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ORGANIZE & DECLUTTER YOUR HOME THIS FALL

Establish new routines for your family to gear up for new schedules and cold weather

By Sally Rummel
news@ctimes.com • 810-629-8282

Your kids are back in school and busy fall schedules are in full swing. Now is the time to get your home organized, before the cold weather hits and holidays begin their countdowns.

Here are a few ideas to get you started from marthastewart.com:

**Fall accessory storage**

For an easy solution to fall clutter, take a cue from restaurants by installing double ceiling hooks under a shelf, to hang jackets, umbrellas, backpacks and purses.

**Clutter control**

Remember the days of lockers that held your algebra book and picture of Shaun Cassidy ripped out of Tiger Beat magazine? Today’s modern version of lockers (or cubbies) can serve as catchalls at home, for your kids’ shoes, sports equipment and more.

**Family mudroom organizer**

For a more organized effort to contain all the fall clutter, give everyone their own space to hold their own stuff. Assign a sturdy metal storage bin to each person in your household. Slide the bins under a bench in the front hall, or line them up in a mudroom. Use magnets and a photo to mark who each one belongs to, even those that are younger than the original doorknob. Use a calendar the evening before, so that books, homework and paperwork are in one place.

**Establish a new fall routine**

Fall is second only to the holiday season as the busiest season for families. Establishing a routine will help you maximize your time and accomplish your must-do list efficiently.

These tips from styleathome.com will help you get organized:

- Keep the family on the same page by syncing everyone’s cell phones.
- Make sure all the clocks in the house keep the same time, so you’re not trying to run out the door while your teen is still getting ready.
- Keep a calendar in the kitchen to track everyone’s important dates and appointments, all in one place.
- Create a study area for your kids in a common room or their bedroom, so that books, homework and paperwork are in one place.
- Organize backpacks, make lunches and update the family calendar the evening before school.
- Minimize the morning routine by picking out clothing outfits the day before. If you’re really proactive, use a clothing organizer to lay out a week’s worth of outfits.

*Source: styleathome.com*

See DECLUTTER on 14
CEILING FANS AREN'T JUST FOR SUMMER

Use them during the colder seasons for warm winter comfort and energy savings.

By Sally Rummel
news@tctimes.com; 810-629-8282

Ceiling fans make you feel cooler in the summer by creating an artificial breeze that evaporates moisture from your skin.

When a ceiling fan rotates counterclockwise (when looking up at it), the slant of the blades pushes air down, causing a noticeable breeze. The faster the spin, the cooler you feel.

The exact opposite effect happens in the winter. A ceiling fan gently circulates hot air that is trapped near the ceiling. Since heat rises, the temperature near the ceiling is greater than at floor level.

Homeowners should set the fan in the fall to rotate clockwise on low, pushing the air near the ceiling up and outward. The gentle updraft pushes warm air, which naturally rises to the ceiling, down along the walls and back to the floor, making the room feel warmer, according to houselogic.com.

Since the air at floor level is warmer, homeowners can set the thermostat lower, saving money and helping the environment at the same time.

Homeowners who use ceiling fans during the winter can save as much as 15 percent on heating bills, according to U.S. News & World Report. Any heat generated by the fan motor is a bonus in the winter, so you can keep the fan running whether you’re in the room or not.

If your ceiling fan is mounted on a two-story cathedral or vaulted ceiling, the fan is too high to create a discernible wind chill, so it can stay in its summer setting (counterclockwise) all year round.

DIFFERENT TYPES OF CEILING FANS

Standard — You will find these in the majority of homes. Typically, they feature five blades and a built-in light fixture. They come in many finishes, from brushed nickel to antique bronze, pewter, black, white and natural. This type of fan is most useful in indoor rooms with ceilings at least 9 feet tall.

Low profile — This type should be used if your home has ceilings less than 8 feet tall. Instead of using a downrod, the fan is installed directly onto the mounting bracket, which keeps it at the required seven feet above the floor.

Energy Star — These fans have efficient motors and aerodynamic blades that help them use less energy.

