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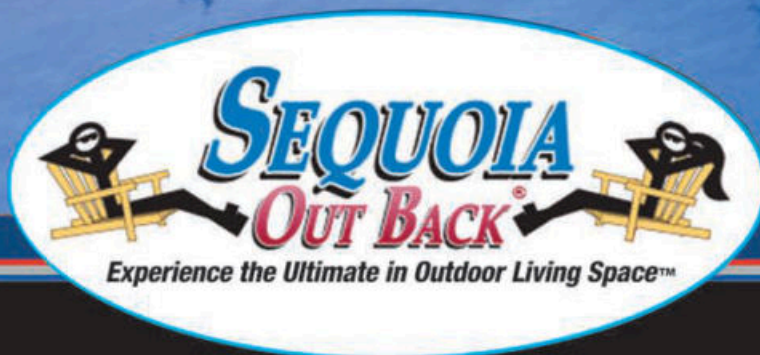
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On the cover:
Family-owned Nyce Create and Landis Block & Concrete is a one-stop shop to create your outdoor paradise located in Souderton, Pa. For more than 75 years the staff has been helping homeowners' ideas come to life by offering knowledge, materials and contractor references. Turn to page 19 to read more about their quality products and friendly staff.

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A visit to Sequoia Out Back puts homeowners on their way to the backyard paradise they've always dreamed of.



For years, outdoor living spaces have been one of the hottest trends in home improvement projects.

However, the past few months have shown that they are not a trend, but an absolute necessity. Homeowners have spent the majority of their spring and summer at home, and by all accounts, fall will bring more of the same, which is why you owe yourself a trip to Sequoia Out Back.

The 30,000-square-foot showroom has no comparison on the East Coast. The website doesn't even do it justice. An in-person visit feels like you are walking through a vision board of your favorite clippings and pins. It's the perfect spot to forget about the news in the world and daydream about the things you

could be enjoying in your own backyard.

"People will come to check our showroom out just for the experience," owner John Keller says. "There's nothing like it anywhere, so it's worth the trip for sure. No one who makes a long trip to get here is ever disappointed."

Sequoia Supply—one of the premier retailers of decking and railing products in the country—opened in 1998 and 10 years later it evolved into Sequoia Out Back, offering everything imaginable for outdoor living.

Dozens upon dozens of displays are set up in the showroom complete with decking, railings, furniture and a faux-blue sky overhead to give customers a genuine feeling about the products. The goal of the showroom was to

make it as life-like as possible. Displays are the size of the decks you would build in your own backyard to help customers get a good idea of how it will look and feel on their own home.

The showroom has been updated with the latest and greatest products on the market. In terms of decking, Sequoia works with all of the leading manufacturers—such as Trex, TimberTech, Wolf, Zuri and Fiberon—who continue to develop different styles and dazzling colors. Keller is also excited about the new composite boards being offered that are closer in price to pressure-treated wood.

"Trex and TimberTech came out with new composites at a lower price point that we have installed in our showroom. In addition to

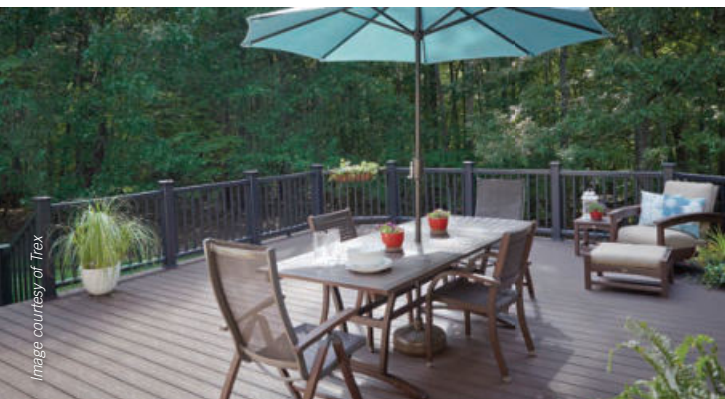
This stunning outdoor project showcases the range of products Sequoia Out Back supplies, including the decking, railings, outdoor kitchen and furniture.

Deck by Amazing Decks

being aesthetically pleasing, homeowners are drawn to these composites because there's a lot less maintenance than with pressure-treated wood," he adds.

