

FALL HOME IMPROVEMENT

OCTOBER 2025



The Yankee Xpress
BLACKSTONE VALLEY **Xpress**

localtownpages 

FREE PRESS 

Thanks to our Sponsors for helping to bring this section to our communities ...



Under Pressure HOME+: The Modern Way to Care for Your Home

Does your home's exterior look a bit dingy? Can your roof and windows use a good scrub? Do you really want to climb that ladder to clean out those gutters?

Add Under Pressure to your home maintenance program. The Hopkinton-based professional exterior cleaning service offers year-round, affordable professional cleaning for siding, roofs, patios, windows, solar panels, and more.

According to CEO Mark Mercer, the HOME+ program is entering its second year.

"The HOME+ program is a modern approach to maintaining your home. You don't wait for your car to break down before you provide necessary upkeep such as changing the oil," Mercer explained. "It's the same with your home — you prevent issues when you maintain the basics. Our top-to-bottom services keep your home running smoothly."

Mercer said that Under



Pressure uses the latest in cleaning technology to keep exteriors sparkling. To clean siding, for example, crews use

soft washing (not power washing) to remove dirt, mildew, and other debris.

"Soft washing allows us to

adjust our cleaning based off what we're seeing. Each technician is trained to know how to clean any surface and change our technique based on what we're seeing," said Mercer.

Crews are trained to handle a variety of exterior materials, including wood, stucco, and vinyl. They can even clean cedar shingles, a New England staple that comes with its own challenges. "There's an art to cleaning it. It's a soft wood," Mercer said, adding that the company specializes in cedar restoration.

Under Pressure can also handle those cold, cold chores of winter, including plowing and ice dam removal.

"Ice dam removal is one of those services where experience and the right tools matter," Mercer said. "We use professional steam equipment to safely melt away the ice

Business spotlight

without damaging the roof. Our crews are trained, insured, and equipped to be on roofs in tough winter conditions. For years, anyone with a truck and a ladder tried to offer this, but there's a right way and a wrong way — and we've built our process to make sure it's done correctly and safely."

As for plowing, Mercer said the company uses large tractors equipped with snowblowers; that way, crews can "place snow exactly where the client needs it or wants it, not just push it into a pile."

Under Pressure can also brighten the holidays with its professional illumination installation program.

"Holiday lighting is more than just putting lights on a house — it's about creating an experience," Mercer explained. "For many families, it's an emotional purchase. They want that 'wow' factor without the stress or risk of doing it themselves. Our team handles everything safely and efficiently, and we design displays that fit each home's style. It's been rewarding to see the joy it brings, and for me, it's a way to bring out my creativity while serving our clients."

Under Pressure is based at 88 Elm St. in Hopkinton and serves most communities in eastern and central Massachusetts. For information, call 508-944-6644, or visit underpressurewash.com.

- Paid Advertisement -

SAVE UP TO 50%* Or Zero Interest if Paid in Full Within 18 Months*

FlooringAmerica Design Center

*Details In Store

950 Chestnut Street, Franklin
508-520-2632 • FlooringAmerica1.com

BE PREPARED, REGARDLESS OF SEASON

Preparing our homes and properties for fall, often has us looking toward winter. Here are some tips on building a winter survival kit that you can keep in your car. Such a kit should include:

- Candle-powered heater
- Small LED flashlight
- Cell phone car charger
- Portable air compressor
- Simple tool kit
- Small bag of "Safety Absorbent"
- Foldable shovel
- Fix-a-flat
- Warm hat and gloves
- Warm blanket

