

Homestyle

Spring Home Improvement

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A DIY Guide to
Repainting Your
Front Door

Get Decked Out

Why you need a new
or refurbished deck
and how to
plan for one

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Best Practices for
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White walls are so 2017. This year, intense, vibrant colors are in, such as Behr's 2018 Color of the Year, In The Moment.



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BY ERIK J. MARTIN
CTW FEATURES

In the world of home design, there's no dirtier word than passé. It's a term that signifies something is past its prime and destined for the dustbin of décor history (or at least for a few years until it probably comes back in vogue).

Now that 2018 is full steam ahead, many home interior experts are eager to suggest fresh and exciting ways for homeowners to reimagine their living spaces. Problem is, many of their clientele are still smitten with design trends that were all the rage last year. It's time to move on, say the pros.

"Trends come and go quickly because people's tastes change," says Tracy Stern, the founder of New York City-based T&T Design. "It's important to replace outdated styles in your home so that you feel inspired."

There's another essential reason to keep up with the latest home design drifts, too.

"For the resale value of your home to stay on par, it's crucial to keep styles and décor current," Matthew Rosenberg, owner of M-Rad Architecture and Design in Los Angeles, says.

And no better time than the present.

"I like making changes at the beginning of the year, because it means starting the year fresh and new," says Michael A.

Menn, architect/principal with Northbrook, Ill.-headquartered Michael Menn, Ltd. He adds that it's never too late to make a New Year's resolution to update key areas of your home.

Here are 5 decorating trends that should have died when 2017 expired, and 5 better ideas for 2018:

**2018 is well
underway — time
for these 5
decorating
trends from
2017 to be
replaced**

Out — white walls. Both Sherwin Williams and Benjamin Moore select shades of white for their "color of the year" in 2016, and the inclination toward ivory continued into 2017. "But once there's no color to look at on the wall, you have to find interest elsewhere. Now, this look has become too impersonal," says



Sherwin-Williams Color of the Year, Oceanside, is a strong, bold palette that complements another 2018 trend – mixed materials.

Mandy Straight, a Denver-based interior designer.

In — intense color. "We're done playing it safe – we want something that makes us excited," says Straight, who cites 2018 paint color of the year choices by Pantone (18-3838 Ultra Violet), Sherwin Williams (Oceanside SW 6496) and Benjamin Moore (Caliente AF 290) as proof that consumers crave more vibrant hues and tones.

Out — smart coffee tables. "A coffee table was never supposed to be a catch-all that includes a fridge, charging stations and even lights. They promote laziness and tend to look cheap and unattractive," Rosenberg says.

In — classic handcrafted wood coffee tables that showcase natural décor like a tabletop fountain. "Incorporating woods, stone and water provides a level of organic appeal," Rosenberg notes.

Out — brass accents. "Last year, homeowners went slightly overboard here. Too much brass can often look cheap when overdone," cautions Stern.

In — mixed metals. This year, "consider mixing metals, like oil-rubbed bronze and chrome fittings,



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Mixing metals is a great way to add character and depth to a house. These oversized chrome drawer pulls contrast between the gold patina mirror and shiny gold geometric vase, which pop on the verde malachite wallpaper. Image courtesy Francisco Aguila.

to accent your home with a more sophisticated look," Stern suggests.

Out — linen. "I see it sticking around as a staple," says Straight, "but this lead singer has been demoted to backup dancer as we look for something with a little more showmanship to offer."

In — velvet. Unlike dry, basic linen, "velvet is like a great date that loves us back," Straight says.

Out — pink. Jennifer Adams, an interior designer in San Diego, says "hot pink, raspberry and bubble gum are fresh, youthful and fun colors, but are too overwhelming in large doses, such as on walls or major pieces of furniture."

In — lilac. "This hue is a newer, bluer version of the blush we've been seeing everywhere for the past two years, and we anticipate that it'll begin filtering into home décor very soon," says Erika Woelfel, vice president of color and creative services at BEHR Paint in Santa Ana, California.

