

HOME & GARDEN

The Crittenden Press

March 19, 2009

Home sweet home

Farmhouse in family since 1880s



The Hardin's home on Old Salem Road is a family treasure with a large, private back yard, situated on 10 acres inside the Marion city limits. Above, there can't be many bathrooms like this one. Pippi Hardin let his imagination escape to foreign lands when he designed this Egyptian themed bathroom.

Photos and story by Allison Evans
PRESS ASSISTANT EDITOR

When Pippi and Phillis Hardin began remodeling Pippi's family home, they had an agreement. He'd leave her alone to design the kitchen, and in exchange, she would let him make the downstairs bathroom his special project.

They both held up their end of the deal, but it was Phillis who got a wake-up call in the kitchen.

"We worked on the house about a year, and when we got ready to start on the kitchen, our girls kept telling me to rip out all the kitchen cabinets. I hated to do that, but I started looking at new cabinets and was having a hard time because I didn't think new cabinets would look right in this house," Phillis said. "One night, I was standing here by myself looking at them, and as I turned to leave and turned off the light, the phone rang."

"There was no phone service in the house, it would only work to dial 911," Pippi said, adding to the eeriness of the situation.

"I answered the phone like someone would be there – which obviously there wasn't – and said, 'OK Martha, the cabinets stay.'"

The couple laughs now, though insisting it was a sign from Pippi's late mother, Martha Davidson Hardin, to keep the old cabinets.

With contractor Keith Meteja's expertise in restoring old homes, the Hardins embarked on a year-long effort to remodel Pippi's family home on Old Salem Road in 2007.

According to family lore, it started as "a little square house" built in the late 1880s by Pippi's great-great-grandparents, who were part of the Stevens clan. The house remained in the family, and belonged to R.P. Davidson, who was Crittenden County clerk; then Pippi's parents, Ewell "Junior" Hardin and Martha Davidson Hardin, lived in the house. Upon Martha's death, Pippi and Phillis decided to sell their house on Bellville Street and move to the home where Pippi was born. He is the fifth generation in his family to live in the house.

"I know it was Pippi's family's house, but I grew up here along with them, loving them like they were mine, in fact I worked with R.P. for six years in the clerk's office," Phillis said.

Not a single room has been untouched by the Hardin's labors; however, they were very cautious to maintain its late 19th century charm – including the rugged upstairs banister, interior stained

glass, and yes, the kitchen cabinets. They did, however, add a large den to accommodate their family – daughters Vicki, Stefanie and Kayla, and their families.

Major overhauls were done in the kitchen, bathrooms and master bedroom.

"Keith built new doors for the kitchen cabinets, added a space for a built-in microwave, installed bead board on the walls and added an island with yellow and blue tile.

"I didn't want a kitchen table, because it seemed like that is where everyone always stayed, but I looked the other day, and you know where we were? All around the island," Phillis laughed.

The first project in the restoration was the master bedroom, which the Hardins made out of

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Something's cookin'



PHOTO BY ALLISON EVANS
Terry Croft (right) of Salem employed the skills of David Smith (left) and Todd Riley (center) of Riley Tool & Machine in Marion to make a mobile barbecue grill that is raising money for local non-profit organizations.

Custom-made, mobile cooker fits Livingston man's needs like glove

By ALLISON EVANS
ASSISTANT EDITOR

With little more than a verbal description of a large, mobile, barbecue cooker, Todd Riley and his employees built Terry Croft a grown man's toy that he's using to raise money for area non-profit organizations.

Croft, a Salem businessman and owner of Terry Croft Concrete Products, is fueling his hobby with a custom-made cooker made from the shell of a propane tank mounted on a flatbed trailer.

Soon after pitching his plan last August to Riley, owner of Riley Tool & Machine in Marion, Big Boy BBQ was pulling up to its first fundraising event. In the four events that followed, Croft – along with family and friends – raised nearly \$8,000 for area charities. With finger-licking good Boston butts, chickens and bologna served hot off the grill, Croft is credited with raising money for Livingston Central High School, where his daughter is a sophomore, and his Livingston County church, among other non-profits.

"I told him what I wanted and they built it. They thought I was nuts," Croft said about laying out his plans to Riley last summer.

"I didn't think he was nuts, I

thought it was doable. I didn't know how far he wanted to take it, but he wanted to go all out," Riley said.

After getting into the hobby of barbecuing a few years ago, Croft knew he wanted greater convenience and mobility. He started with a 350-gallon propane tank donated by Harris Gas and a 16-foot trailer with a wooden floor.

For six weeks, Riley and right-hand-man David Smith engineered and fabricated the cooker, welding and making a door and a slide-out cook surface from a shaker screen. The trailer has sheet metal walls topped with wooden serving tables and a cooker handle made from a

See **CUSTOM**/Page 3B

Small changes can turn house into home

STATEPOINT MEDIA

For years, homeowners looked to increase the value of their houses to turn a profit when they sold them a few years later. In today's economy, because families are planning on living in their homes longer term, these living spaces now need to become more meaningful.

The warmer months are a great time to get started on small projects to help you better enjoy your house. For some homeowners this means repurposing rooms to make them more functional. For others, it's about making outdoor spaces focal points for entertaining.

"During the housing boom, people viewed their homes as investment properties and flip-pable," says architect Kevin Harris, a member of The American Institute of Architects (AIA) and former chair of its small projects committee.

"For most families, their house is their largest investment, and while resale value is important, so is livability. It's time to rethink and rearrange our houses to be homes and use them for what they are really for - spending quality time with family and friends," he adds.

Before embarking on improvement projects to make your home more livable, consider the following:

■ **Plan Properly:** Architects who specialize in residential renovations can help you recognize what works and what doesn't. Their design skills will ensure your home will accommodate your family's needs within an affordable budget. An architect also can help "green" your home, making it more environmentally-friendly and energy effi-



STATEPOINT MEDIA PHOTO

You can inexpensively repurpose existing rooms to make them more usable and comfortable for the family.

cient, resulting in ongoing cost savings.

■ **Bigger Isn't Always Better:** You may not need major improvements. Small changes can have big impact. One homeowner, for example, lived in a "railroad" style home where you had to pass through one room to get to the other, which was a hindrance during parties. After consulting an architect he realized

he didn't need major renovations. He simply needed to add a doorway so the middle room could be accessed from another entrance to change the flow.

■ **Rethink Existing Spaces:** Sometimes you don't need to add a room, just rethink and repurpose an existing one. Most older homes were built with formal dining rooms that are only used once or twice a year. Consider in-

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expensively converting your unused dining room into a guest bedroom, home office, music room or library. A garage can become a family room, or an outdoor storage room can be converted into a summer kitchen. Think of the ebb and flow of your household, and be creative with what you have.

* **Consider Changing Things Back:** For a while, the trend was to create separate state-of-the-art, theater-style media rooms. However, this design was isolated from the rest of the home and family members' activities. Now, media rooms are integrated into family rooms to create more of a den experience.

■ **Look Outdoors for More Living Space:** Outdoor living spaces easily can be designed for year-round use. Not only do they increase a house's value, they facilitate friendship with neighbors, by increasing your ability to entertain larger groups. Outdoor spaces can include covered porches, summer kitchens, portable BBQ pits and outdoor fireplaces, all of which can be outfitted to increase your home's energy efficiency. A covered porch only costs the price of some roofing and flooring, and decks can be built with inexpensive pressure-treated wood.

"Any home improvement project should help your family connect and enjoy the house more thoroughly. And by planning ahead with an architect, you can keep costs down," says Harris



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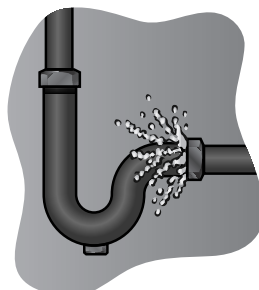
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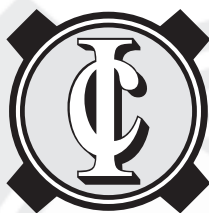


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Proper color choice adds to curb appeal

STATEPOINT MEDIA

Making your home stand out in a crowd – or fit in better with its surroundings – can help enhance its curb appeal. But most homeowners don't want to undertake expensive home improvements, like replacing the roof, windows or doors.

