



# fall HOME

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OCTOBER 31<sup>st</sup>, 2019 | SPECIAL SUPPLEMENT TO

**Shellbrook Chronicle & Spiritwood Herald**

# Four signs it's time to replace your front door

There's a difference between wanting a new front door and needing one. With the change in seasons underway, now is the perfect time to ensure your doors are up to par. Here are four reasons to consider an upgrade:

**1. Wasted energy.** If your door is sticking, it could be for a number of reasons. The weather-stripping may have worn down, causing the door to stick or become unaligned with the frame. The constant weather changes cause doors to expand and contract, and the shifting can throw off the alignment and create gaps where air can flow through. This means that even while your door is closed, you're losing air from your home and increasing your energy bill.

**2. Moisture, mould and mildew.** You probably never thought you could have mould and mildew issues with your door, but it can happen. If your front door has double-paned glass in it, it's at risk of developing moisture issues over time. Just like windows with double-paned glass, the seal between these panes will break down, causing issues and decreasing energy efficiency.

**3. Seen better days.** The odd scrape and scuff marks will happen, but a door



that is covered in scratches, cracks, dings and rust suggests its structural integrity may be compromised. Rust is also a sign that there is a moisture problem, likely coming from the wooden core inside your door.

**4. Curb appeal.** A beautiful new front door will instantly increase your home's curb appeal. This is great news for those who are looking to put their home on the market as a new front door also increases your resale value. In fact, replacing your front door is one of the best investments you can make as it increases your energy efficiency while also adding to its aesthetic appeal.

Whether you decide to update your front door for looks, security or energy efficiency, the project is a smart investment in your home.

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# Three ways to make your home more energy efficient

Whether you're building from the ground up or renovating your existing house, there are many things you can do to reduce the amount of electricity it takes to power your home. Not only is it better for the environment but it'll also save you money in the long run. Here are a few ways you can improve energy efficiency in your home.

**1. Insulate:** install both high-quality insulation and well-insulated windows and doors to stop cold air from coming into your home. Your heating and cooling system won't need to work as hard to maintain a comfortable temperature.

**2. Solar power:** install solar panels on your roof to produce your own clean electricity. If you generate

more power than your house needs, you can make some money by selling it back to the electric company.

**3. Programmable thermostat:** avoid heating your home when nobody's there by installing a programmable thermostat that can be set to lower your home's temperature both during the day and while you're asleep.

Even if renovating isn't in your current plans, there are still lots of things you can do to reduce your energy consumption. Replacing regular light bulbs with LED lights and installing thermal curtains to block cold air from getting into your house are simple measures you can take.



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# Three tips to master indoor renovations this winter

While many of us hesitate to begin a home makeover during the colder months, this can actually be a great time of year to tackle a project. All you need is some research and planning.

For starters, you're much more likely to find a contractor who's available for hire in the winter, since many people choose to do home projects during the more popular warmer periods. Second, renovating your home during low season opens up the opportunity to unlock bargains and better deals on things like products and tools. Who doesn't want to save money and use those savings for items you really need?

If you're looking to do some renovations around the house this season, here are three easy tips to master and get your home ready for winter.

**1. Get the right tools for the job.** Any good renovation starts with having the fundamentals to make it all



happen. When it comes to DIY projects, Craftsman power and hand tools give you the ability to muscle through

any project. With new categories now available in-store and online at Lowe's, Rona, Reno-Depot and Ace, this brand

of tools will arm you with the power you need to conquer any renovation, big or small.

**2. Research before you begin.** The last thing you want happening after getting started is coming to the realization that it's not feasible. Doing extensive research – such as watching video tutorials, contacting your local home improvement store or getting tips from contractors – will give you much more comfort in knowing your project can be done.

**3. Set a budget and create a timeline.** Time and money go hand in hand. Even though you're more likely to save on products and a contractor during a winter renovation, be sure to budget beforehand. Winter is a busy time with the holidays, so planning a timeline as well as a budget for your project will ensure the job gets done on time, without any financial surprises.

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# Three big home décor trends for fall 2019

This time of year isn't just about books and backpacks – it's also about giving your interiors an update. Here's a look at the top trends this autumn and

how to try them at home to create beautiful rooms you will love.

**Rich, luxurious spaces.** After years of the cool, restrained style of minimal-

ism, we are now embracing maximalism with interiors that are bold and dramatic. This trend means spaces that are warmer and richer, as we move to surround

ourselves with our favourite things and mix and match elements and aesthetics. Think deep jewel-tones for wall colours and furnishings and layers of cozy, natural fabrics and materials.

