

# Spring

## HOME & GARDEN



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## Business spotlight

As the remnants of winter recede and the warmth of the sun welcomes the onset of spring, the annual tradition of spring cleaning beckons homeowners and businesses alike. At the forefront of

transforming residential and commercial properties to their peak beauty stands Under Pressure, a name synonymous with excellence in soft washing services for the past quarter-century.

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but quite another to witness the genuine satisfaction and pride they derive from transforming a worn facade into a revitalized frontage. This mutual satisfaction between our team and clients is the essence of what makes Under Pressure stand out.

This spring, let Under Pressure unveil the hidden beauty of your property, enhancing your outdoor living experience. Embrace the op-

portunity to rediscover the joy of your home, supported by a team that's been elevating homes with care and expertise for 25 years. Contact us to arrange your service and step into a season of beauty and enjoyment like never before. You can reach us at 508-944-6644 or online at [underpressurewash.com](http://underpressurewash.com).

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# How to create a sunroom

As fall inches closer to winter, it's not uncommon for people to look to the coming cold with a degree of lament. Spring, summer and fall provide ample opportunities to enjoy the great outdoors, but such chances are few and far between once the winter freeze settles in. Though winter might compel the masses to huddle up inside, there's still a way to take in the great outdoors on cold winter days and nights.

It might not prove an exact substitute for summer nights around the firepit, but a sunroom affords homeowners a chance to marvel at snowy winter landscapes without venturing out into the cold. Sometimes referred to as "all-season rooms," sunrooms can make for a great retreat on quiet summer mornings or crisp autumn afternoons. Sunrooms can be treated as blank canvasses, which makes decorating them more fun. But a few tricks of the trade can help homeowners turn their blank canvasses into welcoming spaces to take in all that nature has to offer throughout the year.

- Define the purpose. The experts at Better Homes & Gardens recommend homeowners decide how they want to use the sunroom before they begin decorating it. When the weather gets too chilly to dine outside, will the sunroom serve as an alternative dining space in the same way patios and decks do during the warm weather? Or do homeowners want to turn their sunrooms into reading rooms? Though it's possible to make sunrooms multipurpose spaces, it may be hard to create a relaxing vibe in rooms that are too crowded with furnishings or too busy. Defining how the space will be used also makes it easier when shopping for furnishings.
- Define when the room will be used. In addition to defining how the room will be used, homeowners should give ample consideration to when the room will be used. A year-round sunroom will need to be heated, while a

three-season sunroom likely won't require heating. Cooling might be a concern on hot summer afternoons, but many homeowners will likely spend such days outside anyway, so cooling the room may be as simple as installing a ceiling fan and ensuring windows can be opened to let fresh air in. Homeowners who want a year-round sunroom should install insulated glass to keep the room even warmer when the mercury dips.

- Opt for bright colors. Bright colors can make sunrooms feel all the more inviting and make for a perfect match with all the natural light already in the room. The renovation experts at HGTV note that white walls and ceilings can maximize the warm illumination of the natural light that will be pouring in from the floor-to-ceiling windows. Better Homes & Gardens adds that brightly colored cushions, pillows and area rugs with similarly hued colors and patterns can add visual interest



and texture to a sunroom.

- Make use of a view. Homeowners needn't direct too much of their focus on decor if their sunrooms come with a view. Art on the walls and other decorative items around the room are less important if a sunroom affords a view of the ocean or a lake or dense

woods that attract local wildlife. In rooms with a view, arrange furniture so residents and guests can comfortably look outward and take in all the surround landscape has to offer.

Sunrooms are a great place to take in nature no matter the weather.



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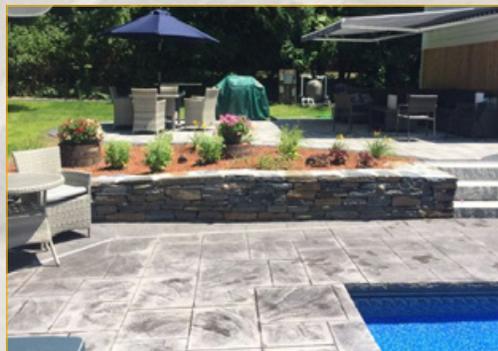
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# Tips to avoid the buildup of clutter

Clutter has a way of taking over a home. As time goes by, items that are not stored or discarded when they've lost their utility can gradually take over a space, creating a claustrophobic, cluttered feeling that can affect how people feel in their homes.

Clutter is not something to be taken lightly. A 2010 study published in the journal *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin* found that women who characterized their living spaces as cluttered or marked by unfinished projects were more likely to experience fatigue and depression than women who described their homes as restful and restorative. Though clutter is often discussed in terms of removing it, there's also many ways to prevent it in the first place.