Something as simple and affordable as painting your home's exterior can improve its appearance and distinguish your house in today's soft real estate market. Painting vinyl or aluminum siding is an option in lieu of replacing it. If you don't want to tackle the large project of repainting your entire house, painting your front door or trim can do wonders.

"Painting is a great way to give your home a facelift to enhance its overall look," said Ann McGuire, founder of Beehive Studios and color consultant to Valspar, a global leader in paint. "However, if you're not ready to paint your entire house a new color, try experimenting with the front door to give your house character."

Regardless of the scope of your painting project, it is important to consider color, style and the correct type of paint.

■ **Select the Right Finish:** The proper finish or sheen to use depends on the surface you are painting. A flat or matte finish hides imperfections and is typically used for the main surface of your house, trim, shutters and eaves. A satin finish also is low sheen and can be used on the bulk of your home. Semi-gloss paint yields a shinier finish that is used primarily for doors, trim and shutters.

■ **Make the Door Pop:** When choosing a front door color, find a warm, inviting color that complements existing materials. Don't be afraid to pick a bold color for the door. For example, rich red colors work well, such as Valspar Ultra Premium Berry Blush 1004-1A or La Fonda Antique Red 2002-5A. For a luxurious, creamy look, a gloss or semi-gloss exterior paint works best, like Duramax Satin Finish.



STATEPOINT MEDIA PHOTO

Just the right splash of color on your home's exterior can instantly enhance its curb appeal, but just as important is the type of paint you may choose.

■ **Consider Your Neighbors:** When painting your entire house, it's nice to harmonize with your neighbors. Drawing from your neighbors' color palettes will make your home appear bigger than it actually is because it blends into its surroundings. If matching scares you, you can still make your house unique by incorporating color into the door, trim or shutters.

■ **Match Paint to Architecture:** The type of home you have should inspire the paint color you choose. For instance, the Colonial style, the most popular home style in the U.S., emphasizes order and simplicity. A wide range of colors work well on Colonial homes, from bright yellows like Oatlands Yellow 3004-6B to darker grays such as Ocean Storm 4004-2B. By contrast, today's Contemporary homes give

the impression that anything goes, so edgier colors like Baked Scone 3007-8B or Roasted Coffee 2009-10 can work well.

■ **Test Things Out:** Whether you are committing to painting your whole house or just the front door, pick-up a sample can and test the color on the actual structure before you make a final decision. The color you see on a paint chip or in the paint can does not always appear the same on the surface. By performing a test, you can also observe the paint at various times of day to see how sun affects the color.

"No matter if you paint your whole house or just your front door, with the proper color selection, painting can boost curb appeal, make your neighbors green with envy or even spark the interest of a buyer," adds McGuire.



PHOTO BY ALLISON EVANS

David Smith of Riley Tool & Machine shows off the business end of a mobile barbecue grill for Terry Croft that is raising money for local non-profit organizations.

Custom-made, mobile cooker fits Livingston man's needs like glove

Continued from 1B

broken shovel. Yes, a broken shovel.

"I couldn't find anything, and saw that in my shop and thought, 'maybe this will work,' and it did," Riley says. "It was our design to have a sliding pull out shelf for the cooker, so when guys are cooking they don't have to reach so far into the cooker and the smoke won't be up in their face."

Riley has made cookers in the past, but nothing to this extreme. Admittedly, some of the design was tricky, but the end product is an eye-catcher, complete with vinyl lettering and logos of each of Big Boys BBQ sponsors – Harris Gas, Riley Tool & Machine,

Croft Concrete and Dunkerson Paving.

"I called (Riley) once and asked him how he was making it, and he said I can't sleep thinking about this cooker," Croft said.

The device is heated by gas but burns wood to enhance flavor, so Riley and Smith had to design metal racks to hold two five-gallon propane tanks and a fire box welded to the actual cooker. It has two temperature gauges, cleanout valves on the underbelly of the stove, jack stands and specially-made detachable steps used to climb up onto the trailer.

To enhance his efforts, Croft mounted racks for dual deep fryers, added a wood box and a

truck-bed tool box in which he stores his cooking supplies.

Riley and Croft advise to "never price your hobby," but Croft says when his sideline job becomes too much like work, he'll quit.

As soon as warm weather returns, he plans to load up the cooker and start hauling it to various functions – two of which are already scheduled for late spring – and agreed to help Riley at a tailgating event before a Crittenden County football game this fall.

"We started tailgating parties last year, and I'm planning to make myself something like this," Riley said. "I've already got the tank cut and ready to go."



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D-I-Y projects easier than ever before

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Do-It-Yourself (D-I-Y) projects have become much easier for the average person. New developments in paints, papers, glues, seals, power tools and other tools and supplies have made good results possible with less time and previous experience needed. A 1997 home survey of nearly 5000 consumers revealed that 52 percent liked and worked with D-I-Y home improvement projects.

User-friendly, step-by-step directions are available for laying floors and tile, installing shelves and paneling, making curtains and blinds and creating soft furnishings. The secret of success is not to aim too high on beginning projects. Learn to do simple, low cost projects. After you build your skills and confidence, move on to bigger projects.

A redecorating project doesn't have to set off flurries of anxiety. Major remodeling efforts, such as putting up or taking down walls, rewiring electrical systems or adding a room, require at least the advice and counsel of a professional as well as more skills with tools and housing structures. Many decorating update projects, however, require only a commitment, a carefully laid plan and some shopping around for supplies.

Function and comfort are key factors to any project. Consider the way you live. Learn your likes and dislikes in home design. Put possibility thinking to work! Look at ideas that might work for you whether they are current trends or practical D-I-Y investments.

For every D-I-Y project there is a trade-off with time vs. money. Studies have shown that a project that takes a professional contractor 40 hours to do will take an expert amateur 48 hours, someone

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De-clutter, de-junk; have a yard sale	Install new shelving units in closets	Have closets professionally designed	Build in new storage area	Add a room!
Rearrange furniture	Refinish furniture	Recover a chair	Buy a new leather recliner	Buy a new sofa
Store all small items in boxes covered with wallpaper	Purchase new sheets and pillowcases	Buy chaise lounge for master bedroom	Buy new mattress and springs	Buy electronic adjustable bed
Use what you have in unusual ways	Purchase new towels and shower curtain	Buy (and use) exercise equipment	Add grab bars and massage shower head in bath	Add a hot tub, whirlpool or sauna
Rearrange and repot house plants	Buy large new house plant	Add a flower garden for a prettier view	Add some landscaping around patio	Add a greenhouse
Rearrange all accessories; display items creatively	Buy new lamp, vases, pillows or other home accessories	Buy an area rug to use on a wood or tile floor	Buy new carpeting for a room	Install a home theater!
Display a collection or family heirloom	Frame or re-mat picture(s)	Buy an original painting or sculpture	Install special lighting for art work/rooms	Buy a masterpiece!
Wash windows	Add room molding (price varies)	Replace window treatments		Install new doors or windows

handy with some experience 60 hours and a beginner 80 hours. Learning to do skills well pays off in real money savings!

Consider your own hourly wage for working on a project. Then figure out how long it will take to complete the project. Compare this cost with the cost of buying new or having the project done by someone else. Other questions to consider are:

- Do I have that much time?
- Will I like doing it or learn anything from it?
- Do I have the skills to do it all?
- Do I have someplace to go for advice if I get stuck in the middle of the project?
- Do I have the tools or can I

borrow them?

- Do I know what materials are needed?
- Can I buy them at a reasonable cost?

EVALUATING D-I-Y PROJECTS

This chart lists suggestions for decorating update projects in various price categories. Prices vary depending upon locale, size of project and individual needs. The chart, however, can help you

make decisions on the projects you can do and those that you will want to hire done for you either now or at a later date. As you review the chart, think about where you can get the best return for the time, energy and money spent.

