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Volume 22, Issue 12

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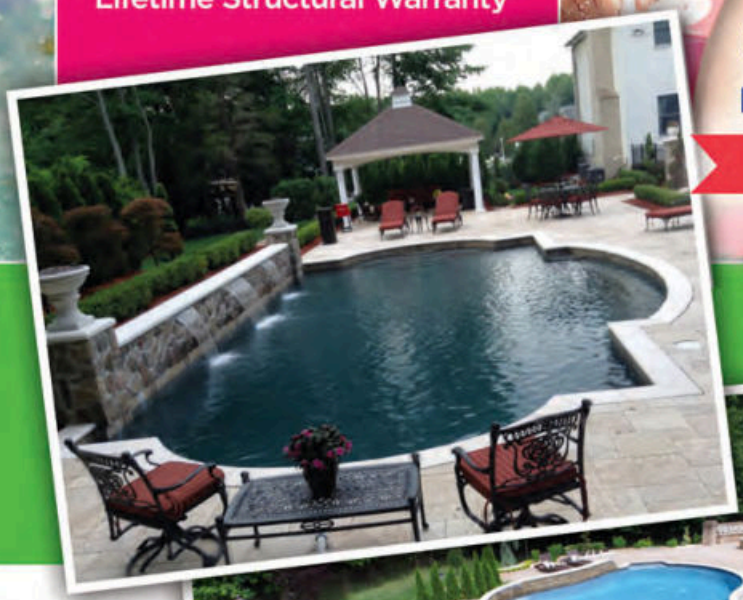
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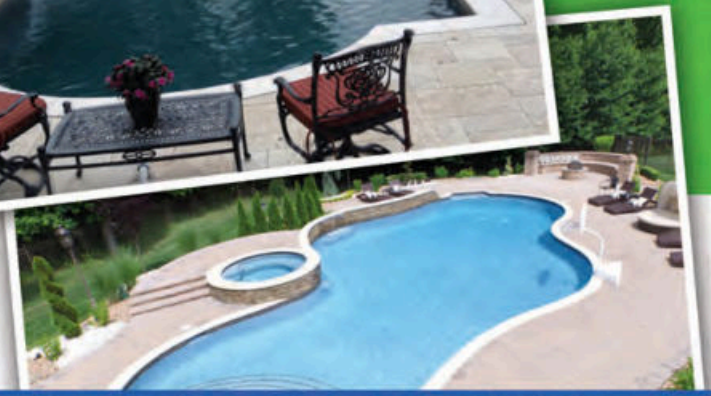
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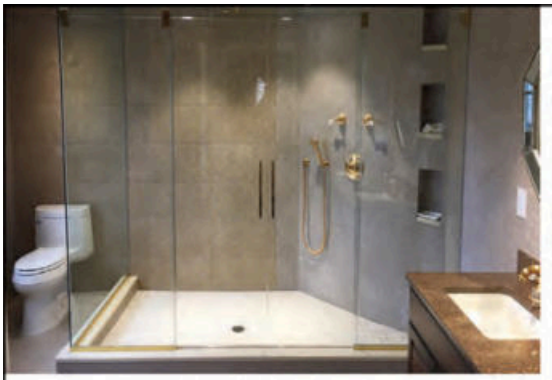
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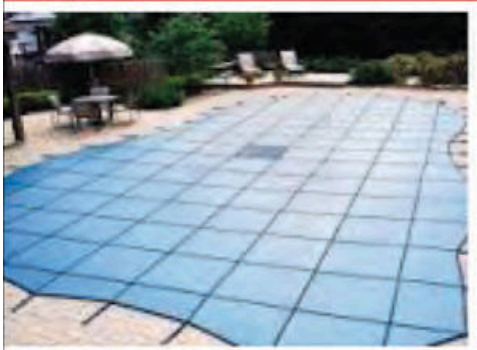
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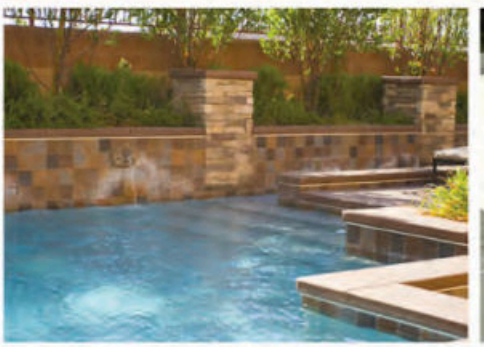
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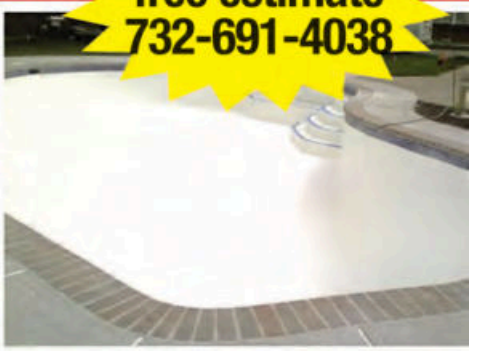
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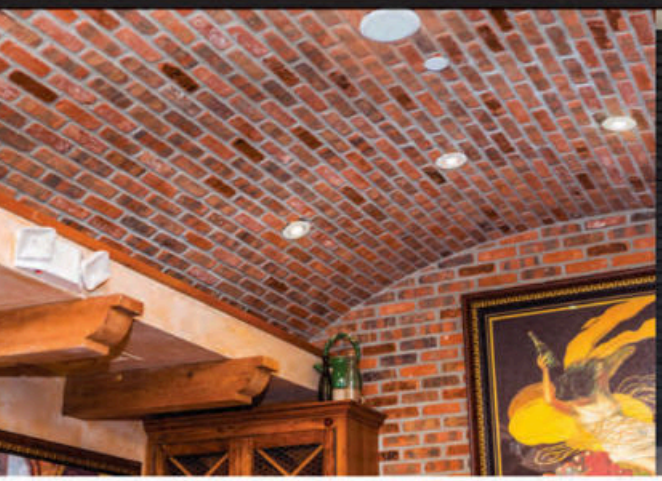