Once finished, Sequoia has all of the amenities and furnishings for your deck or patio.

That includes beautiful furniture from



popular brands in all price points like Gensun, Tropitone, Winston, Lane Venture, Pride, Woodard and many more. Fire pits and outdoor kitchens continue to be in demand for outdoor living spaces, and all of the necessary components can be found at Sequoia, such as a full line of grills and smokers. No outdoor space is complete without a shade element, and Sequoia has you

covered with pergolas that not only add relief from the sun but an attractive design element as well.

The pandemic has resulted in some supply chain issues as most manufacturers shut down, and now demand has increased as people are working on these spaces. To avoid any delay in their project, customers are encouraged to put their orders in as soon as possible.

Sequoia welcomes customers of every type, from those looking to start a DIY project to those who have been sent by their contractor to make product selections. A knowledgeable and friendly staff is on hand to answer any and all questions.

"We can handle products for any scale of project, from a full backyard design like the one pictured above—with everything from the decking, pavers, pool house amenities and all of the furniture—to a simple deck on the back of a townhome where a family can enjoy a meal together," Keller says. "Most people need help and we are here to guide each one every step of the way. Backyards are big right now—everybody wants to be outside. We want to help them get the relaxing space they desire." **H&H**



Sequoia Out Back

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A large, two-story house with a stone and wood deck. The house has a light-colored exterior and a dark roof. The deck is made of wood and features a covered patio area with a stone pillar and a dining table. The patio is furnished with outdoor seating. The house is surrounded by a green lawn and a white fence.

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BY
MATT COSENTINO

***A BEAUTIFUL DECK
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It gives homeowners the perfect place to take in some fresh air, bask in the sun and gather with family and friends for burgers and dogs on the grill or perhaps a strawberry daiquiri or two.

While that remains a popular visual, the fact is that decks are no longer just for summer. As the outdoor industry has exploded in recent years, so too have the possibilities for extended enjoyment. It is now more important to add certain elements to the space that will make it usable well into the cooler months—and maybe even year-round.

“Especially if you’re spending the kind of money that our clients do, you want to get the most out of it,” says Bradley Sensenich of Keystone Custom Decks. “Bringing in features and ideas that can extend the usable season of that space is a big priority.”

Keith Frederick of Environmental Landscape Associates adds that designers have had to adapt to customers’ wants and needs and approach every job with the mission of providing a space that can be enjoyed at all times.

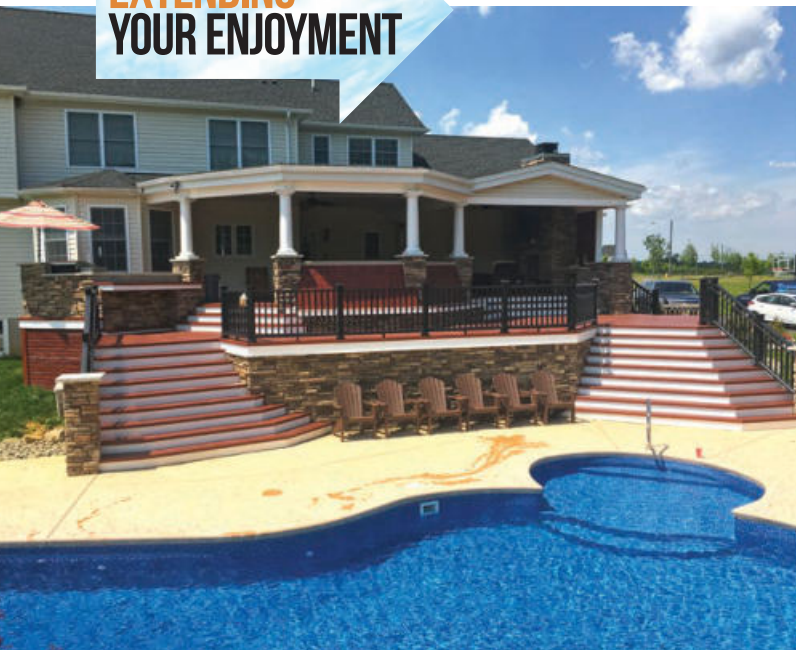
“It’s not just a simple deck project anymore; it’s more like a porch or three-season room,” he says. “It’s all based on the outdoor living lifestyle of utilizing the space 365 days a year, even if you’re not hanging out there for a long period of time. If you’re having a holiday party in the wintertime, people can still congregate out there and smoke cigars without freezing. We see a lot of our projects encompass those elements and a lot of folks are using them on a year-round basis. It gives you much more value for the dollar spent because you

YMENT

YOUR DECK WAY BEYOND THE SUMMER.