**Bold and artistic pieces.** Similarity is out and incorporating unique, interesting items that tell a story and bring out your own personality is in. This means opting for more handcrafted or statement pieces that create visual interest and are anything

but bland and boring. Get the look at home by letting your creativity shine with furniture and décor that inspire you or you've always wanted to try, like a traditional clawfoot tub, luxe canopy bed or one-of-a-kind rustic tables made from reclaimed wood.

**Conscious consumption.** Forget buying something without a second thought as to where and how it was produced. Today it's all about ethical and intentional shopping

for items that are sustainable and well-made. When it comes to fluffy duvets, blankets and pillows, it's never been easier to find locally sourced, humane and ethical down. Look for the Downmark label on products, a Canadian non-profit that certifies strict quality standards and ethical harvesting practices. Find a list of member manufacturers and where to find their products at [downmark.org](http://downmark.org).

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# Easy ways to clean up leaves

Autumn is marked by colorful foliage and plummeting temperatures. Once those leaves reach peak color, they fall from the branches and collect on lawns, necessitating cleanup projects. For homeowners with big yards, such a project can be tiring and time-consuming. However, there are ways to make leaf cleanup easier.

One of the easiest ways to clean up leaves is to reach for a lawn mower rather than a rake. The mower will cut leaves down to smaller sizes, creating an effective mulch that can add nutrients back into the lawn. Davey, a lawn and landscape solutions service, says that mowed leaves also can be collected in a mower bag and added to garden beds or compost piles.

For those who prefer manual raking, select a rake with tines that will not skewer the leaves in the process. Big rakes also can make faster work of gathering leaves into piles.

The home improvement resource The Family Handyman advocates for the use of a lawn sweeper. This is a manual device that has a rotating sweeping brush that gathers up lawn debris and leaves into an attached hopper bag. Like mowed leaves, the bag can be emptied into a compost pile or distributed where needed.

Raking leaves onto a large tarp is another option. Once it's full, the tarp can be taken to the curb where many towns will collect the leaves seasonally. Otherwise, the tarp can be



used as a funnel to put leaves into a gardening bag or another appropriate receptacle.

Leaf blowers remain a fast option for cleaning up yards, but they require electricity or gas and can be noisy. Still, they are a popular

choice for large landscapes or when quick work needs to be made of leaf clean-up.

Leaves will fall in autumn, but luckily homeowners have various methods at their disposal to tame the mess.

# Five renovations that are better to do in the fall

Thanks to its typically temperate weather, fall is the ideal time to complete a number of renovations. Here are some types of projects that are best to undertake in autumn.

**1. Update the siding.**

Nothing boosts your home's curb appeal like a fresh coat of paint or brand new siding.

**2. Repave the driveway.** A freshly paved driveway will stand up to the harsh winter weather that's approaching.

**3. Repair or replace the roof.** Your roof protects your home against rain, snow and wind. If yours is due for a renovation, fall is the best season to complete the task.

**4. Change the windows**

**and doors.** Much like your roof, your windows and doors play a big role in keeping your home comfortable and dry.

**5. Remodel the kitchen.** If you schedule it right, you could complete your kitchen renovation in time to do your holiday baking in the updated space.

Most of these projects will increase

your home's value. They'll also protect your home from the elements and, in some cases, help to lower your monthly energy bills.





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Homeowners often take steps to winterize the interior of their homes in the weeks before winter's arrival, but such efforts should extend to the outside of a home as well.

Decks make for great gathering places when the weather permits. Decks are where many people spend their free time and eat their meals come spring and summer, when the temperatures climb and the sun sets well into the evening. But as summer turns to fall, homeowners must take measures to protect their decks from potentially harsh winter weather.

**Inspect the deck for problems.** Decks tend to be used more often in summer than any other time of year. That makes fall and early winter an ideal time to inspect for wear and tear and any additional issues that may have cropped up throughout the summer. Damaged boards and loose handrails should be fixed before win-

# Prepare your deck for winter

ter arrives, especially for homeowners who plan to use their decks in winter. Fixing such issues in winter and even into spring may be difficult thanks to harsh conditions, so make good use of the relatively calm autumn weather to fix any issues on the deck.

**Clear the deck of potted plants.** Even homeowners who intend to use their decks in winter should remove potted plants from the deck in the fall. The home improvement experts at HGTV note that moisture can get trapped between deck boards and plastic, wood or ceramic containers in cold weather, and that can contribute

to mildew, discoloration or decay.

**Store unnecessary furniture.** Homeowners who like to sit on their decks in winter will no doubt want to leave some furniture out over the winter. But those with lots of furniture for entertaining guests can likely move the majority of that furniture into a garage or shed for the winter. HGTV notes that doing so will prevent the

potential formation of blemishes on the deck that can result from inconsistent weathering.

**Remove snow, but do so carefully.** Prolonged contact with snow and ice can damage a deck. As a result, homeowners should clear snow from their decks when accumulation is significant. HGTV recommends using a snow blower on the deck to avoid scarring. If a shovel must be used, push snow with the planks to reduce the risk of damaging the deck.