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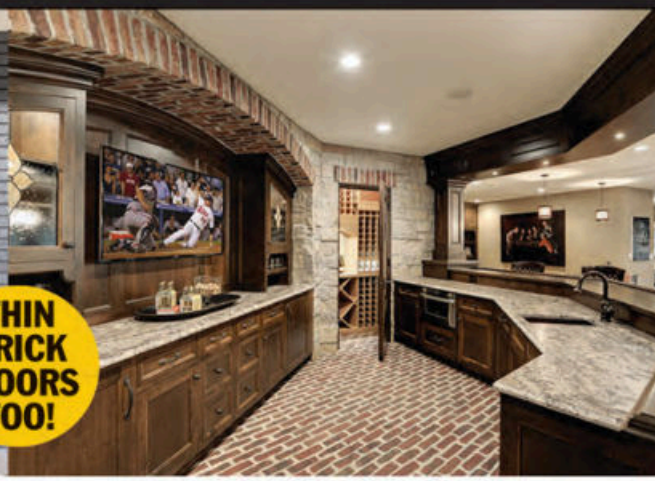
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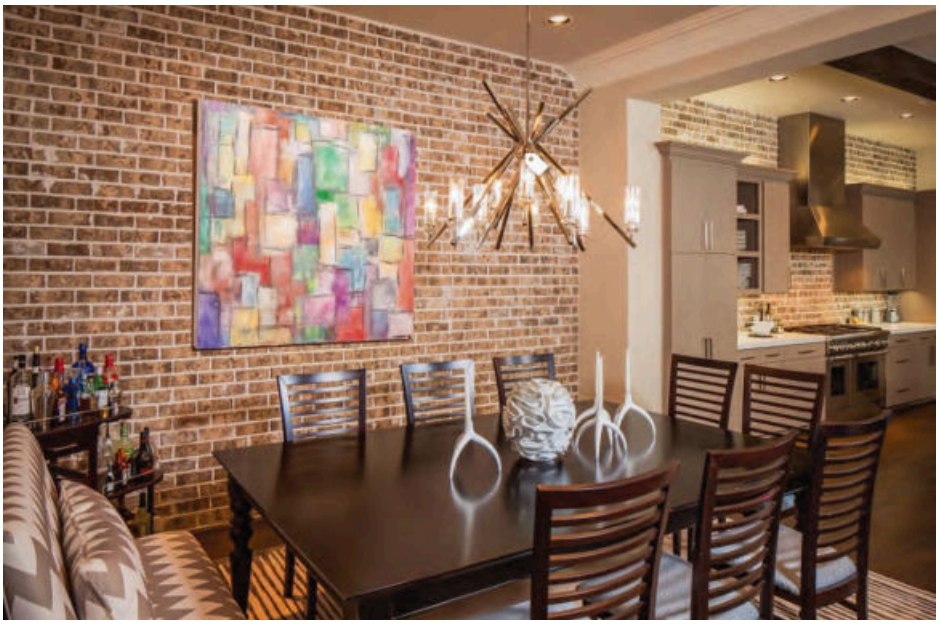
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Michael Chadwick, president

