufacturer, which have the look of luxury shingles at a very affordable price.

**\* NOT WORTH IT: AN UPSCALE MASTER SUITE.**

Those same taste issues aside, returns of only about half your investment make this yet another expensive miss.



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(StatePoint) For homeowners looking to create a more inviting outdoor living space, it all starts with a beautiful lawn. But without the right routines and tools, achieving and maintaining a top-quality yard can be time consuming.

One of the best ways to save time and get the lawn you want is to invest in better lawn care tools. Now is a great time to take stock of the tools in your garage.


“If you’re spending more time than

you’d like maintaining your lawn, you might consider some key equipment upgrades,” says Jamie Briggs, product manager at Exmark, a leading manufacturer of mowers and other lawn care equipment.

“Choosing the right mower is more than just an investment to beautify your property,” Briggs said. “A newer, faster mower will give you more free time to enjoy the outdoor living space you’ve worked so hard to create and to maintain.”

With that principle in mind, here are some insights about what to look for when replacing an older mower with a newer, more efficient model.





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### Maneuverability:

The ability to easily maneuver between flowerbeds, trees and other landscape features allows you to mow closer to these features. As a result, you'll spend less time with a string trimmer.

### Cut quality:

Some mowers deliver a better quality of cut than others. It's one factor to consider when upgrading your mower, especially with respect to the type of grass of your lawn.

### Durability:

Look for features with increased durability, such as welded, fabricated cutting decks, commercial engines, hydro drive systems and heavy-duty welded,

tubular steel uni-body frames.

Briggs recommends homeowners take a look at the equipment used by the professionals.

"Landscape professionals earn their living efficiently maintaining beautiful properties. It's safe to say the zero-turn riding mower has become their tool of choice," he says.

Zero-turn riding mowers from Exmark, for example, are offered at a variety of price points and provide solid productivity, performance and durability. For more information, visit Exmark.com.

This season, give yourself more time and energy to enjoy the outdoor living space you've created, with an upgrade to newer, faster tools.

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you where you  
want to go this  
summer season.

According to  
experts, outdoor  
equipment such as  
trimmers, blowers,  
chainsaws and even  
patio furniture need  
some time and at-  
tention to get them  
ready for use after  
sitting all winter.

This is especially  
true for cars that  
have borne the  
brunt of snow, ice,  
slush and other  
winter-related  
weather.

Here are some tips  
for getting your

machinery, vehicles  
and outdoor equip-  
ment ready for  
summer use and  
entertaining:

\* Get your lawn-  
mower out of  
the corner of the  
garage. Wipe down  
all surfaces with a  
dry cloth, oil mov-  
ing parts to ensure  
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gine. If you added a fuel stabilizer like STA-BIL Storage prior to putting it away for the winter, it should start up smoothly. Should you have some hard starts, try a revitalizer like Start Your Engines! to get it revved up quickly.

\* Prime your automobile. With the cost of driving at a six-year low, you'll want to take that long-overdue road trip this summer, so ensuring that your auto is in tip-top shape is paramount. Ac-

cording to the AAA, driving costs are affected by how well your vehicle runs, and that includes the inside and outside of your car. Performing regular maintenance can ensure more efficient operation and help prevent costly repairs. One way to save money is by detailing the car yourself using products such as 303 Automotive Protectant to protect interior surfaces from cracking and fading. Originally engineered for

aerospace and aviation applications, 303 Automotive Protectant safeguards against harmful UV rays that can cause discoloration. In addition, it keeps surfaces looking newer, leaves a dry matte finish so there's no oily feel, and helps repel dust.

For the exterior, consider 303 Automotive Speed Detailer, which will instantly clean, protect and give your car a showroom shine. It's a

great way to keep your car cleaner between washings. And at every fill-up to keep the engine running smoothly, use STA-BIL 360 Performance, a fuel treatment that protects your engine above and below the fuel line to keep your engine running cleaner, stronger and with greater performance.

\* Assess your outdoor furniture. No matter what material your outdoor furniture is made of, start by wiping

down the surfaces. Plastic furniture, if left uncovered all winter, may just need a little soap and water to remove any dirt. To protect your outdoor furniture's hard surfaces from harmful UV Rays, apply a layer of 303 Protectant. You'll also want to protect your fabrics from water and other debris, so try 303 Fabric Guard.

For more information, please visit [www.goldeagle.com](http://www.goldeagle.com).



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# 6 Ways to Update Home Décor this Spring

(StatePoint) 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.

Get inspired to freshen up your home with these six 2017 décor trends from interior designer and DIY

television personality, Taniya Nayak.