- Schedule weekly cleaning sessions. Cleaning is a chore few look forward to, and that reluctance may be a byproduct of infrequent cleanings. The less a home is cleaned, the longer cleaning sessions take when individuals get around to it. Weekly cleaning sessions



Donating clothing that is no longer worn is a simple way to avoid the buildup of clutter at home.

- Discard items when they're no longer used. Holding on to items you no longer use will eventually contribute to the buildup of clutter. That's a lesson parents know well, as kids outgrow toys, which can then pile up and contribute to overcrowded toy chests

and play rooms. Adults also have a hard time discarding their own toys, including old devices. As kids outgrow toys, let them choose which ones to discard before they're replaced with new items. The same goes for adults, who can wipe old devices like tablets, smartphones and laptops clean and discard them once they've purchased replace-

- Make it easy to find stored items. Even the most well-organized person can fall victim to clutter if stored items prove difficult to find. When revamping storage systems, choose clear, stackable drawers so you won't make a mess as you look for stored items you can't find. Clear, stackable plastic bins and drawers

make it easier to find what you're looking for, reducing the likelihood that items will end up on the floor or strewn about. If you don't want to replace existing storage bins, label them if they're not clear to make it easier to identify what's inside.

- Donate clothing. Much like kids' toys and adults devices should be discarded when they're no longer used, old clothes can be donated to create more storage space and prevent the buildup of clutter. Clutter is often described as something visible to the naked eye, but clutter can also build up in dresser drawers and behind closet doors. Periodically go through closets and dressers and remove items you no longer wear, donating them if they're still in good shape and discarding them if they're not.

Clutter can quickly take over a home. A proactive approach that emphasizes clutter prevention can make for a more relaxing and restful home.

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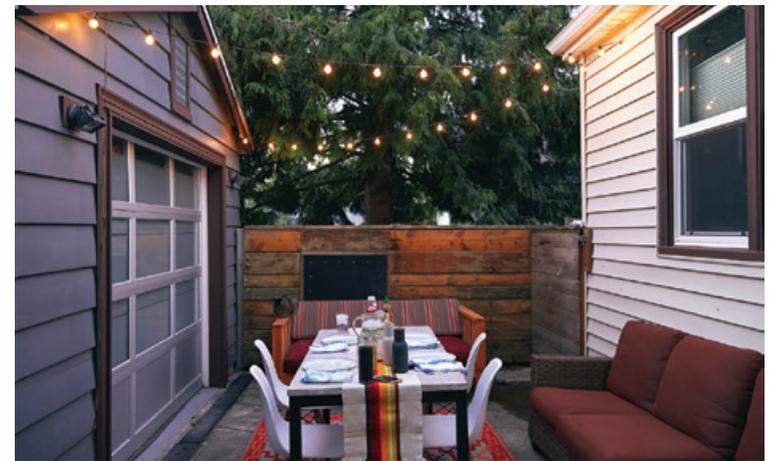
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## 5 patio projects to enhance outdoor living

Warm weather paves the way to more opportunities to enjoy fresh air. For homeowners who have the luxury of outdoor spaces, including private patios, now is the time to start thinking about projects to enhance these gathering spots.

A patio can be considered a transitional area that links the outdoors to the inside of a home. According to the home and lifestyle resource The Spruce,

the best way to enhance the interior of the inside by putting up walls around three sides of the patio if it connects to the home. Leave the last open to the yard, or consider installing screens to mimic the look of popular lanais. The walls will offer more weather protection, meaning you can invest in high-quality patio furniture to make this a fully functioning outdoor living room. Hang a television that is rated for outdoor use for movie-watching



a patio is often an oasis for lounging and entertaining. And depending on homeowners' budgets and preferences, a patio can be just as comfortable and stylish as interior spaces. The following are five patio projects that can transform these valuable spaces.

### 1. Pretty pergola

A pergola is an open-air (traditionally wood) structure that adds a measure of shade and privacy without completely blocking views of Mother Nature. Installing a pergola over the patio helps define the seating area. Hanging plants can add to the ambiance and string lights can make this a great spot to gather when the sun sets.

### 2. Patio fire pit

Build a fire pit right into the design with the same materials used to create the patio. For example, if the patio is brick or flagstone, build up to create an eye-catching fire pit. Fire pits not only look good, they also expand the time frame that the patio can be enjoyed, offering cozy spots to sit even when the weather chills.