Dual motor — These fans have two motors, allowing you to set each one at its own speed. They are usually more decorative than traditional styles. These fans are often used in public settings, due to their ability to circulate air over a large area.

How to adjust your ceiling fan for winter: Most ceiling fans include remote controls or wall controls that adjust the direction the fan blades rotate, so reversing the process is as easy as pushing a button.

If your ceiling fan isn’t operated with a remote, look for a toggle switch on the motor housing just below the blades. With the fan turned off, flip the switch to change the blades’ direction.

For vertical switches, flip the switch down for summer direction or up for winter direction. For horizontal switches, flip the switch to the left for summer direction or to the right for winter direction.

See FANS on 14
Tyrone Township gardener takes broken pieces no one else wants and creates unique garden

By Sally Rummel
news@tctimes.com; 810-629-8282

When life hands you broken pieces, all you have to do is pick them up and find beauty in their brokenness.

Gardener Janice Cooley did just that, building an entire gnome garden out of broken pieces garnered from her own life and from family and friends, in one corner of her 10-acre Tyrone Township parcel of forested trees, winding trails and purposeful gardens.

In the fall, the gnome garden takes on special beauty alongside many of Cooley’s plants and flowers, some of which, like the Dahlia, blooms brightest in the early fall.

For Cooley, the fall garden is a season all its own, with the beauty of majestic maples, the rich textures of perennials and colorful annuals like the Dragon Wing Begonia, which blooms right up to frost. Her gnome garden is a garden staple amidst all these changing seasons, except for winter, when Cooley dismantles and stores the items that would be damaged in the cold and snow.

“The gnome garden first happened because I had to take down a giant oak tree that was in danger of falling,” said Cooley, a retired teacher. She had grown up in a small Upper Peninsula town next to a German couple who had collected gnomes in their yard, and always had a special fondness for this German garden tradition.

“The tree removal company cut down the branches, but the great big pieces of the trunk were heavy, and I couldn’t move them,” said Cooley. “I left them there, and they became the basis of my gnome garden.”

Meanwhile, she ran out to the far reaches of her property where worn-out handmade birdhouses dotted tree branches along a trail. These birdhouses had been handmade many years ago by her late husband, Greg, with their son, Jeff, and were very meaningful to her.

“The birdhouses were in bad shape, so I just covered up all the holes with pieces of old metal, broken shells, jewelry, glass, pottery and other items no one wanted,” said Cooley. Now, all these broken pieces and many other meaningful ones, make up this huge gnome garden with a series of little vignettes, like Grandpa Joe’s Fishing Cottage, and Paul’s Estate, named for Paul Stedman, her partner in life who is the main caretaker of this 10-acre property where worn-out handmade gnomes and fairies, so she can foster better “gnome-fairy relationships.” The difference between a gnome and fairy garden, is that gnome gardens are bigger and feature a wider variety of items. Everything in the 50-square-foot garden is reclaimed or found items and most of the creatures and homes have names and a story. “It’s magic, nature is magic,” she said.

Janice Cooley’s gnome garden features both gnomes and fairies, so she can foster better “gnome-fairy relationships.” The difference between a gnome and fairy garden, is that gnome gardens are bigger and feature a wider variety of items. Everything in the 50-square-foot garden is reclaimed or found items and most of the creatures and homes have names and a story. “It’s magic, nature is magic,” she said.
Learn how to battle ‘the big three’ of mice, squirrels and rats

By Sally Rummel
news@tctimes.com; 810-629-8282

When autumn air turns brisk and the leaves begin to fall, it seems that all the critters from the outdoors want to find shelter in your house, according to Bob Vila, TV home expert. Squirrels bed down in your eaves, and mice rally into your garage, squeezing into a tiny entrance into your home. Rats tunnel their way into your basement, without a thought they might be unwelcome guests.

These rodents then feast on your trim, electrical wires, insulation and siding, not to mention wearing on your nerves and peace of mind as you try to get rid of them. They’re prolific, too. Six mice breed into 60 mice in 90 days and female rats can produce as many as 12 pups (babies) every 23 days. Squirrels churn out six babies a year. These numbers should scare homeowners into action.

