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PUBLISHER
JEB BLADINE

ASSOCIATE PUBLISHER
OSSIE BLADINE

ADVERTISING MANAGER
CHRISTY NIELSEN

MARKETING CONSULTANTS
BONNIE GEORGE
KATHIE STAMPER

**ADVERTISING SALES
COORDINATOR**
BRANDON RUSSELL

**COMMUNITY
ENGAGEMENT DIRECTOR**
CB MASON

PRODUCTION ARTIST
CASEY WHEELER

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Warm and bright, home comfort done right!



Stay warm this winter with an elegant masonry heater



Harsh winters require modern heating systems that efficiently combat the cold and minimize emissions. If you want to heat your home with wood, consider a masonry heater for its rustic charm and sustainability.

How they work
Unlike traditional wood stoves that primarily heat the air through convection, masonry heaters store energy in their solid components and gradually release heat to the surrounding area.

The core of a masonry heater, often made from concrete, contains the firebox where the wood is burned. The gases emitted during combustion rise into a post-combustion chamber, where an additional air intake supplies enough oxygen for a second burn. This process can elevate temperatures to 1,560 F or higher.

This intense heat destroys fine particles and creosote, reducing the risk of buildup in the chimney. Plus, masonry heaters provide an even heat exchange, preventing uncomfortable overheating.

Advantages
Although masonry heaters are more expensive upfront than conventional wood stoves, they burn wood more completely, leaving minimal residue behind. This efficiency can save you money in the long run.

Additionally, a masonry heater can enhance the esthetic appeal of your home. Made from sturdy materials like brick, granite or marble, it can add remarkable character to your space. Some models even feature a built-in bread oven.

Are you planning to renovate your home and considering the addition of a beautiful masonry heater? For a model that meets current regulations, call a heating professional today.

Does your heat pump need to be replaced?



Heat pumps are known for their reliability and energy efficiency. However, like any appliance, they experience normal wear and tear and will eventually need to be replaced. Here are some signs that it may be time to consider an upgrade.

The unit is old
If your heat pump is more than 10 years old, consider it a warning sign. Have a professional inspect your unit. They can suggest a newer model, if necessary, to improve your home's heating efficiency.

The system is noisy when running
If your heat pump makes loud noises when it operates, it could be an indication that some parts are starting to fail. Sounds like whistling, grinding or rattling are usually signs of trouble.

Your electricity bills have gone up
If you haven't changed your usual energy consumption habits but notice a sudden spike in your electricity bills, your heat pump may have lost efficiency. This means that it must run longer to provide the same level of heating.

You notice hot and cold spots in your home
If you experience inconsistencies in temperature, such as a warm living room and a cold kitchen, this could indicate a failing compressor in your heat pump. These uncomfortable fluctuations signal a major breakdown on the horizon.

Are you ready to upgrade your heat pump and enhance your home's comfort? Reach out to a local specialist in your area.

Infrared auxiliary heating: efficient technology

If you want to keep comfortably warm throughout the winter, you may need to invest in an auxiliary heating device. One of the most efficient technologies available is infrared radiation, which is rapidly gaining popularity. Here's how it works.

How it works
Traditional heating appliances warm the air, which then circulates throughout the room. In contrast, infrared technology emits rays that directly heat objects, such as walls, furniture and even people.

A uniform heat is absorbed by these objects, which in turn emit some of this thermal energy back into the space. Since this heating method doesn't use combustion and doesn't produce any condensation, it's a clean and efficient option.

Radiation
Depending on your needs, you can choose an infrared device that utilizes different types of radiation or wavelengths:

- **Long waves** gently and effectively warm larger, well-insulated rooms.
- **Medium waves** are ideal for quickly heating spaces without central heating. Heating devices with medium waves come in a variety of models.
- **Short waves** emit intense heat and are mainly used for outdoor devices such as patio heaters.

Before purchasing an infrared heating device, take the time to assess your specific requirements. If you need guidance, consult a professional at a specialty store near you.