**1.** 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.

**2.** Apply modern morphing techniques. Morph a wide-open space together with bold



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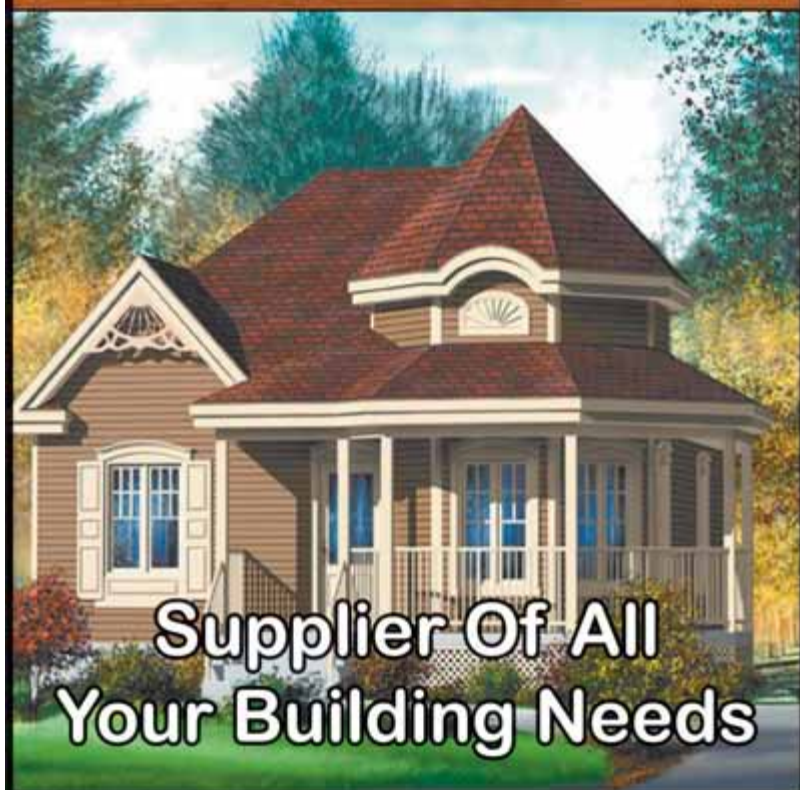
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colors and patterns that help bridge the gap between rooms. Accomplish this with a large piece of geometric artwork or by utilizing color-blocking techniques to paint an accent wall, which tricks the eye as to where one room ends and another begins.

**3.** Interweave textures and bold patterns. Be bold and embrace this indie-meets-mid-century trend to add character to a space. An easy way to attain this look is by pairing patterned pillows with deep, intense colors from an area rug. Or, take it one step

further and create a wall design comprised of overlapping paint using rich shades such as blue, pink or red, for a truly authentic look.

**4.** 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. Fin-

ish the look with ruffled pillows or a faux fur throw for a space that is cozy and chic.

**5.** DIY haute homemade projects. Elevate your home with handmade personal touches that bring comfort and warmth into a room. Go bold and paint stripes on an area rug, or give flea market finds a chic update with metallic paint. If you want to start small, try transforming an

ordinary basic into a fun planter by painting the bottom with fresh white paint. For professional looking results, you can use FrogTape brand painter's tape to achieve a crisp line.

**6.** Incorporate nature's influence. Integrate fresh flowers and surprising pops of color, like yellow or teal, with natural finishes, such as wood, to create an unexpected yet whimsical look. Or create a statement

accent piece by painting a nature-inspired pattern like florals or feathers. All you need is paint and painter's tape to DIY a look that brings nature's outdoor influence inside.

More inspiration and popular trends are available at [frogtape.com](http://frogtape.com).



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, such as FrogTape brand painter's tape, which is treated with patented PaintBlock Technology to help ensure your work looks seamless and to deliver the sharpest transition lines between the newly painted accent wall and adjacent walls.

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# Smart Kitchen Upgrade Ideas to Help You Save Time



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(StatePoint) Most home cooks want the flexibility of preparing complicated meals with ease and convenience. However, even those with a deft culinary hand may be limited by

their tools, space and appliances.

Smartly outfitting your kitchen can help you jump meal preparation hurdles, particularly if you are someone who is inclined

to prepare multi-course meals. Consider space-saving appliances with versatile functionality that can do more than one job at a time. Just as you can multitask, so should your kitchen appliances. Experts point out

that it all boils down to the capabilities of your oven range. When pressed for time, you may have compromised on cooking times or temperature, leaving dishes to suffer through over- or under-cooking.