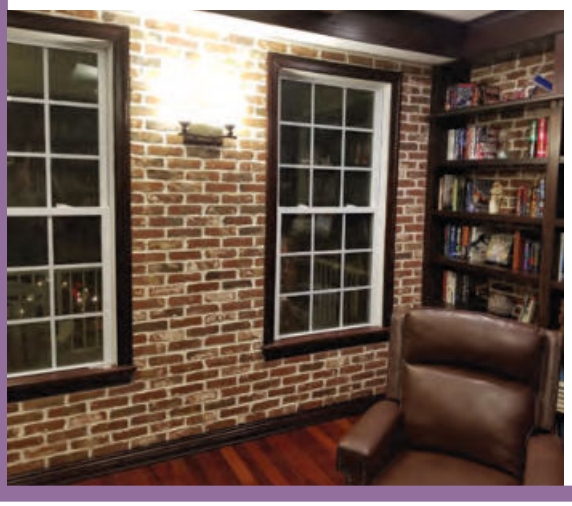
Supplying to architects, builders, masons and homeowners alike, Michael Chadwick indicates that thin brick veneer, a relatively newer product in the market, has become increasingly popular for both commercial and residential projects.

House & Home magazine spoke with Chadwick about what customers need to know before considering thin brick veneer for their upcoming projects.



WHAT IS THIN BRICK VENEER AND WHAT IS IT USED FOR?

The thin brick veneer that we supply is authentic, clay brick that is either manufactured thin or is cut down from full-size bricks at the brick plant. Most thin brick selections are 1/2" thick; however, some styles may be up to 1" thick. Thin brick can be installed inside or outside and will transform your project with the rich appearance and durability that only brick can provide.



WHAT ARE SOME TYPES OF INTERIOR APPLICATIONS THAT CUSTOMERS USE THE THIN BRICK FOR?

The diversity of the thin brick selections makes it uniquely useful for many different interior applications. Accent walls, backsplashes, fireplaces, bar fronts and wine cellars normally come to mind. This lightweight product requires less supporting structure, allowing for installation almost anywhere including ceilings and floors.

IS THIN BRICK POPULAR FOR EXTERIOR USE AS WELL?

Yes. We are supplying a larger percentage now more than ever for exterior use. Thin brick is ideal for remodels. Once the existing siding or stucco is removed, the thin brick can be installed right over the existing house wrap using one of the various methods of installation. The Thin Tec masonry support system that we stock is becoming more popular for both exterior and interior applications. Once correctly installed, thin brick is indistinguishable from full-size brick.



WHAT ARE THE DIFFERENT STYLES AVAILABLE?

Thin brick is available in a multitude of colors and styles. We stock and represent many traditional and rustic styles but are seeing more clients selecting the more modern and contemporary styles that are hitting the market. No matter the style or color selected, thin brick has the pull to be the centerpiece of your next project. **H&H**





FALL

For Outdoor Landscaping





Contrary to popular belief, fall is the most critical time to tend to your outdoor landscape.

SCHOOL IS BACK IN SESSION, THE HOLIDAYS ARE COMING UP AND FOOTBALL IS JUST ABOUT THE ONLY THING ANYONE IS TALKING ABOUT. ALL OF THESE ARE TELLTALE SIGNS THAT SUMMER IS OVER, AND FALL HAS OFFICIALLY ARRIVED. HOWEVER, THE BIGGEST CHANGE IS UNDOUBTEDLY THE DRASTIC TEMPERATURE DROP, WHICH CAN HAVE HUGE AND POTENTIALLY DEVASTATING IMPACTS ON OUTDOOR PLANTS, INCLUDING BUSHES, TREES, FLOWERS AND GRASSES. *HOUSE & HOME* ASKED THE EXPERTS IN LANDSCAPING HOW TO PREPARE YOUR OUTDOOR GREENERY FOR THE ROUTINE SEASONAL SHIFT.