The pros and cons of heated driveways



Are you tired of cleaning the snow off your driveway every winter? If so, you may want to consider investing in a heated driveway. Here are a few pros and cons to help you make your decision.

Advantages
The best thing about heated driveways is you can quickly melt all the snow and ice in front of your home with the push of a button. You don't have to worry about injuring yourself shoveling or paying someone to plow your driveway.

Additionally, you don't have to use de-icing salts. These salts contain sodium chloride, which can deteriorate concrete, damage your vehicle's undercarriage and kill the landscaping near the driveway's edge.

Disadvantages
One of the only drawbacks of heated driveways is that they can be expensive to install and use. For instance, installation can cost anywhere from \$5,000 to \$10,000. Moreover, running a heated driveway over the winter can add a couple of hundred dollars to your monthly heating bill.

If you're interested in taking the plunge and installing a heated driveway on your property, have it professionally installed to ensure years of worry-free operation.



The comforting warmth of a fire

Installing a fireplace or woodstove in your home is much more than just adding another source of heat; it also adds warmth to the décor. Creating a cozy atmosphere is easy with one of the many different types of heating units available on the market. Here are some tips to help you to figure which kind will best suit your needs.

Wood stoves

There's nothing more enjoyable than a crackling fire. Today's slow burning stoves are extremely efficient and emit far fewer particles to pollute the atmosphere than the previous generation of models. However, the fact remains that some towns are now banning the use of wood burning stoves and fireplaces, so be sure to check with your municipality before buying and installing either one.

Gas fireplaces

Whether they use natural gas or propane, these devices are affordable as well as attractive and efficient. They require very little maintenance and, when equipped with batteries, can continue working even during a power failure. What's more, heat production is easy to control.

Ethanol fireplaces

These units beautify the home, are affordable, and the visual effect of the flames is realistic. However, the room where the device is installed has to be ventilated, as they do emit carbon dioxide. They are not an efficient source of heat, either.

Electric units

They are eco-friendly and extremely easy to install; just plug them into a regular electrical outlet. However, while an electric fireplace is ideal for creating atmosphere, it emits very little heat.

Pellet heating

This type of heating uses compacted sawdust or other biomass materials that are less polluting than ordinary wood. Like wood stoves, pellet stoves produce plenty of heat, but they do require some maintenance. Although their flames are only visible at full capacity, pellet stoves still produce the sought-after scent of burning wood. Ideally, look for a unit certified by the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to reduce emissions of particle pollutants.



Wood-burning stoves create a cozy atmosphere with their crackling flames and smoky aroma.



The pellet stove is a space heater that is efficient and easy to use.



The fireplace as focal point: how to make it work

If styled right, a fireplace can be a stunning focal point that pulls a room's entire esthetic together. Here are some ways to dress yours up.

Paint it a bold color

This is a great place to try out a bold tone that you wouldn't normally use to paint a room. Because of the relatively small size of a fireplace, the color will stand out without overpowering the space.

Wallpaper the space

Paint the fireplace a neutral color and apply eye-catching wallpaper to the wall space on either side of it. Choose a design that invokes the room's style or theme.

Hang striking artwork

A large piece of art that occupies both the horizontal and vertical space above the fireplace is sure to draw the eye. The piece you choose will affect the room's overall feel, so be sure to select something you love.

No matter how you style your fireplace, your choices will make an impact. Carefully consider the impression you want to make and design the feature accordingly.

Buying an outdoor fireplace: factors to consider

Do you want a fireplace for your backyard? With so many outdoor models available, you should take the time to find one that suits your needs. Here are a couple of things to think about.

The fuel

One of the first decisions you'll need to make is whether you want a fireplace that uses wood or gas. While wood-burning fireplaces are easy to install and

give off a pleasant aroma, they require regular maintenance. You'll also need somewhere to store the logs, and some municipalities have restrictions on the use of wood firepits.

Contrarily, fireplaces that run on natural gas or propane are easy to maintain. Another advantage is that you can adjust the intensity of the flames with the push of a button. However, you must be able to connect it to a gas line or willing to periodically refill the tank.