For example, if an electric connection is the only option for cooking, consider Verona's 36 inch fully electric double oven range, which offers cooking performance one might not expect from a fully electric range. Also



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Home chefs with this problem should consider upgrading to a double oven range, which would allow you to cook multiple dishes at separate temperatures. Consider the flexibility of being able to bake cookies in convection mode at 350 degrees while simultaneously broiling chicken, all in one unit.

If you do plan to make this upgrade, consider your needs and options.

available in dual fuel and all gas options, the Verona double oven ranges are fully equipped with two easily programmed multi-function ovens and provide multiple cooking modes, including baking, defrosting and broiling.

When form is just as important as function, consider ILVE's larger double oven range options in 40, 48 and 60 inch sizes. All sizes feature





two multi-function ovens and added multi-tasking tools such as a rotisserie and warming drawer. Cooktop options such as a French top and removable griddle give even more flexibility to ambitious home cooks.

With a dual oven range, you may find that a separate built-in oven becomes unnecessary, freeing up valuable cabinet space and valuable dollars for other useful chef's tools and supplies. Additionally, upgrading your most important appliances can help you work smarter, not harder.

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# Make the Most of Your Backyard This Summer

(NewsUSA) - Sponsored News - Summer has arrived, and homeowners are ready to make the most of their outdoor spaces. Current outdoor living trends focus

on several areas, including heating, lighting, dining and multilevel design, with the overall theme of creating a welcoming, relaxing environment suitable for entertaining guests or

enjoying in private. \* Heat it up. Fire pits are a hot item and provide a central point for gathering guests on summer evenings before, during or after dinner. An added bonus: Wood

fires can help keep the mosquitoes away.

\* Light it up. The right lighting is an essential part of an enjoyable, safe and functional backyard design. Some

ways to add light and set the mood for a patio party include illuminated planters, pendant lights, string bulbs and hardscape lighting.

\* Split it up. Multilevel patio designs, particularly in poolscape, add interest to an outdoor living space and offer more options for guests, and homeowners can make their spaces

distinctive by choosing from a variety of designs in retaining wall blocks.

\* Eat it up. No patio party is complete without food and drinks, but today's outdoor living designs allow guests and family members to take outdoor cooking and grilling to the next level. Outdoor kitchen setups let guests take part in meal preparation or

just hang out with the resident chef. Any upgrade to an outdoor living space starts with defining a vision. How will the space be used? For large parties, for outdoor cooking, for a pool? All of the above? Before beginning to renovate an outdoor living space, start by walking around the area to determine the right locations for paths, paving stones, pools or



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multiple levels that will be safe as well as attractive. Once homeowners define their vision for a backyard, pool or patio area, the next steps are to consider design

basics, such as colors, patterns and materials. Outdoor living design companies such as Belgard suggest creating a “mood board,” a collection of colors,


furniture styles and landscaping that can include photos, swatches and bookmarked URLs with design ideas.

Visit [www.belgard.com](http://www.belgard.com) for more ideas and tips for making the most of your outdoor living space and yard.




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# Buying or Refinancing Your Home this Spring? Tips for Success

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(StatePoint) Many Americans start to think about their housing needs this time of year. For some people spring aligns with the school calendar, given the time it takes to find the right home, arrange

financing and move in time for the next academic year. For others, an income tax refund, coupled with refinancing a mortgage, is the way to fund a home improvement project.

So how do you find the right loan products and lender?

- Research products and terms. Home loans come in two forms: fixed rate or adjustable rate. Fixed rate loans come with terms varying from 10 to 30 years for consumers who want the security of consistent monthly payments plus a rate that won't change over the life

of the loan. Adjustable rate mortgages (ARMs) typically are offered at a lower rate with an initial term of five to 10 years.

“A 30 year fixed rate loan is by far the most popular mortgage product with borrowers, but ARMs can be a good option if you plan on moving or refinancing,” says Craig Evans, Ally

Bank's mortgage executive. “When we start a dialogue with a potential customer, we'll discuss the various options and suggest products geared toward their specific needs.”

- Choose a lender focused on your needs. In a crowded mortgage landscape, it's important to find loan experts to help you

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through the process. For example, the Ally Home Team is on hand to help home buyers through the home loan experience, from application to close, ensuring they regularly answer questions borrowers may have along the way.

“Service and communications are the biggest considerations when it comes to choosing a lender, whether it’s new construction, buying an existing home, or refinancing,” says Beth Foley, broker associate at Beacon Sotheby’s International Realty.