Photo courtesy of Keystone Custom Decks

EXTENDING YOUR ENJOYMENT



get a lot more.”

House & Home spoke with several area professionals to learn more about the options available for utilizing outdoor living spaces no matter what the calendar says.

TAKE COVER

Bill Lecorchick Jr. followed his father into the deck-building industry and now works side by side with him at Legends Home Improvements. One of the many tips he learned from his dad is that nothing adds as much value to a deck as a roof.

“The longer I do this, the more I believe it,” Lecorchick says. “In most backyards there’s no shade, so when you go outside the sun is beating down. You get an umbrella but that acts like a sun dial; you’re just following the shade. It’s a losing battle because you can’t put up enough umbrellas to make it usable.

“When you put up a roof and attach it to the house, it gives you automatic shade and you have the option of putting some blinds up for when sun is coming in through the side. If you set them up strategically and you know where the sun is going to be, you can enjoy dinner outside without getting blasted by the sun.”

Juan Cardona of Archadeck of Chester County agrees and estimates that at least half of the projects his company completes include some type of shade structure.

“If you’re looking for shade, I would say go with a roof,” he says. “A pergola is only going to offer you minimal shade unless you put a retractable awning underneath it or another method of solid shade. By the time you get done with that, the cost approaches that of a roof anyway. The roof is much more preferable because it keeps you dry in addition to giving you shade. If it’s a rainy day or a somewhat iffy day, you can always be under it, whereas with a pergola you really can’t.”

Both Lecorchick and Cardona believe that pergolas can add a nice focal point to a deck or other area of a backyard. The same holds true of a gazebo—just don’t expect the same advantages of a roof.

“A gazebo is mostly for people who cannot attach a roof to the house,” Cardona says. “They’re looking for solid shade, they’re looking for someplace to stay dry, but for whatever reason they cannot attach a roof to the house, perhaps because of how

the house is configured. Or maybe they just prefer a gazebo; some people like the distinct, octagonal shape of a gazebo. It can be a matter of aesthetics.”

AN OUTDOOR ROOM

The roof is the necessary first step, but it doesn’t have to end there. “You can also throw some screens on so there’s no sun and no mosquitoes,” Lecorchick says. “If you do glass windows instead of the screens and put in some heaters, you can be out there just about all year. You can just keep upgrading.”

There are several routes a homeowner can take depending on budget and lifestyle.

“Screen rooms and covered structures are extremely popular today,” says Joe Kalnas of My Deck. “We can install drop screens for an instant screen room under a roof structure or build a permanent screened-in area. We also offer a 4-track system that opens for 75 percent ventilation and still can close to keep out the rain, snow and pollen in the spring.”

Both Sensenich and Frederick have done home projects with retractable screens or windows like the ones common in outdoor seating areas at restaurants. Although a bit on the pricey side, these can be motorized or manual and allow the homeowner to easily adapt to the current weather conditions.

As for keeping the space warm in the fall and spring, there are a number of different heating sources.

“It depends on what the goal of the client is and how extensively they’re looking to heat the space,” Sensenich says. “If they’re just looking to spend time in the early fall, a fireplace is a great way to heat the space. If they’re looking to really extend the usability of their deck, a lot of times we’ll open the conversation up to installing actual heaters into the space. We do a lot of infrared heaters and that tends to heat up the room well.”

Infrared heaters can be mounted on the ceiling or the walls and Frederick offers a key suggestion.