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Should moulding be the same colour as the walls?

When it comes time to paint a room, the moulding presents an interesting conundrum: should it be the same color as the walls?

The answer: it all depends on the desired effect — and the look of the moulding. Plain doorframes without any particular aesthetic features, for example, are usually best left to blend in with the surrounding wall. The same goes for a door that's poorly framed — drawing attention to crooked trim is sure to disrupt the visual flow of the room.

If your moulding is quite plain, you might still choose to make it subtly stand out by painting it the same shade as the walls, but in a glossier, light-catching finish.

If your moulding is ornate, don't hesitate to make it pop! Create contrast by using white, grey or black. If you decide to go with white, make sure you choose a shade that matches the rest of the room's color palette — in other words, don't use a crisp, cool white to trim a wall that's painted in a rich, warm hue.

Finally, remember that if your moulding is of a different color than your walls, it's a good idea to paint all the moulding in your home the same color. This is especially true when it comes to creating a harmonious overall look in an open-concept space.

Three tips to prevent water damage this spring

Spring is fast approaching, meaning that the snow and ice accumulated over the winter is about to melt en masse. This has the potential to cause all sorts of damage, from roof leaks to basement flooding and sewer backups. Here are three tips to help you keep such unpleasant situations at bay.

1. Test your sump pump

A sump pump in poor condition can lead to a soggy nightmare — especially during the springtime thaw. You definitely don't want to miss work or cancel plans because you're too busy draining, cleaning and airing out your drenched basement. Be proactive and call a local plumber to test your drains,

clean your sump pump and make any necessary repairs to prevent flooding in your home.

2. Inspect your rain gutters

When your gutters are obstructed or damaged, water from melting snow and ice will flow where it can — usually onto the roof or foundation. This is a surefire way for water to infiltrate into your home. Avoid this by calling a pro to make sure that your gutters are solidly attached and allow for optimal water drainage, far away from your home's foundation.

3. Maintain your drain

A French drain that's obstructed by debris or inadequately installed can back up your sewer, leaving water to escape from every opening in your plumbing system. Make sure you never have to face such an ordeal by having your drain regularly inspected and cleaned by a drainage specialist.

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Decked Out

BY ERIK J. MARTIN
CTW FEATURES

It's more than a home base for your grill and garden hose. It's beyond an elevated stage for eating and entertaining. It's a principal platform for al fresco enjoyment and an extension of your living space into the great outdoors. And it deserves greater priority, say the pros.

We're talking about the great American deck, and if you don't have one yet or are biding your time with one in need of some TLC, what the deck are you waiting for? Spring, after all, is right around the corner.

Jason Davoll, senior product manager for Skokie-headquartered AZEK Building Products, says decks have become an integral part of a typical home's architecture, expanding your functional square footage and adding a handsome design element to your yard.

"They can be a great gathering place for the family or to entertain guests. A deck can often be built at a similar

elevation to the living space closest to it, allowing for a seamless flow from indoors to outdoors," he says.

A properly designed deck creates a more defined gathering area outside your back door, too.

"Most decks are built adjacent to a kitchen, dining area or family room and tend to stay cleaner than a patio or on-grade terrace, eliminating dirt, sand and yard debris that can be tracked into your home," says Rick Johnson, owner of STL Remodeling and General Contracting in Groton, Mass.

Slightly elevated homes – including those with basements – "are ideal for a deck, which can be built on sturdy posts placed deep in the ground and is accessible directly off a sliding patio door," desirably next to a kitchen or family room, says J.B. Sassano, president of Mr. Handyman, a Neighborly company in Ann Arbor, Mich. "Compare that to a patio, which has to be built at ground level, where water and moisture can slowly wash away the base that holds the brick or stone

Why you need a new or refurbished deck and how to plan for one



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pavers up—making for an unsightly, uneven surface.”

A deck that’s an independent structure and set off a bit from your residence can also be desirable.

