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# Fall Home & Garden

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FEATURE STORY PAGE 4





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## Simple ways to incorporate reclaimed wood in your home

Homes come in many sizes and styles. But whether your home is a palatial postmodern masterpiece or a cozy farmhouse, reclaimed wood can be utilized to create an awe-inspiring interior.

Reclaimed wood serves both aesthetic and practical purposes. Visually stunning, reclaimed wood also is a great way to make use of old-growth forest wood. Why is that significant? According to the United States Forest Service, just 3 percent of old-growth forest has survived into the second decade of the 21st century. Old-growth forest wood like that from longleaf pine trees has long been touted as excellent building material, but the pine utilized today comes from trees that are cut down when they're young. Reclaimed wood taken from old or demolished homes built with old-growth forest wood offers access to this highly valued building material while also providing the environmental benefits that come with reusing existing materials.

Reclaimed wood can be incorporated into a home's interior rather easily, and the results are often stunning.

• **Accent wall:** Transforming a wall into an accent wall with reclaimed wood is a simple project that won't affect the existing design of a home's interior. A living room or home office can be given a whole new look with the addition of an accent wall made from reclaimed wood. Homeowners who want their bedrooms to give off the vibe of a rus-

tic retreat can consider adding an accent wall made of reclaimed wood.

• **Furniture:** Reclaimed wood also can be put to use, or reuse, as furniture. A home office desk made from reclaimed wood can be both stunning and sturdy, while end tables and coffee tables made from reclaimed wood can add some unique character to a living room.

• **Kitchen islands:** Homeowners who aspire to have a farmhouse kitchen can consider reclaimed wood when creating their kitchen islands. Reclaimed wood can be used to make the body of the island, complete with cabinets and drawers, that sits beneath the countertop where cooks will prepare their meals.

• **Storage beds:** Guest rooms tend to be smaller than other rooms in the house, and that means little room for furniture like dressers. Rather than cramming lots of furniture into a small room, homeowners can utilize reclaimed wood to create storage bed frames. The frames won't take up extra space in the room, reassuring guests that they won't be spending a weekend in cramped quarters. And the rustic look of reclaimed wood storage beds can be an instant stunner when guests arrive.

Reclaimed wood can be incorporated into a home in myriad ways. This stunning, eco-friendly design choice can add instant appeal to any home.



# How to help houseplants survive a long winter

As fall gradually gives way to winter, gardeners expend ample energy preparing their flowers and plants for the months ahead. Plants may be pruned to increase the likelihood that they will return in full bloom come the spring, while lawns may be aerated so cool-season grasses can get the nutrients, water and oxygen they need when the temperatures dip. But what about houseplants? Do indoor houseplants need the same type of pre-winter TLC that outdoor plants need before winter arrives?

As the seasons change, so, too, do the conditions outside. And those conditions affect indoor houseplants much like they do lawns, gardens and trees. So it's vital that people with houseplants do not overlook the need to keep houseplants going strong as fall gives way to winter.

## LOCATION

Hours of daylight shorten in winter, which means some houseplants won't get as much sun as they were accustomed to over the last several months. That means

plants may need to be relocated closer to windows where they can make the most of each day's sunlight. However, it's important that there's ample distance between the plant and the window, especially when winter temperatures get especially cold. If the plants are too close to a window on cold days, they could freeze. Keep them close enough to the windows to get ample sunlight but far enough away so they don't get too cold. In addition, keep plants away from drafty windows as well as heating vents, as extreme temperatures are not conducive to healthy houseplants.

## WATERING

Watering needs also may change when the temperatures drop. The indoor plant experts at Pistils Nursery in Oregon note that all houseplants need less water in winter. In fact, overwatering in winter can be especially harmful to indoor plants. Plant owners can try decreasing the frequency of their watering by half each winter and see how the plants respond.