LAWN AND PLANT MAINTENANCE

Typically, the largest and most important part of any property is the lawn. Having the greenest, most well-manicured yard on the block is a suburban family's dream, but most struggle to maintain their healthy, luscious grass when the weather gets cooler.

According to Rich Cording Sr., the owner of CLC Landscape Design, there are certain measures to take to ensure your lawn's health through the fall.

He says that thatching, core aerating, fertilizing, seeding and lining are the most important lawn care jobs to get done in the early months of fall. Of course, with the weather changing, the year-round needs of the grass itself begin to change, including watering and mowing your lawn.

"You should cut it right up to Thanksgiving," Cording says. "And you should still keep it watered so that it gets to at least an inch to an inch and a half per week. We are in a drought, so watering now is critical because the roots are going to try to grow

BY KATIE FRANCIS



> ***As things die back, prune them off because then all the energy goes into the roots of the plants, perennials, bushes and trees."***
>
> —George Mihalchick, owner of Ponds by George

FALL

For Outdoor Landscaping

deep during September and October."

As for other plants, there's a fine line between a healthy haircut and completely destroying the greenery.

Cording and George Mihalchick, owner of Ponds by George, agree that cutting off dead growth is beneficial to plants at any time of the year.

"As things die back, prune them off," says Mihalchick. "Because then all the energy goes into the roots of the plants, perennials, bushes and trees."

But be warned: Too much pruning can be detrimental to your greenery.

"You want to prune dead growth off because dead growth on a plant can be harmful to the rest of the plant," Chris DeMato, owner of Rock Bottom Landscaping & Fencing, says. "But you don't want to do any significant pruning as this can weaken a plant and, going into the winter season, that's not such a good idea." According to DeMato, pruning stimulates new growth, which would juxtapose and delay the natural dormancy process that plants go through as the temperature gets colder.

DeMato also stressed the importance of maintaining a clean lawn, free of any fallen leaves, as they could easily kill the grass beneath them.

"It's very important throughout the fall season to keep the leaves off the lawn. People tend to wait until a lot of the leaves fall to clean them and that's a big mistake that can really do damage to your lawn. The weight of the leaves and then matting down on the lawn can kill the lawn," DeMato explains.

THE BENEFITS OF MULCHING

A common theme throughout all of the experts' advice is the importance of mulching, especially this time of year. Freshly mulched beds not only increase the aesthetic of an outdoor property but also provide insulation for the plants growing in them.

"Mulch your beds, clean out your beds," Cording says. "Mulch is important. Not only does it make the beds look nice and give you some curb appeal, but it also insulates the roots over the winter. It holds down winds, and it also holds in moisture."

Cording also says that, because of the late-summer drought, plant roots are going to grow deeper through September and October, making mulching that much more important.





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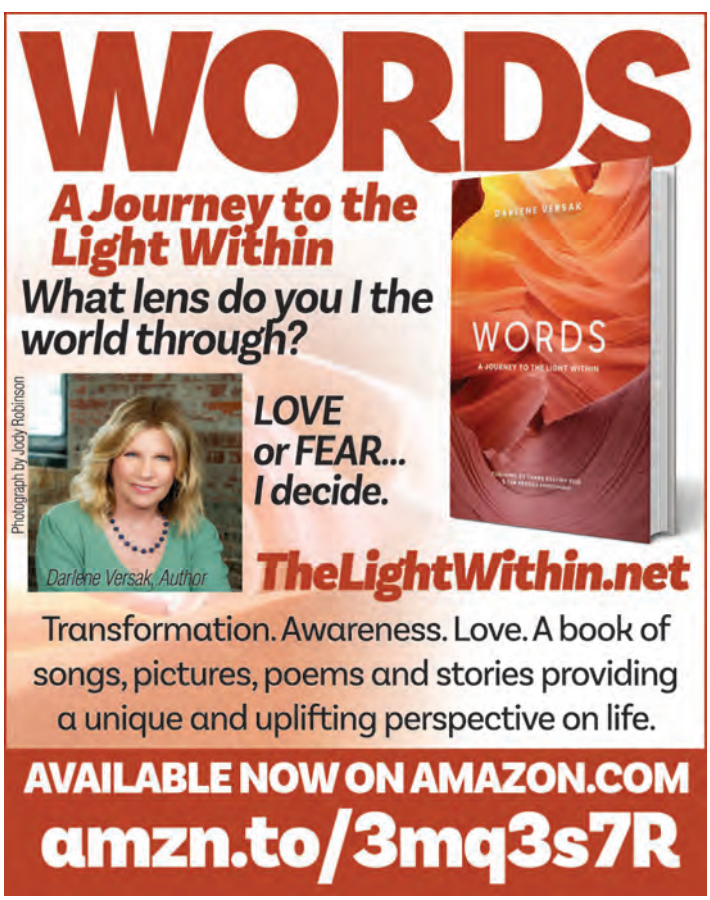
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"To me, it's like a no-brainer. Everybody should be mulching their beds before the winter."