### 3. Frame it in

Make the patio a true exten-

sion of the inside by putting up walls around three sides of the patio if it connects to the home.

### 4. Ooh la la

Vintage bistro tables and chairs can turn a drab patio into one that calls to mind a Parisian courtyard. Whimsical lighting and accents that you would normally think to see indoors, like a gilded mirror, can add extra appeal. Soften wrought iron and other metals on the furniture by including plenty of flowers and greenery. Don't forget the candles and a place to stash a bottle of chilling wine.

### 5. Farmhouse chic

Transform a patio into an entertaining space that caters to guests. A large farmhouse style table flanked by benches and some upholstered chairs sets the scene for a dinner amid the fresh air. Watering cans filled with wildflowers and mismatched flatware establish a casual feel for gatherings in the space. For those who plan to cook and serve outside with frequency, invest in outdoor appliances so you'll never have to miss a beat with guests.

The options for transforming patios into stylish gathering spots is only limited by the imagination.

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# American Backyard: Revolutionizing the Fence Industry in New England

Millis and Medway, MA – In the dynamic landscape of New England’s fencing industry, American Backyard (ABYFence.com) is spearheading a transformative approach. With expertise in Vinyl, Chainlink, Aluminum, and Custom Cedar fences, the company is more than a provider of boundary solutions; it’s at the forefront of service and innovation.

Following four years of comprehensive analysis and market insights, American Backyard (ABYFence.com) has made a strategic pivot towards specializing in fence work. This decision, driven by a desire to enhance efficiency and serve the community better, allows the company to purchase materials in larger quantities, thereby ensuring competitive pricing and superior quality.

Setting American Backyard (ABYFence.com) apart is its unprecedented commitment to customer convenience and satisfaction. As the only fence company in New England offering a 14-day or less installation promise for in-stock fences once an estimate is approved,

## Business spotlight

American Backyard is setting a new standard for speed and reliability in the industry.

Moving away from traditional showroom operations, ABYFence.com embraces a warehouse-centric model. Its showroom and warehouse at 1465 Main St in Millis stand as a testament to this innovative approach. In an effort to streamline operations, the company will soon centralize its offices at the original headquarters at 23 Jayar Rd in Medway, maintaining the Main St location for warehousing and logis-



tics.

This operational consolidation highlights American Backyard (ABYFence.com’s) commitment to not just competitive pricing and superior material quality, but also to top-tier service. The company’s goal to become the “Amazon of the fence business” reflects its ambition

to revolutionize the customer experience in fencing.

An exciting overhaul of the ABYFence.com online presence is on the horizon. The revamped website will feature an interactive platform allowing customers to design, visualize, and estimate their fencing projects from the comfort of their homes. This initiative underlines the company’s push towards enhancing accessibility and convenience in fence shopping.

American Backyard (ABYFence.com’s) pursuit of excellence extends to its product and service offerings. With industry-leading installation and material warranties, the company ensures customer satisfaction and peace of mind. Furthermore, its promise to match or beat any estimate ensures customers receive

unparalleled value.

As American Backyard continues to redefine the fencing industry in Millis and Medway, its vision remains clear: to become the leading fence installation company in New England. By focusing on quick turnarounds, a diverse range of premium products, and customized solutions, ABYFence.com is not just meeting the market’s needs but anticipating its future demands.

In the rapidly evolving world of fencing, American Backyard stands as a symbol of innovation, quality, and a customer-first philosophy. The future of fencing in New England is promising, with American Backyard (ABYFence.com) leading the way towards a more convenient, reliable, and high-quality service era.



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# The dangers of mowing too low

Spring marks the return of many things. Trees and flowers begin to bloom again in spring, while warmer temperatures are welcomed back with open arms. Grass also begins to grow again in the spring. That means it's not too long before homeowners have to dust off their lawn mowers and get to work. Those who don't necessarily enjoy mowing the lawn may be tempted to cut their grass very low, as doing so can mean longer intervals between mowing sessions. However, mowing grass too low can have a very adverse effect on a lawn.

- Cutting too low can injure the grass. Cutting grass too low can injure the grass, creating what's essentially a domino effect of problems to come. Injured grass will focus on its recovery efforts, thereby making it vulnerable to other issues.
- Cutting too low promotes weed growth. Injured grass is vulnerable to invaders, including weeds and insects. Weeds and

insects can attack grass as it recovers from injury, and before homeowners know it, their lawns are overcome with a host of problems.