## CLEANING

Cleaning plants is another way to help them survive a long winter. Dust settles in many homes in winter, when windows tend to remain closed for months on end and fresh air isn't circulating around the house as much as it is in spring and summer. Pistil's Nursery notes that dust inhibits a plant's ability to photosynthesize, thus compromising its ability to make it through a winter unscathed. Better Homes & Gardens recommends using a soft-bristle paintbrush, a toothbrush or pipe cleaner to remove dust from African violets and other fuzzy-leaved plants. Gently washing plants with a paper towel or cloth that's been moistened with water can remove the dust. Oils and polishes should not be used to make leaves shine, as these substances can block pores on the plant.

Houseplants may need some extra attention in winter as hours of daylight dwindle and indoor conditions make it hard for plants to survive.



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# The Local Remodelers You Can Trust

## *Why Rhode Islanders Should Welcome DreamMaker Into Their Homes*

By RONA MANN  
Special to The Westerly Sun



We have all had to do an awful lot of adapting this past year and a half since we've been forced to live with a visitor we never invited in...Covid.

In addition to mask-wearing, social distancing, having our kids go to school at our dining room tables, and more, the virus had made the supply chain on everything from food to building products unreliable and in some cases, come to a complete and utter halt.

People who have spent inordinate amounts of time in their homes during this period have also had time to look around, and many are unhappy and frustrated with kitchens and bathrooms that are in sore need of an upgrade. Just as people like to have a makeover now and then to perk up their appearance and attitude, the comfort and value of your home should also be made over if rooms like the kitchen or bathrooms are old, tired, and dark. But Covid

has made it tough to rely on getting materials and finding the right skilled remodeling professionals to schedule your projects.

Enter DreamMaker Bath & Kitchen, a trusted national franchise brand that just opened a new location here in the Ocean State. The owners of your local DreamMaker Bath & Kitchen are Rhode Islanders, Dennis and Christina Aguiar. They live and work right here in our community with their kids, so when you partner with DreamMaker to make your home look and feel fresh, new, and amazing, you are partnering with local professionals who take care of every aspect of your project from beginning to end. That means you can work through one central point of contact for all of your needs and not have the headache of finding plumbers, electricians, and other contractors.

For over 20 years DreamMaker has worked with homeowners nationwide using the same formula of "we won't



**Dennis and Christina Aguiar**  
owners of your local DreamMaker Bath & Kitchen.

*Continued on next page*



Continued from previous page

start any demolition until we have all of the materials for your project. This allows us to minimize any disruption remodeling can cause during construction.” Do you realize how unique this is? So when Dennis and Christina Aguiar meet with you in person at their design center to discuss exactly what you want and what your goals and expectations are, you will know exactly what the entire process involves upfront.

Following your initial meeting, a home survey is scheduled during which time a DreamMaker designer will visit your home and take measurements, photos, and look for any structural, plumbing, or electrical issues that may need to be addressed.

Next comes a design review and written proposal, and finally when YOU are happy and confident in all the planning, it’s time to move forward, sign the agreement, and DreamMaker gets to work. Once again, you will be working with Dennis and Christina from start to finish, working directly with local Rhode Island business owners who live in our area, yet are part of a successful network of remodeling experts that has a 96% recommendation rate on Guild Quality with nearly 2000 reviews, and the assurance that DreamMaker will not begin

your job until every piece needed for your project has been ordered and received.

Because DreamMaker is new to Rhode Island but has amassed more than 20 years in business nationwide, there’s another very big reason you should call them. They have availability NOW and can give you their professional service, design, and remodeling work without waiting months or into next year for your job to begin. And all work is backed up by a full year warranty.

Call DreamMaker today to make an appointment to visit their showroom and see how everything you’ve been dreaming about can come true. You will be walked through each phase of the design process, see their vast display of product selection, and most of all, get to meet the people who will be handling your job from start to finish.

When you make a significant investment in your home, you are also investing in the people who create that, so isn’t it important to do it right? Call, go, tour, tell them your goals, and see for yourself how they can turn your home remodeling dreams into reality.

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## 5 Tips for Remodeling in Today's Market

### Family Features

In the aftermath of the COVID-19 lockdown, labor shortages and access to certain products affects numerous industries, including remodeling. Even so, after extra time at home and delays caused by the pandemic, there is high demand for home renovation projects.