WHAT TO PLANT

There are countless beautiful plants that thrive in the crisp months of fall, including perennials that change colors as the temperature shifts and annuals that bloom just in time for the fall festivities.

Mihalchick recommends both the burning bush and the itea shrub to use as foundation pieces for a colorful autumn oasis.

"The burning bush and itea will start turning a brilliant shade of fire-engine red," Mihalchick says. "They're bushes that will give you a big 'wow' factor. As everything else is starting to drop its leaves, those bushes turn red just before they drop and they're stunning."

He also recommends cabbage and kale, two common annuals that are staples to fall landscaping and gardening, and a variety of different ornamental grasses that provide different colors throughout the year.

DeMato says that chrysanthemums, more commonly known as mums, are another fall favorite that are perfect for adding color to multiple different areas of your outdoor scape.

"Most [mums] in the garden centers will have an assortment of colors. Most people put them out on their porches but you can certainly plant them for full color as well," DeMato says. He also recommends honeysuckle, which is mildly fragrant, attracts hummingbirds, and has red berries in the fall to provide a bright contrast against its green leaves.

And fortunately, there is no better time than autumn for planting.

Cording says that greenery planted in the fall has a higher success rate than anything planted in the spring because of their root growth.

"If you plant one now versus in early spring, it's going to send its roots now. And then the dormancy of winter is less of a shock than the heat of the summer, and they actually survive very well over the winter. But then as soon as the ground warms up in late February or early March, these plants are ready to grow," Cording explains. "They're going to exceed anything planted in the spring in terms of root growth.

"You get a lot of dew forming on the ground [in the fall], which makes it good for lawns, but what that does to a plant is it stimulates root growth. So just that weather cycle of cold nights and warm days, it's telling the plant 'OK, winter's coming. Here, let me grow some roots down deeper.' So the lawn and the shrubs tend to grow their roots more in the fall in preparation for winter."

Regardless of how you decide to decorate your outdoor space for autumn, whether it be ornamental grasses, traditional mums or both, yard maintenance in the fall is just as important, if not more so, than any other time of year. H&H

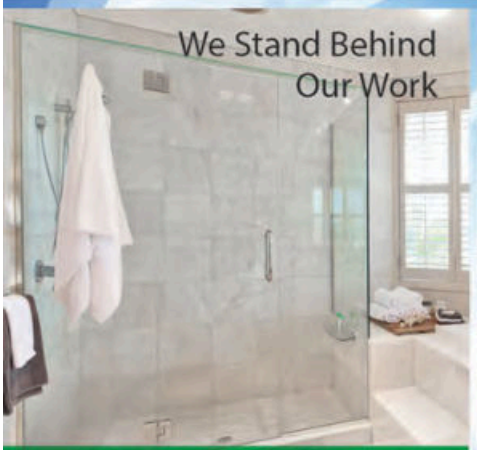
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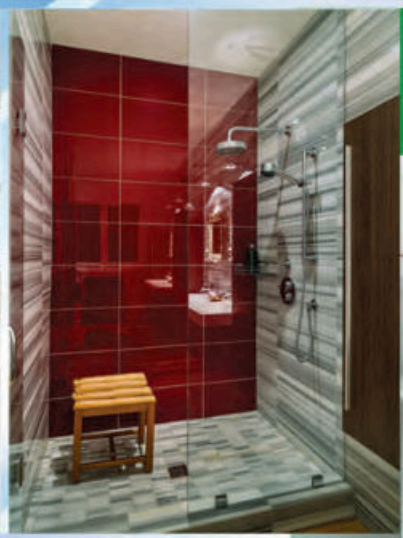
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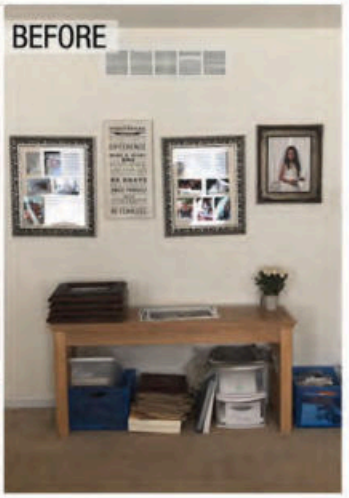


