

# HOME & GARDEN

Spring 2014



# Exercise and Yard Work

**T**ake a look at your yard. Is your lawn well-manicured? Are your leaves raked? Are your gutters cleaned? Keeping up on outside chores not only improves your curbside appeal, but can also boost your overall health.

The Centers for Disease Controls and Prevention (CDC) recommends physical activity such as mowing the yard or picking up sticks for relieving arthritis pain.

Two-and-a-half hours of moderate activity per week, says the CDC, can help reduce pain and improve function, mood and quality of life for adults with arthritis.

It can also help manage other chronic conditions among adults with arthritis, such as diabetes, heart disease and obesity.

## STRETCH AND HYDRATE

Before setting out on an afternoon of yard work, be sure to stretch your muscles to prepare your body and avoid straining. You will also want to stretch a few times during and after your yard work to avoid stiffening.

Stretch your legs, arms and lower back in particular, since these are the areas most impacted by yard and gardening work.

Drink plenty of water before, during and after your outdoor exercise, as well. Staying hydrated will help your muscles work properly.

## CARDIO

If your yard is manageable, opt for the push mower instead of the rider every once in a while. Adding 30 minutes of this type of cardio activity can burn hundreds of calories and get your heart rate increased to an effective rate.

Opt also for the rake instead of the leaf blower. Taking care of your lawn



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and garden the old-fashioned way will put your body to work while improving your overall health.

## STRENGTH

An effective workout implements both cardio and strength routines, so

add a little heavy lifting to your outdoor work. You can burn hundreds of calories by scrubbing your siding, cleaning your gutters, tilling your garden and power-washing your deck.

The built-in aspects of some of these activities – like climbing a lad-

der and lugging bags of leaves to the curb – add even more benefits for your body.

As with any physical activity that requires exertion, pay attention to your body and incorporate as many periods of rest as required.

# A Look at Gardening Apps

**D**irt and technology. What a marriage. Before breaking into the rich soil and fertilizer this spring, use your green thumb to browse these five free, functional gardening apps from Google Play and Apple's App Store.

Then live happily ever after with your bountiful garden. Now, if only there was an app for removing weeds.

## GARDEN TIME PLANNER

Developer: Burpee

Store: Apple App Store

Developed by seed giant Burpee, this app includes a full database of plants, local weather and links to how-to gardening videos. The array of plants on display is impressive, and Burpee has organized them in an easy-to-navigate format. Gardeners also benefit from simple and straightforward video advice on sowing, transplanting and plant tendencies.

## PLANT PICTURES

Developer: Stevenson Software LLC

Store: Apple App Store

No gardening tips within this application – just the visual identities of more than 26,000 plants. Browse by plant name and instantly uncover loads of pictures to help guide your buying decisions and garden layout. The photographs are large and colorful, helping you easily identify distinctions of each plant.



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## GARDENING IDEAS

Developer: Archant Ltd.

Store: Apple App Store

Stunning photography and innovative ideas will get the wheels turning for your next big gardening project. Leverage inspiration from detailed building designs and water features into your own eye-catching creation. This app's overall size is small compared to the others on

this list, helping boost the quickness and fluidity of its user interface.

## GARDEN GUIDE

Developer: Ogden Publications, Inc.

Store: Google Play

The best free gardening app on the Google Play market, according to user reviews, this guide provides expert advice from the popular magazine

Mother Earth News. It doles out planting specifications for all of your vegetables, fruits and flowers. Quick tip: Once you have downloaded the application, tap the "lock" icon to unlock the content and the "tomato" icon to start receiving articles.

## GARDENING TIPS

Developer: ShamZap

Store: Google Play

Built for the novice, this app provides advice for cultivating everything from flower gardens to indoor herb gardens, and it works as a large search engine that quickly takes users to credible sources of information. Simple and to the point, users can link to a variety of how-to videos, informative articles and gardening experts.