“We typically use electric for residential applications,” he says. “Most commercial and restaurant applications use gas just because they’re usually burning for extended periods of time, whereas in residential applications you’re usually out there for an hour or two. It’s not like you need that space heated for an entire night or an entire day. It’s more economical to run the electric if



Top photo courtesy of Legends Home Improvements. Bottom photo courtesy of Archadeck of Chester County

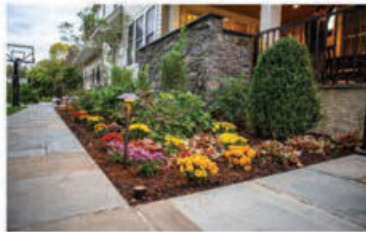


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TIME FOR ACTION

Although the COVID-19 pandemic has been crippling for many industries, construction is not one of them, particularly when it comes to outdoor living spaces. Just about every professional contacted for this article reported an uptick in business this summer, with Sensenich calling it "our busiest year by far."

"Everyone is spending much more time at home," Kalnas says, "so it makes sense that people are investing in their home."

Lecorchick points to people using their tax refunds and money saved from not eating out to update their spaces. Vacations have also been replaced by staycations. "If your new office is your kitchen table and you're staring out the door all day, you're paying a lot of attention to your yard. That's why we've been working the whole time and still have appointments scheduled for August."

"That's very much true this year," Cardona concludes. "Since people can't go on their regular vacation to the Caribbean or wherever they normally go, they have decided to upgrade their

outdoor space and vacation there. The way the market has reacted after COVID, that seems to be the case. People are home, they're looking at their outdoor spaces and they're looking to fix them up." **H&H**



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very hard granite and they have a promise that their colors won't fade or change," says Nyce. "They understand that not everybody can go out there and do their dream backyard all at one time, so you're going to buy pavers from [them] this year, next year[and] the following year and [their] colors aren't going to change, they're going to match."

Going beyond the foundation, Landis Block also offers homeowners kits that complement pavers of their choosing to further curate a livable outdoor space. From a barbecue to a propane grill, each kit can be built within the hardscaping, while accompanying features from waterfalls and fire pits can also be incorporated.

Yet, with all the possibilities, Nyce advises homeowners to do their due diligence before embarking on a project or moving forward with a contractor. "Ask questions," he says. "Get as much information as you can, do your research [and] be smart about what you're doing. Come talk to us, we can help you make those decisions." If a homeowner is using a contractor, Nyce also suggests asking for their references beforehand. "I always suggest that with any contractor ... ask him for references," he vouches. "There's nothing wrong with that."

Beyond that, it's also crucial that plans for an outdoor project start months ahead of time. Fall and winter are a great time to begin the process to ensure full enjoyment next summer. "If you're meeting a contractor, a lot of them get booked up early," Nyce warns. "It takes a month to get something done ... so start making your plans as soon as possible. It's imperative to start your planning and get your process rolling." **H&H**

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A BACKYARD HAS THE POTENTIAL TO BECOME THE PARADISE a homeowner has always imagined. With the right help and knowledge, turning imagination into reality is possible thanks to the experts at Nyce Crete and Landis Block & Concrete.

Now in its third generation of family ownership, Nyce Crete and Landis Block & Concrete has two locations—in Souderton and Lansdale—and employs over 50 people. "We are a resource for good quality materials and service," says Jarrod Nyce, vice president. "What we do here at Landis Block is we're kind of a facilitator," adds Nyce. "A customer comes in here with a bunch of ideas, and we go, 'OK, here's what you can do.' We help them make a decision on: Are they capable of doing it or do they need help? If they need help, we help them find a good contractor. We have a suggested list of contractors, who we trust, who are on that list for a reason because they've earned our trust and will provide a great job," adds Nyce. "If they're a do-it-yourself type of person ... we have all the materials, all the equipment and all the knowledge to help walk [them] through that whole process, step by step."

In addition, the company is also a great resource on installation specifications and all

updated codes, he explains.

"We have tons of different options from a full working kitchen to a simple backyard fire pit," explains Nyce. "We have waterfall [and] fire applications [and] outdoor TV sets. It comes down to, in my opinion, simple factors [like] space, how much room you have, imagination and budget."

That step-by-step process starts with a solid foundation and the pavers themselves, which as Nyce explains, are akin to the carpet or tile floor inside a home. "Everything starts with your floors and you work your way up," he says. "If you're thinking about a kitchen [and] you want to have a nice place to cook your meal, we can give you a couple different options of what kind of grill would work with what kind of pavers, and those pavers just accent everything else. It's your foundation [and] it's where you start."