“This creates a separate space for more privacy or a unique purpose. Perhaps it can provide a great vantage point for some great feature of your property, like a waterfront or skyline,” Davoll notes.

Crafting a new deck doesn’t have to be cost-prohibitive. Today, a variety of colors, styles, sizes, and finishes are available for a range of budgets, and improvements in materials have led to greater longevity and satisfaction.

“Pressure-treated southern yellow pine is still the most popular decking material because it doesn’t decay like untreated wood and is less costly,” says Bill Hirsch, a Pinehurst, N.C. architect and author of “Designing Your Perfect House” (Dalsimer Press, 2016). “Tropical woods like Ipe and Massaranduba are wonderful decking materials that don’t warp, splinter or decay. Even though they’re quite expensive, they can be a good investment because they last a long time and look great.”

Sassano says other worthy decking choices include redwood and cedar wood, which are naturally insect, decay



and fire-resistant but are soft and prone to marring/denting; wood and plastic composite, which retains the look of real wood in an array of hues and doesn’t rot, shrink, splinter or require routine sealing or staining like real woods but which are costly and hot underfoot in summertime; and rubber composite, made with a mix of

polyethylene resins and recycled tires to withstand extreme heat and cold.

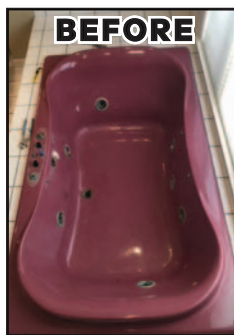
“Among the popular deck styles today are contemporary, which is sleek, sparse and modern, using basic shapes and clean lines; colonial, a classic symmetrical design that can incorporate planter boxes; traditional, with octagon layouts and chamfered

corners; mountain, employing heavy timber framing and rustic log railings; and coastal, built to stand up to wet seaside conditions,” Sassano adds.

Basic decks still remain mostly rectangular, says Johnson, “while higher-budget decks offer multi-levels and curved sides with custom railings.”

Cable railings are gaining in

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popularity, since they don't obstruct your view like wooden or metal railings do, Hirsch says.

"Expect to pay from \$50 to \$100 a square foot and up for a new deck, depending on the components chosen," says Robert Heidenreich, president of The Deckstore in Apple Valley, Minn., who recommends choosing a professional designer/installer and getting the proper municipal permits.

Got an older deck? Consider refurbishing or resurfacing it instead of replacing it.

"This option is best when the deck's substructure is still in good shape. Make sure all decking connections are sound and that it was built to code," Davoll says. "If any joists or planks are bowed or higher or lower than the rest of the deck, consider replacing them."

If that deck is up to spec, think about expanding it or adding some new toys.

"Implement built-in seating benches with lift-up seats that offer additional seating and extra storage," Johnson suggests. "Install low-voltage LED lighting, which provides extra illumination and added safety around stairs. Consider adding heating towers, outdoor speakers, or an LED TV in a weatherproof enclosure. And think about a hot tub, too."

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Images courtesy Pella

BY LISA IANNUCCI
CTW FEATURES

When you walk up to your front door, is it dirty? Dingy? In need of repair? Does it scream 'go away' instead of 'welcome'? Give your front door a well-deserved facelift by repainting it.

"Your front door is the portal to your home and should stand out with a harmonious color and signify a sense

of character and beauty," says Scott Harris, COO and co-founder of Building Construction Group in Los Angeles.

Harris suggests painting it a complimentary, but opposite color to the home's trim and the easiest way to find out what is an opposite and yet complimentary color is to look at a color wheel, found at many home improvement stores.

"For example, if your home is in the warm beige tones, look to the deep blues on the color wheel," he says. "Or, if your home is in the green tones, have fun and try a deep burgundy or wine-colored paint. It's a place to be bold and have fun."