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Here to Please



Customer service has always been and remains the No. 1 priority for **Deck Guardian** as it creates beautiful outdoor spaces for homeowners to enjoy.

By **Matt Cosentino**

As the founder and owner of a decking company that is well known throughout New Jersey for delivering sensational outdoor spaces on time and on budget, Ion Colbasiuc certainly understands what it's like to have his services in high demand. Work especially picks up in late spring and early summer, when the weather is getting warmer and homeowners are dreaming of adding a backyard oasis to their property.

Even at this time of the year, however, Colbasiuc will never find excuses to give a customer the cold shoulder. When he started Deck Guardian over a decade ago, his motivation was to not only provide the finest craftsmanship but also a positive, stress-free experience, and that remains his driving factor to this day.

"Service should be a lot better than what it is across the construction industry," he says. "People call in to get an estimate and they can't get ahold of anybody, they can't get anyone to come out for three weeks to even give them a quote, and once they get the quote it takes too long to get the contract in place.

"We try to make it a lot easier on them. If you call us we'll be there in a few days, we'll get you a price on the deck and if you want to build it, we'll build it as soon as possible. Some people have simple projects and some have more elaborate projects, but it should be as easy as walking in, buying something and having it at your house two months later rather than chasing someone around to answer the phone or give you a price."

That attention to detail is even more important in today's climate, where supply chain issues, rising material costs and difficulties to obtain permits are real challenges. Getting on the schedule early ensures that family dinners, summer barbecues and graduation parties can be enjoyed sooner rather than later.

From the very first meeting, Colbasiuc stresses transparency between his team and the homeowner. He frequently hears the same questions from prospective customers, starting with how much the deck will cost, and takes the time to carefully explain the many variables that will determine the price. Those include the location and whether the soil makes for easy or hard installation of the footings; the cost of building permits in a particular town; the proximity from the driveway to the backyard to transport materials and debris; and whether the deck is low to the ground or on the second story.

"There are multiple factors that come into play when we are pricing a project and it changes on a case-by-case basis," Colbasiuc says. "Most of the projects that we do are around 300-400 square feet and they're within the price range of $20,000-$25,000. But decks are going to last 25-30 years and if you're spending $20,000 on a deck, you're getting at least $15,000 in real estate value."

Customers expect the design process to be complicated, but Deck Guardian takes the approach of creating an outdoor space that is just like the homeowners' favorite rooms inside while accounting for important details like traffic flow and the best place for stairs. "Decks are primarily used for grilling, dining and lounging, so when we're putting together a project, we want to make sure that you have enough space for all three activities," he says.

A shade structure can make the deck usable in extreme heat or rain, and a porch with outdoor heaters can extend the enjoyment into the colder months of the year. Colbasiuc is happy to add whatever amenities make sense for a customer's lifestyle and budget.

When it comes to the timeline for the deck's completion, fall, winter and early spring have the quickest turnarounds, while the summer tends to get extremely busy and will push the project back a bit. Different towns have different processes for granting permits but Deck Guardian has dedicated staff just for this task.

"Most of the decks we build average about a week for installation, so once we get started it will be done before you know it," Colbasiuc says. "But before you start it's a lot of hassles and paperwork, which we handle so the customer doesn't have to."

Nothing beats the feeling when the job is finished and the end result is a beautiful space ready for new memories to be created.

"When it's all done everybody is just thrilled with how much better it came out than they were expecting," he says. "They can look at a picture ahead of time but it's just a picture. When they actually get the space and see how nice it looks against the house, how much room they have and how good the installation is, they have a really good impression.

