Fall for these planters
Add some autumn to your plantings

PG 6

Move over, wood
Fireplace options

PG 10

Create more closet space
No major renovations required!

PG 16

Make your home happy
Get your house ready for winter

PG 18
Convenient. Free.

My family’s binge watching horror movies from the library.

Gulp. I’ll stick with Scooby Doo.

Check out the library for all your Halloween entertainment.
Cozy up your home for fall

By Sally Rummel

Fall is the most special time of year to create a new ambiance of “cozy” in your home, after the warmth of summer is long gone. Here are a few ideas to warm up your home for winter:

1. **ADD TEXTURE**
   Think cable-knit sweaters, flannel or buffalo check, which can easily be incorporated into decor with a throw blanket, pillow, or even a mini rug.

**TIP:** Use an oversized fall scarf to drape over your sofa, instead of buying a brand new throw blanket. It instantly layers in texture without any cost.

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See COZY on 14
Get floored...

Check out these options for basement flooring, which has issues different than any other room in your home.

By Sally Rummel

Forget all the normal rules about flooring when looking at flooring options for your basement. Moisture and flooding are the two realities of basements because of its close proximity to the ground. The primary concern with basement flooring is moisture — how to avoid it, and how well the floor will dry out if it becomes wet. Hard materials like tile and concrete tend to outperform soft materials like carpet in basements. However, your flooring choices can be on a case-by-case basis, depending on moisture issues in your own space.

Here are several flooring options to consider for your basement:

**Vinyl flooring tiles**

**PROS:** Vinyl is durable, easy to install, and highly moisture-resistant. The best options for both appearance and ease of installation are vinyl planks and sheet vinyl. Both can be “floated” over concrete — laid on a thin underlayment sheet with bonded seams (sheet vinyl) or interlocking seams (planks).

**CONS:** As a seamed floor covering, luxury vinyl plank and tile may leak moisture down to the subfloor in the event of flooding. Higher cost than some other options.

**Cost:** $5.78 to $7.93 per square foot

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**Sheet vinyl**

**PROS:** Sheetvinylflooringcreates a nearly seamless, water-impervious surface on your basement floor, keeping water at bay. It’s inexpensive and warmer to the touch than ceramic tile or concrete.

**CONS:** It’s often considered to be a budget product. It needs a very clean surface for adhesion and usually requires professional installation.

**Cost:** $2.50 to $5 per square foot.

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**Ceramic or porcelain tile**

**PROS:** Tile is a slam-dunk in basements due to its unmatched durability and moisture-resistance. It can withstand floods and all manners of abuse.

**CONS:** The biggest expense isn’t the material, but the labor. So tile is not a cheap flooring option unless you are doing the work yourself. Other issues: poor sound absorption qualities, leveling and repair on a concrete slab, cold underfoot unless radiant heating is added.

**Cost:** $11.49 to $17.60 per square foot

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Carpeting

**PROS:** Carpet is one of the warmest flooring options. It improves sound quality for home theaters and is a great option for families with children playing on the floor.

**CONS:** Portions of damaged carpeting can’t be replaced, and drying out often takes industrial-quality drying equipment or services to get the job done fast enough before mold develops.

Cost: $3.50 to $11 per square foot

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Carpet tiles

**PROS:** They have a moisture-resistant plastic backing and can actually be run under water for cleaning, so they can easily handle occasional basement moisture. In case of flooding, you can simply remove the tiles and move them to safety until the crisis is over. You can mix and match colors and patterns for any number of custom designs, and carpet tiles also make great area rugs of any size.

**CONS:** Some tiles will fray at the edges and/or buckle, and they are not as well-cushioned as regular carpet.

Cost: $3 to $7 per square foot

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Plank tile flooring

**PROS:** It’s popular and highly regarded as a very durable surface. It looks surprisingly like real wood. It is considered a status item, is waterproof and its rectified edges mean smaller grout lines.

**CONS:** Pricey compared to conventionally sized tile, and feels cold underfoot unless you install radiant heating mats.

Cost: $15 to $20 per square foot

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Concrete

**PROS:** It can be painted or stained to upgrade its appearance, it’s the most moisture-hardy flooring option, requires the least amount of materials and doesn’t require a sub-floor. If you paint with an epoxy paint, it acts as a waterproofing sealant.