However, be careful about picking a dark color. "If you pick a dark color, such as a black or dark blue, it can cause a door to warp during a hot summer day and may ruin your warranty," Harri says. "On the hottest day, the sun is beating on the dark color and absorbing the heat. However, on the flip side of the door, it's cool. These indifferent temperatures can cause a door to warp."

Remember to test a paint sample before repainting the entire door. You can either tape a paint chip to the door and see how it looks or purchase small cans of paint samples and paint a small section of the door. "Look at it all times of the day as the natural lighting will affect the color throughout the day," Harris says.

Once you have selected and purchased a gallon of your favorite color, it's time to get to work. "Wood doors should be sanded and if they are showing signs of wear, you may need to apply some wood filler," says William Lee, senior project manager at Taconic Builders in New York City. "This all is very easy to do as

"Your front door is not only symbolic, but one of the most iconic visuals of a home, so why not make it special?"

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long as you are patient and take your time. If there is damage to the door remove it and, depending on how bad it is, it may require some carpentry. Apply wood filler, sand the area smooth and let dry."

After the wood has dried, it's time to add primer. First, remove all of the hardware. You can either remove the door from the hinges before applying the primer and paint or leave it where it is.

"When you're happy with the door prep, simply roll on the highest quality exterior-based primer available using a very low nap roller," Harris says. "The paint stores will typically carry better primers than available at large commercial home stores. Have your paint store add some tint to the primer. If you use a standard white primer under and the door shrinks or moves, the white primer will show."

Don't trust your steady hand to paint around the hinges and door hardware. "Take the time to fully cover them with painters tape and when done, peel off the tape and you will look like a pro," Harris suggests.

Repainting a door is typically a one-day project. "On a nice summer day, it can easily be done in a few hours," Harris says. "Your front door is not only symbolic, but one of the most iconic visuals of a home, so why not make it special? Repainting a door is a great project that makes an immeasurable visual impact."

It's also the first thing that your visitors see. "It says a lot about the home and reflects upon you the homeowner," Lee says.

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BY LISA IANNUCCI
CTW FEATURES

Are the kids out of the house and you're ready to downsize? Maybe you want to stay put and simply desire an upgrade that will pay off down the road. Whether now is the time to stick your 'for sale' sign in the grass or you want to remodel for your benefit, take a good hard look at the outside of your home. What would a potential buyer see? If your home is more fixer-upper than move-in ready, it's time to spruce it up, but where should you put your money that will get you the biggest bang for your hard-earned bucks?

"Most interior or exterior fix-ups are first done out of necessity and then done to improve your home's curb appeal," said Texas designer Pablo Solomon.

Updating the natural curb appeal of your home could mean up to a 120 percent return at resale, 20 percent more than the initial investment, according to Kayla Hein, creative director of Modern Castle in Ludlow, Mass. "Being the first thing that a potential buyer sees, the exterior is a worthwhile place to drop some cash."

Hein said that when renovating your home's exterior, there are two areas

where your money can go – into the house or into the landscape. "It's amazing what a fresh coat of paint and some new door hardware can do for a home's exterior," she says. "It could also be as simple as freshening up existing beds with bright annuals and fresh mulch. With these quick fixes, you could expect up to a 200 percent return, receiving back twice the amount that you initially put into the project."

You may also want to consider adding interesting elements like cedar planter boxes, accent shutters or new light fixtures to highlight special areas of the home's exterior. "Something like this should yield 150 percent return from the initial investment," Hein says.

Is your home hidden under natural overgrowth, such as trees, vines, or shrubs? "Be sure to remove those so the house stands out," Hein says. "This is a simple fix, typically with no actual costs, but getting a buyer in the door can sometimes be the hardest part."

You can immediately improve your home's curb appeal by eliminating your old worn front door and replacing it with something more attractive. "Say goodbye to an old wood or steel door and say hello to a new steel entry door," says Rhianna Miller, home and garden improvement expert at Rubber

Mulch. "It may be hard to believe, but the single largest ROI comes from an entry door replacement. You'll recoup around 90 percent of the \$1,400 you pay for the door."