"It's a great experience for them because our service is really what makes the difference. As long as we stick with our core values, people will appreciate it. That's why we have the best reputation in the state and we're on target to build 700 decks this year." H&H

Deck Guardian
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WARDING OFF WINTER

Take the necessary steps to make sure your home is properly protected against the season's harsh climate.

BY PETER PROKO



After another enjoyable summer, it's definitely hard to say goodbye to those sunshine-filled days and the favorable weather conditions that kept us enjoying the outdoors well past dusk. But as we trade in our swimsuits for sweaters and gear up for fall, it won't be long before we're bundling up even further and welcoming back Old Man Winter.

As the temperatures plummet and the days become drearier, homeowners will undoubtedly be spending more time indoors. But before you can enjoy all the comforts that your home brings, you would be wise to make sure your house is primed and ready for the long winter ahead. Winterizing your home—whether making energy-efficient changes to the exterior or necessary upgrades to the interior—can go a long way to saving you money, time and aggravation. And let's face it, dealing with a major home repair project in the dead of winter is not exactly ideal.

Adam Parnes of Global Home Improvement acknowledges the importance of staying on top of a winter checklist and says that homeowners who don't regularly do so are tempting fate. "I think anyone who is winterizing their home is already ahead of the ballgame," he says. "Upgrading insulation, re-caulking windows and cleaning gutters are some of the easier solutions to a safe home this winter."

The fall is the ideal time to winterize your home in an effort to address any issues before the harsh cold weather settles in, according to Andrew Ziegler of Matute Roofing Inc. "This allows for cleaning of gutters, making sure there are no loose shingles [on the roof] and checking that all the home's ridge shingles are securely in place," he says.



WINTERIZING CHECKLIST

A guide on how to plan for the season

- Make sure your attic/crawlspace is properly insulated
- Install pipe insulation around any exposed copper or PVC water pipe
- Have your furnace, fireplace and chimney inspected and serviced
- Check windows and doors for any leaks, rot or poor sealing
- Have a licensed roofing contractor inspect your roof for loose, damaged or missing shingles
- Clean gutters of leaves and other debris and make sure they are properly connected
- Inspect your grounds for troubled tree limbs that could snap and cause damage or harm
- Repair loose patio stones and pavers
- Drain and store garden hoses indoors and drain outdoor spigots







"It's also very important to inspect all metal flashings between the roof and home siding, and between the roof and chimney, to ensure that you have winter snow, ice and water protection at these critical joints on your roof," Ziegler adds.

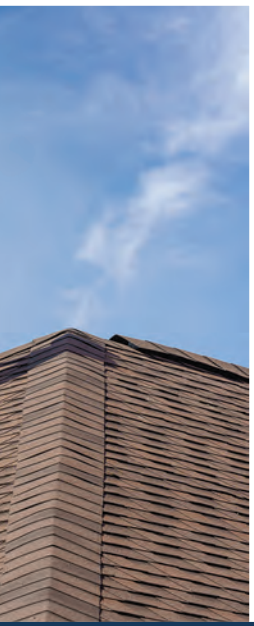
Elsewhere in the home, checking to see if the HVAC system is in need of a tune-up is recommended by industry professionals. Having it serviced annually to ensure things are running smoothly will help avoid rising energy bills due to suboptimal operation.

Another good place to start is in the attic. Poorly insulated attic space can be a major source of energy loss. In fact, estimates by the Department of Energy say that a properly insulated attic can cut your heating bill anywhere from 10 to 50%.

While a poorly insulated attic, or wall space for that matter, can be a large factor in energy loss, additional common contributors are windows and doors that are not properly sealed. Parnes says upgrades to old windows and doors are by far the most popular winter home improvement project and can make an almost immediate impact.

"Not only do older windows and doors not have updated thermal efficiency, but many of them have air leaks, which are just inviting the cold air directly into your home," he says.

What's more, homeowners will want to inspect their window frames to see that they are intact and not beginning to rot.



"Rotted wood window frames, or windows missing pieces of the frame will expose the homeowner to the risk of interior water damage, which can be costly to repair," says Ziegler. "It's best to replace windows to proactively protect inside the home's wall cavities and the surrounding sheetrock. Leaking window frames can lead to the growth of dangerous black mold that can make your family sick."

