

# Fall

## HOME & GARDEN

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*A Special Publication of the*



*Fall 2021 Edition*



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# HOW TO PROTECT WOOD FLOORS FROM INCLEMENT WEATHER

Wood floors are a worthwhile investment that can improve the beauty and function of just about any room in a home. Even though wood floors are durable, and new protective treatments help seal out many of the things that may have damaged floors in the past, homeowners still need to prioritize protecting their hardwood floors.

Certain seasons of the year can be more harsh on wood floors than others. For example, seasons characterized by moisture and precipitation, particularly the early spring, winter and fall, can be hard on wood floors. The experts at ServiceMaster Clean say that cold, snowy days can damage wood floors, and Lumber Liquidators agrees that winter weather can be harsh on flooring.

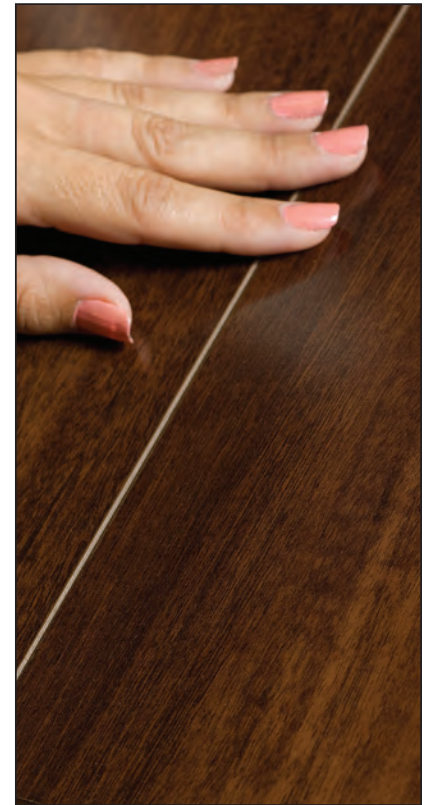
Homeowners need not give up on hardwood if they live in an area that sees all four seasons. They just need to take a few steps to keep floors looking beautiful.

- Clean up the salt. Salt that keeps sidewalks and streets clear of snow and ice inadvertently gets tracked inside a home. Hard chunks of salt can scratch wood floors, and, if left to sit, that salt can eventually cause white marks and other stains. Routinely vacuuming and sweeping up salt is necessary to protect wood floors.
- Invest in shoe storage. Wet or snowy boots can create puddles around the house. Have a special mat or tray by the front door where wet shoes can be kept. A nice bench in the entryway makes it

easy for residents and guests to remove their shoes until it's time to go back outside.

- Use water-wicking mats. Homeowners will probably need a few extra mats around to tame errant drips and wipe shoes. Any entrance that might be used by people or pets should be protected. Try to avoid petroleum-based, rubber-backed mats, as they could discolor the wood floor.
- Control humidity indoors. Cold, dry air in a home can be problematic because the moisture in the wood can eventually evaporate into the air. The heat will suck that moisture from the flooring, causing it to shrink, creak and splinter and become more brittle. Think about investing in an in-line humidifier for the home's HVAC system that can keep a moderate amount of humidity in the home. Hardwood floorboards are installed to accommodate minor temperature and humidity fluctuations. This is typically a range of between 60 and 80 degrees F with a relative humidity range of 35 to 55 percent, advises ServiceMaster.
- Use the right cleaning products. Avoid excessive water to clean wood floors, and select soaps that are specially designed for wood flooring. Consult with the flooring manufacturer for a list of detergents that are safe to use.

With proper care, hardwood flooring can survive rain, snow and cold weather.



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# HOW TO CHOOSE THE RIGHT LIGHTING INSIDE YOUR HOME

Lighting in a home serves both practical and aesthetic purposes. It's easy to maneuver around a well-lit home, reducing the risk of slips and falls, and the right lighting can help homeowners create their desired ambiance, which typically changes depending on which room you're in.

When choosing lighting for their homes, homeowners must walk a fine line between appearance and functionality. A fixture in the foyer that instantly impresses visitors likely won't prove as awe-inspiring if it's installed in the living room. When choosing lighting for a home, some general rules about what works in each room can help homeowners make the most informed decision.

## Kitchen

Kitchens are often the busiest room in a home, so lighting here can be especially important. A kitchen often benefits, both practically and aesthetically, from different types of lighting. For example, pendant lighting above kitchen islands can make meal preparation easier and safer, but such lighting likely won't work in breakfast nooks and informal dining areas in the kitchen. Recessed lighting works best in such areas. In kitchens with no island, under-cabinet lighting can be used to illuminate countertops and simplify meal preparation.