Source: www.familyhandyman.com



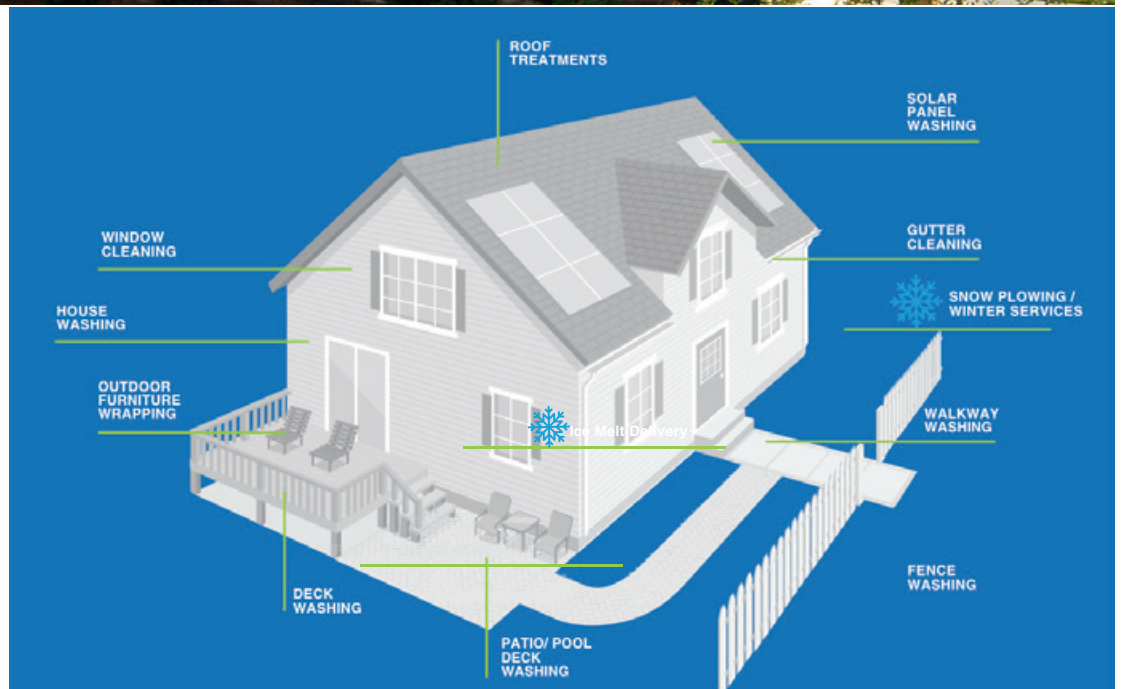
Introducing

HOME+

A NEW TYPE OF HOME MAINTENANCE

Peace of Mind,
One Monthly Payment Away

HOME+ is your all-in-one, year-round home maintenance plan. From fresh **Spring** cleanings and **Summer** spruce-ups to **Fall** gutter care and **Winter** protection, we've got every season covered. All of this is bundled into one affordable program with simple monthly payments—making it easier than ever to keep your home looking its best all year long.



\$200 - off
Not valid on any other offers or prior services.

HOME + PROGRAM

CALL TODAY



UnderPressureWash.com | 508.944.6644

Enjoying 'sweater weather' in the backyard



Though temperatures have started to fall (excuse the pun), backyards in New England are still bustling with activity. And with the weather a little cooler, it could be easier to convince family and friends to help with a quick project so you can all enjoy

your outdoor space into the next season and beyond (you know what they say about New England weather).

Consider any (or all) of these simple projects:

If you're having a gathering in the fall (or winter) and need to extend your entertainment space, consider adding a propane heater or a chiminea to your deck or patio to accommodate your guest list.

Fire Pit Gathering Spot

Create a stone fire ring, purchase a metal fire bowl

Add Adirondack chairs, cozy blankets, and a log holder

Great for an evening of hot cider and/or s'mores

Covered Porch Nook

Weatherproof cushions, throw blankets, small side table.

String lights or lanterns

Great for morning coffee, a good book, or watching others play in the leaves

Backyard Harvest Table

Gather a picnic table, folding table, or create a table out of sawhorses and an old door

Add a weatherproof plaid tablecloth or runner

Add fall décor: mums, kale, gourds, lanterns, bittersweet, corn stalks, etc.

Great for a meal or special event (Halloween party, pumpkin carving, etc.)

Backyard Movie Spot

If possible, set up near fire pit

Hang a sheet or use a portable projector screen (sometimes available from your public library)

Add camp chairs, blankets, cocoa, and seasonal movies

Great for all ages

EASY DIY LOG HOLDER

Materials:

- 2 (or 4) cinder blocks, standard size
- 4 sturdy 2x4 boards, about 4 feet long each



Instructions:

1. Choose a level surface
2. Lay two cinder blocks flat on the ground, back to back, with the hollow holes pointing up
3. Insert one 2x4 into each hole, with boards leaning outward
4. Stack firewood

**Optional: For more stability, add a second layer of cinder blocks*

Front Door Pumpkin & Mum Entryway

Don't forget the front door too (this is similar to the Harvest Table)

Line your front steps or walkway with pumpkins, gourds, mums, lanterns, and other fall décor

Great because it doesn't get more 'New England' than this

J.C. Parmenter Inc.
Septic Systems
INSTALLED CLEANED REPAIRED

LICENSED
TITLE 5
INSPECTOR

FAMILY OWNED & OPERATED SINCE 1920

\$10 OFF

SEPTIC TANK CLEANING

with same-day payment

CALL TODAY TO SCHEDULE

24 Hour Emergency Support

508-435-3381 • Hopkinton • JCParmenterSeptic.com

NEW ENGLAND
REGLAZE

DON'T REPLACE YOUR OLD TUB, REGLAZE IT!
TUBS, TILE SINKS AND MUCH MORE

NOW
\$349

COLOR, TRAVEL, MAY APPLY.