The use

Consider how you want to use your outdoor fireplace. If you want to make it a gathering place for friends and family, opt for a round model. To create a relaxing corner where you can curl up in privacy, a rectangular fireplace may be more suitable. If you plan to cook over the embers, choose a model with a grill.

Finally, keep in mind your budget and space limitations when shopping for an outdoor fireplace. Consult your local hardware store for additional advice.



7 TIPS for a safe and well-protected property ALL WINTER LONG

Winter comes with its own set of safety challenges for you and your property, from snowstorms and icy conditions to heating hazards. If you want to stay safe this cold season, put these sensible tips into practice around your home.



Have a safe winter at home!

1 KEEP ALL EMERGENCY EXITS CLEAR

Make sure your deck, porch or balcony is accessible all year round, even if you don't use it in winter. In an emergency, you may need it for a quick exit or for the fire department to gain access to your home. Promptly clear away snow and keep all potential exits, including basement windows, unobstructed.

2 USE SPACE HEATERS SAFELY

Never leave a space heater unattended. Always turn it off before leaving the room or going to bed. Make sure the heater is on a stable surface and position it at least three feet away from anything flammable, such as furniture or curtains. Additionally, plug it directly into an outlet and don't use an extension cord.

5 CHECK YOUR OUTSIDE VENTS

If you use a combustion appliance or fireplace, blocked exterior vents can cause carbon monoxide to build up inside your home. After a storm, make sure your vents are cleared of snow and ice.

3 SHOVEL OFF YOUR DRIVEWAY AND STAIRS

Keep your driveway and stairs clear of snow buildup to keep everyone safe, including delivery drivers and visitors. If you notice icy spots, spread an abrasive but non-corrosive product like sand, gravel or even coffee grounds to prevent slips and falls.

4 MAINTAIN YOUR CANVAS CARPORT

Periodically check that the shelter, canvas and all the anchors and nuts are still securely fastened, especially after a storm. Clear away any snow to prevent the shelter from collapsing and damaging your vehicle or injuring someone. If strong winds are in the forecast, close it to prevent it from being blown away.

6 CLOSE YOUR POOL

Did you know that snow naturally insulates your pool and concrete? That's why it's best not to clear snow from inside an in-ground pool or around an above-ground one. However, to prevent your above-ground pool from collapsing, regularly clear the snow from the edges and the top with your hands.

7 CLEAR SNOW FROM YOUR ROOF

Over the winter, the weight of accumulated ice and snow can really add up. It can cause your roof to leak or possibly collapse. Clear your roof if more than 20 inches of snow accumulates or if a large amount of wet snow has just fallen. However, leave a layer of at least one to two inches to avoid damaging the roof covering. For this reason, avoid using metal tools!

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Ready your home for the winter chill



Outdoor maintenance: 8 must-do tasks before winter

It's no secret: northern winters are harsh! If you want your property to make it through the cold season without any issues, you have certain tasks that must be completed this fall. Check out this handy checklist to ensure you don't miss anything.

- 1. Close your pool.** Drain the water, remove the ladder, clean the filter and install the protective cover. You know the drill!
- 2. Put away seasonal items.** Empty and put away your garden hoses and turn off the outdoor taps. Clean and store your patio furniture and accessories, summer games and toys and the barbecue, or cover them with a sturdy tarp.
- 3. Maintain your chimney.** Minimize the risk of a fire by sweeping your chimney. Also, check the condition of the cap to ensure no unwanted animals make a home in your chimney.
- 4. Inspect the roof, walls and foundation.** Look for damaged shingles, missing gravel, tears in the membrane or cracks, and make any necessary repairs to prevent leaks.
- 5. Clear gutters and drains.** Wait until all the leaves have fallen, then clear out the gutters and drains to prevent overflows and water damage.
- 6. Install screens on vents.** Vents from range hoods and dryers are irresistible entry points for many creatures seeking warmth. Install new screens or replace damaged ones to keep your home secure.
- 7. Protect your plants.** Shield your shrubs, bring in potted plants, divide perennials, pull up annuals, plant fall bulbs, aerate the soil and trim any hedges. Prune trees as needed to prevent branches from falling on your house in a storm.
- 8. Clean up the yard.** Rake up dead leaves and any debris that could shelter rodents or attract insects.