With many ways to battle the rodent issue, all options fall into one of two basic categories: traps or poisons. Poisons take care of the problem quietly, with the downside that you can’t predict whether the animal will perish outside or inside your walls. Traps, on the other hand, work instantly and leave no doubt as to the outcome. For mice, you can choose between traps that kill or those that capture them live. All rat traps kill. Squirrels are typically trapped live, a more humane method as long as the traps are monitored. Once a squirrel is caught, they can be released, as long as they are three to five miles from where they were trapped.

These services aren’t always cheap. A better solution is to avoid having a rodent home invasion to begin with. Just like burglar-proofing your home — if you make it tough enough to break in, they’ll give up and go elsewhere. It can be tedious work, as it involves plugging up all the entryways into your house.

See CRITTERS on 12
Now’s the time to get your furnace system ready for fall’s first blast of cold weather

By Sally Rummel  
news@tctimes.com; 810-629-8282

We all know that cold weather is on its way, and we certainly want our furnace to be in peak working order when we turn the thermostat on for the first time this fall.

Here are a few tips to prepare your furnace for the cold, snowy season ahead:

1. Replace the air filter in your furnace each month.
2. Consider upgrading your filter to a pleated filter, HEPA filter or electrostatic filter to increase the energy efficiency of your furnace and allow warm air to flow smoothly through your home.
3. Clean your air vents and ducts. Remove the vent covers with a screwdriver and use the extension hose of your vacuum to remove the dust.
4. Inspect the blower belt for cracks, by turning off the power to the furnace and using a screwdriver to remove the steel cover of the air handler. Replace the belt if it is cracked.
5. Engage your setback or programmable thermostat so it automatically lowers the temperature while you sleep or are away from home. According to Consumers Energy, you can save 20 to 75 percent on your furnace’s operating cost by using this type of thermostat.
6. Inspect the exhaust flue outdoors to ensure it is free of obstructions, such as branches or animal nests.
7. Keep the area around your furnace unit free of debris and clutter.
8. Open all your air vents. Remove furniture, boxes and clutter that get in the way of airflow.
9. Keep flammable objects away from your furnace.
10. Make sure your home has working carbon monoxide and radon detectors.

EVERY HOME SHOULD HAVE THESE DETECTORS:

- Smoke detectors — Homes should have smoke alarms installed inside every bedroom, outside each sleeping area and on every level of the home, including the basement, according to the National Fire Protection Association. For example, a two-story, three-bedroom house needs a minimum of five smoke alarms.
- Carbon monoxide detectors — Carbon monoxide is one of the most common household threats, and a detector for this odorless, colorless deadly gas costs less than $20. For $99, you can buy a combined NEST smoke/carbon monoxide detector, which will allow you to remotely monitor your home.
- Radon detector — Radon is second only to smoking as a cause of lung cancer, and the leading cause among non-smokers. This colorless, odorless gas results when naturally occurring uranium in the soil decays. Without proper prevention, this gas can become trapped in the home, a problem that plagues one in 15 homes, according to the Environmental Protection Agency. A single-use radon test costs less than $15 and a radon detector that provides constant monitoring will cost about $130. If a test does come back showing elevated radon levels, don’t panic. A licensed contractor can find and seal any entry points and install a vent system to expel the gas.

10 TIPS FOR GETTING YOUR FURNACE READY FOR FALL

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Cooler temperatures, warm soil and fewer pests make fall a perfect time for planting.

By Sally Rummel
news@tctimes.com; 810-629-8282

Spring may be the season that excites most gardeners, but fall is actually an ideal time to plant ahead for your spring showcase of flowers.

Better gardens come from fall planting.

Spring may be the season that excites most gardeners, but fall is actually an ideal time to plant ahead for your spring showcase of flowers. 

But don’t wait too long to get your gardening tools and shovels out. “You want your plants to have time to get acclimated before the ground freezes,” advised Shirley Carlson of Carlson’s Greenhouses.