# Get that Ballpark Look in Your Yard

## HOW TO CREATE GREAT-LOOKING GRASS PATTERNS

**E**ver wish your lawn looked like the grass at a professional baseball stadium? Incorporating patterns and stripes into your grass is actually an achievable project.

There are special mowers on the market with full-width rollers and free-floating mower decks, allowing you to bring the magic of a baseball field to your back yard.

Just remember that no matter how intricate the pattern you create, the most important aspect of your lawn is its health. Consistent watering and some environmentally friendly care products will keep your grass green and healthy.

### PLAN OUT YOUR PATTERN

If you're considering adding grass patterns, start by planning out your project. How do you want the grass patterns to look? Are you hoping to keep the design simple or would you like to try something more complex?

While drawing out your plots, add different

shades of green to each segment of grass to visualize what the striping pattern will look like.

### PRACTICE MAKES PERFECT

Depending upon the complexity of your planned pattern, transferring your drawing to your yard may take a little trial and error.

You may have more success at first sticking with patterns comprised of straight lines or checkerboards. As you become more advanced in striping, you can opt for diamonds or circles. Use your imagination!

### USING THE ROLLER

The roller is the part of the mower that actually makes the mowing patterns.

Standard on many new models, the roller can be an add-on worth purchasing if you're looking to recreate your favorite ballpark's outfield.

After mowing each line once – this is sufficient as too many lines can harm the grass – drop down your mower's rollers to finish your patterns.

### SAFE LAWN TIPS

Great-looking grass is only as good as its overall health. Luckily, there are some easy steps you can take to keep your grass in top condition.

Alternate the direction you mow your lawn every couple of weeks. This will improve overall grass quality and reduce wear and tear from tire marks.

# The Next Step: Greenhouses

**A**re you a super gardener or looking to start your own gardening business? If you answered yes, then you have probably already looked into the option of building or purchasing your own greenhouse. Good thinking.

Greenhouses can be great investments that pay for themselves multiple times over. They allow you the opportunity to grow plants, herbs, flowers and vegetables year round without the worry of climate or weather damaging them. Although simple in the way it functions, there are some specific steps to building or placing a greenhouse that you need to follow.

## HOW THEY WORK

Greenhouses filter the sunlight through their walls and ceiling and then heat up the air that is trapped inside.

The process helps plants grow while keeping them protected from external climate and weather forces that can cause serious damage.

For optimum performance, even the best designed greenhouses may require the installation of additional heating. This will help keep temperatures at their most effective levels, especially during the winter.

## ORIENTATION

Large, small or somewhere in between, where your greenhouse sits in your yard will have the biggest impact on its successful rearing of produce.

Greenhouses are usually constructed with the longest side oriented toward the south to allow maximum sunlight exposure during the cold



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winter months. Avoid butting your greenhouse against a barn or in highly shaded areas.

## BUILD YOUR OWN

Constructing your own greenhouse

can be a large project, one that with the proper tools and attention to detail can end up saving you a substantial amount of money, freeing up more funding for plants to fill it with.

Before you build, consider the skill level required for your project. A large,

intricate greenhouse with multiple corners and sections may require the help of a professional contractor.

A more straightforward design is definitely an achievable project, and can give you the satisfaction of a job well done.

# In-Home Movie Theaters

**T**he average price of taking in a movie for a family of four is more than \$30, according to the National Association of Theater Owners.

And that's just for the tickets. Throw in the popcorn, sodas and not to mention the add-on for a 3-D ticket, and the average family could easily be spending double that amount. That's a lot of movie money.

It's no wonder that many families across America have chosen to enjoy more movies within the comfort of their own homes. But just because you stay in doesn't mean you have to sacrifice a good time.

Advances in technology, lighting and home construction techniques can help you build a genuine theater experience right within your home.

## THE SCREEN

By mounting a projector on the ceiling, you can project images toward as large a screen as you choose for your wall. Keep the projector in the back of the room to convey a real cinematic experience.