What other projects have a high ROI? According to Remodeling's 2018 Cost vs. Value Report, projects such as a backyard patio and the addition of a deck actually recoup less money this year than they did last year. For example, a backyard patio costs approximately \$54,130 and recoups only \$25,769, a 47.6 percent ROI. The addition of a composite deck can run home sellers around \$17,668 while only recouping \$11,239 or 63.6 percent of an investment.

"The important thing to understand is a deck, especially composite, is definitely a higher end addition that can run upwards of \$15,000," Miller says. "However, today's homebuyer is most likely looking for this element in their future home."

The good news though is that the addition of a wood deck – a \$10,950 project – can recoup a whopping 82.8 percent of the costs.

What other projects have a high ROI?

1. New garage doors

"Older garage doors can be a real eyesore," Miller says. "They typically



A new coat of paint and upgraded hardware on doors offers improved style that will, ultimately, attract buyers.

lack proper insulation and other modern qualities. A new garage door will run approximately \$2,000 and you can look forward to a 77 percent return."

2. New roof

Replacing a roof dropped in recouping its costs in Remodeling's survey, but if yours is really in need of

patching, you may want to consider a full replacement. The last thing a potential buyer needs to see is worn shingles that cause leaks when it rains. "A new, well-maintained roof protects an entire home from weather damage," Miller says. "The new roof can also vastly improve your home's curb appeal and is often something that prospective buyers will want

inspected. A mid-range roof replacement will run about \$20,000, but the return on investment is upwards of 69 percent."

3. Updated siding

"Outdated, faded siding will bring down your home's value at an alarming rate," Miller says. "The good news is that new siding will total about \$15,000 and the return on your investment is a whopping 76 percent."

For more substantial upgrades, like masonry repairs, Hein said that you can expect a 100 percent return. Basically, you're getting back the money that you would pay into the project," she says.

Of course, you may not have enough extra cash lying around to complete all of these projects, so choose the one that will fix the biggest eyesore and get that buyer to make an offer and sign on the dotted line.

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BY ERIK J. MARTIN
CTW FEATURES

If you think climate change and extreme weather conditions have been tough on human beings, just imagine being stuck outdoors, naked to the elements 24/7. Such has been the lot of live landscaping staples like grass, trees, shrubs, plants and flowers, which have had to withstand the fury of Harvey, Maria, La Niña and other bullies in recent years.

Indeed, from extended droughts and blistering hot summers to 100-year floods and bomb cyclones, Mother Nature has created a lot of extra challenges lately for homeowners seeking a scenic setting across their yards.

"Landscaping has always been at the mercy of weather conditions, but it appears to have gotten more difficult in the past few years," says Ronna Moore, owner of Fairy Homes and Gardens in Savannah, Mo. "Climate change causes big global problems, such as rising sea levels, increasing air and sea temperatures and extreme weather, but it is also causing challenges in the yard."

Case in point: Japanese beetles, which benefit from higher carbon dioxide levels and warmer winters,

recently decimated Moore's red veined alder trees and stripped the leaves off her variegated porcelain berry vines.

Jon Feldman, owner of Nyack, N.Y.-based G. Biloba Gardens, says changing environments have disadvantaged what were previously flourishing species by making them more vulnerable to disease.

"Also, non-native, invasive plants spread more rapidly and can choke out ornamental shrub beds. They generally have less water requirements than native species, allowing them to survive extreme drought conditions. On the opposite end of the extreme weather cycle, flooding can cause erosion of top soil, depleting the available supply of nutrients that ornamental plants need in greater quantities than invasive species," Feldman says. "Shrubs, perennials and annuals particularly suffer."

Angie Hicks, founder of Indianapolis-headquartered Angie's List, says even the most resilient plants have their limits.

"Hardy plants have the ability to survive cool temperatures and frost, but they aren't invincible against extreme heat, wind and other conditions," she says.

For all these reasons, homeowners now have to put more thought and planning into landscape design, "from the materials they use to the plants they plant," Hicks adds.