Homeowners who take steps to protect their decks throughout the winter months can ensure these popular areas are ready once entertaining season returns in the spring.

# Winter inspection: how to prepare your home for the cold

It seems like every year the colder months are bringing increasing unpredictability. From your morning commute to local power lines, we know that sudden cold snaps, hail and ice storms can do some serious damage. With this checklist, you'll know how to best ready your home for the coming months.

**Foundation.** It's easy to overlook this area, but it's key to start from the bottom up. In times of milder weather, you may not have noticed slight marks in your foundation, but now is the time to do a thorough check. The warming and cooling over the summer and fall months may have caused the concrete in your foundation to expand, contract and potentially crack. With a cold winter on its way, it's important to get these cracks fixed so there's no space for snow and ice to get in, potentially creating larger cracks later on.

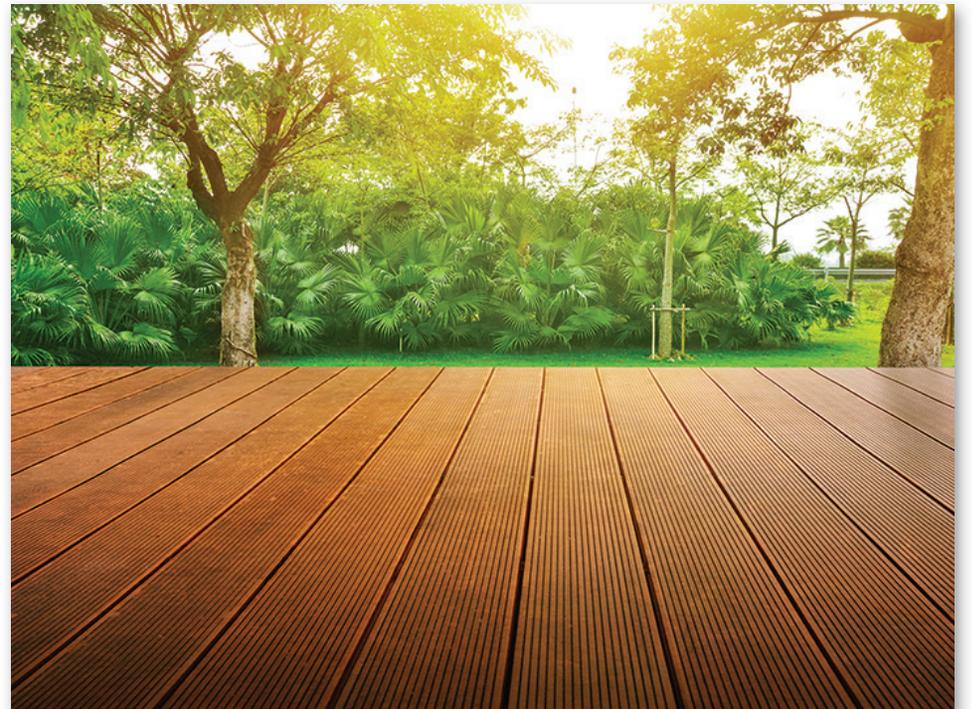
**Roof.** Take a quick look around your attic or crawl space to ensure you have the right amount of insulation between your living space and roof. When your heat is on, you don't want to be trapping condensation that may eventually

freeze.

**Pipes.** Another item on your checklist should be your pipes. Those located on or near exterior walls can freeze and burst throughout the winter, causing havoc to your home. Make sure you consult a professional to confirm your household pipes are in good shape, so you can take on the unexpected with this important behind-

the-scenes part of your home's system.

**Home insurance.** When inspecting your home, be mindful to prepare for the things you can't guarantee won't happen, like an ice storm that could cause serious damage. Make sure you're covered for the unexpected. With PC Home Insurance, you can determine the best plan for your family.



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# Lighting is a key component of curb appeal

Curb appeal can affect prospective buyers' perception of a home. When addressing curb appeal, homeowners may be inclined to focus on features that are easily seen from the street during the day. But what can a homeowner do to improve on his or her home's nighttime aesthetic? Outdoor lighting is one

aspect of curb appeal that is often overlooked, advises the home improvement experts at The Spruce. Homeowners may fail to recognize the importance of how proper illumination can provide their homes with a warm glow and make it look beautiful after the sun has set. For example, think of how cozy and inviting neigh-

borhoods appear during the holiday season when homes are strung with twinkling lights. Homeowners can replicate that look all year long with lighting elements.

Lighting for evening hours also helps maintain a safe environment for people who are visiting the property. Illuminating walkways and doorways provides a clearly

visible and safe path to and from the home.

The following are a few ways to improve outdoor lighting.