**CONS:** It’s the coldest underfoot, with no options to heat from below, poor sound quality, requires more labor than one thinks and it requires intensive scouring and cleaning before it can be painted.

Cost: $4 to $7 per square foot

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Engineered wood

Since wood is derived from trees and is organic, it does not stand up well to prolonged moisture, making solid hardwood a poor basement choice. However, engineered wood is a different story.

**PROS:** Holds up well to mild amounts of moisture, very attractive, excellent sound absorption qualities

**CONS:** Subfloor required, expensive, more difficult to take up in the event of water

Cost: $4 to $7 per square foot
Start with these tips for transitioning your summer pots into fall planters:

**Tip 1:** Keep some of the plants that still look good in the planter.

**Tip 2:** Buy perennials that you can reuse in the garden.

**Tip 3:** Divide larger pots into two pieces – two for the price of one.

**Tip 4:** Add artificial accents for extra texture and color.

**Tip 5:** Add other fall accents like gourds or Indian corn.

**Tip 6:** Consider moving plants from the garden into your planters.

**Tip 7:** Group rustic fall containers made of birch logs together.

**Tip 8:** Group container gardens together to make a statement, and move them around to change the look.

---

**FALL for these planter ideas**

- Spruce up your planters and window boxes with autumn themes, plants and flowers

**Because of Sally Rummel**

- Start with these tips for transitioning your summer pots into fall planters:

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• Snapdragons — pair purple “Bluebird” nemesia to contrast with brown and orange bicolor snapdragons that look just like candy corn, a favorite Halloween treat. A “crown red” snapdragon adds another pop of color, and the leather leaf sedge pulls it all together.

• You can’t beat coral bells, also called heuchera, for a fall container garden plant. They love the cold and only get more beautiful as the temperature drops. Hybrids come in a gorgeous array of colors from a bright ‘Key Lime,’ to an almost black-purple, ‘Blackcurrant.’

• This basket of flowering cabbage will look even better as the weather gets colder and the colors deepen. Because of its low profile, this container garden would look great as a table centerpiece or on a low step.

• This fall container garden will last well past the first frost. It uses purple fountain grass, “Rubrum,” (Pennisetum setaceum) and creeping wirevine (muehlenbeckia) in a simple arrangement.

• Fill a large terra cotta pot with large-leafed lambs’ ear, sweet potato vine, sedum, flowering kale and a small ornamental grass.

• Dark coral bells with rich, textured ornament grass and mums for color, make a fall planting classic.

Source: Thespruce.com
Attention, WILDLIFE lovers
Here’s how you can help nature’s critters during the change of seasons

By Sally Rummel
The transition from summer to cooler temperatures can be a challenging time for wildlife, with food sources becoming more scarce. Here’s how you can help local wildlife through this change of seasons.

Let your garden go wild
• Leave undisturbed wild areas in your garden — piles of leaves or brushwood can make the perfect nest in which animals can hide, rest and hibernate.
• By leaving the task of tidying your garden borders and shrubs until early spring, shelter can be provided for insects throughout winter.
• Your compost heap will become a welcome habitat for frogs and grass snakes.

Break the ice
• If your garden pond freezes, gently melt a hole in the ice by placing a pan of hot water on the surface. The hole will release toxic gases that could otherwise poison fish, frogs and other organisms that have remained in the pond.

Offer food and water
• Put out extra food to feed birds, because birds may find it difficult to locate natural foods such as berries, insects, seeds, worms and fruit during this cold season.
• Provide a range of seeds, fresh unsalted peanuts and table scraps (cheese and fruits such as apples and pears). Garden birds also love dried mealworms or waxworms, which can be bought from bird food suppliers. Check out Audubon.com to find out which types of feed are best for different species.

Attract garden visitors
• When food is scarce, putting out a small amount of an appropriate treat will help to see the mammals visiting your garden through the winter.
• For squirrels: Squirrels do not hibernate, instead they store food during autumn to eat when food is

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of food each evening to avoid your guests becoming dependent on handouts.

- It is also not advisable to provide food if it encourages wildlife to cross a busy road.

**Watch out**

Animals can be particularly difficult to spot in autumn, especially on leaf-covered roads.