Time to get to work!



Interior maintenance: What to focus on this fall

What could be better than curling up at home, sheltered from the snow and wind on a cold winter day? As fall arrives, take the time to inspect and maintain these key elements inside your home.

Windows and doors

Keep the heat in and the cold out by reapplying caulking, installing plastic window sheeting and replacing damaged weatherstrip. You should also remove window screens to prevent condensation and potential breakage.

Detectors

Test your smoke and carbon monoxide detectors by pressing the test button until you hear the alarm. If needed, or if it's been a while, replace the batteries. While you're at it, inspect your fire extinguishers to ensure the tamper seal and safety pin are still intact.

Heating system

Check your heating system to ensure it's working properly before the winter chill sets in. Vacuum your baseboard heaters or wall-mounted convectors to prevent unpleasant odours. Also, make sure no flammable objects, like curtains or cushions, are within 10 centimetres of them. Consider scheduling a professional inspection if it's been a while since your last check.



Air exchanger

Wash the unit's filter and air vents. Then, remove them entirely to vacuum and clean out as much dust and debris as possible.

Sump pump

Pour a bucket of water into the tank slowly. If the pump starts immediately, it's working as it should.

Air conditioner

Clean the filters on your wall-mounted or window air conditioner. Then, either store it away from the elements or protect it with a cover or case.

Once you complete these tasks, you'll be ready to face winter in a warm, cozy home.

Tips for lighting a room

The right lighting can enhance the style and functionality of a room. If you want to update a space in your home, here are four tips for choosing the right lighting.

1. Complement the existing style
First and foremost, you should choose light fixtures that match the style of the room. For example, recessed lighting and pendant lights are great for modern and contemporary homes.

2. Analyze the room
It's important to think about how you use the room. You should also take into account the furniture arrangement and amount of natural light to determine if the space needs bright, general or directional lighting.

3. Use different types of lights
Every room should have a variety of light sources. It's a good idea to have one main light source like a ceiling light, a secondary light source like a table lamp and a decorative lighting feature like string lights.

4. Choose the right light bulbs
Choose warm, neutral or cool lighting to put the finishing touches on your space. If you want to be able to vary the intensity of the light, install a dimmer switch.

Lastly, don't hesitate to ask a lighting specialist for advice or hire an interior decorator to help brighten your space.



Use architectural lighting to revamp your home

Architectural lighting enhances the structure of a space to create a cohesive experience. It's something to be considered during every building and renovation project, and the earlier the better. This is because this type of lighting is integrated directly into the space, blending in with the features of your home. Here are some ways architectural lighting is used:

To emphasize ceilings
If you have architectural ceilings, rather than installing pot lights consider adopting lighting that blends into the millwork and molding. This could work well on a beamed, coffered, coved or tray ceiling.

To set the mood with wall wash lighting
Wall washing is a technique that directs light at a wall to draw attention to the smooth, vertical surface. The fixtures can be recessed in the ceiling or mounted to it. If you prefer to create an uplighting effect, install the lights on the floor.

To light your way
Illuminate stairways by adding pot lights on both sides of the bottom step, either on the lowest riser or the wall. Alternatively, add lighting within each riser. Uplighting can create height and drama, and when used to illuminate staircases, it also focuses light where it's most needed.

There are many other possibilities when it comes to architectural lighting, from illuminating the underside of kitchen counters and cabinets, to lighting up built-in shelving and other custom features. For the best possible results, make sure to speak with an architect before you start your renovation or building project.



Recessed lighting: a world of possibilities!

Are you renovating your home and trying to decide on the perfect light fixtures? The right light source will ensure you create a functional and inviting space. Recessed light fixtures are one of the most popular lighting options available on the market. Here's what they have to offer.

