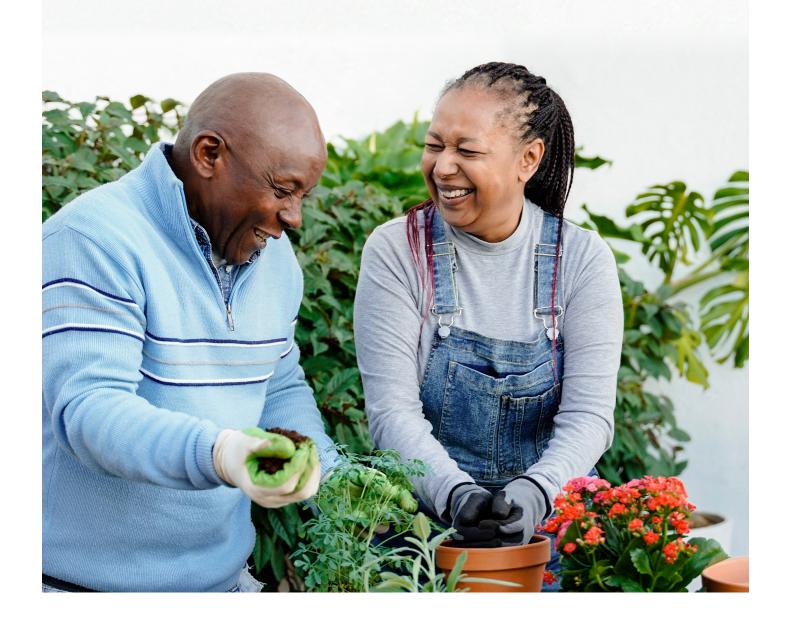
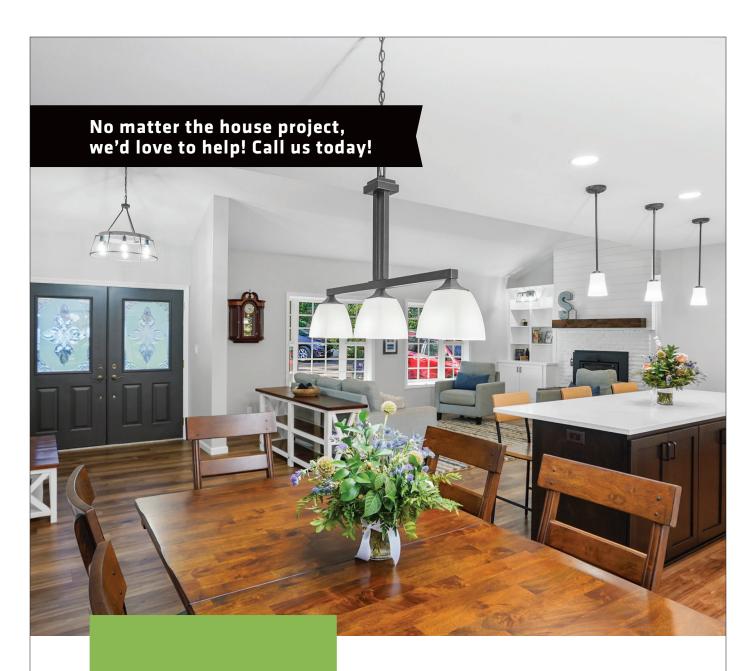
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

5 Budget DIY'S for your
spring curb appeal 6
Spring clean your home office 8
No room for vegetables?
Pot up your plants 10-11
Through thoughtful practices, lawns can be climate-friendly 12-14

ADVERTISER INDEX





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5 BUDGET DIY'S FOR SPRING CURB APPEAL

SARAH OWRE | HomeSmart Broker

According to the 7-second rule, individuals form first impressions within the first 7 seconds of introduction! This is why curb appeal is so important when preparing your home for sale. First impressions simply cannot be ignored. With a few simple updates you can make a big impact, on a small budget this spring.

1. FRESHEN UP LANDSCAPING

The best rule of thumb with landscaping? K.I.S.S. (Keep It Simple Sweetie)! Replace or add fresh bark to give your front yard a clean feel. For a pop of color, add some budget friendly annuals such as Moss Rose, one of the hardiest annuals around, to a planter placed on the front porch! Of course, we can't forget to mention cleaning up your grass and keeping it trimmed.