SAVE
\$100
WITH AD

Reg. \$449

WE DO ANY TUB!
CALL NOW
617-895-7771

www.newenglandreglaze.com

Tips to renovate on a budget

Renovations around the house require an investment of time and often considerable amounts of money. Findings from the 2024 U.S. Houzz & Home Study show that home renovations are becoming more expensive. The median renovation spending for homeowners has gone up 60 percent since 2020. Angi, a home services website, reports the average renovation cost for homes between 1,250 and 1,600 square feet is \$51,772, but the final cost of home renovations depends on the scope of the project.

Homeowners who are conserving funds can rest assured that it is possible to make meaningful changes both inside and outside a home without breaking the bank. Here are some ways to renovate a home on a budget.

- Create a budget and don't waver. Figure out exactly what you can afford for a renovation and then make that your maximum dollars spent. Research comparable projects in your area and be honest about whether you can afford the renovation as-is or

if you must adapt ideas to fit your price. Make sure to build in a cushion of around 15 to 20 percent for any unforeseen expenses that may arise once a renovation is underway.

- Maximize an existing floor plan. This Old House suggests looking for ways to maximize your current layout before you invest in major renovations like an expansion. Bring in a designer with an eye for utilizing space. For example, see how you might be able to replace shelves with pull-out drawers in the kitchen. Moving furniture around or re-thinking floor plans also can help to lower costs.
- Balance DIY with hiring contractors. You can save money by tackling some projects yourself, but only if you are confident in your renovation skills. Rather than risk making costly mistakes and having to redo things, hire well-vetted professionals but ask if there's any DIY work you can do to cut costs.



- Check clearance and resale stores. Shop discount stores for building materials to save money. For example, if a builder ordered too many cabinets they may offer them to Habitat for Humanity ReStores, which are non-profit home improvement stores and donation centers.

Checking the clearance and markdown sections of other stores may yield considerable savings on items needed for a renovation. Warehouse retailers like Costco or Sam's Club also can be great places to find certain home improvement materials and furnishings.

- Take advantage of free services. Certain stores may offer things like free consultations with designers who can show you what a renovation can look like. This is advantageous to the stores because once you see the potential you're more likely to buy the products, even if it's not mandatory.

- Resurface instead of redo. Certain items can be made to look new with minimal effort. Paint is a relatively inexpensive tool that can transform walls and more. A good hardwood flooring company can buff out a floor and put a new coating instead of an entirely new floor. Kitchen cabinets can be resurfaced instead of replaced as well.

Finding ways to perform home renovations on a budget may require some creative thinking, but it's possible to get results at the right price point.

MAKE IT HAPPEN WITH

Your Accessory Dwelling Unit Partner



DETACHED



ATTACHED



INTERIOR (UPPER LEVEL)



INTERIOR (LOWER LEVEL)



ABOVE GARAGE



GARAGE CONVERSION

Now, it's law! Great news for Massachusetts homeowners!
 The Massachusetts Affordable Home Act may empower you to build an Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) up to 900 square feet on your single-family lot!* Whether you're looking to create an inviting in-law suite, a lucrative rental unit, or stylish backyard cottage, we are ready to turn your vision into a reality. Maximize your property's value and income potential with a top-quality, professionally built ADU. Let's get started! *Subject to local building codes/regs.









**ACCESSORY DWELLING UNITS
 HOMEBUILDING
 ADDITIONS & REMODELING**

Licensed General Contractor in Massachusetts and Florida

APPENA PROPERTIES
 774-615-6567 | 774-615-9861
 t.tonani@appenaproperties.com
AppenaProperties.com

Keep Cozy this Fall Season!



Specialists in Home Comfort & Energy Conservation

AC • FURNACES • HEAT PUMPS • HOT WATER SYSTEMS • FUEL TANKS

Service Plans, Install and Repairs & More!

Coan Bioheat® Fuel Delivery

196 West Central St., Natick
508-653-5050 • 800-262-6462

coanoil.com



How to put your garden to bed until spring

According to www.garden-pals.com, 55% of American households engage in garden activities; 33% of U.S. households grow vegetables, fruits, and other food; and children involved in growing vegetables are more willing to eat them.

In New England, we love our gardens. Here are some ways to prepare for colder temperatures, protect the soil, and get ready for the spring growing season.

Clean up the garden. Pull out annuals, vegetable plants, and any diseased or pest-infested plants; and clear out any leaves, stems, or old mulch.

Soil care. Test the soil pH and nutrient levels; add compost, manure, or organic matter to enrich the soil over winter.

Mulch. Apply a two-to-four-inch layer of mulch around perennials, shrubs, and garden beds to insulate roots, reduce soil erosion, and discourage winter weeds.

