

POSTNOTES

NEWS AND INFORMATION

VOL 14 NUMBER 3

HOUSE SENSE

OUTDOOR SPRUCE UP

The snow and ice have melted, but this winter's wild storms have left yards across the country in need of a major spring-cleaning.

1. Remove the debris. If the winter's seemingly incessant wind, rain, and snow have done a number on your trees, start your clean-up efforts by collecting the fallen branches and scattered sticks. Rent a wood-chipper from any garden or hardware store and turn your debris into mulch.

2. Rake dead leaves and twigs. Last year's leaves will make great compost, but not if they keep the grass from absorbing sunlight. Thoroughly rake the yard and garden beds.

3. Prune and trim. Prune back weatherworn bushes and hedges as well as any perennials that look overgrown. Trim damaged tree limbs and branches that you can reach, and make arrangements for a professional tree-trimmer to take care of the rest.

4. Map out landscaping and garden plans. If you're going to make landscaping changes, make a sketch of your lawn indicating what sort of trees, shrubs, or plants you'd like to add. Consult with a gardener or landscaper at the nursery before making any final decisions.

5. Start planting. Check the planting dates on your new purchases. Any plants, trees or shrubbery hearty enough to survive spring's still-cool nights can be put in the ground now.



MOTIVATION

SPRING CLEAN YOUR LIFE

Do you want more out of life, more money, fun & adventure, a better social life, perhaps a new romantic partner, good health, career success? If you do you are going to have to make space; A BIG SPACE.

Have you ever wandered into a new show house or apartment and lusted after the Zen like peace and tranquillity that seems to ooze from the open spaces, clutter free surfaces, immaculate bathrooms and thought if you could just move in there, life would be perfect?

Chances are if your present home is in clutter, your life is too, simple as that. The problem with clutter is that it's clogging up your life like plaque on your teeth. You might well be aware of the need to detoxify your body but what about your living space?

What exactly is clutter? It's the physical and mental excess in your life you no longer need that is taking up space that could be put to a lot better use in your life.

What's the connection? Clutter is past tense, old stuff, it might have been useful once, possibly even attractive then, but now it is just sitting there getting dusty, going moldy, time to sort it or chuck it.

Step One - Clear the Clutter

1. Start with the bedroom. The level of a person's self-esteem shows by the state of what they put next to their skin. Get rid of anything that smacks of poverty, grubby bed linen, threadbare towels, not to mention some of the old worn stuff in the wardrobe. Replacing these items with the best you can afford sends a serious message to the universe that you now value yourself much higher and are ready for more good stuff in your life.

2. Remove the junk from your hall, fix up the doorbell, letterbox, phone & email connections and you'll more than likely be in for a raise, promotion or increase in business.

3. Empty the fridge & clean up the kitchen for the fastest way to attract wealth. It is your connection with nourishment.

Step Two - Clean

First you clear the clutter, then you CLEAN.

The good news is that now the house is almost empty you have a whole lot less to clean. If you are lazy, get in cleaners, but there is a huge benefit in doing it yourself as you get down and dirty and really excavate those gunged up crevices.

While your body is engaged physically, your mind will be doing overtime clearing the mental and emotional cobwebs.

When you are finished, your home will be like a magnet set to attract the best life has to offer you, so open the windows, buy some flowers, light a candle, relax and wait for the universe to deliver the goodies.

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REPLACEMENT COST QUIZ

FENCE / LANDSCAPING

Guess the average replacement cost of these following items.

- | | | | |
|------------------------------------|--|--|--|
| 1. Reset post in concrete | <input type="checkbox"/> \$65 | <input type="checkbox"/> \$75 | <input type="checkbox"/> \$85 |
| 2. Chain - link (4 ft.) | <input type="checkbox"/> \$10-15 lin ft. | <input type="checkbox"/> \$20-35 lin ft. | <input type="checkbox"/> \$35-45 lin ft. |
| 3. Wood - cedar (5ft.) | <input type="checkbox"/> \$5-10/lin.ft. | <input type="checkbox"/> \$15-25/lin.ft. | <input type="checkbox"/> \$25-35/lin.ft. |
| 4. Wood - pressure treated (5 ft.) | <input type="checkbox"/> \$10-20/lin.ft. | <input type="checkbox"/> \$25-35/lin.ft. | <input type="checkbox"/> \$38-42/lin.ft. |
| 5. Lay sod and soil | <input type="checkbox"/> \$2-5/lin.ft. | <input type="checkbox"/> \$5-7/lin.ft. | <input type="checkbox"/> \$9-11/lin.ft. |
| 6. Sprinkler system | <input type="checkbox"/> \$1,000 | <input type="checkbox"/> \$1,500 | <input type="checkbox"/> \$2,000 |
| 7. Retaining wall -concrete | <input type="checkbox"/> \$50/sq.ft. | <input type="checkbox"/> \$60/sq.ft. | <input type="checkbox"/> \$70/sq.ft. |
| 8. Retaining wall -wood | <input type="checkbox"/> \$40/sq.ft. | <input type="checkbox"/> \$50/sq.ft. | <input type="checkbox"/> \$60/sq.ft. |

1. \$75 2. \$10-15/lin.ft. 3. \$15-25/lin.ft. 4. \$10-20/lin.ft. 5. \$2-5/lin.ft. 6. \$1,000 7. \$50/sq..ft. 8. \$40/sq.ft.

Cost and Life expectancy will vary based on quality, usage and operating conditions.