Your defense against the elements starts with choosing sturdier botanical breeds whenever possible. These can include wild geraniums, oregano, chives, poppies and daffodils, suggests Hicks. Other worthy candidates are drought-resistant species like Lewisia, Angelina sedum, red bird of paradise, blue star juniper,

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To help protect your plants from unpredictable weather patterns, it is best to properly apply mulch and place plants near your home or other greenery. Image courtesy Grunder Landscaping, Miamisburg, Ohio.

Russian sage and yellow alyssum.

Another best practice: go native.

“Plant species that are indigenous to your specific area or region,” recommends Cassy Aoyagi, president of FormLA Landscaping in Tujunga, Calif. “Native plants have spent millions of years adapting to thrive in your soils and climate and will have the best chance of adapting yet again, requiring no chemical fertilizers or pesticides and much less fuss.”

In addition, think twice about planting species that could lead to a lot of toil and regret in these times of extreme weather fluctuations –

including arborvitae, white pine and birch trees.

“With more humid and wet weather, fungus becomes a greater issue than in decades past. For that reason, I am not a fan of roses, which require fungicides and other chemical applications to retain their aesthetic appeal,” Feldman says.

“If you predict that harsh sun or heavy rains will become problematic, place your plants nearer to your home or other greenery to help protect them. Also, consider adding an overhead canopy above prized plants or an outdoor heater on your patio to take the chill off plants positioned there,” advises Missy Henriksen, vice president of public affairs for the Fairfax, Va.-based National Association of Landscape Professionals. “Apply fresh mulch around trees and planting beds, as well, which can help them retain moisture and survive during drier seasons, prevent weeds and supply

nutrients back into the soil.”

Many mulch materials are on the market, including peat moss, gravel, shredded hardwood, and pine nuggets; if you’re not sure which is best for your needs, consult a landscape professional, Henriksen adds.

When shopping for plants at a gardening center or other retailer, read the fine print carefully.

“Do not choose plants that are borderline hardy in your zone. Read the labels and follow the planting instructions,” Moore says.

If you cherish plants and lawns that require more

consistent watering, consider investing in an underground irrigation system.

“If plantings are large enough, this is essential to maintain their health and appearance for years, although it’s a significant added cost,” Feldman notes.

Lastly, remember that no garden, lawn or yard is 100 percent invulnerable to the ravages of extreme weather.

“Homeowners can do everything they can to plant the right species and use the most durable materials, but weather can be so unpredictable,” Hicks says. “Keep in mind, also, that all plants require some maintenance at some point.”

And a foliage facelift from time to time, too.

“When plants become overgrown or too large for their location, a change is probably necessary,” Henriksen says.



The Japanese Beetle benefits from warmer winters due to an increase in carbon dioxide in the soil. Image courtesy Bruce Marlin.

Tips for hiring a local lawn service

BY LISA IANNUCCI

CTW FEATURES

Spring is right around the corner and that means it’s time to haul the lawn mower out of the garage each and every week for your weekly landscaping chores. Wait, maybe not this year. Maybe this is the year that you finally hire a lawn service to take care of that grass for you. Then you can spend that time barbecuing with your family, catching a movie or finishing up some other chores that you’ve been wanting to do.

If the idea of handing over the mowing responsibilities to someone else sounds exciting, here are some tips on finding the right lawn care service for you.

1. Use an app

Finding the right lawn care company may be as simple as using an app. “All you have to do is put in what you want done – for example, mowing your lawn twice a month – and local lawn companies bid on your job,” says Nathan Fink, owner of MW Mowing in Nashville. “You hire them, the job gets done and that’s it.”

Fink recommends using an app such as Plowz and Mowz, Greenpal and Takl. “Most check out the services that sign up and make sure they are legit and have insurance,” he said.

Some apps require that the lawn care company send you a photo when they are finished.