Protect plants. Cut back dead foliage on perennials but leave some seed heads for birds; cover perennials that need protection from cold temperatures; and bring potted plants indoors.

Plant for fall and winter. Plant spring-blooming bulbs like tulips, daffodils, and crocuses before the ground freezes; and spinach, kale, radishes, garlic, and other cold-hardy vegetables can still be planted in early October.

Lawn care. Rake leaves to prevent plant suffocation and disease; fertilize to help strengthen roots for winter and spring growth; and overseed bare patches to get a thicker lawn next spring.

Garden tools and structures. Sharpen pruners, clean shovels, and store hoses to prevent rust; drain irrigation to outside structures (and pools) to prevent freezing damage; and repair or protect trellises, fences, raised bed structures, etc. as needed.

LET THE PROS HANDLE IT!™



Say "NO" to Cleaning Out Your Gutters.

Protect Your Home With LeafFilter.



20% OFF + **10% OFF**
Your Entire Purchase* Seniors + Military

++ We offer financing that fits your budget!¹

Promo: 285

+ See Representative for full warranty details. *One coupon per household. No obligation estimate valid for 1 year. 1Subject to credit approval. Call for details. AR 366920923, AZ ROC 344027, CA 1035795, CT HIC.0671520, FL CBC056678, IA C127230, ID RCE-51604, LA 559544, MA 176447, MD MHIC111225, MI 262300173, 262300318, 262300328, 262300329, 262300330, 262300331, MN IR731804, MT 226192, ND 47304, NE 50145-22, 50145-23, NJ 13VH09953900, NM 408693, NV 86990, NY H-19114, H-52229, OR 218294, PA 179643, 069383, RI GC-41354, TN 10981, UT 10783658-5501, VA 2705169445, WA LEAFFNW822JZ, WV WV056912.



FULL SERVICE GUTTER PROTECTION – SCHEDULE YOUR FREE INSPECTION NOW! 1-866-906-3585

How to prepare your home for fall

Where does the time go? We're not sure but it's fall already. Experts agree that the number one item on your checklist should be clean and inspect gutters, followed closely by seal gaps and cracks, clean the dryer vent, and have your chimney cleaned.

With the help of Better Homes and Gardens, Family Handyman, and House Beautiful, here are ways to prepare your home for the fall, ranked in order of difficulty.

Easy Tasks

- Test smoke and carbon monoxide detectors
- Check for drafts, seal exterior gaps and cracks
- Clean/replace furnace filter
- Shut off and drain outdoor faucets and hoses
- Reverse ceiling fans
- Stock up on winter supplies
- Swap out seasonal decor/textiles
- Change humidifier settings or clean units

- Test outdoor lighting, replace bulbs as needed
- Store summer clothes and rotate closets
- Clean and store outdoor furniture/grill
- Schedule chimney/fireplace cleaning
- Schedule furnace/heating system service
- Bleed/drain hot water radiators

Moderate Tasks

- Inspect and clean gutters and downspouts
- Clean dryer vent
- Check windows and doors for drafts, add weatherstripping or film
- Keep window wells clean
- Check/test sump pump
- Service lawn equipment before storing
- Rake leaves, mulch gardens with leaves

- Aerate, fertilize, overseed lawn; cut short one last time
- Deep clean appliances, including oven
- Check handrails and steps for sturdiness
- Plant spring bulbs
- Check insulation in attic/basement, add more as needed
- Fix cracks in driveway
- Test winter equipment

Difficult Tasks

- Check roof for loose/damaged shingles
- Inspect and trim large trees near your house

Did you know?

Homeowners with an eye on home improvement projects should know that kitchens and

between 20 and 40 percent of the total budget of a given project. The final cost of any renovation project will depend on a



bathrooms tend to be the most costly rooms to renovate. An affiliate of the National Kitchen and Bath Association told Architectural Digest in 2023 that kitchens and bathrooms require the most labor-intensive renovations, which contributes significantly to the high costs of such projects. Labor is indeed a significant cost when renovating a home, as the Construction Labor Market Analyzer indicates labor cost percentages in construction are

between 20 and 40 percent of the total budget of a given project. The final cost of any renovation project will depend on a host of variables unique to each home, including the square footage of the room being remodeled and the materials homeowners choose. However, homeowners looking for less costly renovations may want to consider revamping their dining rooms and closets, each of which are projects that can make a difference and tend to require a less significant financial commitment than projects like kitchen and bath remodels.



RestoPros

NORFOLK COUNTY ATTLEBORO BROCKTON

HAVE STORM OR WATER DAMAGE?

Providing residential and commercial emergency mitigation services.



Water Mitigation



Storm Damage



Mold Remediation



Fire / Smoke Mitigation

Quick and reliable assistance when you need it most.

Locally owned and managed.