Remember to plan carefully and never rush into a D-I-Y project. The unexpected, unforeseen and unusual can and probably will happen.

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Expanding outdoor living areas grows as popular trend

STATEPOINT MEDIA

As consumers spend more time at home, it's no surprise many are enhancing their existing living spaces. In particular, this season homeowners are embracing value-added decorating changes outdoors.

"Homeowners recognize an investment in curb appeal is a cost they'll likely recoup, so they're willing to make new purchases in this area. As they redesign outdoor spaces, many homeowners are enhancing existing decks and walkways, while others even are installing expansive outdoor kitchens or entire great rooms," says Jack Miller, senior product manager at Kichler Lighting.

Expanding outdoor living areas means manufacturers are getting creative in product development, combining new design trends with creative lighting schemes for spaces that can be enjoyed day and night.

Among the newest trends in these areas:

■ Outdoor Fans: Homeowners want to enjoy their outdoor spaces without being consumed by outdoor heat. Outdoor fans cool a space while also lending a stylish accent. These days, some fans even feature built-in lighting, so they can be used once evening sets in. For instance, Kichler offers several outdoor decorative ceiling fans that coordinate with other landscape offerings. Many even incorporate reversible blades with different finishes on each side, giving homeowners enhanced flexibility.

■ Slate: Slate has long been used in outdoor pathways and walkways. Now, slate and other natural materials are being incorporated into other outdoor elements, such as outdoor furniture and landscape lighting fixtures. Popular this year are mission-style path lights that combine the richness of mission aesthetics with the beauty of natural slate.

■ Green, Energy-Saving Products: Everyone is buzzing about

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going green and looking for new ways to save on electricity bills. LED lighting, an ultra energy-efficient light source, uses 75 percent less electricity than typical incandescent lighting products. With this in mind, lighting companies like Kichler are offering a variety of outdoor LED fixtures.

"Landscape lighting is left on for several hours at a time, so energy-efficient solutions are extremely important outdoors. Recognizing this, we've designed LED deck lights, step lights, path lights and accent lights to ensure every area of the landscape can be illuminated efficiently," says Miller. "Our LED products emit the warm, white light homeowners have come to expect from their lighting, and have the added bonus of low energy consumption."

■ Lighted Potted Planters: Flowers and plants are great inexpensive decorating accents. They can help small spaces appear larger and add warmth to larger areas. New this season are standing lighted planters that spread beautiful shadows on path and patio surfaces and wall-mounted planters that spotlight flowers at eye level.

■ Owls: It's the year of the owl. New owl-inspired decorations are making a statement indoors and out. Decorative owls have become particularly trendy in outdoor spaces, adding a welcoming, natural presence and an exciting accent. With an eye on this trend, Kichler is offering a decorative owl fixture with a natural-looking owl perched on a lighted tree branch.

As you nest at home this season, go ahead and enjoy the outdoors. With a few well-placed lighting accents, plants and decorations, your outdoor space can easily and inexpensively become a winning focal point of your home.



INTERNET IMAGE
Creative outdoor decorations and lighting complement a home's architecture.



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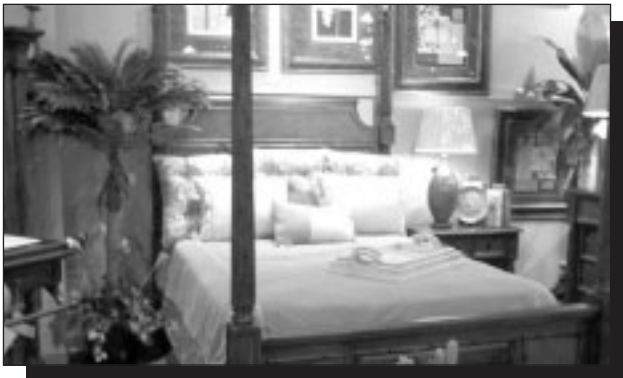
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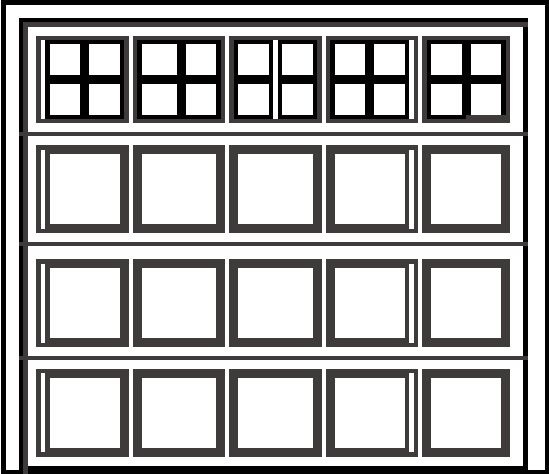
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Window treatments key to decorating your home

UNIVERSITY OF KENTUCKY COOPERATIVE EXTENSION SERVICE

Creative window treatments are a key element in decorating any home. Stylishly dressed windows make a room seem complete and add the finishing touch to the overall decor. Some treatments are dramatic and become the focal point of a room while others are subtle and complement existing decorating ideas. With a century of creative ideas as reference, the options for today's window treatments seem limitless.

Window treatments serve various functions in addition to their aesthetic qualities. They can control light, affect air circulation, insulate against weather and noise and provide privacy. They can also enhance a beautiful view or camouflage an unpleasant one. When selecting a window treatment, carefully consider which function(s) should be the first priority.

HISTORY

New building construction and the remodeling of older buildings keep the demand and interest for updated and practical window treatments in the forefront of interior design. Historically, fabric window treatments meant pinch-pleated draperies. Then four-inch rod pocket curtains came into style and were soon followed by more options in decorative rods and poles. This trend led to an emphasis on tab-top curtain treatments. Now the trend is turning toward shirred curtains and scarves. Unique window treatments are now possible simply by selecting different combinations of curtains, top treatments and accessories.

Blinds and shades have also changed over the years. Venetian blinds and Austrian shades of the 1950's gave way to Roman and fabric shades. Puffy balloon and cloud shades were replaced with mini, vertical and micro blinds. Today, horizontal two-inch wood blinds are enjoying a revival. Many designers now use a combination of blinds and shades with fabrics, especially top treatments.

FABRIC

The end of the 20th century features window treatments that are soft and layered with sheer curtains and scarves often used to achieve this look. Interesting color, texture and pattern combinations show up in both casual and formal styles. Many choices in fabrics are available, including printed formal and plaid sheers, embroidered and crushed voiles, fancy batistes and a variety of laces. These fabrics are often layered with sheer curtain over sheer curtain or tiered with more classic forms, such as crisp panels or non-fabric treatments.

Pattern choices in fabrics are limitless. Popular themes found in fabric motifs include:

- Floral and fruit patterns with an occasional butterfly.
- Classical and Renaissance motifs, softened by draping the fabric and accenting with scarves, trims and accessories.
- Prehistory or ancient history motifs include fossils, engravings and ancient drawings.
- Classic stripes, simple plaids and tone-on-tone solids in interesting textures that mix well with other fabrics and add dimension to the soft looks.

Polyester and cotton are dominant fibers used in window fabrics. Sheer curtains are most often 100 percent polyester with special chemical treatments sometimes used to create iridescent or soft faux suede finishes. Both 100 percent cotton fabric and blends combining cotton with polyester, linen, silk, or rayon are popular choices. Cotton finishes vary widely and may include a sateen finish, brushed for a soft hand, and dramatically woven into damasks or brocades. Other options, such as wool and plush velvets, are seasonal favorites or used for special areas.

TRIMS

Watch for trims on all types of fabrics and treatments! Trims add interest and draw attention to

draperies, top treatments, swags and scarves. Delicate fringe outlines scarf edges while tasseled fringe adds interest to sheers. Welting cord and braids add distinction to cornices and valances. Layers of cords and tassels become accents over curtains and valances. Braided cord tie-backs, tassels, buttons and rosettes accessorize window treatments and coordinate with table linens, lamps, bedspreads and furniture. Creativity with trims is the key to a one-of-a-kind window treatment.