You can save space and a little money by opting for special paint instead of a large screen. The paint rolls directly onto the wall and reflects images just like a regular screen.

## SURROUND SOUND

Projecting images is one



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thing. Adding theater-quality sound can be just as important to pulling off an authentic movie aura.

Carefully place your speakers around the entire room, helping engulf your ears with optimum sound. Speaker companies have started to

design their products on the smaller side, allowing for devices that look more streamlined and modern instead of big and bulky.

Add a couple of tower speakers at the front of the room to provide an extra boost.

## THE LIGHTING

What good is a theater room with bright lights? Dim your lighting to enhance the quality of whatever movie you're watching.

Recessed lights can not only add to the overall look of the room, but they are also

versatile enough to be installed around the border of the room like you see in standard movie theaters.

Consider a remote control device to switch your lights on and off from the comfort of your large, cushy seat.

# Adding a Safe Room

**H**urricanes, tornadoes and earthquakes are some of the most destructive and frightening forces on Earth. If you live in an area susceptible to any of these natural disasters – and most likely you do – you may be considering installing a safe room into your home.

Contractors can build a safe room in either the new construction phase or as an add-on to your existing home.

If you want your safe room to meet the criteria established by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), there are certain steps to take. FEMA's standards ensure that your safe room will provide "near-absolute protection" in extreme weather events, meaning that based on FEMA's knowledge of dangerous natural weather events, the occupants of a safe room will have a very high probability of being protected from injury or death.

To be considered a FEMA safe room, the structure must be designed and constructed to the guidelines specified by FEMA, which can be found by visiting [fema.gov](http://fema.gov) and searching for "safe room."

## BASEMENT SAFE ROOM

FEMA advises that in a new or existing home with a basement, the safe room should be built in the basement. You can build the safe room with its own walls or with one or more of the basement walls.

Using the existing basement walls will require you to reinforce them for ultimate protection. Typical reinforcement techniques used in residential basement walls, FEMA states, will not provide sufficient protection from major damage-events like extreme-wind loads.

Optimum reinforcement of basement walls will occur during the construction of a new home.

## ADDING ON A SAFE ROOM

For homes without basements, safe rooms can be added by modifying a bathroom, closet or other interior room. Wood-frame walls and ceilings must be replaced with options that are resistant to the impact of wind-borne objects and other effects of extreme winds.

When possible, FEMA recommends that safe rooms be built as a new room within the existing space in order to isolate the shelter from the home structure.



# Gardening: By the Numbers

**G**ardening is on the rise. A new study by the nationwide market research firm Scarborough found that of the nearly 164 million homeowners in the United States, 49 percent of them gardened in the past 12 months.

That is a lot of green thumbs. Looking deeper into the numbers offers a glimpse into why people are spending so much time in their gardens, including their passion for growing their own produce and the enjoyment that gardening provides them.

Some of the more interesting numbers from the Scarborough study include:

- Gardening homeowners are 10 percent more likely than all homeowners to be baby boomers (45 to 64 years in age)
- 33 percent of gardeners have at least a college degree and 47 percent hold full-time employment
- Gardeners are 25 percent more likely to pay for more eco-friendly products and donate funds to environmental causes
- Online use is high among gardeners, with 37 percent who have Internet access spending 10 or more hours per week on the internet



## TOP GARDENING CITIES

The top local markets for adult homeowners who have gardened in the past 12 months are:

- Seattle (63 percent)
- Portland, Ore. (63 percent)
- Salt Lake City (62 percent)
- Milwaukee (58 percent)
- Columbus, Ohio (58 percent)

## BOTTOM GARDENING CITIES

The markets with the lowest penetration of gardeners among homeowners are:

- St. Louis (43 percent)
- Mobile, Ala. (40 percent)
- West Palm Beach, Fla. (40 percent)
- Miami (38 percent)
- Las Vegas (37 percent)