- Cutting too low allows crabgrass to thrive. Crabgrass needs ample sunlight to grow. By cutting grass too low, homeowners may unknowingly be promoting crabgrass growth. Crabgrass is unsightly and can rob surrounding grass of the moisture it needs to grow. So lawns cut too low may not only lose their lush appeal thanks to the unattractive appearance of crabgrass, but also because areas surrounding the crabgrass patches might turn brown due to lack of water.
- Cutting too low can stress the grass. Cutting too low also makes lawns vulnerable to summer heat. Without blades tall enough to block some of the summer sun, grass can quickly succumb to summer heat, leading to dried out, discolored lawns.

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## Did you know?

Perhaps due to changing weather patterns that have made Mother Nature as unpredictable as ever, Florida rooms are wildly popular. These rooms, sometimes referred to as "sunrooms," enable a home's inhabitants to take in the beauty of nature even on those days when the weather outside is less than welcoming. The cost of a sunroom addition varies greatly and is affected by a host of variables, including the existing structure and whether or not homeowners aspire to utilize the room year-round or during the three seasons when temperatures are at their most moderate. According to HomeGuide, the cost to install an 8 x 10 three-season Florida room averages between \$6,000 and \$18,500. The same size room built to be enjoyed year-round can cost between \$16,000 and \$28,000. Homeowners may choose to create larger Florida rooms, but the cost will increase with each square foot added to the project. Such costs are considerable, but homeowners should know that adding square footage to a home typically increases the home's resale value, meaning it's likely they can recoup a considerable percentage of their Florida room investment when selling their home.

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# Robert Roofing and Gutters: Just a Roof, No Gimmicks

BY JANE LEBAK

Robert Greene of Robert Roofing and Gutters begins his work with a promise: “One Call Sends A Roofer, Not A Salesman.”

Springtime is peak roofing season, but replacing a roof can seem like a nerve-wracking process. After all, “a roof over your head” is shorthand for your home itself. It’s important to find a roofer you can trust, and Robert Greene strives to be that man.

“When homeowners make that first appointment, I’m the one who goes out there to look at the roof,” Rob says. “I take that first appointment myself because I want the assessment done right.”

“The human touch is important, and it’s a dying art,” adds Kelli Spadea-Greene, Operations Manager and also Rob’s wife. “I guess we could make it seem flashy and high-tech by flying a drone over the roof for high-resolution

## Business spotlight



photos, but that’s not how we operate. Drones and photos can’t replace sending a man up on a ladder. Even from the ground, Rob can tell you all sorts of things about a roof. He can figure out how many layers of shingles it’s had. He can tell from the way it feels whether the plywood needs to be replaced or whether the underlay is rotting.”

A proper roof breathes, so Rob also inspects the ventilation. Afterward, he’ll take a



walk around the property, determining where to place the ladders and how to protect the landscaping.

“Any salesman can sell you a roof, but an experienced roofer can give you an accurate picture of what your house needs.” Rob adds, “Many times, it turns out the roof doesn’t need replacing at all. That’s a huge savings for the homeowner.”

Kelli says, “Rob is down to

earth and straightforward. No gimmicks. No upselling. If our team is up there and finds an issue, they don’t just do extra work. Instead, we’ll take pictures so the homeowners can see the problem themselves. We’ll explain their options, and they’ll agree on a solution before we do the work, that way, there are no costly surprises.”

Most times, Rob can get a team on the roof within two weeks. Most roofing jobs can be started and completed the same day so the house isn’t exposed to the elements.

Robert Roofing and Gutters is a second-generation company based in Norfolk. Rob started at age thirteen, working cleanup for his father’s construction business and learning from the experienced roofers, men he calls “the great old-timers.” Now his son, Robert Junior, works alongside him, and Rob has become the teacher.

The majority of Robert Roofing customers are referrals from other customers. “It’s because we’ve been a part of this community for so long,” says Rob. “At any event in Norfolk, I always see a customer or two, and they know me, too. Part of my work is to give back to the community.”

Robert Roofing and Gutters supports several local organizations, such as the North Cottage Program in Norton and Gilly’s House in Wrentham. Kelli Spadea-Greene says, “It’s important to us to help one another. We do that by providing great service at a fair price, sure. But we also do



that by reaching out, whether it’s by making donations or by public speaking with groups who maybe got into a place where they need a hand up.”

Robert Roofing and Gutters offers different types of roofing, such as asphalt, rubber, low-slope, and specialty shingles. In addition, Rob can install gutters or new downspouts, install new fascia, replace vinyl and wood siding, and perform chimney repointing and flashing. “Just about everything for the outside of your home.”

“A good roof makes for a good house,” says Rob. “It’s easy to brush off minor damage to your shingles, or try to get one more year out of that failing roof, but you don’t want to wait until it’s an emergency.”

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