Consider the cost if you're planning to add trims to decorator fabrics. The cost of the trim may exceed the cost of the fabric itself. Add it up first! Be sure to figure the total cost of the window treatment, including trims and accessories, before making a final purchase decision.

Another factor to consider is care and maintenance of the window treatment. Care instructions for the trim, as well as for the fabric itself, must be taken into account. If a dry-clean-only trim is used on a washable sheer curtain, the sheer curtain then becomes dry clean only. This problem could be solved by attaching the trim so it could easily be removed during laundering.

TOP TREATMENTS

Valances and cornices have played an important role in the history of window treatments, and they are still key elements in window decor for many homes and businesses. Soft and structured top treatments are used either by themselves or combined with draperies, curtains, blinds or shades.

Top treatment styling varies greatly. You'll see pleats, points, scallops, cuffs, gathers, tabs, ties and layers. Drapery workrooms create many unusual treatments, but no-sew and quick-sew techniques offer lower-cost options. Experienced sewers may use structured sewing methods and more detailed styling while new sewing aids are available for those with little time or limited sewing skills. Linens, towels and sheets offer quick remedies for curtains and top treatments. No-sew methods drape, fold, knot and shape fabrics into the desired style while various tapes, pins, tacks, hook-and-loop fasteners and holders secure the fabric in place.

Swags, cascades and jabots are classics that appear individually and in combinations. Styling variations include formal, casual, overlapped, tied and crossed options. Swags and cascades take on a new ambiance when slipped through sconces, draped over rods and poles or knotted in place.

Cornices add variety and interest. Wooden cornices come in various styles with natural or painted finishes or covered with fabric. Use them separately or combined with other fabric treatments over blinds and shades.

HARDWARE AND ACCESSORIES

The vast array of accessories provides one of the most dramatic changes in window treatments. Although decorative poles have traditionally been used, fancy finials and rings add variety and interest. Choices now include decorative brackets, end caps, scarf holders, sconces and hold-backs along with window art and jewelry. Use these items either alone or in combinations.

Wood, acrylic, brass and wrought iron hardware and accessories are available in a variety of finishes for casual or formal styles. Unfinished wood poles can be covered with wallpaper or fabric or decorated with a paint finish, (plain, sponging, ragging or colorwashing). Pole sizes vary in length and diameter. Finials in a design of your choice individualize each treatment. Concealed and decorative tie-back holders and swag holders add still more options.

Don't forget the more traditional sash, curtain, café, tension and traverse rods. Some decora-

tive traverse rods can be converted into poles. Sash and tension rods are good choices for layered looks since they can be placed close to the glass. Use tension rods for inside-frame installation since they won't damage the woodwork. They're also handy for metal frame windows and for frequent movers. Magnetic brackets are also available for metal frame window installation.

Several child safety features are available. A power remote control system eliminates cords and their danger. Remote control features are popular for convenience, too. Prevent accidents by using breakapart tassels on blind pulls. They'll snap apart when a small amount of pressure is applied. Some companies have replaced chain draws with a wand that's not as accessible to children and pets. Your current window treatments can be adapted for safety by adding such items as cord clips and tension tools or ties.

Give your decor a dramatic and personal touch with new accessories and supports. Be creative, but keep in mind that they can add substantially to the cost of the total window treatment.

BLINDS AND SHADES

Blinds and shades are enjoying renewed consumer interest. Manufacturers offer many new products in a wide variety of styles, colors and innovations. For instance, look for blinds that repel dust. One model reduces static electricity which in turn helps to keep dust from collecting on the surface. Another has an ion alignment that repels dust particles. When shopping for blinds, especially the two-inch or larger slats, these dust repellents could be an important factor.

Retail stores and designers show creative stylings and innovative mechanics to update traditional products. They offer many variations of blinds and shades, including wood, vinyl and aluminum blinds; slat widths from 1/2- to 2-inches or more; horizontal and vertical slats; cellular, pleated, coach shades; and other softly-styled fabric shades. Each category has a variety of features and qualities. Prices vary according to size, material, styling and installation.

SELECTING A BLIND OR SHADE

Select a window treatment with an eye both toward function and the styling effect desired. Consider first the functions desired from the window treatment. How important are privacy, light control, insulation/energy efficiency and maintenance? Which blind or shade is best suited for the job? Then develop a treatment that will accomplish the needs within your current decorating style. Review the options on price and selection to achieve the desired look. The chart on the previous page will help you evaluate each style.



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Before the grill, check the deck

STATEPOINT MEDIA

There's nothing like enjoying a meal on your deck, entertaining friends and family at a backyard barbecue, or simply relaxing outside in your favorite chair. But before you fire up the grill, you need to make sure your deck has endured the elements and is ready for the spring season.

"The abuse a deck surface takes from the weather, foot traffic, barbecues, and food and drink spills can create both surface and structural problems. Moisture also can be a hazard when a deck is located around a pool area, or if it is continually sprayed with water from a sprinkler," says Sean Morris, product manager for Cabot Woodcare.

"Homeowners who do not properly clean and seal their decks, will find them turning gray and dingy, while the wood surfaces may begin to crack, split and warp," he adds.

There are several steps you can take to prepare your deck for the season:

■ For safety's sake, make sure there are no nails sticking up from the deck or out from any posts. Over the winter, moisture buildup can cause expansion and contraction of wood which can loosen nails.

■ A clean deck is a durable deck, so clean it thoroughly every one to two years and restain every two to four years. A deck and outdoor furniture can be cleaned, stained, and rid of mold, wood rot, mildew stains and algae, in two weeks or less. To complete the job quickly, be prepared with the right tools: a power sprayer or garden hose, scrub brush, drop cloths and a large staining/paint brush.

■ Before staining or sealing your deck, make sure the surface has been prepped. Not only does the deck need to be free of debris, the deck needs to be cleaned properly. If the deck is dirty, scrub it with a proper cleanser, such as Cabot's Problem-Solver Wood Cleaner, then rinse it with



STATEPOINT MEDIA PHOTO

Decks need maintenance and care to withstand weather and normal usage.

clean water and allow it to dry for two to three days before staining.

■ Choose the right stain or sealant. Water-based finishes dry quickly, so oil-based stains should be used if you are finishing your deck in the heat. Oil-based stains used on decks, such as Cabot's Decking Stains, should penetrate deep into wood and contain a tough alkyl resin for scuff resistance. Also available are stains containing 100 percent acrylic resin, like Cabot's Solid Color Decking Stains, which provide a tough, scuff- and water-repellent finish, yet are breathable.

■ Decks and porches can give way if they are old or improperly built. Scrutinize them for rotting or split wood; wobbly handrails; loose, rusting or missing hardware; warped floorboards; and weakening supports, girders or joists.

■ Beware of welcome mats on decks. They can collect moisture and dry out too slowly, which can lead to water damage and/or wood rot. After precipitation, be sure to dry out the mat and allow the deck to dry.

■ Think about where you place your grill. Placing a hard rubber door mat underneath it will keep your deck free of stains. If grease drips onto your deck, use a household cleaner to wipe it clean.

For more advice on caring for decks, visit www.CabotStains.com.

"It's easy to forget that decks need maintenance and care just as your lawn or roof does," says Morris. "By performing routine checks and taking care of the warning signs, homeowners can extend the life of their decks so they can be enjoyed for years to come."



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Maytag voluntarily recalls 1.6 million refrigerators

WASHINGTON (AP) – Maytag Corp. said March 10 that it has voluntarily recalled about 1.6 million refrigerators due to an electrical problem that could create a fire hazard.

The problem has led to 16 incidents ranging from smoke damage to major kitchen damage, Maytag said.

The company and the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission said the recall – the nation's largest involving refrigerators, according to federal authorities, involves some Jenn-Air, Amana, Admiral, Magic Chef, Maytag, Performa by Maytag and Crosley side-by-side and top freezer refrigerators. They were sold from January 2001 through January 2004 at department and appliance stores and by homebuilders.

The refrigerators, which sold for \$350 to \$1,600, came in black, bisque, white and stainless steel. Those with bottom freezers are not included in the recall.