If you're planning a home remodel or construction project, consider these tips from professional remodelers to avoid frustration and ensure your vision comes to life.

### *Do Research and Plan Ahead*

Mapping out your project early and thoroughly can help you avoid delays. This is especially important when it comes to ma-

terials, said John Brown of Bliffert Lumber and Hardware.

"The quicker a homeowner can make selections, the sooner we can get it on order and get it in," Bliffert said.

Some contractors are adjusting the way they approach planning to offset delays. For example, selecting materials and finishes at the outset, instead of as you progress through the project like you normally would, may mean the materials are available when you need them.

"The design process has really changed," said Robi Kirsic of TimeLine Renovation and Design. "We're still designing based on homeowners' wishes and dreams, but we're also modifying by providing options based on what's available."

Know Where You're Willing to Compromise

Whether you're able or willing to compromise often comes down to why you're doing the renovation in the first place.

"Some homeowners are specific about what they want," Kirsic said. "They've been waiting for a long time to do this project and they're not doing it to compromise. Others have a time constraint for one reason or another; they don't have the luxury of waiting."

It's a sentiment echoed by others, who caution that you may be able to get an item you have your heart set on, but you may need to be willing to wait.

"If you have your heart set on a certain bathtub, it might be a 6- or 8-month wait, but another one might be available sooner," said Jason Hensler of Marvin Windows and Doors.

### *Avoid Making Changes*

Once your plans are set and your materials have been ordered, avoid unnecessary delays by changing your project scope or material selection. In this environment, project timelines are extremely tight and even minor changes can create significant disruptions, especially if there's a delay in obtaining different materials or your new ideas require a different crew that wasn't already scheduled for your job.

### *Choose a Trustworthy Partner*

While these are unusual times, having a reliable contractor can make the project run more smoothly and help you feel more comfortable as the project progresses.

"Use someone you trust, someone who is part of a reputable group like the National Association of the Remodeling Industry," Brown said.

That way, if you encounter unexpected bumps along the way, you can be confident they will be handled professionally and appropriately. Brown encourages his teams to communicate early and often, which helps homeowners understand and trust they're doing everything possible to keep the job on track.

### *Be Patient*

Above all, understanding these are unusual times can go a long way toward a more successful project.

"Patience will help it go a lot smoother," Hensler said. "That may mean accepting longer wait times than you anticipated and a later completion date than you hoped."

The sooner you get your project started, the sooner your contractor can start mapping out a project timeline. Find contractors in your area at RemodelingDoneRight.com.

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## Attract More Birds to Your Backyard

# Basic tips for feeding wild birds

### Family Features

With all the constraints people lived through in 2020, many turned to their own backyards - nature, in particular - for hope, solace, wonder and even entertainment. Despite the worldwide crisis, nature's normalcy remained intact; flowers continued to bloom, bees continued to pollinate and birds continued to fly and forage food.

Feeding birds can be enjoyable for any age group and provide stress relief for all who partake. A University of Exeter study, focused on nature's impact on humans in suburban and urban areas, found lower levels of depression, anxiety and stress were associated with the number of birds people saw during afternoons at home. The benefits of birdwatching come from seeing lots of birds - quantity not "quality" - the study found.

People "felt relaxed and connected to nature when they watched birds in their gardens," researchers said. These feelings increased with the level of bird feeding in the yard. For millions working and schooling from home, this stress reduction was an unintended bonus.

Interest in birding isn't slowing down. If you haven't tried attracting birds to your backyard, now is a perfect opportunity to start. The experts at Cole's Wild Bird Products Co. offer these bird feed and feeder basics to attract more birds to your backyard.

### Feeders

A variety of bird feeder types placed at different heights attract more birds than one feeder featuring one seed type. Start with

two feeder types that accommodate most feed options. Bowl feeders serve not only seeds but also dried mealworms, fruit and suet. An option like Cole's Bountiful Bowl Feeder comes with an adjustable dome cover you can raise or lower to prevent larger birds and squirrels from getting to food and protect it from rain.