• **Focus on architectural features.** Outdoor lighting can focus on the external features of the home's architectural style. Use light to draw attention to interesting gables, dramatic roof lines,

dormers, or curved entryways.

• **Play up landscaping.** Stylish lighting can highlight trees, shrubs, pathways, gardens, and all of the elements of softscapes and hardscapes on a property. The lighting experts at Vernon Daniel Associates say that soft lighting can make homes feel warm and cozy. Uplighting trees or other elements can add a dramatic effect.

• **Light up all doors.** Make sure that doors, both entry and garage, are properly lit for ease of entry and egress from the home. Safety.com, a home and personal security resource,

says a home burglary occurs every 90 seconds in the Canada. Installing motion-activated lights or lights on timers can deter break-ins. Consider using home automation to control porch lights and other outdoor lights remotely, if necessary.

• **Create entertaining areas.** Outdoor lighting can be used to extend the hours residents can spend outside. This is great for entertaining and can be an excellent selling point.

Homeowners are urged not to overlook outdoor lighting as a vital part of their plan to improve curb appeal.



A home lit up at night helps increase its curb appeal.

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## Restore rusty tools

Many people may be tempted to discard rusty tools that have gone unused and sat in a garage or shed for a significant period of time. But tools encrusted with rust do not need to be relegated to the trash bin, nor do gardeners have to toil for hours scraping and sanding off the rust. There's a much easier way to restore rusty tools that relies on a common household ingredient: vinegar. Pour vinegar into a deep enough vessel to submerge the metal part of the tool. Soak the tool overnight. The next day, use a scouring pad to rub off the rust. If the tool is too big to fit into a can or bucket, simply wrap it with a vinegar-soaked rag and cover the whole tool with a tightly secured plastic bag. Follow the same procedure the next day. After all the rust is gone, rinse the tool in cool water and dry thoroughly. Then return it to regular usage.

# Bedroom decorating tips to help you get more Z's

Many people suffer from the occasional bout of insomnia. However, if this happens to you more often than you'd like, making a few tweaks to your bedroom may be the solution. Here's what you should do.

### Get the right bed

Resting on a comfortable mattress makes it easier to fall and stay asleep every night. Choosing the right one, however, can be tricky.

The best thing to do is find a store with a good return policy so you can sleep on the mattress for at least a month before you decide if it's a good fit.

Your bedding can also make a difference. Choose soft linens made of natural materials and comfortable pillows.

### Make it a relaxing space



Decorate your bedroom with soothing colours, round shapes, soft textures and cosy or airy fabrics.

Many sleep experts also recommend keeping your bedroom clutter-free and clean. A disorganized space can

stress you out, while a dusty and dirty room can aggravate allergies and make it harder to sleep.

Also, it's a good idea to install blackout curtains to make the room as dark as possible when it's time to sleep.

### Keep technology out

It may be tempting to keep a television in your bedroom, but the light from the screen can trick your body into thinking it's not tired. The same goes for your smartphone and even digital clocks.

For a restful sleep, keep your room free of light-emitting technology. If you need to unwind before bed, read a book or write in a journal instead.

One last tip: consider lowering the thermostat. Cool rooms help you fall asleep quicker and encourage deeper slumber.

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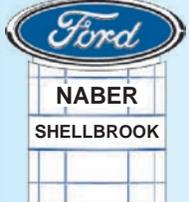
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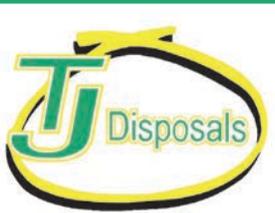
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# Protect your plants from winter weather

For the majority of gardening enthusiasts, gardening is a warm weather activity. While some people live in climates that make it possible to enjoy gardening year-round, those who don't often lament the end of the gardening season.

Winter might not be conducive to gardening, but the arrival of cold weather does not necessarily mean a gardener's work is done until the following spring. Taking steps to protect plants from winter weather is an important part of maintaining a healthy garden that thrives from year to year.

Timing is of the essence when winterizing a garden. The online gardening resource Get Busy Gardening! advises gardeners that the best time to winterize is after the first hard freeze in the fall. A hard freeze occurs when temperatures dip below freezing overnight. When that occurs, annual plants and vegetables are killed off and perennial plants, which grow back year after year, begin going dormant.

Better Homes and Gardens notes that perennials are the easiest plants to prepare for winter, as they require just a little cutting back and mulching to be safe

from cold weather. But no two perennials are alike, so homeowners should consult their local gardening center for advice on how to prepare their particular perennials for the coming months.