The window for fall planting ends about six weeks before the first hard frost. Any fall-planted perennials should be carefully watered until the ground freezes, to keep their roots healthy and strong. Don’t overwater, but make sure the plants get at least 1 inch of water one time per week.

Here are a few perennials that can weather whatever our Michigan climate delivers. Best of all, they come back year after year with almost no attention on your part.

• Peonies — These bloom throughout the summer, and range in height from 16 inches to 4 feet.
• Black-eyed Susans — These stay in bloom for more than a month, beginning in August.
• Sedums — These are easy to grow, stinky with water and rich in texture and shape.
• Yuccas — Because these are tough as nails, yuccas are the ideal plant for a no-maintenance garden, and combine nicely with other moulded foliage plants.
• Daylilies — If ever there’s a “sure bet” perennial, it must be the daylily. They tolerate a wide variety of soil conditions, aren’t troubled by diseases or pests and bloom faithfully for years with virtually no attention.
• Butterfly Weed — Even though it has the word “weed” in its name, don’t let that scare you away. It’s as easy to grow as a weed, but hummingbirds and butterflies adore it.
• Allium — These members of the onion family are easy to grow from hardy bulbs. Purple allium, with its unique pom-pom shape and leafless stem, brings height to beds of low-growing plants.
• Peonies — These perfect pink flowers bloom best after a fall planting, compared to spring. Almost carefree, peonies will thrive in a sunny location.
Fall is the right time of year to pull out your slow cooker for flavorful, seasonal dinners.

By Sally Rummel
news@tctimes.com; 810-629-8282

When temperatures drop just a few degrees and there’s a little nip in the air, I pull out my slow cooker and begin thinking of cozy fall recipes to enjoy and share with friends.

Here are a few of my fall favorites. I hope they will become part of your recipe collections, too.

**SLOW COOKER TERIYAKI FLANK STEAK**

**Ingredients:**
- ½ c. wine (dry red is preferred, but any wine will work)
- ½ c. low sodium soy sauce
- ¼ c. olive oil
- 2 T. sesame oil
- ¼ c. grated fresh ginger root (or 1/4 t. dried ginger, or to taste)
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 t. ground black pepper
- 1 ½ lbs. beef flank steak
- Freshly ground sea salt and black pepper, to taste
- Additional oil, for searing

**Directions:**
Note: you can cut down the amount of oil and soy sauce used, to reduce fat and sodium.

In small bowl, mix wine, soy sauce, olive oil, sesame oil, brown sugar, ginger, garlic and pepper. Set aside. Rub the steak with sea salt and black pepper, then heat oil in large skillet. Sear steak on both sides, not to cook it, but to give it a “crust.”

Place the beef in slow cooker and pour the sauce on top. Cook on low for 6 to 8 hours. I cooked mine for about 6/2 hours and it was perfectly tender. Remove from slow cooker and slice meat against the grain. Pour sauce over to serve.

**BEST-EVER SLOW COOKER BEEF STEW**

**Note:** Let the flavors meld together by cooking one day and serving the next day.

**Ingredients:**
- 2 lbs. trimmed boneless chuck roast, cut into 2-inch cubes
- 1½ t. kosher salt, divided
- 1 t. freshly ground pepper, divided
- 2 T. canola oil, divided
- 3 medium yellow onions, cut into ½-inch thick slices
- 6 garlic cloves, thinly sliced
- 1 ½ lbs. baby Dutch potatoes, halved
- 1 lb. carrots, peeled and cut diagonally into 2-inch pieces
- 4 thyme sprigs
- 2 bay leaves
- 2 T. all-purpose flour
- 1 T. Dijon mustard
- 1 T. red wine vinegar
- ¼ c. flat-leaf parsley leaves

**Directions:**
Heat a large skillet over medium-high heat. Sprinkle beef evenly with ¼ t. salt and ¼ t. pepper. Add 1½ t. oil to pan; swirl to coat. Add half of beef, cook 6 minutes, turning until well browned. Remove beef from pan. Add remaining 1 T. oil and repeat with other half of beef. Remove beef and juices from pan.