Traditional tube feeders are all-purpose options for bird feeding, especially for small birds that cling. For example, the Terrific Tube Feeder is made with state-of-the-art materials to prevent warping and discoloration and includes a quick-clean, removable base to make cleaning fast and easy. Just push a button and the bottom of the feeder pops off for easy access to the inside. Rinse the feeder with soapy water, dunk it into a water-bleach solution at a concentration of 9-to-1, rinse, dry and reattach the bottom. Regular cleaning of feeders is essential for preventing mold, germs and disease.

### Popular Foods

**Birdseed:** Not all birdseed is created equal. Look for quality blends without cheap filler like red millet and oats. All-natural seed containing no chemicals or mineral oil is safe and more appealing to birds. Top seed picks include all-natural black oil sunflower and Cole's "Hot Meats" (sunflower meats infused with habanero chili peppers that birds love and squirrels dislike). Or an option like Special Feeder blend, packed with favorites including black oil sunflower, sunflower meats and pecans, attracts the greatest number of wild birds. Offering a wide variety, Cole's feed is researched and specifically formulat-

ed to attract certain bird species, the largest number of birds and the greatest variety of birds.

**Insects and Worms:** A healthy, lush lawn is one of the best ways to feed birds that prefer insects and worms. You can supplement birds' diets by serving dried mealworms in a packaged variety that's easier to feed and less messy than live mealworms. Mealworms are packed with energy and contain essential nutrients, fat and protein.

**Fresh Fruit:** Apples, orange halves and bananas are favored fruits.

**Suet:** Perfect for insect-eating birds, suet is a high-fat food that provides abundant calories, rich nutrition and is a high-energy treat.

Using the right feeders and high-quality feed can enhance your backyard and entice more birds, bringing stress relief and enjoyment. For more information on attracting birds to your backyard, visit coleswildbird.com.

Source: Cole's Wild Bird



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# Home Cleaning Hacks for Fall

Family Features

Cooler fall temperatures mean you're likely to spend more time indoors. Taking time to spruce up inside and out can make you more comfortable and give you peace of mind that your home is tidy, clean and prepared to weather the months ahead.

**Tidy Outdoor Spaces:** Before stashing your lawn care equipment, give your home and landscape some end-of-season attention. Use a power washer to clean lawn furniture and store it away from the elements or use covers to protect it. Clean out gutters and remove debris from flower beds to encourage proper drainage.

**Check for Repair Projects:** Give your home a thorough inspection to identify any problems that need attention before cold weather sets in. Look for concerns like loose shutters or siding, cracked or loose shingles, cracks and gaps around doors and windows that may allow moisture or cold air to creep

in. Severe weather and cycles of freezing and thawing can exacerbate these problems, so it's best to make repairs before they result in major damage.

**Eliminate Dirt and Dust:** Moving indoors, take time to remove any dirt and grime that has accumulated. Wash textiles like curtains and rugs. Wipe down kitchen and bathroom surfaces with an antibacterial solution. Dust other parts of the house, including blinds, windowsills, baseboards and other hard-to-reach places.

When it comes to vacuuming, make sure to keep floors clean and free of outside dirt all season long with an all-around cleaner that can vacuum and mop simultaneously, like the DEEBOT OZMO T8 AIVI. It provides convenient, efficient, hands-free cleaning you can control via smart home devices. With a built-in HD camera, the AI-powered robot identifies common household obstacles and intelligently determines how to clean around them, while also providing

on-demand home monitoring. Complete with laser mapping and navigation technology to scan and map your floors for faster cleaning and fewer missed spots, it is also compatible with an optional, automatic emptying station that allows for up to 30 days of fully maintenance-free cleaning.

**Promote Air Quality:** In addition to keeping floors clean and allergens under control, there are other steps you can take to promote better air quality while you're spending more time indoors. Scheduling service for your furnace can help ensure it's in good condition before cold weather hits. This is also a good time to replace your air filter and consider a duct cleaning. Take time to clean ceiling fans and reverse the blades so the air circulates but fans don't create a chilling effect.