2. Ask a neighbor

If you don’t want to use an app or if the apps do not service your area, then ask your friends or neighbors who they use. “We like when our clients are all in the same area, so you might even get a good price because it helps the company,” Fink says.

The National Association of Landscape Professionals also offers a directory of landscape professionals in your area.

3. Find a full-service company

“Hire a company that offers other gardening services besides lawn mowing and care,” says Pol Bishop, a gardening and landscaping expert with Fantastic Gardeners, which is part of Fantastic Services, an international company with branches operating in the U.S. “They’d have more knowledge on maintenance, different types of turf and what kind of care they need.”

If it’s a company that specializes only in

lawn care and mowing, that is all that they will be able to do for you, so if you need other work done, such as pruning trees, you will need to hire someone else. “Tree surgery requires a different type of knowledge and equipment, so it’s better to look for a company that offers a wide range of gardening services besides lawn care,” Bishop says.

4. Look for certification and insurance

Lawn care certificates vary by state and you can find out your state’s requirements by visiting their Department of Agriculture website. “Companies that offer lawn care and gardening services must have a pesticide application certification, must be certified by the National Association of Landscape Professionals and have a certificate they are qualified to perform any type of gardening service they offer,” Bishop says.

Every company must ensure the safety of its employees, make sure the company has workers compensation and liability insurance. “If they are mowing and hit a rock and something happens they need to be covered,” said Fink.

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Sleep Tight

7 Things to Know About the Modern Mattress

BY NANCY MATTIA
CTW FEATURES

Shopping for a mattress involves more than just jumping on floor models for one that feels right. Customization, trendy fabrics, and convenient designs all contribute to your mattress experience. Here are a few things to keep in mind before buying a new one.

1. The basics still hold true.

When you're in the market for a new mattress, look for one that offers these long-held essentials: good support, pressure relief, comfort and long-term durability.

2. You can customize it to suit your individual needs.

Let's say you like a mattress that feels like you're sleeping on a fluffy cloud, but your sleep mate prefers a surface that's got some oomph to it. Neither of you needs to compromise, thanks to dual-support beds, which allows one side to be soft and the other firm, explains Ana Cayeiro, a Coral Gables, Florida, interior designer at furniture retailer Robb & Stuckey. But the innovations don't stop there. "Larger mattresses with heavier gauge innersprings can be ordered to support larger body frames, and new upholstery materials can be placed in the bed to help control a mattress's temperature."

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Mattresses now can suit different needs for couples, such as the wildly popular Sleep Number models. Image courtesy Sleep Number.



Bed-in-a-box foam mattresses expand when taken out of the box and often cost less than traditional models. Image courtesy Casper.

3. Some manufacturers tout eco-friendly mattresses that contain copper or aluminum.

Consumers are concerned with any harmful effects of the chemical and synthetic products used in regular mattresses. But keep your eyes open. "Eco-friendly is a term that's not specifically defined," says Cayeiro, "and currently there is no governing body that monitors this definition and those mattress constructions." If eco-friendly interests you, research the manufacturer and the product so you're getting what you expect.

4. Mattress exteriors are better than ever.

The fabric coverings have improved over the years: They stretch and recover better and are softer and more durable, Cayeiro says. "The fabrics are in synch with current fashion trends in terms of color and design." They're sometimes made of wool, and bamboo fiber and other natural materials, which gets a thumbs up from the eco-friendly crowd.

5. Mattresses can be 18 inches high or more.

Typically, the most expensive beds have the most upholstery materials and those mattresses can be higher than 18 inches tall, Cayeiro says. "That said, mattress manufacturers understand that their products must fit today's sheets. Therefore, most mattresses are manufactured at 12 to 16 inches tall."

6. Some mattresses have multifunctional features.

They're designed to fold into other seating like sofas, sectionals, wall beds, and recliners, Cayeiro says. "The main feature of these mattresses is their ability to bend and/or provide a certain support level, which is generally firm and are typically queen or twin-sized."