2. PAINT TIRED FRONT DOORS

Don't be overwhelmed by this DIY job! Most local hardware stores sell quarts of exterior primer and paint in one for projects such as this. Simply choose a day with temperatures around 50 degrees or above, clean your door with a degreaser, lightly sand with 100-150 grit sandpaper, then finish with a second pass of 180-220 grit sandpaper and voila, your door is ready for paint! I suggest an angled brush for recessed areas and small roller for flat areas and applying two coats. Always allow first coat to dry before applying the second.

3. FRESHEN UP LIGHTING & HARDWARE

With a freshly painted door, your hardware and exterior light fixtures might be looking a little sad. No need to buy brand new light fixtures or door hardware, you can paint these too! Just be sure to choose an exterior paint & primer in one spray paint! I personally like, Rust-Oleum® Universal® spray paint in a black hammered finish as it's great at hiding imperfections caused by rust. Mask around your fixtures with painter's tape, clean with a degreaser, remove any rust or flaky paint with a wire brush or emory cloth sandpaper and spray with two coats of paint! Remember to allow the first coat to completely dry!



4. ADD WELCOMING DÉCOR

Décor is often overlooked on a home's exterior, but don't leave this one out! A simple new door mat can be all you need! Pick these up for as little as \$8 at discount home stores! If you have a small porch area, consider adding a chair and table which looks inviting and cozy, along with a welcome sign to greet guests! These can easily be found at a thrift store or a garage sale!

5. CLEAN SURFACES

Clean dirt, mud and those pesky cobwebs off your siding and light fixtures! Evidence of these extra visitors taking up residence at a potential new home isn't the

Impression! Next, remove the moss collected over the winter off your driveway and walkway. Last, but not least, clean your windows! Believe it or not, the sun will come out again and nothing makes windows shine like the sun beaming through streak free windows!

As the saying goes, "you never get a second chance to make a first impression!" The amount of time & money may be minimal, but the impact can be huge with a few simple DIY updates to boost your curb appeal!







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SPRING CLEAN YOUR HOME OFFICE WITH THESE EASY TIPS

In the pursuit of work-life balance, you may mentally compartmentalize your home office from the rest of the house. But that doesn't mean this space should get a pass where spring cleaning is concerned. Here are three easy ways to spruce up your workspace this sea-

1. FILE:

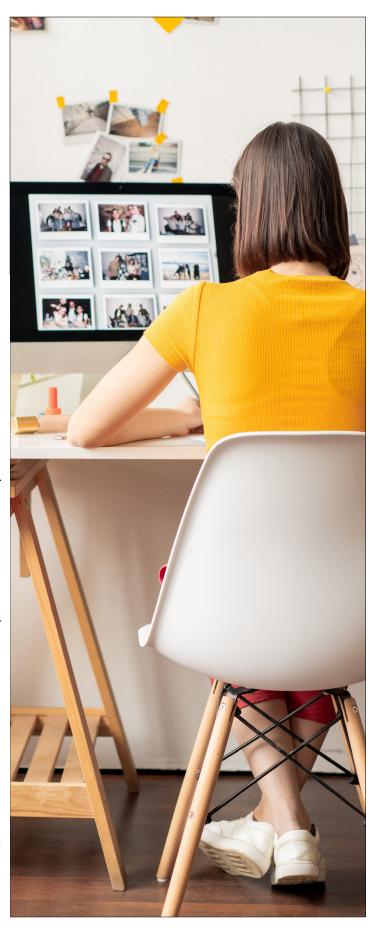
Make time to finally tackle that growing stack of paperwork. Decide what needs to be filed away, what needs to be shredded, and what can simply be recycled. (This would be a good time to manage those digital files as well.) If you don't already have a dedicated filing system, put one in place to keep things organized moving forward. Short on floor space? Use a wall-mounted paper organizer instead of a traditional filing cabinet.

2. DUST

Improve indoor air quality for healthier, happier working hours. Periodically dust your desk, your computer and monitor, the baseboards, lamps and the tops of ceiling fans. Vacuum the carpet and rugs and sweep the floor. Also, consider using an air purifier to reduce dust, allergens and other air pollutants. If you're not sensitive to pollen, invite a fresh breeze by cracking open a window on warmer days.

3. DISINFECT:

After a rough cold and flu season, it's a good idea to reset your workspace by disinfecting the items you touch most frequently, such as doorknobs, cabinet handles, light switches, your keyboard, your mouse, landline receivers and handheld devices. This is especially important to add to your checklist if your home office is visited by clients or colleagues.