IICRC Certified
Licensed & Insured

OUR PROMISE

- 24/7 Emergency Response
- Free Inspections
- Work with Insurance



For Natick, Ashland ONLY
508-205-9602

CONTACT US TODAY

781-818-1821





Robert Roofing and Gutters, Inc. – A Family Business Built on Trust and Quality

By JENNIFER RUSSO

Purchasing a house is one of the greatest investments we make, and when it comes to protecting it, few things are more important than a solid roof over your head. A well-built and maintained roof helps preserve the home's structure, safeguarding the owners and providing peace of mind with all of the varied weather that New England is known for, from season to season.

Robert Roofing and Gutters has been a trusted company that has built its reputation on top-notch craftsmanship and an eye for detail that homeowners appreciate. Rooted in tradition, the company has a foundation of superior customer care, honesty, and a commitment to quality – doing things the right way, every time.

With decades of experience working at his father's construction company from the age of thirteen, Robert "Rob" Greene learned from highly experienced roofers that diligence, communication, and quality workmanship were integral, and that with that comes pride for a job well done. Passing his expertise on to his own son and foreman, Robbie Jr., the business will eventually be a third-generation family business steeped in beautiful work and honest business practices.

With the colder months coming, it is very important to ensure

Business spotlight



that your roof is in good condition. Having a roof evaluation should be part of everyone's annual checklist to best prepare for winter ice, snow, sleet, and potential high winds. Additionally, with the very rainy spring we had this year, homeowners should check to be sure their gutters are in good shape.

"I really recommend the installation of 6-inch gutters to maximize the amount of drainage, especially in the spring when you not only have a lot of rain, but you also have a lot of snow melting from the roof of your home," says Rob. "Larger gutters can handle significantly more water, and this helps prevent overflow, which protects your siding and landscaping from damage. They are also less likely to clog, so will need fewer cleanings and will have a longer lifespan."

For the roof of your home,



Robert Roofing recently donated a new roof to the historic Norfolk "Tramp House," originally built in 1886.

there are some things to look for that may signal the need for care, especially if it is an older home (20+ years old). Note if any shingles are curled or buckled, or missing altogether, and check if there are any fiberglass strands shining through on the shingles or granules in your gutters or at the end of downspouts. Any or all of these things could mean that you need repairs or replacement, and it's best to get this done before winter hits.

"Don't wait until spring to have your roof repaired or replaced, as doing so can exacerbate your problems. Any damage your roof has can only get worse during the winter. It's best to be proactive instead of dealing with emergency roof repairs at the last minute," shares Robert.

When warmer months return, having an estimate done to ensure that the winter elements didn't damage a roof is also recommended, as is making sure the roof has proper ventilation, which can provide many benefits, including reduced energy usage, improved air quality, temperature regulation, and help extend the life of your roof.

Aesthetics is another consider-

ation for homeowners who may want something other than the standard roof color. Robert Roofing is particular about the materials they use, and one option for those who may want a pop of color to stand out a bit more in their neighborhood is the Owens Corning® line of shingles, which come in various shades of green, blue, purple, and red.

Standing by their slogan of 'One call sends a roofer, not a salesman'. Robert feels very strongly that the focus should always be service over sales because the ultimate goal is to make sure you have a good roof AND save you money. This honest philosophy is built into the very fabric of his company's mission. If your roof can be restored, they will try their best to do that and not try to sell you a new one. That said, if you do need a new roof, their expert installers will make sure the job is executed flawlessly.

Robert Roofing works on both residential and commercial buildings. Their crew has years of experience with diverse types of roofing (asphalt, rubber, low-slope, specialty shingles, etc.) and the other services the company provides, such as gutter installa-

tion, coil stock metal coverage, soffits, and chimney repointing and flashing.

In addition to providing Norfolk and nearby communities with these services, Robert Roofing is enthusiastic about giving back to their local community as well. With a big heart for those living with addictions and recovering from substance abuse, the business is a dedicated supporter of sober living facilities in the area. Recently, they also donated materials and labor to the historic "Tramp House" in Norfolk, to honor the recently departed Thelma Ravinski, a longtime Norfolk resident who made many contributions and was a strong advocate for the town's history.

Robert Roofing and Gutters, Inc. offers roof inspections, installations, and repairs, as well as preventative maintenance, waterproofing, new gutters, window installations, and more. For a full list of services available or to obtain a free estimate, visit www.robertroofingandgutters.com or call 857-247-8709.

- Paid Advertisement -

CHARRON



Tree Service

Quality Timely Service!