## Formal dining room

Many people enjoy the look of chandeliers in formal dining rooms, and such fixtures can be installed directly above the dinner table. The interior design experts at

Better Homes & Gardens advise hanging chandeliers roughly 33 inches above the table in dining rooms with eight-foot ceilings, adding three inches for each additional foot above eight feet. Darkened dining areas may be ideal in restaurants, but homeowners may want to split the difference at home and choose dimmable chandeliers for their dining rooms. This allows homeowners to dim the lights for romantic dinners but turn them up for family gatherings with lots of people around the table.

## Living room

Adaptability also is important in the living room, where homeowners may host anything from movie nights to book clubs to parties for the big game. It can be a tall order to accommodate such a wide range of activities, and many homeowners come down to deciding between recessed lighting and track lighting. If the living room currently has neither style, homeowners should recognize that it will cost considerably less to install track lighting than recessed lighting. Better Homes & Gardens notes that flexible track lighting provides ambient, task or accent lighting, and track lights can even be moved to change lighting schemes at any time, making them a budget-friendly option for homeowners whose living rooms are multi-purpose spaces. Recessed lighting also works well in living rooms, especially ones with low ceilings. That's because recessed lighting is installed into the ceiling, meaning it does not take up any visual space in the room. That can help living rooms feel bigger.



## Bedroom

The home improvement experts at BobVila.com note that bedroom lighting should provide enough light when getting dressed, but also be able to be toned down as residents prepare for their bedtime routines. Both portable and installed lighting can be used in bedrooms to serve these various functions. Recessed fixtures that dim can ensure there's ample light to get dressed in the morning, but they also can be dimmed at night as residents try

to get ready to sleep. Portable nightstand lights can make it easier for couples sharing a bedroom, allowing one person to stay up and read while the other goes to sleep.

Homeowners have many options and many needs when choosing lighting for their homes. A professional consultation with a lighting expert or interior decorator can help homeowners find lights that provide both practical and aesthetic appeal.

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# SIMPLE WAYS TO IMPROVE A KITCHEN PANTRY



People have been spending more time at home in 2020 than in years past, and certain projects around the house have become a priority. One home improvement idea that serves the double benefit of creating organization and making cooking at home more efficient is to reimagine the kitchen pantry.

A pantry is a room or closet where food, beverages and linens or dishes are stored. Pantries can be highly useful spaces that provide ancillary storage in kitchens. Many modern homes are equipped with pantries, but older homes may require some modification to create more useful pantries. Whether starting from scratch or modifying an existing pantry, these tips can help projects go more smoothly.

- Maximize vertical storage. Utilizing vertical areas can help increase storage capacity. Build in extra nooks by investing in undershelf storage baskets. These baskets can instantly create designated areas for different types of ingredients. Homeowners also can look for ways to use the inside of cabinet doors or add extra shelves on walls or in eaves.
- Consider your needs. Figure out which items you would like to store in the pantry and then shop for corresponding storage systems. For example, storage solutions may feature wine bottle racks, baskets for potatoes and other produce,

shelving for small appliances, and even pull out racks for baking pans or cutting boards.

- Use clear storage. Put ingredients in clear, airtight containers of similar dimensions so that you can easily find items you need. Transfer bulky items, like cereals and baking supplies, to storage containers for uniformity.
- Store bulk items elsewhere. Bulk shopping can be cost-efficient, but bulk items can quickly eat up real estate in the pantry. Designate another area for non-perishable bulk products, like paper goods or canned items, such as in a garage or utility room.
- Pull out drawers are convenient. Pull-out drawers can reduce the need to seek and reach for items. These drawers conveniently roll out so items in the back can be accessed without disturbing foods in the front. Drawers can be custom built for any pantry space.
- Make it accessible. Think about who will be taking items from the pantry. Put children's snacks on the bottom pantry shelf where they can reach them, and then organize other shelves for adults in the home.

A pantry remodel can add valuable storage space and make one of the busiest rooms in the house operate more efficiently.

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# WHY HOMEOWNERS SHOULD ADD MORE EXTERIOR LIGHT TO THEIR PROPERTIES

Homeowners are increasingly realizing the benefits of improving the exteriors of their home, which can be just as valuable as improving the interior spaces. As individuals design picturesque garden beds and cultivate lavish lawns or revamp exteriors with architectural features, they probably want to spotlight these improvements. This is where exterior lighting can be put to great use.

Exterior illumination can cast a glow on various features, but there are many other reasons to increase lighting around the exterior of a home.