Key advantages
If you like simplicity and minimalism, recessed lights are the perfect choice. They take up minimal space and blend seamlessly into your decor, giving the space a clean, elegant and modern look. They're extremely versatile and can be installed in various rooms of your home, including the kitchen, office, living room, bathroom, playroom or bedroom.

Types of recessed lighting
The two most common types of recessed light fixtures are:

Fixed fixtures. These usually have a wide beam angle and are ideal for general lighting. Consider choosing models with a dimmer switch so you can adjust the brightness to meet your needs.

Adjustable fixtures. These can tilt to illuminate specific areas. Their adaptability makes them perfect for highlighting artwork or decorative objects.

If you're renovating a space with high humidity, such as a bathroom, look for waterproof recessed lights.

Despite their discreet design, recessed lights come in various sizes and colors to suit your style. Choose the type of bulb (LED or halogen) and the color temperature (warm or cool) to kickstart your project.

Lighting options to brighten your yard!

There are endless options when it comes to outdoor lighting. Halogen or LED? Electric or solar? Here are a few ideas to help you make the right choice.

Bulbs

Each type of bulb has its advantages. LED bulbs are renowned for their durability. Plus, you'll end up saving on replacement costs. They also consume up to 75 percent less electricity than halogen bulbs. However, halogen bulbs give off more heat, which can melt the snow around your trees in winter and save you some time and effort shoveling.

Power

One big question remains: is it better to opt for lights that run on electricity or solar energy? Here's a quick comparison:

- **Electric lights** are affordable and reliable. However, they require more equipment, and it can be hard to hide the cables.
- **Solar lights** are practical, removable and low maintenance. However, the light's intensity is weak and limited to the amount of sunlight the fixture receives during the day.



You'll also need to consider the characteristics of your yard, the slope and the visual effect you want to achieve. Not sure which product to choose? Talk to a landscaping professional for enlightenment.



Comforting beef and barley soup

Deliciously flavorful, this hearty soup will warm you up on a cool fall day with its tender vegetables and delicately thyme-infused broth.

Servings: 6

Ingredients

- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 16 ounces beef, cut into small cubes
- 1 onion, chopped
- 2 stalks celery, finely diced
- 2 carrots, peeled and finely diced
- 1 clove garlic, finely chopped
- 8 cups beef broth
- 2/3 cup pearl barley
- 1 bay leaf
- 1/2 teaspoon dried thyme
- 1/2 cup turnip, finely diced
- Fresh parsley, chopped (optional)
- Salt and pepper



Directions

1. In a large pot, heat the oil over medium-high heat. Add the cubed beef, salt and pepper. Brown the meat on all sides for about five to seven minutes.
2. Add the onion, celery, carrots and garlic. Saute for three to four minutes, until the vegetables start to soften.
3. Pour the broth into the pot and scrape the bottom well with a wooden spoon to loosen any browned bits. Add the barley, bay leaf, thyme and turnip. Stir to combine.
4. Bring to a boil. Then, reduce the heat to medium-low. Cover partially and simmer for about one hour, or until the barley is tender and the soup has thickened slightly.
5. Remove the bay leaf. Taste and adjust the seasoning as needed. Garnish with parsley if desired.



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Autumnal butternut squash salad

Tasty and nutritious, this fall salad features colorful ingredients that are abundant during this bountiful season.

Servings: 4

Ingredients

- 3 cups butternut squash, peeled and diced
- 1 can chickpeas, rinsed and drained
- 6 tablespoons olive oil, divided
- 1/2 teaspoon smoked paprika
- 1 bunch kale, stems removed and leaves chopped
- 1 tablespoon lemon juice
- 1 tablespoon maple syrup
- 1 tablespoon apple cider vinegar
- 1 teaspoon Dijon mustard
- 1 red apple, thinly sliced
- 1/3 cup dried cranberries
- 1/3 cup pumpkin seeds
- Salt and pepper, to taste