508-883-8823

FREE ESTIMATES • FULLY INSURED

RESIDENTIAL & COMMERCIAL

- Tree Removal • Pruning/Trimming
- Storm Damage • Land Clearing
- Stump Grinding • Seasoned Firewood

CharronTreeService.com

KEVIN LEMIRE - OWNER
All Employees Are Covered Under Workers' Comp Insurance

1060 Pulaski Blvd
Bellingham, MA 02019

Family-Friendly Fall Fixups

Ways to get kids involved in home improvement

A homeowner's work is never done, or so it seems. Here are some projects that (a) need to be done, and (b) can be family friendly.

Easy, even kids can help

Decorate the entryway with pumpkins, mums, and lanterns

Paint front door or mailbox

Update house numbers

Rake leaves into piles and compost or bag them

Create a DIY leaf-press art project (see text box)

Check and replace outdoor lightbulbs

Clean and organize coat closet or mudroom

Moderate, family teamwork

Install or replace weatherstripping on doors and windows



Get a handle on the messy garage before winter is here.

Install a ceiling fan for better air/heat circulation

Plant spring bulbs (tulips, daffodils, crocus)

Organize garage for winter gear

Clean and seal wooden deck or porch

Build or decorate a birdhouse/birdfeeder

Challenging, adult-led

Install a storm door

Install attic insulation or seal attic hatch

Replace or repair broken fence posts/gates before snow

Build raised garden beds and fill with fall perennials

Refinish or stain outdoor furniture before winter storage

Build a mudroom bench with storage

FAMILY-FRIENDLY LEAF-PRESS PROJECT

What's a more family-friendly fall project than collecting leaves and pressing them into projects that can be enjoyed year-round? Here is a way to do just that.

1. Collect Leaves

Go on a nature walk with the kids. Choose leaves that are flat, not too thick, and freshly fallen (dry, crumbly ones break easily). Gather different shapes, sizes, and colors for variety.



2. Press the Leaves

There are two main ways to press your leaves, the old-fashioned book method or building a leaf-press (see orange box) – either way can be fun.

The Book Method:

Place each leaf between two sheets of newspaper or plain paper

Put the paper inside a heavy book

Stack more heavy books on top

Leave(s) for 1–2 weeks

3. Create Your Masterpiece

Once the leaves are flat and dry:

Leaf Collages: Glue leaves onto construction paper to make animals, patterns, or abstract art.

Leaf Rubbings: Place a leaf under paper and rub over it with crayons to see the veins and shapes.

Leaf Prints: Paint one side of the leaf, press it on paper, and lift for a stamp effect.

Nature Journal: Glue leaves into a notebook and label them (fun science + art combo).

Seasonal Decorations: Frame pressed leaves, make bookmarks (lamine them), these can also be holiday gifts.

DIY LEAF PRESS

Cut two pieces of cardboard (about 8 1/2 x 11)

Punch holes in the corners

Place leaves between sheets of paper and stack between the cardboard

Thread string or use bolts with wingnuts to tighten the press

Leave for 1–2 weeks, tightening occasionally

BUY 1, GET 1
40% OFF
 All Windows and Doors¹

PLUS
\$200 OFF
 Your Entire Purchase¹

PLUS
NO Money Down
NO Monthly Payments
NO Interest for 12 months¹

MINIMUM PURCHASE OF 4 REQUIRED – INTEREST ACCRUES FROM THE PURCHASE DATE BUT IS WAIVED IF PAID IN FULL WITHIN 12 MONTHS

REPLACEMENT WINDOW AND DOOR EVENT

RENEWAL by ANDERSEN
 FULL-SERVICE WINDOW & DOOR REPLACEMENT

The Most 5-Star Reviews
 Among Leading Full-Service Window Replacement Companies

Offer Ends 8/31 Call to schedule your FREE consultation.

TOLL FREE 866-359-1799

¹DETAILS OF OFFER: Offer expires 8/31/2025. Not valid with other offers or prior purchases. Buy one (1) window or entry/patio door, get one (1) window or entry/patio door 40% off, and 12 months no money down, no monthly payments, no interest when you purchase four (4) or more windows or entry/patio doors between 5/1/2025 and 8/31/2025. 40% off windows and entry/patio doors are less than or equal to lowest cost window or entry/patio door in the order. Additional \$200 off your purchase, minimum purchase of 4 required, taken after initial discount(s), when you purchase by 8/31/2025. Subject to credit approval. 12-month Promo Period: while no payments are due, interest accrues but is waived if the loan is paid in full before the Promo Period expires. Any unpaid balance owed after the Promo Period, plus accrued interest, will be paid in installments based on the terms disclosed in the customer's loan agreement. Financing is provided by various financial institutions without regard to age, race, color, religion, national origin, gender, or familial status. Savings comparison based on purchase of a single unit at list price. Available at participating locations and offer applies throughout the service area. See your local Renewal by Andersen location for details. License numbers available at renewalbyandersen.com/license. Some Renewal by Andersen locations are independently owned and operated. ⁴Review aggregator survey of 5-star reviews among leading national full-service window replacement companies. January 2024 Reputation.com. "Renewal by Andersen" and all other marks where denoted are trademarks of their respective owners. © 2025 Andersen Corporation. All rights reserved. RBA14301