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PHOTO PROVIDED BY UNSPLASH

NO ROOM FOR VEGETABLES? POT UP YOUR PLANTS

KYM POKORNY

Public Service Communications Specialist

CORVALLIS, Ore. - Many vegetables grow well in containers located on a patio, porch, balcony or windowsill, so don't let lack of yard space keep you from gardening this spring and summer.

Limited garden space precludes being able to grow some of the larger vegetables, according to Brooke Edmunds, Oregon State University Extension Service horticulturist. For instance, growing corn on a balcony may not be practical. But a wide variety of crops can be planted, including lettuce, herbs, tomatoes, peppers, eggplant, carrots, beans, squash, radishes, kale, chard and spinach.

There are some dwarf and miniature varieties, such as Thumbelina carrots or other baby vegetables that work particularly well in small confines. Vine crops can be put in hanging baskets or grown in oak barrels or large pots and trained vertically on trellises, stakes or railings.

The amount of sunlight available will affect your choice of crops, Edmunds said. Root and leaf crops (beets, turnips, lettuce, cabbage, mustard greens) can tolerate light shade. But vegetables grown for their fruits, including

tomatoes, green beans and peppers must have from six to eight hours of direct sunlight each day. The more sun the better.

Almost any type of container can be used, from traditional pots to bushel baskets, metal drums, gallon cans, fabric grow bags, plastic tubs, wooden boxes and wellrinsed cut-off bleach jugs. Ten-inch pots are good for green onions, parsley and herbs. For plants with larger root systems, such as tomatoes, peppers and eggplant, five-gallon containers are best.

No matter what container type is used, adequate drainage is a must, Edmunds cautions. Drill drain holes along the side about 1/2 inch from the bottom and make sure the soil drains well. It also helps to elevate the pot with bricks or boards, off the surface of your patio or pot sau-

Good soil really helps. Use a packaged potting soil or composted soil available at local garden centers. These purchased potting soils make for excellent container gardening because they are lightweight, sterile and drain well. Avoid topsoil or garden soil; they can be heavy and drain poorly. Same thing with planting mix.

As in bigger gardens, container grown vegetables can be grown from transplants, or they can be planted as



seeds. Pre-moisten the soil by adding water and mixing with your hands or small trowel (rule of thumb is that you don't want to be able to squeeze any water from it). Smooth out the soil surface and then plant vegetable seeds according to the instructions on the seed package, Edmunds said. After planting, gently water the soil, taking care not to wash out the seeds.

Vegetables grown in containers need regular fertilization. A soluble, all-purpose fertilizer that can be mixed in water is the easiest type to use with container plants. Fertilize every three to four days with a solution that is half the strength of the recommended mixing ratio.

Dry fertilizers sprinkled on top of the soil offer a second-best alternative. If you use them, fertilize every three weeks. Organic materials including compost, animal manures, blood meal or rock phosphate and greensand can be used for fertilizer as well.

Religious regular watering is also essential, Edmunds said. The soil in containers can dry out quickly, especially on a concrete patio in full sun. Daily watering is not unusual, but don't let the soil become soggy or have water standing on top of it. Water when the soil feels dry and until it runs out the drain holes. After spring and early summer crops are harvested, the containers can be replanted with late summer and fall vegetables.

For more information on container gardening and other gardening basics, view OSU Extension's publication Growing Your Own.

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THROUGH THOUGHTFUL PRACTICES, LAWNS CAN

BROOKE EDMUNDS | Community Horticulture, Master Gardeners **ALEC KOWALEWSKI** | Associate Professor RUYING (WRENNIE) WANG OSU, Department of Horticulture

Love your grass lawn but want to make your landscape more climate-friendly? Lawns might get a bad rap but provide benefits such as play space for kids and pets, erosion control and allowing line-of-sight at intersections. They are also a low-cost, easy-maintenance ground cover. There are thoughtful ways to keep a lawn as part of your landscape while balancing climate change concerns. Before we dive in, let's briefly discuss some of the environmental benefits of having a grass lawn.

LAWNS HELP MANAGE STORMWATER RUNOFF

Many areas of Oregon are predicted to experience more intense rainstorms due to the changing climate (See the Oregon Climate Assessment's chapter on flooding). Compared to impermeable surfaces (like concrete), lawns can play an important role in managing the runoff from these severe storms. Lawns, grass paver drives and walkways, and other permeable surfaces can slow the horizontal movement of water. This allows time for the rain to infiltrate down into the soil. This will reduce the flow into the stormwater system and help mitigate flooding.