Another trouble spot for leaks is perhaps your greatest protection from the outdoor elements: the roof. Jane Alfaro of Alfaro Enterprises says an annual inspection of the roof by a professional will help identify any concerns and hopefully allow you to get well in front of any major problems.

"Your roof needs to be in good condition. No missing shingles, no leaks, etc. If you see dry rot or corrosion present or the underlayment plywood is corroded, it is time to replace your roof," she says.

Having to potentially replace your roof or windows can be a large expense and so some home-



WARDING OFF WINTER





owners may try and get through one more season before they decide to pull the trigger. But all it takes is one major winter storm and the problem could balloon into a much larger issue.

"The most important thing to consider is what could happen if you don't replace it," says Parnes. "A leaky roof will cost you way more money in damage then the money you save by trying to wait one more year."

Barbara Carranza of Carranza Roofing and Remodeling says age should be the key factor when weighing repairing or replacing one's roofing, siding or windows. "It is easy to nickel and dime repairs, but in the long run it is less costly to replace them. Putting off repairs leads to long-term and more costly problems," she says.

Ziegler echoes that sentiment, especially if the roof is approaching the end of its life.

"Roof and window repairs do not come with substantial warranties," he says. "Typically, when a roof is 20-25 years old, the shingles have begun to curl and the adhesion of the shingles to one another becomes compromised."

This could lead to the shingles allowing water to penetrate or perk down into the plywood decking, causing deck rot. "The risk to the homeowner of not proactively replacing the roof now is that there will be greater expense later for the replacement of rotted plywood decking," Ziegler says.

While having someone inspect your roof, it's also a good idea to check your gutters. "Gutters should be cleaned out and secured twice a year, prior to the change in weather. Ideally in the spring and the fall," says Alfaro.

Once gutters become clogged by leaves and debris, water does not flow through the downspouts. Thus, the water will back up under the shingles and behind the fascia boards.

"These leaks will cause interior damage as well as rot the fascia boards, causing extensive damage and costly repairs," Carranza says.

But, while this is a critical step in protecting your home, Carranza warns homeowners should not attempt to take matters into their own hands.

"It is very important for a homeowner not to climb a large ladder and attempt to clean their







gutters. Professionals have the experience and knowledge on climbing ladders and roofs. Inexperienced homeowners can easily fall from the ladder or the roof and be seriously injured or even cause death," she says.

No matter what type of services you may require, it's clear that now is the time to start thinking about the necessary upgrades that will help get your home ready for winter. By being proactive, you'll save money and avoid the hassles and headaches so you can enjoy your home the way it was meant to be. H&H

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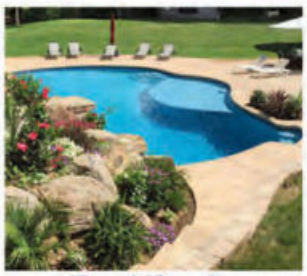
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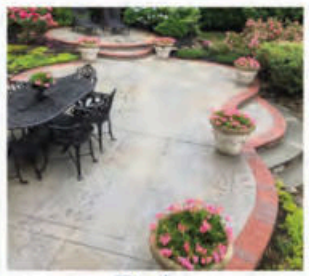
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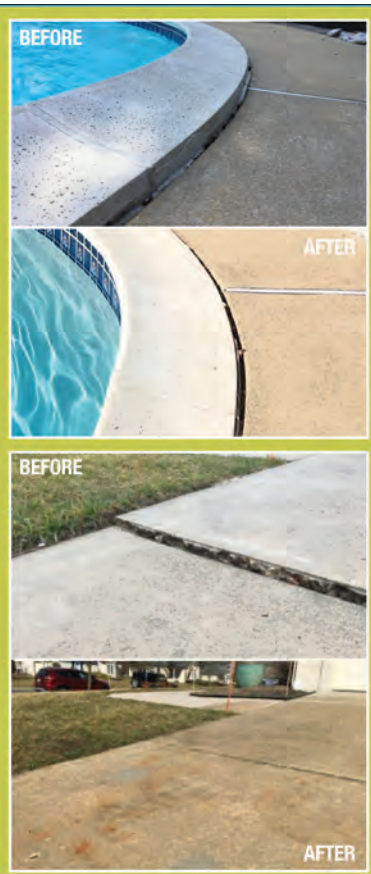
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