Add remaining 1 T. oil to pan; swirl to coat. Add onions and garlic; sauté 4 minutes. See SLOW COOKING on 15
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**CLEAN UP YOUR ‘TOYS’ IN TIME FOR WINTER STORAGE**

You may plan to barbecue outdoors all year long, but still take the time to clean your outdoor cooking equipment for the new season. Scrub the grill grate with a grill brush to remove caked-on food, using oil rather than water to condition the metal pieces and avoid rust. Wipe down the grill’s exterior with a dry cloth and lubricate moving parts.

Tighten the valve on your propane tank. If you won’t be using your grill for several months, disconnect the tank and store it away from the home in a dry area. Once your grill is cleaned, cover it with a fitted cover and move it under the eaves of the home.

**Barbecues and grills**

Use a dry cloth to wipe off any dirt, moss, bugs or pollen. Follow manufacturer’s instructions for any deeper cleaning. Once the furniture is completely dry, cover it with a tarp, and then move under the eaves or in another dry place. Umbrellas should also be wiped down and covered.

Store outdoor cushions in a climate-controlled environment that stays dry, using a protective container to keep bugs, mold and mildew away. They can also be spot cleaned before storage, taking care to clean or treat spots from oil, food, sunblock or any other oil-based products.

**Outdoor furniture**

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**Outdoor play equipment**

Empty sandboxes and cover them securely to keep out unwanted pets, animals, insects and debris. Check with the manufacturer about any other recommended cleaning or winterizing tips.

Plastic play toys can be stored in a dry area, or cover them with a tarp to discourage mold. Store smaller pieces in a shed, garage, attic or basement.

**Sports equipment**

Before storing away bicycles, kayaks or golf clubs, wipe them down and remove dirt, mud or debris. Oil mechanismed equipment so rust won’t affect moving parts.

If possible, elevate unused equipment to store out of harm’s way. You can invest in an organizational garage storage system for ideal sports storage.

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**By Sally Rummel**

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**See TOYS on 14**

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**BOSS DEALER!**

bossplow.com
Fall is a good time to repair or replace the path to your home
By Sally Rummel
news@tctimes.com; 810-629-8282

Fall and spring are good times to replace or repair your driveway, while
moderate temperatures replace the blistering temperatures of hot summer
and the cold extremes of winter.

When you take a look at your own driveway or sidewalk, you will have
to consider whether it’s better to patch, refinish or replace it.

If you’re going to the expense of replacing it, you may also want to look
at materials beyond asphalt and concrete, especially if you’re looking to add
aesthetic appeal to your home.

Some of the new materials making up today’s driveways include pavers,
brick, stamped concrete, crushed shells and more.

The decision to patch or replace
requires several different considerations, according to angieslist.com.

DRIVEWAY REPAIRS
Asphalt driveways typically last
about 20 years, and a concrete driveway
typically lasts between 25 and 50 years,
depending on how well it has been
maintained.

A good scrubbing with a hose and stiff
brush is all you need for cleaning your
driveway, while using a concrete sealer
once a year will add a layer of protection.

In a snowy climate like Michigan, fall is
the best time to seal a driveway, enabling
it to stand up to road salt and lots of snow.

Harsh Michigan weather may
accelerate the timetable for driveway
repair or replacement.

The constant freeze-thaw cycles of a
winter, plus the pounding of thousands
of pounds of vehicle metal moving over
the driveway every day, creates damage
over time. Usually it shows up as small
cracks across the surface or small divots
in the material.

Driveway cracks less than a quarter-
inch wide usually can be repaired easily
with liquid crack fillers. Cracks that
are wider and deeper often signal more
significant issues. Filling in those cracks
will only temporarily solve the problem.

If you plan to do driveway patching
yourself, expect to pay about $3 to $5
per square foot, or double that if you hire
a contractor.

Eventually, you’ll have to replace
driveways with deep holes and large cracks.

Patching can move this replacement back
a few years, but it will have to be done.