- Avoid speeding and scan the road for wildlife while driving. Be extra careful at dawn, dusk and shortly after dark. Assume that where there is one animal, the rest of the family is likely nearby.
- Install lower-intensity and motion-activated outdoor lights, so that your home’s lights don’t disturb migrating and nocturnal animals.

Source: Huffpost.com

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scarce. Offer them nuts such as hazelnuts, walnuts and almonds, plus some chopped apple, beans, carrots or spinach.

- For deer: Start by feeding the deer that visit your yard branches and other woody vegetation. Then, slowly introduce other foods, like oats, fruits, vegetables, and acorns. You can also purchase specially formulated deer food mixes that are great for deer.
- For badgers: Badgers have a tough time finding earthworms, their favorite food, when the ground is frozen. Provide them with lightly cooked meats, cheese, peanuts and fruit.
- Do not leave out large quantities

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Offer squirrels nuts plus apples, beans, carrots or spinach to tide them over the winter. *Times file photo*
By Sally Rummel

There’s nothing cozier than snuggling up by the fireplace on a crisp, cool fall night. But before you gather all the firewood for your wood-burning fireplace, check out all the options available now for fireplace and wood stove alternatives.

Wood-burning fireplace

This option takes us all back to a simpler time when a crackling fire was the backdrop for sipping hot chocolate on a cold, winter night.

**PROS:** Beautiful ambiance, environmentally friendly, source of heat and light in a power outage, choices of firewood types you can burn

**CONS:** Upkeep required to maintain fireplace and chimney, annual inspections required, steady supply of firewood needed

**Wood-burning fireplace installation cost:** Approximately $3,000, depending on intricacy of masonry work, size of hearth, etc.

**Cost to operate annually:** Cord of wood, $120-$180, annual chimney inspection $100-$150. Fireplace or chimney repair may be $4,000-$5,000.

Gas fireplace

Many homeowners consider a gas fireplace to be “the next best thing” after a wood-burning fireplace, because they do simulate a genuine fire without the hassle of starting and maintaining a real fire.

**PROS:** You can turn on your gas fireplace with the touch of a button, flip of a switch or by remote control, very little maintenance or cleanup required, electricity isn’t needed for operation, making them a more reliable source of heat compared to an electric fireplace.
**CONS**: Pricey to install, inefficient heat, not environmentally friendly or recommended for people with asthma or other respiratory problems

**Cost to operate annually**: About $100

**How much does it cost to install a gas fireplace?** The average costs associated with installing a gas fireplace include:
- $600 for the firebox installation
- $750 for the vent pipe
- $2,750 for the full installation and finishing work
- $150 to $800 for the gas line, depending on how far it needs to run

Source: Fixr.com

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**Electric fireplace**

If you don’t have a wood-burning fireplace built into your home, an electric fireplace is another option.

**PROS**: Inexpensive, able to replicate both the heat and light of a real fire, portability, start with a push of a button, environmentally friendly

**CONS**: Power outages, more costly to operate, can’t simulate the smoky smell of a genuine wood-burning fireplace

---

**Space heaters**

Space heaters are designed to warm a single room or a small space inside a home or building. It focuses the heat right where you need it, and can range from small to large capacity. Some are powered by an electric cord, while other common fuels include propane, natural gas, kerosene and wood pellets.

**Cost to operate**: About 18 cents per hour

**PROS**: Lower energy costs — it’s cheaper to use a space heater to warm a small space than the central heat at a higher temperature, greater energy efficiency.

**CONS**: Safety, with 25,000 residential house fires each year attributed to the use of space heaters. Choose a heater with an automatic shut off and avoid direct contact with the heating elements. Do not leave unattended.

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See **FIREPLACES** on 20

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1280 Ray Rd. Fenton, MI
Here are your ‘must have’

fall garden tools

There’s more to fall cleanup than just raking leaves

By Sally Rummel

Here’s a look at the tools you should have in your garage to take care of many fall chores. Don’t forget that perennials and shrubs and other plants in your yard might need to be cut back before winter.

- **Leaf rake**
  Of course you need this important tool. That’s why it’s number one on the list. There are many sizes and shapes and types in the marketplace. Should you buy plastic or metal? Some lawn experts prefer plastic because of its durability and tines that don’t bend out of shape easily. If your yard has many shrubs, you may want to add a smaller rake, to easily get between the trunks of low-lying plants and shrubs.