**Swap Seasonal Essentials:** A new season brings change, whether it's simply swapping out your wardrobe or gearing up for a busy season of school activities and sports. Make time to put away out-of-season clothes and other necessities to make room for the things you'll need for the autumn months.

Keep only the things you need and store the rest to help keep clutter under control.

Find more tips for efficient fall home maintenance and cleaning at ecovacs.com.

Source: Ecovacs



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## Self Made, American Made, Made Exclusively for You

by Rona Mann

What's a "self made man?"

Usually it's an individual whose success was not the result of inheritance, serendipity, or luck, but success driven solely from within. This special brand of accomplishment was achieved not by who someone knew, but how much they knew and were willing to work to reach even higher plateaus. These are the rare people that some scorn saying, "He had to have an in," or "Someone bankrolled him," but that is not the case with a true self made man. These people are rare indeed, driven by a fire that burns in their belly. Such a man is Ed Smith of Chariho Furniture.

Although Smith grew up in a middle class family and had just a high school diploma, he never stopped educating himself when he found a situation that interested him or a goal he wanted to achieve. From his teens years he new he wanted to work for himself one day and to achieve that he was willing to start anywhere and do anything. Nothing was too menial if he could learn and advance. He began as a box cutter in a small Rhode Island furniture store. Although his duty was to slice boxes, he kept looking around, watching, and

in the process he learned the mechanics of furniture delivery, refinishing, sales, and how to treat customers. When the furniture store failed, Ed Smith decided he would open his own and do it right. More than 34 years later, he's still doing it right.

"I did the impossible," Smith said. "I started with \$3000. of our wedding money and a home equity loan on my parents' home. In 1987 he moved into a tiny space in Richmond with a paper sign and little inventory. It was a terrible rime to open a business following the stock marker's "Black Monday" and the Rhode Island statewide credit union collapse. But that didn't deter the young man barely in his twenties. Ed started Chariho Furniture with inexpensive furniture, "only three of everything. When I sold a \$699. sofa, I replaced it with "\$899 one. When that was sold, I replaced it with a \$1299 piece. I kept raising the bar."

Fast forward to today when Chariho Furniture is a high-end destination store doing business throughout the entire United States. Smith holds firm to his conviction of everything must be made

in North America, crafted of solid wood , and must be customizable so the customer literally has thousands of choices. Every supplier to the store must craft only the highest quality, Chariho Furniture owns all its inventory, and every salesperson is a professional interior designer.

Unlike other stores in the state and throughout New England who advertise that they carry Amish furniture, Ed says, "Most of them have three or four different lines and much of it is imported. My daughter, Stephanie, our Chief Operating Officer and I go out to Ohio where there is an enormous Amish furniture market. Therefore, we now carry an inventory from 33 Amish companies... all solid wood, all American made, all customizable to the needs and tastes of our customers."

Working with Ed, Stephanie, or Smith's staff of educated interior designers, a customer may choose their own wood species, the finish, and the hardware, right down to the smallest detail.

Take the time to visit Chariho Furiture and take a look for yourself. You'll find no high pressure, just a high level

of workmanship, stewardship, and educated service. Before you go, visit their website, unlike any other at [www.charihofurniture.com](http://www.charihofurniture.com).

The photography is extraordinary, the choices for customizing are endless. And if you think they're just sofas and tables and chairs, take another look. They have beautifully crafted, made in America office furniture, in solid wood. There are also gun cabinets and curio cabinets, mattresses, accessories, even quilt holders!

Ed Smith looks around the store he built, one sofa at a time, one table at a time, one customer at a time, and grows silent. Then his gaze falls upon the giant, magnificent slabs of wood, hand made by the Amish and soon to be the centerpiece of someone's dining room. A big smile spreads across his face as he says, "It's fun, you know. We sell really cool stuff."

Understatement!

Chariho Furniture is an easy ride from anywhere, just off I-95 at Exit 3A, Jct. Of Rt. 138 & 112 10 Richmond Townhouse Road (401) 539-9043





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