LAWNS HELP REDUCE URBAN HEAT

Bare soil and impervious surfaces (like asphalt and concrete) increase temperatures in comparison to surfaces covered in plants. Research has also shown that actively growing turfgrass will reduce daytime temperatures compared to bare soil, asphalt and artificial turf on a hot summer day. On average, turfgrass is 4°C cooler than urban surfaces not covered with turf and as much as 39°C cooler than synthetic turf on a hot day (Brosnan et al., 2020).

BUT WHAT ABOUT CLIMATE CHANGE? ARE GRASS LAWNS A FRIEND OR FOE?

Climate change is occurring because an excessive amount of the gas carbon dioxide (CO2) is accumulating in the atmosphere. This extra CO2 acts like a greenhouse or blanket. The result is that excess heat is trapped close to the earth. This is causing changes to our climate. We are seeing increases in the average temperatures, rainfall, severe weather events, etc.

All green plants have the potential to absorb or capture this extra carbon from the atmosphere through photosynthesis. (Plants absorb CO2 and use water and sunlight to make their food. This is called photosynthesis.) This process of pulling



PHOTO BY BROOKE EDMUNDS Lawns go dormant (left) when not irrigated in the summer months in



Use an electric mower to mulch cut grass and leaves back onto the

BE CLIMATE-FRIENDLY

carbon out of the atmosphere and back down into a plant is a type of carbon sequestration.

SO, WHERE DO LAWNS COME IN?

Unlike an annual vegetable or flower garden, lawns are densely planted and perennial. They also cover the soil year-round in the Pacific Northwest. A lawn's long growing season means a greater potential for pulling carbon from the air into the grass blades and root system.

It sounds like lawns are a great choice to plant to pull extra carbon out of the atmosphere, right? Not so fast! Lawns are a surprisingly complicated ecosystem (and so is the carbon sequestration process). So, it isn't easy to make broad generalizations. Lawns take in carbon from the air and temporarily store it in the grass blades and the roots. But, some of that carbon is moved back into the atmosphere by soil microorganisms (like bacteria) that break down roots and thatch (accumulated leaves, stolons, and rhizomes on the soil surface).

Oregon State University's Turf Management Program researchers are studying how to best balance this. Studies show that mowing, fertilizing and irrigating can increase the amount of carbon moving into the grass plants (by boosting photosynthesis) and soil. We also know that some cultural practices encourage soil microbes to break down organic matter (releasing carbon back into the atmosphere).

OSU researchers are currently determining the optimum lawn management practices to have lawns be at least a "net carbon sink." This means having more carbon stored in the grass plants and the soil than is released by soil microbe decay.

Here are suggestions based on what we know so far: Tips for moving toward a more climate-friendly and healthy lawn

MINDFUL MOWING & MANAGEMENT

SELECT THE OPTIMUM MOWING HEIGHT: Lawns managed at a higher mowing height have greater shoot biomass. However, a lower mowing height produces greater lawn density by stimulating lateral growth. Recent research at OSU in Corvallis suggests that a 2-inch mowing height is optimum for lawn health, broadleaf weed prevention and carbon sequestration (Braithwaite et al., 2021; Wang et al., 2021). Mowing lower than 2 inches will open the opportunity for weeds to move in. While mowing higher than 2 inches may reduce carbon sequestration because the density of the lawn will decrease. (Fewer grass plants per square foot. This means fewer plants absorbing carbon.)

CONTINUE TO PAGE 14



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KEEP GRASS CLIPPINGS IN PLACE: Skip the bag or use a mulching mower to return grass clippings to the lawn. Mulching mowers have special blades to chop the grass finely. Other mowers can be used without the collection bag in place. Use a rake to separate any large clumps of clippings to avoid smothering the lawn. This recycles nutrients like nitrogen, potassium and phosphorous into the lawn and reduces fertilizer needs. Research shows that bagging and removing grass clippings will remove around half the nitrogen applied in a year (Grégoire et al., 2022). For instance, if 4 lbs of nitrogen per 1,000 sq ft were applied in a year, 2 lbs of nitrogen per 1,000 sq ft were removed by bagging clippings during mowing.