- **Gloves**
  Protect your hands from blisters after leaf raking. Other reasons to wear gloves — dog poop, spiders and snakes. Use inexpensive gloves for light duty, and leather ones for tougher jobs.

- **Waste bins**
  Handy pop-up bins are useful all year long. They’re lightweight and easy to move around. You can line them with heavy duty...
plastic trash bags or fill them up with yard waste and dump them right into the compost pile, depending on the job you’re doing. These are perfect for holding bags for leaves, with flexible sides.

- **Hand shears**
  At the end of the gardening season, there’s lots of plant material that you might want to cut down and tidy up for the winter. A good pair of spring-loaded, sharp pruning shears is a must for making clean, healthy cuts and reducing hand fatigue on those repetitive motions.

- **Leaf shredder**
  If you have a very large yard with numerous mature trees, a leaf shredder is a very handy tool. Use the leaf waste for mulch, and establish a compost pile.

- **Tarp**
  A basic tarp can be very helpful with your weed collection efforts. Just lay the tarp down, rake the leaves onto it, and grab the corners and drag to your compost pile.

**Yard waste bags**
If you don’t have a compost bin or pile, you’ll probably want some kind of yard waste bag to use for yard waste curbside pickup.
There’s nothing like the aromas of pumpkin, apple, cinnamon or nutmeg to bring the fragrance of fall into your home.

Think beyond just lighting candles — although fall-scented candles are a wonderful way to bring fall fragrance into your home. You can also use oil diffusers, autumn potpourris or pomanders.

For a true autumn fragrance, put a fall simmer pot on the stove with apples, cinnamon sticks and other spices bringing the real scent of the season into your home.

TIP: Keep these fall scents real and fresh by baking pumpkin bread or apple pies, and enjoy a delicious treat while adding fragrance to your home.

UPGRADE LIGHTING

Now that it’s getting darker earlier, hold onto the light by upgrading the lighting throughout your home — your table lamps, floor lamps, and consider adding dimmers to overhead lighting. Turn on lamps in the evening to add a cozy factor, compared to using harsh overhead lighting.

TIP: When the temperatures dip even further, don’t forget your fireplace. Remember to cozy up your mantel too, with candles, outdoor elements and more.

COZY
Continued from Page 3

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Use this time of year to pare down and simplify your home before the holidays. Transition your closets, get rid of all the planters, pack up any bright/summery decor and simplify things indoors.

Fall SIMMER POT

INGREDIENTS: Apples, oranges, cinnamon and vanilla beans or vanilla extract

DIRECTIONS: Cut your fruit and add to a small pot. Add about a half tablespoon of the vanilla and a couple of cinnamon sticks. Add water to cover the mixture and bring to a boil, then reduce the heat and just barely simmer it. It only takes about 10 minutes of simmering to add fragrance to your home. Add water occasionally to replace the water that has evaporated.

Source: Thehappierhomemaker.com

MAKING IT FRAGRANT

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5. **BRING IN LIVE ELEMENTS**
When the indoor palette is more neutral, the plants can really take over the spotlight. Pick up a new indoor plant and buy greenery for your vases.

**TIP:** Consider adding succulents indoors in the brightest window of your home.

6. **ADD A NEW DOORMAT**
Summer doormats are just waiting to be replaced, and there’s nothing cheaper than a new fall welcome mat for your front door. For $10 to $15, you can brighten your entryway with a seasonal welcome.

**TIP:** Think about layering your doormat with another, slightly larger rug underneath. This way, you can add texture and interchange your seasons.

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**SIMPLE FALL DÉCOR CAN GO A LONG WAY**
Who wants to buy and store an entire collection of fall décor? Since fall items can only be displayed this time of year, just add minor touches to your year ‘round décor, without investing a lot of time, money and storage.

**TIP:** A white pumpkin, bundles of wheat or a fall branch can go a long way to setting an autumn mood without going overboard.

Source: The DIY Playbook

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By Sally Rummel

The weather is getting cooler, so it may be time to switch out your sundresses for sweaters. While you’re changing your wardrobe, why not tackle the clutter in your bedroom closet spaces and optimize your closet’s storage and function?

Whether you have a minimal standard closet behind bi-fold doors or a larger walk-in space, you can organize your closet to make it work better for you.

