



Trends & Tips

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The Great Outdoors

After the near record-breaking heat of July is beginning to subside, the backyard is becoming a more comfortable place to relax or entertain your family and friends. Now is the time to consider what renovations, if any, that you would like to make to your landscape. Landscaping is subjective by nature, and many people find that simply keeping hedges trimmed and trees pruned is enough to make their landscape beautiful. However, landscaping can be very versatile and specialized to each homeowner.

Pavers and Retaining Walls can create a functional and accessible space for people to gather together or to lounge around on patio furniture. Break away from the monotony of concrete and check out the hundreds of different styles of pavers, types of wall block, and patterns to add an affordable dynamic to your outdoor living space.



Landscaping is best installed in the early spring or fall, but with proper watering habits or irrigation systems, summer installations are not out of the question. New perennials and bulbs will insure a colorful spring, and new trees and shrubs can naturalize an otherwise modern or "stale" space. This fall, don't forget to plant mums and pansies to provide a seasonal interest to your gardens!

Lighting paths, areas, and trees can extend your outdoor hours well into the evening. Whether it's lighting pathways to guard against tripping hazards in the night, creating night time scenes in your garden, or providing mood lighting for a romantic evening, low-voltage lighting systems

are simple and effective ways to get things done. Autumn is on its way! Let's all use the time we have before winter sets in to seal us in our houses for the cold months.

Written by Marcus Welch. Marcus is the newest member of our team and has a Bachelor of Ornamental Horticulture and Environmental Design he is also ICPI and NCMA-SRW Certified.

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Fall is on it's way!

Fall is the time to get your home ready for the coming winter, which can be the most gruelling season for your home. These are some suggestions for a variety of tasks you can perform which will help you to avoid the most common and costly problems before

they occur. Some of these tasks are:

- Ensure leaves and other debris are removed from gutters and downspouts for proper drainage from the roof. Ensure that downspouts direct water away from the house foundation.
- If you have a gas, oil, or other non-electric heating system, have it serviced by a qualified company (every two years for a gas furnace and every year for an oil furnace or in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions). Have the chimneys or combustion vents checked for nests or other obstructions before turning on your heating system.
- If you have a furnace, check and clean or replace filters on a monthly basis during the heating season.
- Gently vacuum in and around hot water baseboard and electric baseboard heaters to remove dust. Remove the grilles on forced-air heating systems and vacuum inside the ducts. Ensure airflow dampers are open.
- If you have a heat recovery ventilator (HRV), ensure the air intake grille-located on the outside of the house-is clean, the filters and core within the unit are clean, the condensate drains properly (test by pouring water into the drain pan under the core and watching the flow through the drain tube), and the HRV is turned on and is set at the right speed.
- If you have a well, test the water quality.
- If you have a sump pump, ensure it is operating properly, with no obstructions or leaks in the drain line.
- If you have a septic tank, have it checked to determine if it needs to be emptied before the winter starts.
- Remove and store window screens, install storm windows, and ensure all windows, doors and skylights shut tightly, including the door between your house and garage; repair or replace weather-stripping, as needed.
- Ensure that the ground around your home slopes away from the foundation wall to decrease the likelihood of water draining into the basement.
- Cover the outside of the air conditioner, and drain and store outdoor hoses. Close the valve to the outdoor hose connection and drain the faucet.
- Winterize landscaping by storing outdoor furniture, preparing gardens and, if necessary, protecting young trees or bushes.

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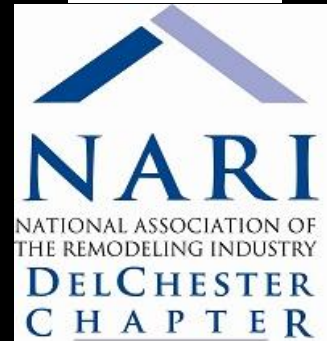
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