With Landis Block's vast array of products spanning pavers and wall systems from Cambridge, brick pavers, Belgian blocks or concrete products, the options are endless. It's especially true if a homeowner is looking to complete the space in small projects over time. "The nice thing about the pavers we sell, [from] Cambridge Pavers, is they have what's called ArmorTec, a special surface layer they put on that's made of

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Let's face it, the coronavirus pandemic has made us all a lot more familiar with our homes. Putting money into home improvement projects, like an outdoor patio, or a stamped concrete walkway, is one of the most prudent and financial investments you can make. Now more than ever, we are staying in the comfort of our home as opposed to shared spaces.

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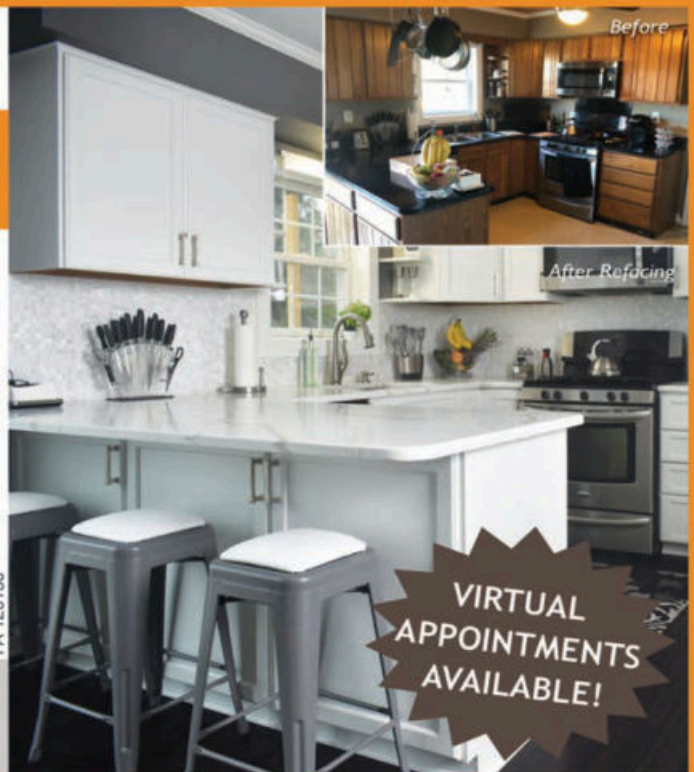


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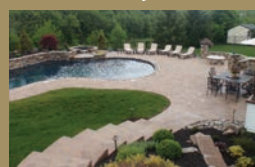
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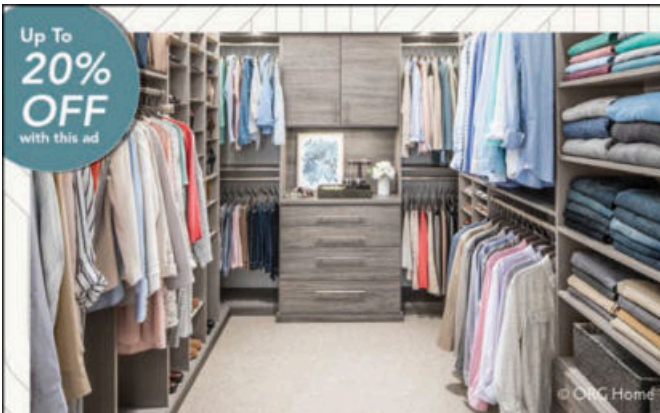
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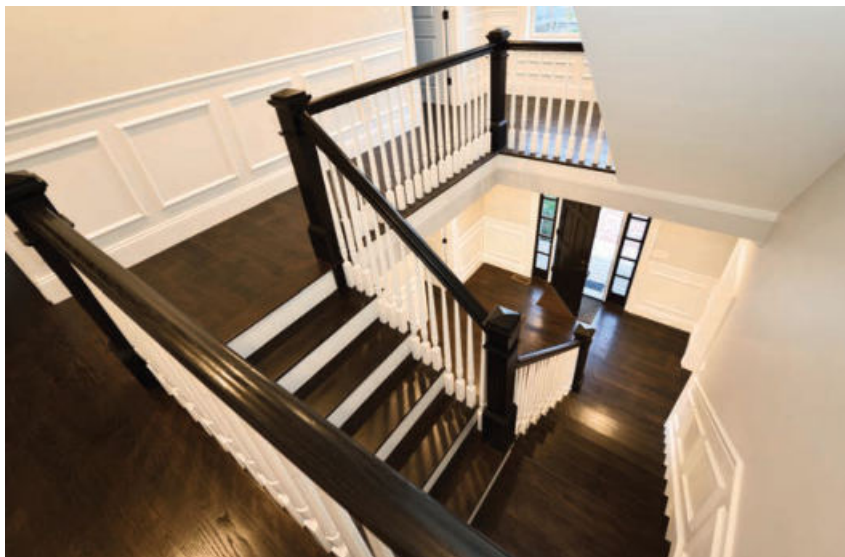
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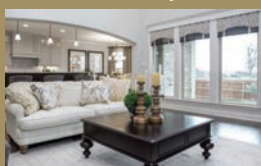
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Fall Facelift