**STEP 1**

Empty your closet
Take everything out of your closet and decide what to keep, throw away or donate.

**STEP 2**

Rotate your clothes by the season
Keep the clothes you wear every day in the current season “front and center” in your closet. In the fall, store away your bathing suits and sundresses and make your sweaters...
and long-sleeved shirts more accessible.

Make your closet space appealing

Do your walls need cleaning, painting or other maintenance? Now is the time to think about sprucing up your space with wallpaper, perhaps a hanging mirror, etc., while your closet is empty. Buy new matching hangers, add some fun accessories, a pretty stool, etc. to make your dressing routine more fun. Consider a new light fixture, too.

Maximize space with hanging rods/shelves

STEP 3

STEP 4 Dedicate only two-thirds of your closet to hanging rods. Mount two of them — one well above eye level for longer garments and another slightly more than 3 feet off the ground for shirts and short jackets. Position both at least 1 foot from the back wall.

Add small storage unit/drawers

STEP 5 Add a small dresser, storage drawers or a pretty, small lingerie unit to store your undergarments, workout clothes, pajamas, etc.

Organize like your favorite boutique

STEP 6 How do you like to see clothing displayed — by color, by item type, in pre-selected outfits? Put your clothes that way in your closet for an easy dressing routine. See CLOSET SPACE on 22

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[ˈkoo̯kiŋ] the practice or skill of preparing food by combining, mixing, and heating ingredients.

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Buying a house is only the first step in being a homeowner. Maintaining your home for the upcoming seasons will protect your investment for years to come.

Here are a few items that you can do to get ready for winter:

1. **Check your home’s heating and air conditioning system**
   Most heating and air systems typically last 12 to 15 years. Your maintenance of these systems will help determine whether your systems go for the long haul. Before the weather turns cold, change your filters. Have the system inspected by a reputable HVAC contractor. Consider an annual maintenance agreement to ensure your heat and air will turn on when needed.

2. **Paint, caulk and seal exterior wood**
   Protect your home’s exterior wood trim or it will deteriorate very quickly. Keep this wood painted and caulked. Once the wood is rotted and requires replacement, you may need a good trim carpenter.

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If the caulk is cracking and paint is chipping and flaking away, scrape it down and apply fresh. Check your deck, too, by pouring water on it. If the water beads up, it’s good as is. If the wood absorbs the water, it’s time to clean and seal.

- **Seal your masonry and hard surfaces**
  Make sure your concrete patio, driveways or walkways are protected as well. Occasionally apply a concrete sealer to all of your flat exterior concrete surfaces. All concrete flatwork eventually develops cracks. Inspect your concrete and fill in any cracks before you apply sealer so that water cannot get in and freeze over the winter.
  If you have an asphalt driveway, consider resealing that as well. If your driveway has developed cracks, then patch those before sealing.

- **Test your smoke and carbon monoxide detectors**
  Most house fires happen in the winter, while furnaces are blasting and fires are built. Check smoke detectors and carbon monoxide monitors to ensure they are working and have good batteries. The HVAC inspection will also ensure your furnace and water heater are properly vented, the most likely source of carbon monoxide.

- **Clean your gutters**
  Once the leaves have fallen, clean the gutters to avoid backups and overflows. That will water down your home, speeding up the deterioration of your exterior. It can also lead to deterioration of your foundation, water in the basement and settling under your concrete porches and walks, all of which cause problems.

- **Check your drainage**
  Make sure the soil around your foundation hasn’t settled, creating areas for water to pool at your foundation. If you find a low spot, fill it in with soil. Check your rain gutter downspouts, making sure water moves away from the home. Add downspout extenders if needed. Saturated soil around a foundation can create real problems as it freezes and thaws throughout the winter months.

- **Clean your chimney and order firewood**
  Have your fireplace cleaned and inspected. A good chimney sweep company will make sure the fireplace is safe and will identify maintenance issues. Order firewood, then stack and cover it in a good location in the yard. Make sure that old firewood isn’t rotten and move it away from your home.
**Don’t miss the Novi Home Show**

**OCT. 11-13**

- It’s your one-stop destination for the newest products and services in home improvement, decorating and landscaping.

By Sally Rummel

The Novi Home Show is a southeastern Michigan tradition for homeowners interested in the newest products and services for their biggest investment — their house.