DRIVEWAY REPLACEMENT
How much does it cost to replace a
concrete driveway? Most prices
reflect a tear out of the old driveway and pouring
of the new. Angie’s List members report
a nationwide average between $6,275 and
$8,500, with an average cost of $7,394.

That’s why most people live with a
cracked and pitted driveway for quite
awhile, before deciding to replace it.

Sometimes, an upcoming sale of the
property is what drives a homeowner to
replace the driveway, because its poor
condition may send a negative vibe to a
potential buyer.

The aesthetics of a driveway as part
of the property’s hardscape features also
drives some homeowners to replace
their.

DRIVEWAY RESURFACING
A compromise between repair
and replacement might be found in
resurfacing the driveway. Essentially, a
contractor would take off only the top
layer of concrete, if the foundation is
still in good shape. This option would
offer a driveway that looks as good as
new, with a price tag of about $1,687 for
a 750 square foot residential driveway,
according to angieslist.com.

If a homeowner prefers a more
aesthetic appeal, they can add patterns
or colors to the concrete surface, for a
final cost of between $3,000 and $6,000.
CRITTERS
Continued from Page 6
home — mice can wiggle through an opening just ¼-inch across, according to This Old House.
Critters usually get past the gates not guarded very carefully: the garage, the basement, the roof, anywhere they find a crevice big enough to slip through.
To make sure your home isn’t vulnerable to pests this fall, ask a local firm to examine and troubleshoot your house. Then you have the option of having the work professionally done or doing the work yourself.
Whatever you do, don’t make it easy for pests to get inside by leaving your garage door open all day. By nighttime, they are already inside.

SUMMARY
Mice, rats and squirrels are “the big three” rodents that many homeowners have a problem with in the fall. You can win the war, with a few precautionary tips.

Gnome Garden
Continued from Page 5
property. “Every one has a story,” said Cooley.
Like many of Cooley’s garden areas, she lets the natural, native plants and wildflowers create the beauty in her gnome garden, then weeds out what she feels doesn’t belong there. “If something wants to be out here, it stays,” said Cooley. “If not, it just disappears.”
She starts each morning in her gnome garden, with her Golden Retriever, Bubba, by her side and a cup of coffee in her hand. “Sometimes it’s fun just to come out here and work on it, and other times I just come out here to be.”
“The spirit here in this gnome garden has given me back a lot,” she adds. “I realized how much beauty there is in old, broken things.”
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FANS
Continued from Page 4

greater area than a standard fan.

Remote controlled — Many different fan types mentioned above are available with remote controls. This is a perfect choice for people who aren’t tall enough to reach pull cords, or who want the ability to remotely adjust the speed and direction of the blades. It’s also a good option for rooms with high ceilings. If the fan has lights, they can be turned on and off with the remote.

Damp and wet — These are made with motors that resist damage due to moisture and humidity, and have all-weather blades that resist warping. This style is useful for rooms or outdoor areas that experience a fair amount of humidity, including covered porches or patios and sunrooms. A wet fan will work best for areas like an exposed porch or gazebo. They can withstand rain and snow and are also a good option for outdoor areas that are close to the beach.

HOW TO CHOOSE A CEILING FAN

TIP #1 — Which type of room will the fan circulate air in?

TIP #2 — What is the area of this location and how tall are the ceilings? The larger the space, the bigger the fan must be.

TIP #3 — Determine the size of the fan you need by measuring the size of the space you want to cool. A 52-inch fan can cool up to a 400-square-foot room; a 44-inch fan can cool up to 225 square feet and a 42-inch fan can cool up to 144 square feet.

TIP #4 — If your ceiling is 10 feet or higher, you need to add 1 foot of downrod for every 2 feet of ceiling space.

TIP #5 — Choose the perfect finish and style to match the room or outdoor space.

TOYS
Continued from Page 10

Camping and outdoor gear

Tents, sleeping bags and other outdoor fabric items need to be protected from accumulated dirt, food, charcoal and oils like sunblock and insect spray.