Experts recommend the latest innovations in curb appeal.

BY LIZ HUNTER



As fall approaches, homeowners are looking beyond their outdoor spaces when it comes to improvements.

Exterior projects such as siding, roofing, windows, doors and more can bring a boost in curb appeal, as well as extra protection for colder temperatures. Shopping around at this time of year could put you ahead of schedule, say experts.

Ben Weaver, general manager of Alderfer Glass Company, says repairs should never be delayed, but now is a great time to consider replacements. "On replacement, the best time is actually prior to fall as there is a lead time involved with ordering windows and doors, so late fall consultations will likely be installed going into the winter," he says. "We actually don't mind installing in the winter, and homeowners can find shorter lead times and good purchase options, but if looking for a fall replacement we actually encourage consumers to be shopping in the summer."



With the current boom in the real estate market, those who are thinking of selling will find a great return for these projects. “More and more, homeowners are realizing the difference exterior home improvements can make on resale value. The term ‘curb appeal’ is not just a catch phrase, it’s what buyers see when they first look at your home from the curb of the house,” says Adam Parnes of Global Home Improvement.

process is thorough. “Our process from start to finish includes roof deck protection with GAF Deck Armor, which is used under the shingles and provides protection from wind-driven rain and trapped moisture; leak barrier, starter strip shingles, Cobra attic ventilation and ridge cap shingles.”

When researching companies to handle a roof, Ianelli says to ensure they are not subcontracting the work. “You can’t



Roofing Systems

The advancements in roofing systems make this one of the most important upgrades to a home.

As Chris Fontana, co-owner of Magnolia Home Remodeling Group, says, “A roof is a solid umbrella over a house, offering protection primarily, but also aesthetics in the various colors and styles available.”

Where previous roofing systems had a 25- to 30-year lifespan, the standard now is 50 years.

Mike Ianelli, owner of M&J Roofing, has been installing roofs for almost 20 years. He can tell the age of a roof just by looking at it, and comes across the same issues in older roofs. “The previous generation did not install a water and ice shield or put ventilation on the roof. That causes humidity to build up leading to condensation and shingle damage,” he says.

The leading roof manufacturer in North America is GAF. Ianelli says these products come with a 50-year warranty and have a host of colors to choose from. He says the installation

compare quotes apples to apples. If they are cheaper, they are probably forfeiting something,” Ianelli adds.

Windows and Doors

If energy efficiency is a concern, Weaver says windows and doors should be at the top of your list. “A lot of energy can be lost through poorly sealing doors, or deteriorating old windows. If I had to rank between the two, probably windows are the most important as the typical home has many more window openings than door openings,” he says.

Among the most common issues in aging windows is fogged glass. “This is a common problem as windows do have a service life, and a lot of windows installed in the last 20 years have some lower quality insulated glass installed in them. It is something that is very difficult to ‘see’ or evaluate when purchasing a home, particularly if the windows seem ‘new,’” says Weaver.