The steps necessary to winterize annuals depends on which type of annuals, cool- or warm-climate, you have. Cool-climate annuals should be covered with polyspun garden fabric when light frost is in the forecast. In addition, Better Homes and Gardens recommends pulling dead annuals and adding them to a compost pile after a killing frost. Any annuals that developed fungal disease should be discarded. Mulch annual beds with a three-to four-inch layer of chopped leaves or similar materials, spreading the mulch only two inches thick over self-sown seeds you want to germinate in the spring.

Warm-climate annuals also should be covered with polyspun garden fabric when light frost is expected. Seeds of cold-hardy annuals can be planted for extended winter bloom, while gardeners also can collect seeds of warm-weather plants that will breed true to type. Even though you're winterizing, Better Homes and Gardens recommends that gardeners

continue to weed and water their plant beds and plants while also keeping an eye out for pests. If organic mulch has decomposed or thinned out, replace it with a new layer.

Get Busy Gardening! notes that the bulbs of tender plants like dahlias and tuberous begonias can be dug up and overwintered in their dormant state. All dead foliage should be removed after the bulbs have been dug up, and the bulbs

should be allowed to dry out a little before being stored. Container gardeners can overwinter their tender bulbs in their pots inside, but be sure to remove their foliage and store them in a dark, cool place that maintains temperatures above freezing.

Winterizing may mark the end of gardening season, but it's an important task that can ensure a healthy, beautiful garden next spring, summer and fall.



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# How to create a winter-friendly outdoor living space

For many homeowners, the arrival of fall and winter marks an end to time spent lounging and dining al fresco on the patio. But cold air does not necessarily mean patio furniture must be packed up until flowers bloom anew in spring.

In its 2017 Home Design Trends Survey, the American Institute of Architects found

that consumers continue to emphasize practical features that expand the functionality of their homes via heavy investment in outdoor living spaces. The survey found that the popularity of outdoor living spaces increased by 72 percent between 2012 and 2017, highlighting just how much homeowners enjoy spending time out-

doors. By taking measures to make their outdoor living spaces winterproof, homeowners can enjoy these areas of their homes even more.

- **Cover your deck.** A covered deck may appear to make the space less enjoyable during spring and summer. However, covered decks can protect residents from the sun on especially

hot days while also making the space more functional in winter. An overhead shelter on a deck can be outfitted with heaters (and fans to provide a cooling effect in summer) and allow residents to sit outside and watch snow fall without getting wet.

- **Plant the right trees.** Coniferous trees prevent wind, which can

be especially harsh in winter. Homeowners who are unsure about which direction wind typically comes from can consult a landscape architect to determine where to plant the trees to ensure they're most effective.

- **Fire up the patio.** A firepit or fireplace can warm up an outdoor living area, making such a space warm and cozy even on a cold winter night. A patio with a built-in firepit can cost a pretty penny, but such an addition can withstand winter weather better than a standalone

firepit, which might be vulnerable to being tipped over by winter winds.

- **Install lighting.** The sun sets early in winter, so homeowners won't be able to rely on natural light to illuminate their outdoor living spaces well into the evening like they do in summer. Heat lamps can be used to both warm and illuminate a space, serving dual, budget-friendly functions.

With the right adjustments, outdoor living spaces can be enjoyed throughout winter.

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Covering a deck or patio and/or adding a fire feature are two ways to make outdoor living spaces more winter-friendly.

### Did you know?

Carpet can add warmth and texture to a room and also provide a little bit of soundproofing. Underfoot, carpeting can be more comfortable than other types of flooring, even though it may require more upkeep. Carpet comes in various forms, but here are the main material components.

- **Nylon:** This is one of the most durable and stain-resistant carpet fibers available and a popular choice among many homeowners.
- **Polyester:** Carpeting can be made from polyester, which is fashioned to feel and look luxurious.
- **Olefin:** Olefin is made from polypropylene or polyethylene. It is prized for its strength, resistance to staining and colorfastness. It is often suited well to loop pile or high, dense cut piles.
- **Wool:** Wool is durable, albeit less resistant to soiling than some other materials. However, because it is an all-natural material, it is prized by people who want natural beauty.



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# How to store firewood *the right way*

A fireplace is a cozy and warm spot around which a family can gather. The home and real estate resource HomeGuides.com indicates that 60 percent of new homes have a fireplace, which is up from 36 percent in the 1970s.

Naturally, fueling a fireplace for the season may require homeowners with wood-burning units to keep an ample supply of wood at the ready. How that wood is stored is

important, as properly stored firewood can prevent waste and other issues around the house.

Wood that is freshly cut has a water content of 60 percent or more. Yet, for best burning ability, wood should be near 20 percent in water content. Green wood is hard to ignite and will not burn nearly as well or efficiently as seasoned wood. Another concern associated with green wood is that it can contribute more to creosote accumulation in the flue of a fire-

place. Creosote is a combustible material that may lead to fires if left unchecked.