- **Safety:** Trips and falls can occur at night when trying to traverse walkways and landscapes in the dark, as it can be difficult to see rocks, stairs and uneven pavement. Outdoor lighting can illuminate pathways, entryways and other areas for safer access for homeowners and their guests.
- **Extend outdoor entertaining:** Ample lighting can increase the amount of time one can use outdoor spaces and make them the perfect gathering spot. As autumn arrives, days become shorter. However, patios, porches and more can get extended use with lighting.
- **Safeguard security:** A well-lit home may be less likely to be targeted by burglars than one swathed in darkness and shadows. Lights can remain on all evening or be motion-triggered. Setting

lights on timers also ensures that the home is illuminated whether residents are home or not.

• **Create drama:** Landscape lighting designers can establish focal points around the landscape and highlight the best features of a property. Uplighting in trees, silhouetting techniques to showcase plants and spotlights to show off architectural features are all options for homeowners to consider.

• **Add value:** The experts at Parker Homescape, a landscape design service, say that exterior lighting can add roughly 30 percent to the value of a home. They also indicate that 50 percent of all home buyers say that outdoor lighting is important when buying a home. If current residents are thinking about selling, now may be the time to invest in exterior lighting.

Improving a home's exterior may be as simple as adding more lighting to improve functionality and beauty.





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# OPTIONS ABOUND WHEN SHOPPING FOR HOME SIDING

Home improvement projects run the gamut from minor repairs to complete overhauls. Replacing exterior siding is one of the most significant home improvement projects homeowners can undertake. Such a project can give homes a completely new look, which is why choice of siding is such an important decision.

Homeowners have many siding options to choose from, and the following guide can help them make the best choice for their homes.

## Vinyl siding

Vinyl siding is easily maintained and among the more budget-friendly siding options. According to the home improvement resource HomeAdvisor, vinyl siding is made from a PVC plastic that does not rot or flake. Siding professionals note that the technology used to create vinyl siding has changed considerably in recent years, making this option more diverse than traditional vinyl siding. So homeowners turned off by the potentially plastic look of vinyl siding might be surprised at how different modern vinyl siding looks compared to the vinyl siding of yesteryear.

## Fiber-cement siding

The home improvement television network HGTV

notes that fiber-cement siding has grown in popularity among homeowners in recent years. This material does not require much maintenance and it's non-flammable and resistant to termites. HomeAdvisor notes that fiber-cement siding can create the look of wood, stucco or masonry, making it a versatile option capable of creating various looks. In addition, fiber-cement siding is known for its durability, with some products coming with warranties lasting as long as 50 years.

## Wood siding

Homeowners have many choices if they prefer wood siding on their homes. Cedar, cypress, fir, pine, and spruce are just a handful of the many wood siding options homeowners can choose from. HomeAdvisor notes that cedar shingle siding offers a natural look that blends well in wooded and waterfront landscapes. Wood clapboard siding is another popular option, though it tends to require more maintenance than cedar shingle siding. Homeowners who want wood siding should discuss their options with an experienced siding

professional, as many factors, including the choice of wood, must be considered before making a final decision.

## Stone and stone-veneer siding

Many homeowners fall in love with the natural appeal of stone, but the price tag, which tends to be costly, may not be as awe-inspiring. HGTV notes that stone can be difficult to add to an existing home, and doing so may drive the price up even further. Stone siding is durable, and there are many options, including solid stone and natural stone cladding, that make this an option capable of providing an array of looks. Stone-veneer siding is less expensive than natural stone and also comes in an array of styles. As is the case with wood, stone siding options are so extensive that homeowners are urged

to discuss each one with a siding professional before making their decisions.

These are just a handful of the many siding options homeowners can choose from. Siding can give homes a completely new look, making choice of siding a significant decision worthy of careful consideration.



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## FRESH VEGGIES ARE NOT EXCLUSIVE TO SPRING AND SUMMER

Spring and summer may be the seasons most often associated with gardening. But people who love to grow their own vegetables can do so even when the weather outside is frightful.

Various vegetables thrive in cool temperatures. The home and garden experts at HGTV note that some winter vegetables are hardy. That means they can handle frosts in temperatures as low as 25 F without being damaged. Others are even sturdier in the face of all that winter can throw at them, capable of tolerating temperatures that dip into the high teens.

Growing vegetables in winter requires a different approach than growing in spring and summer, as gardeners must be ready to prevent damage from frost if temperatures get especially chilly. For example, the experts at Michigan State University Extension note that gardeners may need to utilize floating row covers

to protect sensitive crops from frost. Gardeners interested in planting winter vegetables can speak with a local garden center professional about which crops to plant and what to do if temperatures push winter vegetable gardens to the brink.

Though it's up to gardeners what they want to plant, the following are some popular winter vegetables that can make for wonderful, fresh additions to any dinner table even after the traditional gardening season has come and gone.

- Arugula • Broccoli
- Brussel sprouts
- Cabbage • Carrots
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# WHEN IT CAN BE SMART TO HIRE A PAINTING PRO

Few things can revitalize a home more readily than a fresh coat of paint.