- Ask your lender what products fit your needs. For example, Fannie Mae’s HomeReady product may be a good option for first-time homebuyers and millennials. Key benefits include

down payments as low as 3 percent, plus these loans are priced similarly to standard loan pricing, and flexible sources of funds can be used for the down payment and closing costs.

- Establish your limits. Some lenders provide useful tools to get you started, such as Ally Home, a new direct-to-consumer home loan service offered by Ally

Bank, ([www.ally.com](http://www.ally.com)). Its Affordability Calculator helps you analyze your household income and current financial obligations to estimate how much house you can afford.

- Refinance an existing loan. Refinancing is a potential option if it offers a better rate than your existing loan, allows you to lower your mortgage payment,

or shortens the term of your existing loan. If you have considerable equity, it’s also a way to consolidate debt or fund home improvements if used wisely.

For most people, buying a home is the biggest purchase of their life. Once you find your perfect house, make sure you make the right financing choices to complete the picture.



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# From Clogs to Backups: 3 Simple DIY Plumbing Fixes

(StatePoint) If the idea of doing-it-yourself where plumbing is concerned sounds intimidating, fear not. There are many simple fixes to common plumbing problems that just about anyone can take care of without professional assistance. More importantly,

performing these simple maintenance tasks as they are needed can prevent larger problems from occurring.

Not sure where to start? Try these quick plumbing tips from Jeff Devlin, a licensed contractor who's appeared on several

TV home improvement shows.

● Hair clogs: If you are accustomed to calling the plumber or snaking the drain when your tub is clogged, consider a simpler solution. Hair clog removers, available at your local hardware store or supercenter, are

**“You can also help slow down the forming of new clogs by ensuring all of your drains have strainers to catch hairs and other debris.”**

formulated with specific ingredients that work to dissolve hair and clear a drain on contact. For example, Roto-Rooter Hair Clog Remover works up to five times faster than other brands because it has 25 percent more hair dissolving ingredients.

You can also help slow down the forming of new clogs by ensuring all of your drains have strainers to catch hairs and other debris.

● Kitchen clogs: Grease, soap and food can get trapped in kitchen

sinks -- it happens in every home sooner or later. The easiest way to clear these tough clogs is to use a solution designed specifically to cut through grease and food and open up a drain. Use 16 oz of a solution like Roto-Rooter's Gel Clog Remover and wait about 10 minutes before flushing with water.

While a great clog remover can do wonders, you should try to dispose of larger amounts of grease in the garbage. Keep this in mind next time you are deep frying dinner!

● Septic backups: If you have a septic system, know that anything poured down any drain

in your home will end up in the tank. So it's very important to keep that system healthy. A septic system is not unlike the human digestive system -- it contains bacteria and enzymes which help to eliminate waste. However, sometimes the good bacteria and enzymes get destroyed by the things that get dumped into drains.

Just as you can add a probiotic to your personal digestive system to keep things in balance, in a septic system you can maintain balance by adding a septic treatment to your toilet. To avoid costly and messy backups, do this quick task once a month.

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# How to Spruce Up Your Garden with Bird Safety in Mind

(StatePoint) You may not realize it, but the average residential property can be hazardous to local wildlife without proper precautions taken.

An estimated 98 million birds are killed annually in the U.S. when colliding with windows, according to Western Ecosystems Technology, making your home a potential death trap during migratory season. However, there are steps

you can take to not only protect the birds whose flight path traverses your yard and garden, but also offer them a safe place to rest and feed – adding natural beauty for your garden.

Start by making glass visible to birds by applying safety decals to window exteriors every few feet. Remember sliding glass doors as well.

To maintain the look of your home

and your own view out the window, use decals that are unobtrusive to the human eye, but contain a component that reflects ultraviolet sun-

light. Those from WindowAlert have proven in studies to be an effective visual barrier that only birds can see, particularly when combined with



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WindowAlert UV Liquid, a gel which can be applied between decals for greater protection.

"Everyone can help contribute toward making migration safer for birds," says Spencer Schock, founder of WindowAlert.

Because the UV reflectivity may fade over time based on exposure, replace the decals every four months and reapply the liquid every three months.

Schock also points out that if you want migratory birds to stay awhile, you may want to consider avoiding the use of pesticides that kill insects which are their natural food source. A strategically placed

bird feeder -- either within three feet of a window or over 30 feet away in order to prevent bird strikes -- can provide nourishment and energy to hungry birds. Ideally, bird feeders will be placed well away from where prey may be lurking, such as bushes and trees.

If you own cats, you should also be mindful of their danger to birds and monitor your cats' time spent outdoors to ensure they are not hunting feathered friends.

More tips for turning your yard into a safe haven for birds can be found at windowalert.com.

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