According to BioAdvanced, a science-based lawn, garden and home improvement innovator, seasoning wood typically takes six months to a year. Homeowners may opt to purchase seasoned wood that already has sat and dried.

Homeowners who have an abundance of firewood have to store it somewhere. Log Splitters Direct suggests choosing a dry,

breezy area of the property that is about 20 feet from the nearest door to the house. This helps avoid hitchhiker pests from coming inside with the wood, such as termites, ants, spiders, and mice. Do not stack the wood flush against a structure. It should be at least a few inches away to allow airflow behind the stack.

Stick to organized rows of wood no more than four feet high. Log

racks and pallets and posts will keep the wood up and off of the ground where moisture and rotting can develop. Placing the logs in an unorganized pile will impede air flow and cause the wood to rot rather than continue to dry and season even more.

Homeowners also should use a cover to protect seasoned firewood from the elements. Position a

tarp or plastic sheeting so it blankets the top of the stack and extends a few inches down the sides. Keep the sides mostly exposed to air. Others prefer to stack it in a barn or shed or under an overhang.

Green wood is less expensive than seasoned wood. Those who prefer this method should do so in the early spring and let it season over the next several months.



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# Prevent growth of mold/mildew in colder months

Mold and mildew are not only unsightly, but unhealthy. These fungi grow readily in damp areas and are found in the air breathed both indoors and outside. If left unaddressed, mold

and mildew can threaten the health of a home's inhabitants.

Mildew is a type of mold that remains relatively flush with the surface it grows on. Other molds can grow puffy in appearance. Molds serve the purpose of destroying organic materials, but in high amounts, these microorganisms can cause respiratory problems, sinus congestion, throat irritation, headaches, and other issues, particularly when mold grows unchecked indoors, says Better Homes and Gardens. As a result, it is essential to address mold before it becomes problematic.

According to Polygon, a drying technology and temporary climate solutions company, the wet season in winter is when molds often grow and expand. Mold can break down the integrity and strength of the surfaces where it grows.



## Homeowners can employ the following strategies to prevent mold growth.

- Keep all surfaces clean, using proper cleaning products. Diluted bleach solutions are highly effective at killing microscopic fungi, viruses and bacteria.
- Reduce moisture and humidity by ensuring sufficient air circulation in rooms, particularly bathrooms and kitchens. An exhaust fan will help remove moisture quickly.
- Fabrics covered in mildew that can be laundered should be carefully removed and washed in chlorine bleach and hot water. An oxygen bleach product also can be effective.
- Invest in a dehumidifier that can reduce moisture in the home in problem areas, such as damp basements or garages.
- Fix plumbing leaks as soon as possible.
- Remove damp leaves and snow from areas around the foundation of the home. Ensure that gutters and downspouts are clear of debris and can shuttle water away from the house effectively.
- Replace cracked or defective mortar in basements.
- Make sure all seals on windows and doors are not compromised and are in good working condition.
- Be sure an HVAC in-line humidifier is adjusted to the right setting and isn't pumping too much moisture into the heated air; otherwise, the added humidity can contribute to mold.
- If there is a flood or water infiltrates a home in other ways, hire a professional service to help clean and dry the home effectively.

**Mold and mildew are problematic, but with diligence they can be kept at bay.**

## Find the right gutters for your roof

While not the most attractive or exciting feature on a house, gutters are very important to the overall maintenance of your home, as they route water from the roof away from your foundation. With several materials available, it's important you know your options so you can make the right decision.

**Vinyl.** A popular choice due to its economical price point, vinyl gutters can cost anywhere from \$4 to \$8 per piece. They are very effective in moving water away from your foundation. Another benefit is that they do not rust or corrode. However, they are not the best choice for climates with extreme weather, as the cold can cause vinyl to become brittle and crack over time.

**Aluminum.** Like vinyl, aluminum gutters are lightweight, rustproof and easy to work with. Unlike vinyl, aluminum gutters are weather resistant, maintain their

integrity in cold climates and can be painted. A cost-effective option, they will run you between \$6 and \$12 per piece. The main drawback is they are not as structurally sound as other materials.

**Stainless steel.** The sturdiest and most expensive option, stainless steel gutters are great for Canadian homes. While they don't necessarily perform better than other materials, they are a good option for harsh climates. Below freezing temperatures,

heavy rains and snow will not phase stainless steel gutters. They won't rust and will continue to look great for years to come, but the biggest drawback is the cost: between \$11 and \$33 per piece.

Now that you have a better idea of your options, it's worth connecting with a gutter installation specialist to get their professional opinion about the best gutters for your home. Find one at [homestars.com](http://homestars.com).

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# What causes curled shingles?

No homeowner wants to look at the exterior of his or her home and see roof damage. Such damage may lead homeowners to think they need a new roof, a potentially costly expense that can quickly throw household budgets into a state of disarray.