Improving storage in common areas

Increasing storage capabilities at home is a popular goal among many homeowners and renters. Despite how much space a person may have at home, there's often a desire to have more or maximize the areas that are there. According to the Self-Storage Almanac, there are an estimated 51,206 storage facilities operating in the United States today, and MJ Partners Self-Storage Update says 11.1 percent of households currently rent at self-storage facilities. IBISWorld indicates the Canadian self-storage industry has grown at an average annual rate of 3.1 percent over the last five years.

People often turn to external storage facilities to house their belongings when space is at a premium at home. Others may focus their organization energy on closets, garages and basements to free up room. But common areas around the home also can provide additional sources of storage. Common areas are locations where people come together for activities.



Living room/family room

Living rooms and family rooms are areas of the home where people spend many hours. These tend to be multifunctional spaces where people entertain, lounge and even enjoy movies or

gaming. Possibilities in these living spaces that can create extra storage include furniture that serves double-duty. For example, a storage ottoman adds decorative appeal but also can be filled with board games or books. Cabinet-style TV stands may not be

as streamlined as mounted versions, but they're ideal places to stash games, remote controls and other accessories.

Entryway

An entryway or mudroom can quickly succumb to clutter. When

organizing such a space, think about the needs of the household. A storage bench will be a place where everyone can sit to put on shoes, and then stow footwear underneath when not in use. A wall-mounted rack can hold the current season's jackets or sweaters, as well as purses or backpacks for easy access. A shelf with some hooks can store keys or hold a basket to store the daily mail.

Hallway and closet

Closet organization systems can be the unsung heroes in closets utilized by multiple members of the family. These customizable components can be sized accordingly for the space, and then configured as needed with a balance of shelves and hanging racks. An out-of-the-way nook or long hallway can be enhanced with a bookshelf to hold photo albums or that library that only continues to grow as new reading material is acquired.

Homeowners can make common areas more functional with the addition of storage.

REACH MORE THAN 182,000 WITH OUR ANNUAL

Holiday Guides

This holiday season, showcase your business in our Holiday Guides - a special pull-out section. Drive shoppers to your door with great gift ideas, catering options and everything to make the holidays joyful and bright!

Coming in November and December!

ZONE 1: REACH 77,681

Auburn, Charlton, Douglas, Dudley, Grafton, Holden, Millbury, Northbridge, Oxford, Paxton, Rutland, Sutton, Uxbridge and Webster

ZONE 2: REACH 104,764

Ashland, Bellingham, Franklin, Holliston, Hopedale, Medway, Mendon, Milford, Millis, Natick, Norfolk, Norwood, Upton and Wrentham

DON'T MISS OUT!

Reservation deadlines:

October 8th for November issue

November 5th for December issue

Save 10% when you commit to both Guides!

Reserve your space today by contacting Jen Schofield at
508-570-6544 or by email at jenschofield@localtownpages.com

localtownpages

The YankeeXpress
BLACKSTONE VALLEY Xpress

FREE PRESS

Surprising hidden costs of home ownership

A home is the most expensive purchase many people ever make. Buyers understand that certain costs come with home ownership. However, some of the costs associated with home ownership can catch even the most savvy savers off-guard. And in recent years, those extra costs have been surging.



The following are some of the unexpected expenses that come with living the homeowner dream.

- **Property taxes:** Depending on where you live, property taxes can comprise a large portion of monthly expenses. Some people pay their property taxes separate from their mortgage payments. Others wrap the tax burden into their mortgage bill. Either way, Business Insider reports that New Jersey currently has the highest effective property tax rate in the United States, with a median Garden State property tax bill at \$9,000 annually. The lowest property tax rate is found in Hawaii, and the average homeowner there pays only \$2,000 in property taxes annually. Zocasa reports that annual property taxes in Canada can cost anywhere from \$2,500 to \$10,000 depending on the province's property tax rate and average cost of homes.
- **Home insurance:** CNN Business reports that home insurance premiums have surged in recent years, in large part due to extreme weather. In the U.S., insurance rates jumped 11.3 percent nationally last year, according to S&P Global. Severe storms, including hurricanes and wildfires, cost homeowners insurance agencies nearly \$101.3 billion last year, and those losses have been passed

on to policy holders through higher prices.