The recall notice said an electrical failure in the relay component that turns on the refrigerator's compressor can cause overheating and pose a serious fire hazard.

Maytag, a unit of Whirlpool Corp., said 41 refrigerator ignition incidents have been reported, with 16 resulting in various degrees of damage.

Consumers were advised to contact Maytag to find out if their refrigerator is included in the recall and to set up a free in-home repair. Its toll-free number is 866-533-9817.

The company said refrigerators should not be returned to the stores that sold them.

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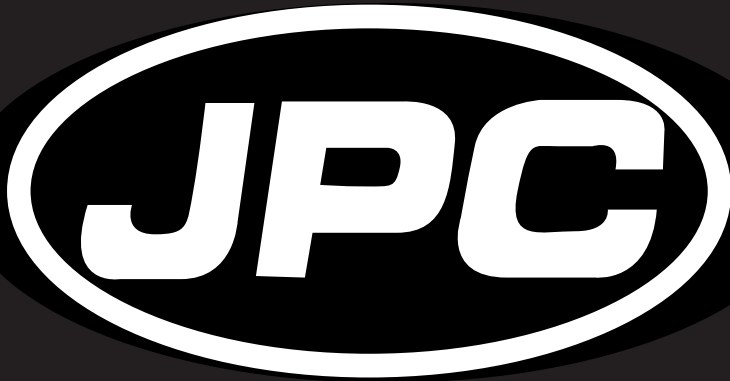
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Buying furniture used a bargain

UNIVERSITY OF KENTUCKY COOPERATIVE EXTENSION SERVICE
Furniture is a major purchase for many families. Good quality used furniture may be more durable and better looking than poor quality new furniture. Take time to shop carefully to get the best value for the money spent. Compare prices on items that you need. Then buy well-built, good quality pieces in a style that you like since you will live with it, look at it and use it every day.

THINK ABOUT...

Here are some things to think about before buying furniture:

■ Which pieces of furniture do you need the most? Plan to buy them first.

■ What will the furniture be used for? In a small apartment or house, you need furniture that has more than one use—a couch that can also be used for sleeping or a table with extra leaves to make it bigger.

■ How long will the furniture be needed? Do you want it to last “forever” or for a few years?

■ How much care will you be giving it?

■ What size limitations are there? Measure the space where you plan to put the furniture. Then measure the piece that you are planning to buy. Does it fit into the room? Can you get it through doorways, hallways and stair wells?

■ How much can you afford to spend? There are a variety of places to buy furniture, and attractive, comfortable furniture comes in all price ranges.

Used furniture can be a bargain if you choose it carefully. Check the newspaper ads and watch for bulletin board notices in apartment buildings, offices, supermarkets and laundries. Other good places to look for used furniture include:

- Auctions
- Garage sales
- Good Will and Salvation Army stores

■ Used furniture stores
Save money by doing some work on restoring furniture yourself. Can you refinish or repair some pieces? Upholster or slip-cover others? With a little imagination, you may see a way to restyle some pieces. Some furniture may only need a good cleaning or a bit of repair to be useful again. Do you have the skills and tools needed to do the work? Big repairs can make a used piece of furniture too expensive unless you can make them yourself.

Major appliances can be a major purchase

UNIVERSITY OF KENTUCKY COOPERATIVE EXTENSION SERVICE

The purchase of a major appliance is a major expenditure. Selection of the best appliance to meet your needs and ultimate use is important. The questions below are to help you think through your purchase decision.

■ What do you need? Major appliances come in many sizes and with varying features. Think about your lifestyle, what features you will use and what size is best for your immediate and future needs. As the features increase, so does the cost of the appliance. Think about the features and ask yourself if you will use them. Are they important to your use of the appliance?

■ Consider the care required in maintaining this appliance. Look for an appliance with smooth construction, few cracks and seams where soil can accumulate, and materials that do not require special cleaning products.

■ Will the appliance fit in the space you currently have or will you need to remodel to make space for a larger appliance?

■ Will there be installation costs? Some major appliances may require special electrical outlets, gas connections or water lines. These additional costs should be considered along with the purchase price of the appliance.

More online

For tips on buying major appliances and furniture, visit the U.K. Cooperative Extension Service www.ca.uky.edu

■ Consider the operating costs and maintenance costs. Most major appliances come with an energy label that provides an estimate of the cost to operate that particular appliance. It may be desirable to pay more for an appliance that will cost less to operate, thus saving money over the lifetime use of the appliance.

■ Where will you obtain help when the appliance needs to be repaired? The availability of this should be considered when purchasing the appliance.

■ Read the guarantee that comes with the appliance. Be sure that you understand what is and what is not included in the guarantee and who pays for it. What is the time period for the guarantee? Does it include labor and parts or just parts?

■ Appliances come with several ‘seals of approval’. Important ones to look for that give assurance for safety are the UL (Underwriters’ Laboratory) seal for electrical and fire safety; and the AGA blue star emblem (American Gas Association) for safety and performance standards on gas appliances.

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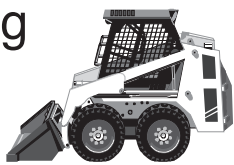
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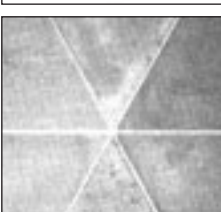
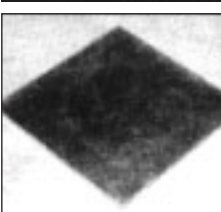
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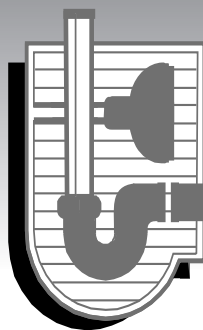
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DOI offers tips to policy holders dealing with cleanup of disasters

PRESS RELEASE
FRANKFORT, Ky. – Signs have begun popping up on street corners across the commonwealth offering assistance with tree trimming and debris removal. Trucks with out-of-state license plates are showing up in neighborhoods hit by the recent ice storm.

“This is a time when Kentuckians may need to show a little less Southern hospitality,” said Sharon P. Clark, commissioner of the Kentucky Department of Insurance (DOI). “We urge consumers to use caution when selecting someone to assist with clean-up and debris removal.”

In the aftermath of any disaster, Clark said consumers should deal only with reputable companies and should ask for proof of general liability and workers’ compensation insurance. In addition, some municipalities may require a special permit or license for those working in the disaster area. Check with the Better Business Bureau or local Chamber of Commerce for assistance in locating reputable companies to handle storm clean-up.

Kentucky residents are advised to remember some basic information for dealing with the aftermath of any natural disaster:

Understand there is a cost when dealing with a public adjuster. Kentucky has 26,000 licensed adjusters, and DOI has authorized about 800 more to enter the state on an emergency basis to assist with ice storm claims. The majority work for insurance companies with no cost to the consumer. Public adjusters, however, work on a consumer’s be-

More online

After the Storm Has Passed

Find it at doi.ppr.ky.gov/kentucky under Free Publications.

half and are paid a fee or a percentage of any claim paid. This could leave the insured without enough money to make necessary repairs.

Know what your policy covers and what your company expects of you during the claims process. DOI has received reports of incorrect information being disseminated regarding what is covered by insurance and how to handle the claims process. Don’t assume food spoilage is covered without calling your agent or checking your policy. Don’t purchase a generator under the assumption that your insurer or the federal government will reimburse you. While temporary steps should be taken to prevent further damage (place a tarp on the roof or remove water from a basement), no permanent repairs should be made until the adjuster has finished reviewing the claim. Consumers should keep receipts for any temporary repairs made and take photos to document the damage.

A decision about extending the time to pay premiums would be made by companies, not DOI. DOI has received a number of calls

from consumers who say they have asked their insurers for an extension or leniency in paying premiums due during or immediately after the ice storm. Consumers say they have been advised to contact DOI to request this service. Individual insurers would make any determination regarding a premium payment extension, not DOI.