According to the HomeAdvisor, the average homeowner spends a little more than \$7,600 installing a new roof. Various factors, including the size of a home and the type of roof homeowners prefer, will affect the cost of a roof replacement. In addition, homeowners who see roof damage can rest assured that not all roof problems will necessarily require a replacement roof to be installed.

Curled shingles are a problem many homeowners have encountered. This particular problem is not always indicative that a roof is on its way out. In fact, the home improvement resource This Old House notes that, as asphalt shingles age, their corners often begin to curl downward or upward. Homeowners who notice



this early enough can glue down the curled section of each shingle that's beginning to curl.

Some shingles may be curling because they're defective. Fortified Roofing, a New Jersey-based roofing company that specializes in the repairing and replacing of various

roofing configurations, advises homeowners to contact a local roofing professional to diagnose the cause of the curling. Doing so quickly can prevent curled shingles from contributing to more widespread damage.

Moisture and poor ventilation may be contributing to curled shingles as

well. Homeowners with attics in their home may see curled shingles on their roofs because moisture is building up in their poorly ventilated attics. In addition to causing damage such as curled shingles, a poorly ventilated attic allows moisture to build up, potentially contributing to mold growth. Mold presents a host of additional problems, including some that can adversely affect the health of a home's inhabitants.

Improper roof installation also may be the culprit behind curled shingles. When a roof is not installed correctly, shingles may not be aligned or nailed down in the right way. This might be what's causing shingles to curl on recently installed roofs.

Curled shingles are unsightly and can pose a significant threat to a home if not addressed promptly. Homeowners can protect themselves and their roofs by working with skilled roofing professionals, who can diagnose issues like curled shingles and offer the right solutions.

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## Powerwashing tips for your home

Powerwashing, also known as pressure-washing, utilizes a high-velocity water spray to remove dirt and residue from the exterior surfaces of a home. It is frequently used on vinyl siding, concrete and sometimes wood decks to treat mildew and other growth that accumulates over time.

Powerwashing can be a great way to remove grime without having to scrub by hand. But it requires a delicate touch to get it right. Sometimes it is best to leave the job to professionals. But homeowners willing to give it a go can try powerwashing themselves, as various stores rent power washers.

The home improvement website ImproveNet says that, until very recently, pressure washers were almost exclusively commercial machines sold to professionals or rented to do-it-yourselfers. Lately manufacturers have targeted homeowners looking to buy with lightweight options. For those who see powerwashing as a routine venture, purchasing a unit may be worth the investment.

It is important to exercise caution when operating a powerwashing machine. The high-velocity spray can tear through skin. It is key to get a feel for the washer, and try less pressure

first to get a handle on the magnitude of the tool.

Don safety gear prior to using a pressure washer. Gloves, eye protection and ear protection can be handy. Most units will connect to a standard garden hose. Choose old clothing and expect to get wet. Never point a powerwasher hose at anyone and do not attempt to rinse feet or hands in the spray.

The renovation resource The Family Handyman suggests starting with a wide-degree nozzle to test out the spray on the surface that needs to be cleaned. A 15- or 25-degree nozzle is usually the wand for general cleaning and paint stripping without damaging the surface of the home. Experiment with an optimal distance of the washer wand to get the desired cleaning effects without causing any damage. Work using a horizontal and slightly downward angle to avoid driving water up under the siding of a home.

Avoid spraying any electric wires or components on the home. Also, try not to spray upward, and angle the spray away from doors, windows and vents.

Some washers have reservoirs that will hold a detergent solution. Choose the right detergent for the job. Keep in mind that cleansers containing bleach can damage surrounding plants, so



**Powerwashing the exterior of the home can be an effective way to clean it in the spring and fall.**

they may need to be covered while the washing takes place.

Avoid the use of ladders when operating a powerwasher. The push-back from the wand can cause falls. Instead,

opt for an extension wand to address the upper reaches of a home.

Powerwashing a home is an effective way to remove stubborn grime and refresh the look of a home's exterior.

## The threat posed by ice dams

Cold, snowy weather can present various issues for homeowners to contend with. One such problem, ice dams, can cause damage to walls, ceilings and other areas.

The University of Minnesota Extension says that an ice dam is a ridge of ice that forms at the edge of the roof and prevents melting snow from draining properly. A complex combination of heat loss from a home, snow cover and outside temperatures can lead the formation of ice dams. An ice dam will be fed by melting snow above it and cause a backup at the edge of the roof.

Dams can cause gutters to tear off and loosen shingles and may lead to water backing up and pouring into the home, advises This Old



House.

Ice dams also can contribute to soggy insulation, making the insulation lose its protective R-value and becoming a magnet for mold and mildew.