Here is what you need to know:

**Dates:**

- Fall dates are Friday through Sunday, Oct. 11-13, at the Suburban Collection Showplace in Novi, 46100 Grand River Ave.

**Show times:**

- Friday, Oct. 11, from 2 to 8 p.m.
- Saturday, Oct. 12, from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m.
- Sunday, Oct. 13, from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

**Parking:**

Visit Novihomeshow.com for details.

**Tickets:**

- Teens and adults 13 and over: $10
- Senior adults 55 and over: $9
- Children 12 and under: Free

**NOTE:** You pay only $5 for your tickets after 5 p.m. on Friday and Saturday.

**TIP:** Discount tickets are available in advance online at Novihomeshow.com.

**Put these upcoming dates on your calendar:**

- **Novi Home & Garden Show**, April 3-5, 2020 at Suburban Collection Showplace

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**PROS:** Ambiance of regular fireplace, portable, efficient heat without need for venting or installation, no smoke

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**Cost to install:** $900 (national average)

**Cost to operate annually:** Each can of fuel costs about $3 and will burn for two to three hours before needing replacement.

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**FIREPLACES**
Continued from Page 11

**Cost to operate:** About 12 cents per hour

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HAPPY HOME
Continued from Page 19

■ Check your trees
Before the leaves fall, take a look at your trees and make sure they’re still healthy, especially trees that could fall on your or a neighbor’s home. Fall isn’t a good time to trim your trees, but if there are branches up against your house, trim them away before winter so you don’t have ice-coated branches scratching your siding or windows.

■ Prepare your lawn for winter and set it up for a great spring
For a beautiful spring lawn, you only have September and October, then April and May to do it. In late September, aerate the lawn and overseed it. Then in late October or November, apply fertilizer with winterizer.

■ Keep critters away from your attic
It’s going to get cold out and your attic is the perfect winter home for squirrels and birds. These critters can cause a lot of damage and potentially some health problems. Trim trees away from the house, and make sure gable vents are intact. Tack a screen up behind your gable vent just in case. Check the soffit and fascia to make sure there are no holes that will allow birds to get in.

■ Shut down the pool and the sprinkler system and drain outside faucets
Make sure your pool and sprinkler systems are properly shut down for winter. Consider getting an expert to inspect and shut down the system. Fall is a good time to get pool work done if a problem is discovered. Most sprinkler systems require the lines to be blown out. A professional winterizing is much cheaper than replacing broken lines next spring.

■ Do a quick energy audit
A professional energy audit is a good investment. Fall is also a good time to check your door seals. Make sure you’re not seeing daylight around your exterior doors. Fill canned foam insulation around those drafty outlets and light switches.

■ Prep your expensive lawn and yard care equipment
Drain gas from your lawn equipment. You can pour the shed gas can into your vehicles and get fresh gas in the spring. You can also put a fuel stabilizer into the gas if you want to keep it on hand.

Your weed eater probably uses two-stroke gas so you can’t put that into your car. Plan to run out the fuel with one final really good trim job. If you used your pressure washer this year, make sure the gas is emptied out. Run some pump-protecting antifreeze through the system.

■ Cover your patio furniture
Protect your patio furniture with covers, waiting for a clear, warm day so you don’t trap moisture on it.

Source: Washingtonpost.com
Keep formal clothes and workout clothes or work uniforms apart from your everyday clothes to maximize your space.

Use shelf dividers, hooks and hangers

Use a valet or pretty dish to serve as a catchall for loose change, receipts or other items that accumulate in your pockets.

Put small items in their place

Source: House Beautiful

Closet Space

Continued from Page 17

Use shelf dividers, hooks and hangers

Can organize your closet without over-cluttering with too many baskets and bins. Label the baskets and bins you do use so you know exactly what is in them.

STEP 7

Hooks, hangers and shelf dividers

STEP 8

Use battery-powered stick-up LED pucks, such as Sylvania’s Dot-its along the top and under shelves so that you can find what you’re looking for.

STEP 9

Closets should be wired for lighting. If yours isn’t

STEP 10

Clever ways to store your shoes

Only things that can be easily lifted or rolled away, such as suitcases, should be stored directly on the floor; everything else should sit at least 1-inch off the ground to allow for regular vacuuming. Sources: This Old House, Real Simple, The Spruce

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