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EXCITING HOME TRENDS

Your home reflects your personal style but trends help trigger your creativity. Here are a few hot home trends:

- 1. Shower Spa** - Seek a serene, spa like shower environment with a curbless design for a spacious wonderful and perfect open shower experience.
- 2. Open It Up** - Open plan kitchens are expanding even further with glass front cabinets and open shelving units to give the feeling of even more space.
- 3. Smart Sensors** - Smart thermostats are the latest environmentally friendly gadget. Save energy by automatically adjusting the temperature based on your daily routine.
- 4. Back to Nature** - Add value and comfort by blending indoor and outdoor living space. All-weather furniture and outdoor fireplaces are top picks.



- 5. U-Sockets** - The smallest upgrade can make the biggest difference! U-sockets are wall plugs with two built-in USB ports that can be used to power devices such as tablets and smartphones.

Hopefully these trends have inspired you whether you are looking to stage and sell your home or just want to add a little pizzazz to your space.



UPDATE ANY ROOM

Give your home a fresh new look - quickly, cheaply and easily - with these low and no cost tips.

- 1. Give upholstered pieces new life** and unite mismatched furniture with slipcovers. Limitless choices are available at Pottery Barn.
- 2. Use paint to rescue wood furniture.** It turns drab into delicious. Layer on even more personality with stenciling, decoupage or painted accent designs.
- 3. Tack on some trim.** Add cording, fringe or other trim to the seams where two fabrics meet - along edges of drapery panels, around duvet covers and on toss pillows.
- 4. Juggle your accessories.** Moving accent pieces you already own to new locations or other rooms can really jazz things up and at no cost.



SPOTLIGHT ON DECKS

For many, a deck is an extension of the home. It brings indoor life to the great outdoors. With a little care, a deck can last for many years. Neglected, it can become an eyesore or worse, unsafe! This spotlight on decks provides a few tips to help keep your deck safe and in good condition.

Deck Materials

Pressure Treated Wood: The most common deck building material is pressure treated wood. Properly maintained, a pressure treated wood deck can last 20 years. Pressure treated wood comes in construction grade and premium grade. Construction grade, pressure treated wood tends to warp and split as it dries and shrinks. This is fine for the deck structure but the decking calls for a higher quality material. Premium pressure treated deck boards are cut from better stock and are treated and dried to a higher standard.

Cedar: Cedar is a premium deck building material with a rich look and feel. It is more expensive than pressure treated wood but it has many desirable properties. It is naturally more dimensionally stable than pressure treated wood so it does not shrink and split. A well maintained cedar deck can last 20 years.

Synthetic: Synthetic decking is the most expensive decking material but it requires little to no maintenance beyond cleaning and should last many years. There are many different types and styles.

**Wood Sealer**

The secret to a deck that looks good over the years is wood sealer. Unsealed wood will absorb water and expand and then dry out and shrink. Over time the wood splits and deteriorates. If the water beads up and runs off, the deck is in good shape. Otherwise it needs sealer.

Guard Rails

Guard rails keep you safe on your deck. The point is to keep people from falling from the deck. Guards are generally required for decks higher than 24 inches and 30 inches from the ground.

- The guard rail should be 36 inches high (a deck over 6 feet high requires a 42 inch guard)(Requirements may vary by location).
- There should be no openings larger than 4 inches so nobody can fall through or trap children.
- It should be strong enough to hold a person that falls heavily into the rail or balusters.

Deck Collapse

Except for hurricanes and tornadoes, more injuries may be connected to deck failures than all other wood building components and loading cases combined. Many decks fail because they are old, worn and rotted. Others fail because they were not built properly in the first place. The most critical connection is the deck to house connection.

FLOWERS THAT LAST



The beauty of cut flowers from the garden or florist is apt to fade all too quickly. Here are a few ways to keep them adorning your home a little longer.

- **Choose the freshest.** Pick barely open blooms and gently squeeze them at the base. They must feel plump and firm.
- **Make fresh cuts.** Hold the stems under water while you trim off the dry ends. Place them into a jar of water while you make your arrangement.
- **Clean up your act.** Leaves that sit under water will decay and shorten the life of blooms, so remove them.

COMMUNICATION

BE IN THE MOMENT

ORANGE: Studies show orange is the warmest color and makes you feel instantly less stressed and more open to the beauty of the moment. Wear it when you want to meet new people or be more persuasive, they will be more open to you in orange.

TIME CLOCK: Removing the constant reminder of time ticking away stops the "fast-forward thinking" that keeps you from focusing on the here-and-now.

REALLY LISTEN: We are all so busy, we become experts at half-listening while our minds are somewhere else. Really zeroing in on what your client, child or spouse is saying right now creates a bona fide connection.



HOUSEWATCH MAINTENANCE

CHECK YOUR DECK - LOOK FOR THESE SIGNS OF TROUBLE

- **Wood rot:** If you see wood rot it could be worse than you think. Rotted connections such as the ledger board to house connection could lead to deck collapse.
- **Good connections:** Check points of connection of major components such as the deck to house, guard-rail to deck, beam to post, post to pier etc. You should see plenty of metal brackets and bolts, not nails. If in doubt, have an expert look at your deck. For example, it is very difficult to inspect the deck to house connection because it is not easily accessible. Of course, it helps if you know what you are looking for.

There are over 40 million decks in North America with over 1 million being built or re-built each year. With care, a deck can last many years and provide a safe place to enjoy the great outdoors.



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