Make claims as soon as possible but take care of immediate needs. DOI has received information that some consumers are being told they must make claims immediately. While it is best to make claims as soon as possible, some damage may not be obvious right away, and waiting a few days is not going to cause a problem.

“Companies understand that those without power for days are dealing with more immediate needs at this time,” said Commissioner Clark. “Kentuckians don’t need added panic over filing an insurance claim.”

Patience remains the key. In a widespread disaster, such as the recent ice storm, it may take several days after a claim is reported for an adjuster to assess the damage. In some parts of the state, insurance personnel are unable to enter areas due to blocked roads and downed power lines. Once it is safe to enter an area, additional delays may occur because of the widespread damage.

Understanding insurance policy key in disasters

PRESS RELEASE
FRANKFORT, Ky. – Reading and understanding your insurance policy can prevent unnecessary confusion and expense, particularly during natural disasters such as the recent ice storm.

“Consumers should not assume something is covered without first checking the policy,” said Sharon P. Clark, commissioner of the Kentucky Department of Insurance. “If there is any question about reimbursement, call your agent before incurring the expense.”

Clark reminds consumers that most policies do not cover living expenses when not necessitated by an insured loss.

“If you leave your house because there is no electricity, your insurance company is not going to reimburse you for those hotel expenses,” she said. “However, if you leave your house because a tree has fallen on the roof, making it unsafe to stay there, additional living expenses generally will be covered.”

To assist consumers with common concerns, the department has developed these frequently asked questions:

■ A tree on my property fell on my neighbor’s house. Whose insurance pays?

In most cases, the homeowner’s insurance policy of the person who has the damage will pay for the loss. If your tree falls on your neighbor’s property and there is no well-documented proof that the tree was diseased or that you were somehow negligent, your neighbor’s homeowner’s insurance policy covers the loss.

■ If my neighbor’s tree falls on my car, whose insurance pays?

Your auto insurer would pay if your neighbor’s tree falls on your car but only if you have comprehensive coverage. There is no coverage if you only have liability coverage on your auto policy.

■ The ice storm damaged my trees and shrubs. Will my insurance pay for replacements?

No, landscaping is not an insured loss.

■ If there is damage to my shed, garage or outbuildings, will my insurance cover the damage?

Yes, if coverage for the outbuilding is included under your homeowner’s policy.

■ If the power goes off and I rent a generator to keep my house warm, will insurance cover the cost?

In most cases, no.

■ Will insurance cover the cost of removing fallen trees if the tree did not damage insured property?

Some homeowner’s policies have a set amount available for removal of trees or debris but usually only if part of a covered loss. Check your policy or call your agent.

Consumers may contact the Kentucky Department of Insurance at 800-595-6053 for additional information or to file a complaint.

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INTERNET IMAGE
If you are planting a flower garden for the first time this spring, it's good to remember to start small.

Planting your own flower garden can be as easy as 1-2-3

By **JIM FITZGERALD**
ASSOCIATED PRESS WRITER
Start small in spring: Watch carefully in summer. Plant daffodils in fall.
If you're thinking about creating your first flower garden in 2009, following those three steps will give you a good chance at success, a low-cost test to judge whether horticulture is for you, and a basic introduction to the joys and successes that await if you continue next year.

START SMALL

You'll be happiest if you contain yourself to a small plot. It may not be easy to rein in your plans, especially when you come across photos of spectacular landscapes in the countless catalogs and online offers that will inevitably come your way. Failure is a constant in gardening, but success in a small space is far preferable to an ambitious undertaking that leads to dying plants and raging weeds.
Besides, if after one year you find out gardening's not for you, you'll have spent less time, money and effort to find out. And if your little plot flourishes, and you find yourself delighted, you'll have a better idea of what you're in for as you expand your space, try new plants and test more complicated techniques in 2010.

With that in mind, your first step is to pick out a good spot, assuming you have a choice. If your climate is temperate, you'll want as much sun as possible. As you gain experience you'll want to deal with the challenges and pleasures of gardening in the shade, but that can wait. (Would-be gardeners in the hottest parts of the country have special requirements and should seek local advice.)

Remember that you'll have to drag a hose or lug a watering bucket to your garden, so don't put it too far from a spigot. And if you can, place it where you can see it from inside or where you'll pass it every day. It's easy to neglect a hidden garden.

Testing your soil and learning how to improve it – with compost, peat moss, manure and such – is an important and interesting part of gardening but that can wait until next year. Remember, we're sticking to the basics in 2009.

The next step is to literally dig in. Wait until spring frosts are unlikely in your region (a date you can get from your local Cooperative Extension or other online source) and the ground is not wet, and then grab a pitchfork or spade and dig down into your little plot to break up the soil. You'll want to remove stones, grass and weeds and break up big clods of earth so your baby plants can get a foothold. Toss in some fertilizer (ask for a balanced, time-released type), rake it smooth, water well and you're ready for planting.

Don't worry, just yet, about seeds. It's great fun to start seeds inside, giving you a head start on the season, but it can also be tricky – again, wait to see if you're interested next year. This year, just head to your local garden center and see what annuals are for sale.

Annuals are plants that live their entire life in one year. Perennials are the ones that survive winter and return in spring. Under our keeping-it-simple program, restrict yourself to annuals this year (until fall, when we get to the daffodils). But keep dream-

ing about the perennials, shrubs and trees – to say nothing of vegetables – you can try later. After all, you have a lifetime.
Ask for advice at the garden center, or from gardening neighbors, about which annuals might do best in your plot: consider marigolds and zinnias if it's really sunny, impatiens and wax begonias if you're stuck with shade. They come in little plastic cells, often in six-packs or flats of 24. Remember that they're going to get a lot bigger, so don't overbuy. Pick plants that are compact rather than leggy, green rather than yellowing, with buds rather than already in flower.

Water those babies when you get them home, then head out to your waiting garden plot with your plants, a trowel and a watering can. One by one, pop them out of their cells, spread their roots just a bit, dig a small hole with the trowel and carefully set them into the bed. Firm the soil around the roots, then immediately water each plant well. Next morning, water them again.

WATCH CAREFULLY

OK, the garden is in. But you have to keep an eye on it as you wait for the payoff of beautiful flowers. Don't rely on rain; keep the watering can handy and make sure the soil is always moist just under the surface. In summer, you'll have to check daily. If you go away, employ a neighbor.
Keep after the inevitable weeds. If mulch is available, it will help, but your garden is small enough, and you're watching closely enough, that you can keep on top of invaders.

By July, the original fertilizer may be exhausted; add more, following the directions on the package. If your plants get so tall they want to flop, use twigs or stakes to prop them up. If any problems develop, or you're invaded by deer or other critters, go online or to the garden center for solutions. Horticulture and Fine Gardening magazines, along with Martha Stewart and many others, have excellent sites.
Meanwhile, enjoy! Watch those buds turn into blooms under your care. Cut some for inside. Brag a little.

PLANT DAFFODILS

Come October, it's time to expand beyond your little plot and think about next year. Buy as many daffodil bulbs as you can afford (well, keep it under 100). Pick up fat, firm ones at the garden center and plant them 6 to 8 inches deep wherever you'd like to see them pop up (but not where they'll get mowed with the grass).

As your annuals die with the frost and winter sets in, and you begin thinking about next year's garden (and keeping a garden journal), you'll know that under the frozen soil, these wonderful, nearly carefree bulbs are already waiting to release bright yellow (or white, or pink) flowers to greet you next spring.

Seeds, swaps can keep gardening affordable

By **SHARON THEIMER**
ASSOCIATED PRESS WRITER
A flower garden may seem like a frivolous expense in these tough economic times, but experts say there are plenty of ways to cultivate a beautiful and varied collection of blooms when money is tight.

Options for gardening on the cheap range from the labor-intensive – growing flowers from seed – to the neighborly, such as swapping plants with friends or asking a successful gardener down the street for cuttings, cup-of-sugar style.

Even flower lovers without green thumbs can find ways to save. Those who lack the time or expertise to do anything but stop by a greenhouse for annuals can cut costs by choosing low-maintenance varieties that spread out in the garden, requiring fewer plants to fill a space. Some annuals are cheaper when purchased as bulbs rather than plants.