- **Mortgage insurance:** Many people do not have the standard 20 percent down payment necessary to buy a home. To circumvent this, lenders will require borrowers to take out mortgage insurance, also called PMI, to offset their risk. Credit Karma says PMI depends on factors such as down payment and borrowers' credit scores, but typically it's around 0.2 to 2 percent of the loan amount per year. You can remove PMI from your monthly payment once you have 20 percent equity in your home.
- **Maintenance:** Even a brand new home will require some measure of maintenance and routine upkeep. Bankrate indicates one of the biggest costs of owning a home is maintenance, coming in at roughly \$3,018 a year and an additional \$3,300 for improvements. Lawn care, home cleaning, pest prevention, replacing smoke alarms and batteries, roof repair, and clearing rain gutters are some of those costs.
- **HOA and CDD fees:** Some communities impose homeowners association fees on those who live within the neighborhood. Such fees cover items like maintenance in and around the community and snow removal. A Community Development District Fee is imposed by the developer of a neighborhood or subdivision to finance the cost of amenities in a neighborhood. Homeowners should be aware of these fees before buying in an HOA community.

Apart from these expenses, annual utility payments can be quite expensive. Utilizing utility plans that offer a fixed cost per month can help homeowners budget for utility expenses more readily.

Home ownership can be costly. Buyers would be wise to familiarize themselves with some of the hidden costs of owning a home prior to purchasing one of their own.

Building a basic toolbox

Many homeowners have a box or drawer of miscellaneous tools, but here is a way to build the perfect 'basic' toolbox with tools that will help you accomplish most basic home tasks.

- Safety gear (gloves, goggles, ear protection)
- Claw hammer
- Locking tape measure (25 ft.)
- Screwdriver set (flathead & Phillips)
- Utility knife (with extra blades)
- Adjustable wrench
- Slip-joint pliers
- Needle-nose pliers
- Allen (hex) wrench set
- Cordless drill + drill bit set
- Level (2- or 4-ft.)
- Stud finder
- Flashlight or headlamp
- Extension cord (heavy-duty, outdoor rated)
- Adjustable pliers (Channel-lock style)

- Crescent wrench set (metric + SAE)
- Putty knife (flexible + stiff)
- Socket set (ratchet with sockets)
- Small parts organizer
- Duct tape
- String or twine
- Set of cheap paintbrushes

And some additional "nice to have"s include:

- Handsaw
- Ladder (6-8 ft. step ladder)
- Pry bar (crowbar)
- Stud and circuit tester
- Caulk gun
- Measuring square (combination square)

With these basic tools, you'll be ready to tackle these fall home improvement projects:

- Clean and re-caulk around windows and doors
- Install or replace weatherstripping on doors

- Hang storm doors or reinforce screen doors
- Patch and paint exterior trim or siding
- Check and tighten stair rails or deck handrails
- Install hooks or racks for winter coats and boots
- Replace or upgrade outdoor lighting
- Check and patch gaps in siding or foundation
- Install or reinforce shelving in garage/basement
- Repair or replace damaged fence posts/pickets
- Swap out old showerhead for a water-saving model
- Build a simple firewood rack
- Install draft stoppers on attic access or crawlspaces
- Tighten hinges and latches on gates, garage doors, and sheds
- Check gutters for leaks and patch with sealant

Sources: www.networkx.com, www.lowes.com, www.goodhousekeeping.com

THIRD ART PAINTING

CALL TODAY

774-707-7735

FULLY INSURED

OUR INSURANCE WILL PROTECT YOUR INVESTMENT

FAMILY OWNED

WE'RE LOCAL SMALL BUSINESS, NOT A FRANCHISE. THAT MEANS WE CAN GIVE SPECIAL ATTENTION TO EACH JOB.

PREP WORK

GOOD PREP IS CRUCIAL TO ENSURE A LONG LASTING AND BEAUTIFUL PAINT JOB

WARRANT

WE'RE CONFIDENT OUR SERVICES WILL STAND THE TEST OF TIME SO WE OFFER A WORKMANSHIP WARRANT

Painting | Gutter Cleaning | Carpentry

Follow us on Facebook and Instagram @thirdartpainting

Serving

All MASSACHUSETTS AREAS

NO SUBCONTRACTORS. ONLY OUR VERIFIED EMPLOYEES

thirdartservices.com

Email: thirdartpainting@gmail.com

DON'T LET YOUR FALL TO-DO LIST SPOOK YOU!

- 
- New Roof Installation
 - Fascia, Soffit, Trim
 - Seamless Gutters
 - Chimney Re-Leading
 - Window Installation
 - Skylight Installation
 - Siding

Let Robert Roofing & Gutters help!

- Free Estimates
- Licensed & Insured
- Serving the South Shore & Surrounding Areas

Robert Greene
857-247-8709

robertroofingandgutters.com

One Call Sends a Roofer, Not a Salesman