“Failing windows can be for a number of reasons depending

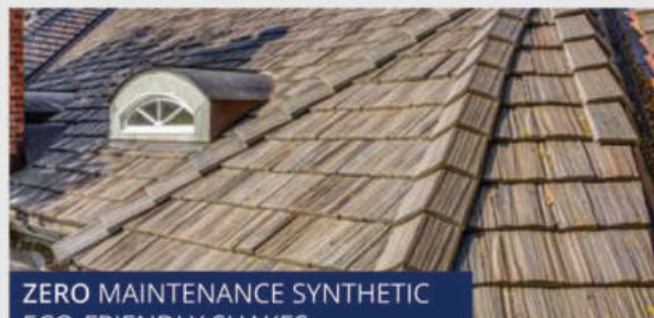
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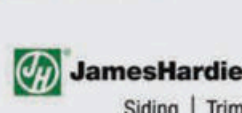
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on age, but even some newer vinyl windows have lock and balance issues, trouble raising and lowering, or warped frames and poor installation(s). If a homeowner is noticing a draft or actual cold/warm air to the touch, and can feel moving air, this is something that should definitely be evaluated fairly promptly," he continues.

Parnes says windows are a great project for homeowners looking to add beauty and efficiency to their home. "Infinity from Marvin has a 100-percent fiberglass frame which is eight times stronger than vinyl. This allows for thinner, more narrow frames, adding more natural light and style to your home," he says.

A new entry door can also make a dramatic difference in your home's appearance. Michael Esh, field manager for E&E Contracting, says ProVia doors are a product with a lot going for it.

"We have a division devoted entirely to windows and doors and ProVia entry doors are one of the best in the nation with several

things that set them apart from competitors," Esh says. Each door can be customized in terms of size, shape and style. Esh says the doors are constructed of fiberglass, with high-quality insulation materials and structure, with a real-wood look.

"These doors have a 10-year finish warranty and they are just more solid than a typical entry door," he says. "They have incredible design and stain options, and decorative glass. Over the last 10 to 15 years of installing these, we've seen fewer issues and fewer repairs."

Siding, Stucco & Stone Veneer

When it comes to the largest surface area of your home's exterior, the most popular choice is vinyl siding. "Right now, there is a push for vinyl siding. It's super versatile and is an alternative to repainting," says Fontana.

His company works with a product called Prodigy from Alside. "It's a one-piece insulated vinyl



siding product," he says. "Customers are looking for low- or no-maintenance exterior solutions, and the insulation is an additional benefit with the siding to help lower energy costs."

Esh says James Hardie fiber cement siding is well known to the general homeowner and used in a lot of higher-end communities, but another product, LP Smart Side, has been gaining traction.

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“We’re excited about this product. It’s wood-based siding that is soaked with a mixture of waxes and resins to keep any termites or rotting at bay, and it resists woodpeckers,” he says. “It looks like wood but does not have the weaknesses of traditional wood siding.”

Stucco is another prevalent material on home exteriors in this area. Esh says stucco remediation is a main source of E&E’s work. “Not every stucco home has problems but if stucco was installed on top of wood framing and incorrectly flashed, this scenario invites water,” he says. “Since stucco is a full done facade, there’s no air movement and no drainage, which causes slowly rotting issues that can be hidden from the naked eye for years.”

As this damage continues, it will make its way to the facade of the home. Esh says water and moisture come out in the form of the black stains on stucco, indicating there is rotted or damaged wood creating the stain coming out with water.

Stucco can be removed and reinstalled, but Esh says a majority of people are shying away from it and choosing to go with vinyl siding.

For a truly appealing aesthetic, stone veneer can create a dramatic effect. Esh says they install a lot of Brandywine natural stone veneer, which is real stone cut into thin slabs. “This doesn’t fade like manufactured stone will over time to some degree. Manufactured stone is a good choice but natural stone is an amazing product and popular recently,” he says. “There are keys to know about installation, including correct flashing and house underlayment for proper drainage to allow water to drain and air to flow through to dry it out.”

Stone veneer can be installed as an accent up the entire front of a home or just up to the second floor, or over a porch to highlight the gable. Esh says the combination of siding and stone veneer can make for a truly stunning design. **H&H**



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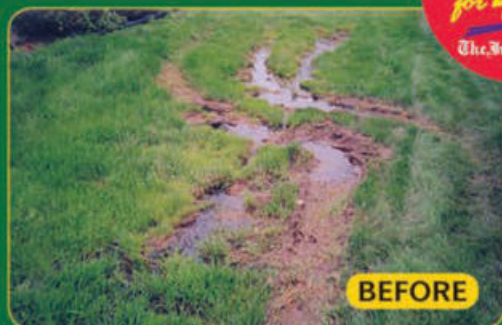
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