Still, there is no way around it: Achieving significant savings can take time and effort.

"Growing things from seed is absolutely the cheapest way to go," said Ann Hancock, a horticulturist at Michigan State University's DeLapa Perennial Garden in East Lansing, Mich. "You pay a premium for buying already-started plants from a greenhouse."

To novices, nurturing plants from seed may seem tricky and tedious. It can require close attention over several weeks, with no guarantee of success.

Hancock and other horticulturalists suggest some simple steps:

- Plant the seeds in sterile seed mix rather than potting soil, to avoid weeds and fungus that can weaken or even kill young plants. It's OK to plant the seeds densely. Start them about six weeks before you intend to plant them outside.
- Use clean containers with holes in the bottom for good drainage. Wash them in a solution of bleach and water for at least three minutes if they've been used before. There's no need to invest

More online

National Gardening Association
www.garden.org
Growing plants from seed
extension.umd.edu/publications/PDFs/FS551.pdf

in new plastic pots – even paper cups will work.

■ Keep the seed mix moist by checking it frequently and misting it with a sprayer, rather than pouring water on it.

■ After planting the seeds, cover the container with plastic wrap to help prevent them from drying out.

■ To ensure adequate light and minimize the risk of the seedlings drying out, put the containers under a fluorescent shop light or ultraviolet light rather than in direct sunlight. Hang the light about 3 inches above the containers.

■ When the plants come up, remove the plastic wrap.

■ When the plants become seedling size, transplant them to a tray with cells, using soilless mix and putting one plant in each cell.

■ When the seedlings get three or four leaves, they're ready to go into the garden.

Plants that can be started indoors or seeded directly into the garden include zinnias, marigolds, snapdragons, sunflowers and nasturtiums.

Sunflowers in particular can be started from seed pretty easily, and there are many kinds to choose from, said Charlie Nardozi, a National Gardening Association horticulturist based in

Burlington, Vt.

"Some of the newer varieties are not as big as the old varieties, and they have multiple heads," Nardozi said. "They produce from midsummer right to frost."

A bonus with sunflowers: birdseed.

Other good varieties to start indoors from seed include cosmos, petunias and cleome, also known as spider flower.

Plugging into a network of flower enthusiasts can be another way to save, said Ellen Hartranft, a horticulturist at Brookside Gardens, a public botanical park in Wheaton, Md.

Check your local botanical garden for plant society shows and sales, go to charity plant sales or take part in garden club plant exchanges.

"If you can't find a formal sale, just ask your friends and neighbors. If someone you know has a beautiful garden, they're often willing to share cuttings or divisions," Hartranft said. Spring is an ideal time to ask, because that's when gardeners are often dividing perennials into multiple plants.

"It's a good way to get a more established plant even than you would if you purchased it at a nursery," she said. "A division of a sturdy, successful, hearty plant is more likely to succeed in your garden."

Day lilies, bee balm, black-eyed susan, phlox, live forever and hostas are among easy-to-divide, easy-to-care-for perennials.

For novices, buying plants from a greenhouse is often the safest option, Nardozi said.

Greenhouse annuals that grow

to cover a lot of ground include impatiens, petunias, cosmos, snapdragons and marigolds. Annuals and perennials that can be cheaper if purchased as bulbs include caladiums, begonias and dahlias.

And plant prices come down after peak growing season.

"They might be a little ragged-looking, but you can save 40 or 50 percent," Nardozi said. The plants can bounce right back with a little tender loving care, he added.

Gardeners in areas with poor soil can save by creating raised beds, building up the sides with cinderblocks, brick or other material and then putting fresh soil in, to lessen the chance the soil will flatten out or leach away and have to be replaced, Nardozi said.

Those who decide to skip flowers this year would do well to put in a cover crop such as buckwheat or rye grass that can be cut or turned under, Nardozi said. That will look nice, build up the soil's fertility for next year's garden and help control weeds.

Still, even in the Great Depression people had flower gardens, Hartranft noted.

"People can actually grow vegetables in their flower borders," she said. "The act of gardening relieves stress, and it's important to have beauty when you're surrounded by depressing news."

Added Michigan State's Hancock: "I would never advocate buying flowers if you have a house payment or an electricity bill to pay. But having said that, if you have your basics covered, you know, flowers are good for the soul."

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Spring cleaning tips to rid your home of hidden dirt, allergens

STATEPOINT MEDIA

It's time to give your home a proper spring cleaning, but it's far too easy to miss hidden dirt – germs, allergens and dust mites that lurk in hard-to-reach spaces and places we often forget to dust or vacuum.

To keep a healthy home, you need to make a proper plan of where you want to clean and have the right tools at hand. From sponges and mops to the right vacuum cleaner, arming yourself properly can help eliminate your home's hidden health hazards while making spring cleaning easier on your body.

"When it comes to ridding your home's surfaces of dirt and allergens it's all about being thorough and making sure you don't forget to vacuum bedding, upholstery and window treatments. Most importantly, you need to use a vacuum that maintains its suction power as your vacuum bag fills with dust and dirt," says Gino Iacovella, National Marketing Manager for Vacuums, Panasonic Consumer Electronics Company.

Here are some useful tips from Iacovella and the experts at Panasonic, for effectively and more easily cleaning your home:

- Don't skip surfaces. Most

people vacuum or wash their floors, but skip other surfaces where dust can accumulate. Be sure to dust and vacuum walls, ceilings, moldings, door jams, window sills and the tops of light fixtures or ceiling fans.

- Window treatments and lampshades attract dust and germs as much as any other surface in your home, but are just as easily cleaned when using a removable vacuum attachment, such as a combo brush or crevice tool extension.
- Be sure your vacuum is powerful enough and doesn't lose suction as it fills with dirt. If your vacuum loses suction midway through its run, dirt and harmful allergens and dust mites can escape right back into your home. For instance, Panasonic's Performance Plus Platinum Line of OptiFlow canister vacuums uses new technology to extend the life of the vacuums' bags by creating better suction as the bag fills up.
- Wash bed linens, afghans and sofa pillow cases in 130 degree hot water to kill allergens and dust mites. Be sure to vacuum mattresses and pillows to rid them of hidden dust mites.
- If you or family members suffer from allergies, use a vacuum with a HEPA filter or a

HEPA filtration telescoping wand. These filters trap irritating particles so they don't circulate back into your home's air and in this way keep your home's allergens to a minimum.

- It's easy to overlook common household mold in humid areas, such as your bathrooms or kitchen. Use a cleaning solution that contains low levels of bleach to kill mold on non-porous, hard surfaces.
- All that bending, stooping and stretching can make cleaning hard on your body. Having the right-sized cleaning implements like brushes and mops can help. Use a vacuum cleaner that makes bag removal easy. For instance, Panasonic's OptiFlow vacuums include a bag caddy that makes bag disposal easier because it pops out, allowing you to simply carry it to your garbage can.
- Be sure to follow all usage directions and precautions on household cleaning products and in your vacuum's instructions.

"Thoroughly cleaning your home isn't just about making it look good. Make sure you eliminate those nasty allergens, dust mites and mold spores that can negatively impact your family's health," says Iacovella.

Removing spots, stains on carpet, upholstery can be tricky business

UNIVERSITY OF KENTUCKY COOPERATIVE EXTENSION SERVICE

Spots, stains and discoloration of carpets, upholstery and other home furnishings textile products happen as a result of normal family activity in our homes. Basically, there are two types of spots that appear. The first type is the common stain which occurs when food is spilled or ordinary dirt or oily substances are tracked in. These spots are usually seen immediately and can usually be removed without damage to carpet or upholstery fabrics.

A second type of stain or discoloration on home furnishings textiles is caused by chemicals. This type of stain may not be apparent for days or even months after chemical contact. The chemical actually changes or destroys the dye and nothing can usually be done to restore the dye to its original color. Since there are few known dyes which will resist chemical attack, and manufacturers cannot prevent their products from coming into contact with these chemicals, these types of spots and stains are not covered under most manufacturers' warranties.