BUILD THE SOIL: Adding compost can help build the soil. Spread a one-quarter-inch layer over an existing lawn in the spring or fall and rake in. The quarter-inch compost layer will provide approximately 2 lbs of N per 1,000 sq ft. Therefore, two applications at this rate would provide 4 lbs N per 1,000 sq ft annually (annually fertilization rates should be 2 to 4 lbs N per 1,000 sq ft annually).

SKIP THE EMISSIONS Switch to electric-powered mowers, edgers, string trimmers, blowers and other equipment. Gas-powered lawn equipment runs on petroleum-based fuels. These emit carbon and other pollutants into the air. In some cases, the emissions from older gas-powered equipment can be many times higher than a car. Electric-powered equipment is readily available as either plug-in or battery-powered units. Manual reel mowers are another lower-cost option that only use human power to cut the lawn using sharp rotating blades.

APPLY FERTILIZER THOUGHTFULLY: To reduce your carbon footprint, consider applying organic fertilizers. Great examples include Milorganite, BioTurf and Dr. Earth. Organic fertilizers like this are naturally slow-release, meaning heavier, infrequent applications are possible. Two applications per year, once in the spring and once in the fall, at 1 to 2 lbs N per 1,000 sq ft (totaling 2 to 4 lbs N per 1,000 sq ft, respectively), should be adequate.

If you are using synthetic fertilizer, pick a product with a low concentration of phosphorus; a 10:1 nitrogen to phosphorus ratio is suggested. Research has shown that lawns require a relatively low amount of phosphorus (Waddington et al., 2021). Excess phosphorus will accelerate eutrophication (death of animal life in a waterway). A slow-release synthetic fertilizer will also reduce leaching associated with quick-release nitrogen sources and allow for heavier, infrequent applications.

Adding clover to your lawn can also negate nitrogen fertilizer requirements. Clovers and other legumes can fix (generate) nitrogen from the atmosphere. Adding these elements to create an "eco-lawn" has become guite fashionable and will resolve concerns associated with the carbon emissions produced during fertilizer manufacturing and delivery.

USE WATER WISELY: If you can tolerate a brown lawn in the summer, let it go dormant by not watering. Keep

in mind that unirrigated lawns are more susceptible to broadleaf weed invasion and will require some maintenance in the fall after the hot, dry summer. Dormant lawns are also generally carbon-neutral. The lawn isn't growing and taking in carbon, but the soil microbes also aren't active and releasing carbon.

While the historical trend has been deep and infrequent irrigation, recent research in western Oregon has shown that lighter, more frequent irrigation will provide a healthier lawn while using less water (Blankenship et al., 2020; Cain et al., 2021). More specifically, around one-quarter inch applied four times per week, totaling one inch per week, will result in a greener, healthier lawn with fewer weeds than a lawn that receives one inch applied in a single application. Reducing the amount of irrigation water will also decrease the microbial activity of the soil and reduce carbon emissions.

REPLACE YOUR WATER-HUNGRY LAWN: Tall fescue is generally a drought-tolerant, cool-season grass that can retain some green color during summertime without irrigation. In contrast, fine fescues can survive with little to no water by going into dormancy.

Research in the Willamette Valley has shown that onehalf inch per week is adequate for tall fescue while one inch per week is required for perennial ryegrass. In eastern and central Oregon, tall fescue will require more irrigation (roughly one inch per week) but less than other grass species in this environment (Blankenship et al., 2020).

Common yarrow (Achillea millefolium) is a typical component used in Oregon eco-lawn plantings. A mixed planting of common yarrow and grass will keep the lawns looking green longer into the summer months without any irrigation. If monthly irrigation is applied (one-half to one inch once a month), the lawn may stay green all summer. Common yarrow and other eco-lawn seeds can be purchased from specialty seed companies online. Ecolawns can be planted by overseeding into an existing lawn or during a complete renovation.

Other low-growing, non-grass ground covers include creeping thyme, creeping mint, low-growing chamomile or even moss. Match the ground cover to the amount of sunlight and moisture the site receives.

RETHINK WEED MANAGEMENT: Build your tolerance of weeds. Not every weed needs to be removed to have an attractive, easy-to-manage lawn. Weeds can even help increase biodiversity in your yard by providing food sources for different insects. Flowering weeds can provide support for pollinators.

Use herbicides wisely, if at all

The emissions released from the production of synthetic herbicides contribute to climate change. When possible, mow before the seed sets to avoid spread or use physical removal for weed management. If a chemical herbicide is warranted, choose from the list of low-impact herbicides published on the Oregon School IPM Program website.



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