Homeowners can do a number of things to temporarily prevent the formation of ice dams. Heated cables clipped to the roof's edge in a zigzag pattern can help prevent dams that lift shingles. Pushing snow off the roof can help. Laying an ice melt product in gutters to

help melt the ice that forms also can prevent ice dams.

More permanent solutions involve keeping the entire roof the same temperature as the eaves by increasing ventilation, adding insulation and properly sealing air leaks that can warm the underside of the roof. This may involve calling in a professional contractor. Such an investment is well worth it, as it can prevent much more costly damage down the line.



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# The perfect lighting for every room

**L**ighting is more than décor. The type of light in your environment influences everything from your sleep schedule to mood. It can also improve energy savings and can be an affordable way to revamp your space. There's a lot to think about when determining the perfect illumination for every room in your home.

**Functional choices.** Each space has a function, whether it's for relaxation, cooking, play or work. Choose the best lighting for each room by assessing what you do most often in that space. In the kitchen, bathroom, playroom or study, you want clear, bright light. Choose fixtures that will illuminate the whole area, or task lighting to help you see what you're doing, such as over the kitchen sink or where you prepare food. For cozier

spaces like bedrooms, living rooms and dining rooms, consider accent or ambient lighting. These will allow you to see and move around comfortably and safely while giving the room a soft glow.

**Budget-friendly upgrades.** Changing your lighting is an easy way to make over or upgrade any room. By incorporating floor lamps, smart bulbs or under-cabinet track lighting, your space can take on a new vibe without a hefty renovation bill. Think about swapping old incandescent bulbs to compact fluorescent bulbs or LED lighting. These last longer and cut down on your power consumption.

**Engage an expert.** Upgrading your lighting yourself, such as changing a bulb or switch cover plate,

can be done safely using essential equipment. But virtually all electrical work, including modifying an existing switch to a dimmer switch, requires a Licensed Electrical Contractor, a notification (also known as permit) and a Certificate of Inspection from the Electrical Safety Authority.

Whether you want to add new fixtures or outlets, such as a tamper-resistant receptacle (child-proof out-

let) or a ground fault circuit interrupter for bathroom and kitchen safety, hire a Licensed Electrical Contractor to complete the task. They will advise you of the electrical requirements for any lighting changes and ensure the work is done safely with the proper notification and Certificate of Inspection.

Find more tips at [poweryourlife.ca](http://poweryourlife.ca).  
[www.newscanada.com](http://www.newscanada.com)



# How to protect wood floors from inclement weather

**W**ood floors are a worthwhile investment that can improve the beauty and function of just about any room in a home. Even though wood floors are durable, and new protective treatments help seal out many of the things that may have damaged floors in the past, homeowners still need to prioritize protecting their hardwood floors.

Certain seasons of the year can be more harsh on wood floors than others. For example, seasons characterized by moisture and precipitation, particularly the early spring, winter and fall, can be hard on wood floors. The experts at ServiceMaster Clean say that cold, snowy days can damage wood floors, and Lumber Liquidators agrees that winter weather can be harsh on flooring.

Homeowners need not give up on hardwood if they live in an area that sees all four seasons. They just need to take a few steps to keep floors looking beautiful.

• **Clean up the salt.**

Salt that keeps sidewalks and streets clear of snow and ice inadvertently gets tracked inside a home. Hard chunks of salt can scratch wood floors, and, if left to sit, that salt can eventually cause white marks and other stains. Routinely vacuuming and sweeping up salt is necessary to protect wood floors.

• **Invest in shoe storage.** Wet or snowy boots can create puddles around the house. Have a special mat or tray by the front door where wet shoes can be kept. A nice bench in the entryway makes it easy for residents and guests to remove their shoes until it's time to go back outside.

• **Use water-wicking mats.** Homeowners will probably need a few extra mats around to tame errant drips and wipe shoes. Any entrance that might be used by people or pets should be protected. Try to avoid petroleum-based, rubber-backed mats, as they could discolor the wood floor.

• **Control humidity**

**indoors.** Cold, dry air in a home can be problematic because the moisture in the wood can eventually evaporate into the air. The heat will suck that moisture from the flooring, causing it to shrink, creak and splinter and become more brittle. Think about investing in an in-line humidifier for the home's HVAC system that can keep a moderate amount of humidity in the home. Hardwood floorboards are installed to accommodate minor temperature and humidity fluctuations. This is typically a range of between 60 and 80 degrees F with a relative humidity range of 35 to 55 percent, advises ServiceMaster.

• **Use the right cleaning products.** Avoid excessive water to clean wood floors, and select soaps that are specially designed for wood flooring. Consult with the flooring manufacturer for a list of detergents that are safe to use.

With proper care, hardwood flooring can survive rain, snow and cold weather.

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