The only real solution for consumers is in the careful use of any household chemical products. It is very important that you read and carefully follow the directions. Special attention should be given to any precautions or warnings that are supplied by the manufacturer.

Some of the more common chemical products known to cause problems include medications, certain cosmetics, all household bleaches, disinfectants, furniture polish, certain plant foods, fertiliz-

ers and insecticides. The effect differs according to the type of chemical, the environmental conditions and the particular textile products involved. Chemicals, for instance, can lie dormant until a change in humidity, temperature, moisture or sunlight activates the chemical reaction. This delayed reaction then makes the spots seem to appear quickly and without cause. For example, relatively high humidity is necessary to start a bleaching action, and many other chemical agents require wetness to trigger a reaction. As a result, discoloration may occur shortly after a carpet or upholstery fabric is cleaned. This is not the fault of the cleaning product or the person doing the cleaning, but is simply the delayed result of the chemical reaction.

Knowledge and correct use of the household chemicals is important for the prevention of these spots and stains.

IDENTIFYING CHEMICAL SPOTS

The following questions may be helpful when trying to identify the source of chemical spots and stains on carpets and other household items.

- Where is the spot located in the house and within a room? Is it located in teenagers room, near baseboards, or near house plants? What chemicals have been used or carried into this area?
- Was the substance spilled or

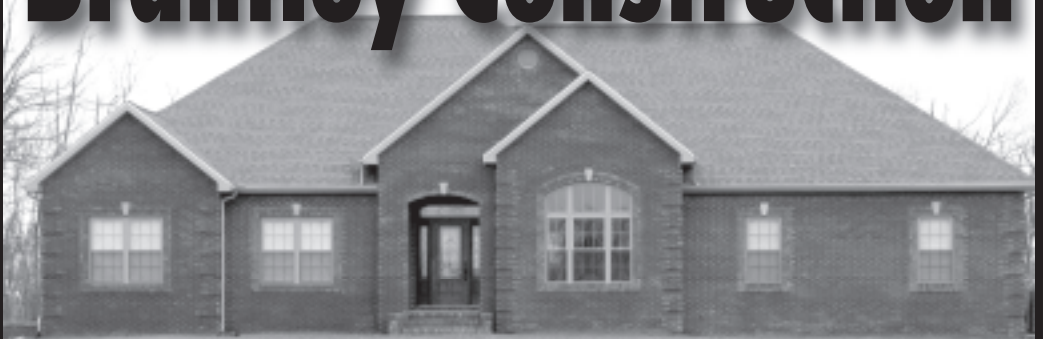
tracked onto a carpet? Study the pattern of the spot or stain. Spills often resemble explosions and radiate out from the center. They will also generally be larger near the Educational programs of the Kentucky Cooperative Extension Service serve all people regardless of race, color, age, sex, religion, disability, or national origin. Tracking in from another area leaves a clearly defined shape, such as a footprint. These stains are usually found on the top of the tufts of yarn.

- Does the spot have an odor? If so, a foreign substance is present, and the type of odor could be a clue to its identity.
- What color are the spots? Different chemicals react differently to the variety of colors and dyes found in carpets. They also react differently under various climatic conditions. In general, red spots on tan or beige carpet suggests strong acids. Yellow stains indicate reactions by strong oxidizers or bleachers. Green or blue stains indicate sunlight combined with another substance. Note: Dye spots caused at the mill during production are rare and are always darker, never lighter, than the background.

TREATMENT

Once a textile product has been chemically stained, nothing can be done either by an individual or a professional cleaner to restore it to its original color and condition. In this case the best that can be done is to identify the source of contamination and prevent further damage to the item. It's important to prevent spots from occurring in the first place by using household chemicals with care.

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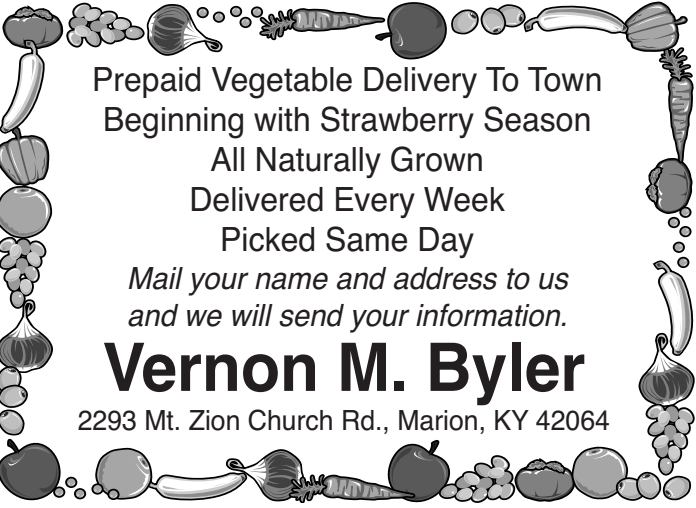
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Hardins keep 19th-century charm of family home

Continued from 1B

the old den. With Meteja's suggestions, they added his-and-her closets and overhead storage, on either side of the doorway into the bedroom. They remodeled a small bathroom – keeping the pale green tile on the lower half of the walls – and gave it some local flavor with an octagon stained-glass window made by Marion's Will Ed Arflack, which Phillis won in a give-away from the Crittenden County Museum.

While the entire house is warm and inviting, it's Pippi's bathroom that seems to get the most attention from visitors.

Keeping up her end of the bargain, Phillis let Pippi design the bathroom.

The end result was a very unique Egyptian theme featuring a hand-

painted mural by former Marion resident Sherri Wright. It includes plenty of Egyptian artifact replicas, a garden tub and walk-in shower.

Everyone wants to know the inspiration.

Pippi laughs and says surely one day he will trace his genealogy to Egypt – at least that might explain his fascination with the culture.

"I've always been intrigued with the development of the pyramids and Egyptian study," he said.

The bathroom has a life-size statue they call King Tut, which doubles as a linen cabinet, and two other period statues. But the mural above the tub, framed by broken ceramic tile pieces, creates the illusion of a nighttime scene looking from a temple onto a pyramid in the desert.

The theme is carried out from floor to ceiling and every corner of the room with navy blue walls to simulate darkness and gold crown molding to match the pyramids. A small black and gold cabinet with Egyptian scenery serves as a vanity for a modern vessel sink.

For fun – and quite fitting – the Hardins incorporated a computer-generated picture which they purchased in Las Vegas many years ago, showing them seemingly dressed in Egyptian regalia.

They were a little reluctant to show the bathroom to one of their guests upon completion of their home. Pippi's cousin, Isabelle Vaughn, was among three families who lived in the home during the Depression. She provided the Hardins with valuable history, including the fact that her father built

the two rooms in the second story, along with the staircase. Today, the second story features two bedrooms, one containing a beautiful old bedroom suite belonging to Phillis' aunt Minnie Cruce, which, interestingly, was purchased by Pippi's mother at Ms. Cruce's estate sale. The bedroom furniture was a gift to Ms. Cruce from her husband, purchased while the couple was on their honeymoon in Louisiana. The other second floor bedroom is decorated with the Hardin's three grandchildren in mind, a Barbie comforter on a bed on one side of the room, and a Hulk Hogan bed spread on the other. In the center of the room is another mural painted by Wright, this one is a garden scene depicting the three grandchildren on a tree swing.

As she talked about her time in the

house, Vaughn also told the Hardins about watching her grandmother make biscuits on an old Hoosier cabinet.

Through that visit with Ms. Vaughn, the Hardins realized the cabinet she was talking about was now a refurbished antique standing in their dining room. Pippi's mother always told them it was the oldest piece of furniture in the house.

With a few details yet to finish, the Hardins are pleased with their handiwork.

"This house is not just for me and Pip, it's for his brothers and sisters because this is always going to be the place everybody comes back to," Phillis explains. "As long as we live here, his brothers and sisters will always come back."



Despite a major overhaul that includes a cheerful yellow, blue and white color scheme, the Hardin's kitchen features old cabinets with new custom-made doors.

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