Tents can be spot cleaned and folded away. Sleeping bags can also be spot cleaned or washed in a commercial washing machine.

Wash and dry all other camp gear like utensils and food storage containers. Store in a clear plastic box to keep off dirt and debris.

Camp stoves should be taken apart and thoroughly cleaned. Close propane tanks and store them separately, never inside your home. You can also take propane tanks to your nearby propane distributor for recycling or refilling.

DECLUTTER
Continued from Page 3

the family dog.

Remote corral

Colder weather and new fall seasons mean more TV watching, right? Use a pretty tray on your coffee table or a wide-mouth vase to keep all your remotes gathered in one place.

Basket of slippers

Hint, hint — take off your wet boots and shoes when you walk inside your home, and encourage guests to do the same, by filling a basket with comfortable slippers or soft, heavy socks as a warm welcome for visitors.

Kindling keeper

Don’t let your good-looking garden planters hibernate all winter. Use them along your hearth as eye-catching elements indoors, and put them to work to store split logs, kindling and aromatic enhancements such as dried lavender and pinecones.

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DECLUTTER
Continued from Page 3

n
Ceiling fans work well for fall and winter by circulating hot air that is trapped near the ceiling. Since heat rises, the temperature near the ceiling is greater than at floor level.

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SLOW COOKING
Continued from Page 9
Add beer, scraping pan to loosen browned bits. Bring to a boil; cook 2 minutes. Stir in 1 cup stock, remaining 1 1/4 t. salt and remaining ¼ t. pepper. Bring to a simmer.
Pour mixture into slow cooker. Add beef, potatoes, carrots, thyme and bay leaves. Cover and cook on low for seven hours.
Combine remaining ¼ cup stock and flour, stirring with a whisk. Stir flour mixture into stew; cook 15 minutes or until thickened. Stir in mustard and vinegar. Discard thyme sprigs and bay leaves. Sprinkle with parsley.

SLOW COOKER STUFFED TURKEY MEATBALLS
Ingredients:
1 lb. lean ground turkey (use 93-percent lean)
1 medium onion, finely chopped, divided
1 slice whole grain bread crumbs
1 large egg
1 t. kosher or sea salt, divided
½ t. black pepper
3 ½ oz. ball of fresh mozzarella or about 6 string cheeses, sliced into 4 pieces
Whole wheat (or regular) flour to coat meatballs
Extra virgin olive oil for browning
½ c. chicken broth
1 (14 oz.) can diced tomatoes
1 t. dried oregano
4 fresh sage leaves, or dried sage, to taste

Directions:
In a medium bowl, mix turkey, ground bread crumbs, egg, half the onions, ½ t. salt and black pepper. Shape into about 24 small meatballs.
Push mozzarella chunk into center of each meatball. Roll the meatballs on a plate with flour, and then set aside. Over medium heat, in a saucepan with olive oil, brown the outside of the meatballs (do not cook through), and then set aside in a bowl. Discard the oil.
In the same saucepan, pour new oil to sauté remaining onion. Return meatballs to the pan, and then pour in the broth. Cook until the sauce thickens.
In the slow cooker, pour the meatballs with the sauce, canned tomatoes, oregano, remaining salt and a dash of pepper. Cook on low for 6 hours or on high for 4 hours.

LEMON CHICKEN
Ingredients:
Two chickens, cut up or 2½ lbs. pieces
¼ c. flour
2 T. oil
1 (6 oz. can) frozen lemonade
3 T. brown sugar
3 T. ketchup
1 T. vinegar
2 T. cold water
2 T. cornstarch
Hot, cooked rice

Directions:
Coat chicken with flour and salt, brown in oil. Transfer to crockpot. Stir together lemonade, brown sugar, ketchup and vinegar. Pour over chicken. Cover and cook on high for 3 to 4 hours. Remove chicken. Pour cooling liquid into saucepan. Return chicken to cooker; cover to keep warm. Skim fat from reserved liquid. Blend cold water into cornstarch; stir into hot liquid. Cook and stir until thick. Serve over rice.

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