Directions

1. Preheat the oven to 400 F. Spread the squash cubes and chickpeas on a parchment-lined baking sheet. Drizzle with two tablespoons of olive oil and sprinkle with paprika, salt and pepper. Toss and roast in the oven for 25 to 30 minutes, stirring halfway through, until everything is golden brown.
2. Meanwhile, place the kale in a large bowl. Add the lemon juice, 1 tablespoon of olive oil and a pinch of salt. Massage the leaves with your hands for two to three minutes to tenderize them.
3. Prepare the vinaigrette by whisking together the remaining olive oil, maple syrup, apple cider vinegar and Dijon mustard in a small bowl. Season with salt and pepper.
4. Add the diced squash and cooled chickpeas, apple slices, cranberries and pumpkin seeds to the kale.
5. Pour the vinaigrette over the salad and toss well just before serving.

Homemade apple butter

Slowly simmered with autumnal spices, this apple butter can be spread on bread or enjoyed by the spoonful. Pure delight!

Ingredients

- 5 pounds (about 12 to 14) Cortland, Lobo or McIntosh apples, peeled, cored and chopped into pieces
- 1/2 cup water
- 1 cup sugar
- 1 tablespoon lemon juice
- 1 1/2 teaspoons ground cinnamon
- 1/4 teaspoon ground nutmeg
- 1 pinch ground cloves (optional)
- 1 pinch salt



Directions

1. Place the apple pieces and water in a large saucepan. Cover and cook over medium heat for 20 to 30 minutes, stirring occasionally, until the apples are very tender.
2. Puree the apples in a food processor until smooth. Return the puree to the saucepan. Then, add the sugar, lemon juice, spices and salt. Mix well.
3. Cook over low heat, uncovered, for about an hour, or until the mixture thickens and turns a nice caramel color. Stir often to prevent the mixture from sticking to the bottom of the pan.
4. Pour the hot apple butter into sterilized jars, leaving a little more than a half inch of space at the top. Close the jars and refrigerate (keeps for about one month).

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GREEN IDEAS

How to de-ice surfaces in an environmentally friendly way

The winter season is synonymous with slippery streets, sidewalks, parking lots and stairs. To prevent accidents, individuals and municipalities use a variety of substances, some of which contain ingredients that can have a negative impact on waterways, plants, animals and the soil.

De-icing solutions that don't harm the planet are becoming more widespread, which is excellent news. Are you responsible for de-icing a surface? Find out what environmentally friendly solutions are available to make it as safe as possible.

Get in the habit of regularly clearing snow from the ground with a shovel or snow blower. This will help reduce the amount of ice that accumulates. Spread coffee grounds, sand, gravel, bird seed or a commercially available chemical-free non-slip mix to improve the surface's grip.

If the ice is thick and poses a slip-and-fall hazard, apply a food-based de-icing product that's colored to help you avoid spreading too much. Grape pulp and beetroot, which have been used successfully on some highways in North America, are promising solutions.

You can also find eco-friendly de-icers that don't contain harmful magnesium chloride or calcium chloride at your local hardware store. They're effective and harmless to vegetation and concrete when used as directed. They're also safe for pets, which is a big plus.

Visit your local retailers to get everything you need to make your surfaces safe for people, animals and, of course, nature.



Brighten up your home for the festive season with eco-friendly decorations



Do you want your yard and the inside of your home to look festive for Christmas and New Year's? You have plenty of options. However, remember that some choices have a more positive impact on the planet than others.

Many decorations that you can buy online or in supermarkets — like lights and ornaments — come from huge factories overseas. As a result, these colorful and sparkling products must travel thousands of miles before reaching your hands. Keep in mind that long-distance transport means high greenhouse gas emissions.

WHAT ARE YOUR OPTIONS?

If you want to embellish your property while reducing your ecological footprint, you must choose your decorations carefully. Here are a few tips.

- Stock up on ornaments in second-hand shops
- Make centerpieces or wreaths from pinecones, evergreen branches and cinnamon sticks
- Visit a Christmas market to find unique decorations made by local artisans
- Buy a real tree from a local company that limits the use of pesticides
- Organize a decorations swap with your friends

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