Thanks in part to the affordability of paint and its ease of application, painting is something that even novice DIYers can typically handle. According to the marketing advice guru Brandon Gaille, it is estimated that residential interior paint only lasts around three years before it needs to be updated. Exterior paint can fade, chip and peel due to various environmental factors. As a result, many homes can likely use a fresh coat of paint in at least one room.

As DIY-friendly as painting can be, when attempting to paint the interior or exterior of their homes, homeowners may learn that some painting projects are best left to the professionals. Painting requires skill, patience and a knowledge of how various paints — including finishes for particular applications — will hold up. Novice painters may do more harm than good by dripping paint on expensive carpeting or floors or fail to recognize the nuances that indicate a spot-on painting job.

Professional painters have spent hours upon hours learning the ropes of what works — and what does not. Painters often understand that painstaking preparatory work is crucial to getting pristine finished results. Walls

and ceilings must be properly repaired and prepared even before a base coat is applied.

Professional painters also have an eye for details. And because professional painters make a business out of doing interior and exterior surfaces, they understand which techniques can improve efficiency. That means a professional job can typically be completed much more quickly than a DIY project.

Even though some people think they'll save money by painting their own homes, that's not necessarily true. Professionals already have all the equipment necessary, unlike novices who may need to make repeated and potentially costly trips to the hardware store for supplies. Plus, if mistakes happen, DIYers have to spend additional time and money fixing them.

Safety can be a large motivator for turning painting over to a pro. Navigating exterior areas or tall interior ceilings can be challenging and may require scaffolding or tall ladders DIYers do not have. Risk of falls or other injuries increase with lack of experience.

Painting can give a home a facelift, and oftentimes it is smart to turn the work over to professionals to ensure the job is done just right.




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## 5 TIPS TO PREPARE FOR WINDOW REPLACEMENT

Winter is coming, and for millions of people who reside in areas of the country that see the mercury drop considerably between December and March, that means prioritizing staying warm. Inefficient or aging housing materials may compromise your ability to do just that.

Drafts from doors, poorly protected attics and basements and aging windows may force heating systems to work extra hard to maintain interior temperatures.

Replacing old windows can make a home quieter by blocking out exterior noises. Consumer Reports also notes that new windows are often easier to clean and maintain than older varieties.

Many homeowners are interested in replacing their windows, but may not know where to start. These guidelines can help the process along.

1. Get several estimates. Ask for recommendations from neighbors or other people in your area on which companies they used to install their replacement windows. When you interview the prospects, ask several questions about how they go about installing the windows. Questions can include:

- How long will the project take?

- Will I need to remain home during the process?

- Do you discard of old debris?

- What is the protocol for installation during inclement weather?

2. Research permits. Most home renovation projects need to be approved by the local municipality. Go to the permit office and find out the requirements. Some window contractors will include securing permits in the cost of the project. After the project is completed, an inspector will come by and ensure the work was done according to code.

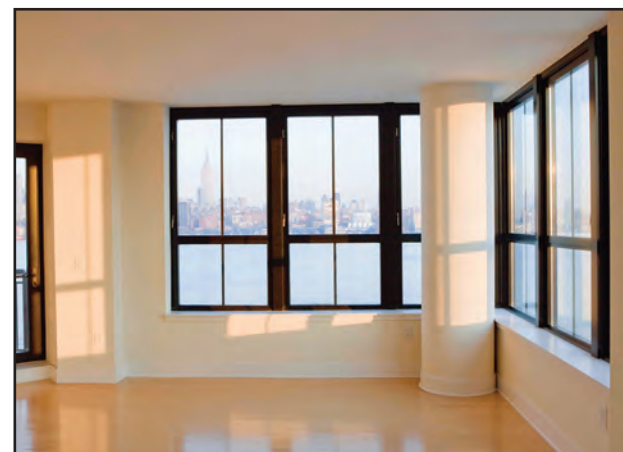
3. Change up the appearance. Look at the type of hardware you have around the home and other fixtures. Choose windows that have locks or latches that can match those features for continuity of style. Think about choosing a different style or frame color of the window, or a different type of window to improve efficiency and function.

4. Research top window manufacturers. It's tempting to purchase windows based on price alone, but replacement windows are often a decision that only has to be made once or twice for the life of the home. Invest in durable windows that will have staying power. Consumer Reports offers unbiased reviews on various window brands and

can help homeowners make sound decisions.

5. Prepare for installation. Clear pathways, remove window treatments and disconnect window alarm systems. Plan for one to two days of installation, advises Andersen Windows and Doors. Keep pets and children away from work areas.

Replacement windows can be a smart investment. New windows can improve the look of a home, reduce heating costs and can keep interior spaces comfortable.



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