7. Bed-in-a-box foam mattresses are a thing.

They're made to be convenient – manufacturers ship the mattresses, which you buy online or from some retail stores. But be aware of the cost versus quality, so your expectations are met. Not all mattresses are created equally.

Lots of innovations make getting a good night's sleep better than ever

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Discover Corian, the multi-use material



If you're looking for a practical, beautiful and durable surface for your countertop, backsplash or bathroom vanity, consider Corian. This ingenious material was invented by DuPont in 1967, and has seen many improvements and variations since. Read on to find out more about this versatile surface option that's well worth the investment.

The main characteristic of Corian is that it can be moulded into any shape imaginable. Prized by architects and designers around the world, it can easily be:

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Abundantly used in hotels, restaurants and luxury offices, Corian surfaces are elegant and as hard as stone. Their material doesn't wear and is resistant to scratches, heat, stains, and impacts. What's more, it only requires minimal upkeep.

Incredibly malleable, Corian also offers the possibility of joining sections without any obvious seams, allowing the creation of never-ending surfaces or gigantic monoblock-type structures. What's more, its non-porous finish develops a soft patina as it ages.

This innovative surface material is available in more than a hundred colours, with neutral, textured and bold finishes. Whether you prefer classic or modern design, you'll most certainly be delighted by the offerings of your local Corian supplier.

Bathroom vanities for every taste

The vanity is a crucial component of every bathroom. It's where you wash your hands, brush your teeth and get ready for each day. It's also where you store toiletries, toilet paper and cleaning products. If you want to purchase the ideal vanity, read on!

Here are some factors to consider:

- Ground support (directly on the floor or on feet)
- The shape and position of the sink (rectangular, circular, oval, semicircular, encased, on top, fitted underneath)
- The material and finish of the bottom section (wood, melamine, glass)
- The style (Scandinavian, classic, modern, retro)
- The material of the sink and counter (tempered glass, marble, porcelain)
- The size (width, height, depth, one or two sinks)
- The doors and drawers (configuration, opening mechanisms, handles)
- The faucets (simple or double, made of stainless steel, brass or nickel)

Pay a visit to the numerous stores in your region to discover myriad magnificent vanities for every style and budget. If you can't find a model that fits perfectly in your bathroom, why not have one custom-made? Lastly, remember that it's always preferable to have a plumbing professional install your vanity.



Timeless decor tips for your child's bedroom

A parent's schedule is nothing short of hectic. Between work, daycare and groceries, interior decoration often finds itself quite low on the list of priorities. Have you been meaning to redesign your child's bedroom? Here are tips for a functional and attractive room that'll stand the test of time.

Furniture

There's no denying it: low-end furniture wears and breaks faster than quality furniture —especially in a child's bedroom, where flying toys and sticky fingers are the norm. While savings are always on a parent's mind, higher-end furniture can be seen as an investment rather than an expense. For an elegant design that will hold up for years, sturdy, multifunctional pieces such as:

- A high-rise bed with desk space underneath
- A bench that doubles as a storage unit
- A bed with built-in drawers
- A desk equipped with shelving



Themes

Kids grow up fast and their tastes change even faster. Think twice before buying bedding or curtains covered with your child's favourite cartoon character. While trains and princesses are fun and appealing, it's best to opt for an age-appropriate design that you won't have to completely overhaul every year. So, when your child

pleads for a superhero-themed bedroom, keep in mind that she'll probably be begging for something entirely different next month.

It's all about compromise! While taking into account your little one's strongest interests and preferences, suggest a more general — but nonetheless fun — theme such as nature, animals, sports or space.

Color schemes

Thinking long-term about your child's bedroom means choosing a color scheme that isn't strongly associated with a specific age or gender. In other words, avoid making cotton candy pink or baby boy blue the room's main hue.

Instead, choose a neutral shade for the walls and spice up the space with brightly colored or uniquely patterned accessories. If your child's preferences change every year, showcase their new favourite things with wall art, throw pillows or light fixtures.