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## Keep your home warmer

#### Simple window technology makes a big difference in winter

#### **By MARIN HOWELL**

With colder temperatures already creeping into our daily lives, many of us are thinking about how to keep our homes warm through the winter. This year, you could consider installing window inserts, a crafty alternative to cranking up the heat or throwing on an extra laver.

Window inserts help keep the

warm air in your home by creating additional layers of insulation, while still allowing you to see out and let light in through the glass panes.

The technology is actually pretty simple. Each insert is made of a wooden frame with tightly sealed, clear polyolefin film wrapped on either side. The film creates a layer of air space inside the insert, which

works in conjunction with the layer of air space between the insert and your window to keep the cold air outside.

The insert is firmly secured into your window well with a compressible foam gasket. The foam keeps the insert sealed in place during the winter and allows for easy removal in the spring.

Like other home improvement projects, there are options for purchasing custom-built window inserts. But you'll find it's cheaper to build them yourself or sign up for a community-build event in your area.

For the past three years, the Bristol Energy Committee has taken part in these community builds. The committee works with WindowDressers, a Maine nonprofit that organizes volunteer efforts to measure and build window inserts throughout New England.

Those who purchase their inserts through WindowDressers are asked to volunteer at the communitybuild events, where residents work together to build inserts for those in the area who ordered them. These volunteer efforts help keep WindowDressers' inserts affordable. And Bristol Energy Committee Chair Sally Burrell says they're also a lot of fun.

"I find it to be probably one of the most satisfying energy committee projects we've done in that it's satisfying to work together having people coming together in the community. It builds community and saves money. I love it," Burrell said.

Inserts purchased through WindowDressers range in price based on size, though Burrell said they typically cost around \$30-\$40, and there is financial assistance available to cover part or all of the cost as well.

Constructing your own window inserts is a bit pricier, with materials coming in around \$80, based on window size. The price of the project can vary depending on the materials you use; some tutorials call for plexiglass, which can be a lot pricier than polyolefin



VOLUNTEERS INVOLVED IN last year's window insert at Holley Hall in Bristol help deliver inserts to New Haven's Beeman Elementary School. Photo courtesy of Maggie Eaton

film or shrink wrap.

Though, part of the beauty of window inserts is that they eventually pay for themselves.

"Because you're not losing heat through the window, your heater doesn't have to come on as often. It's keeping the air in the house warm longer," Burrell said. "Your bills, whatever you're paying for either wood or oil, are going to be cheaper, and you usually find that within two years, you've broken even for what you've paid for the inserts.'

WindowDressers estimates that installing 10 inserts can save an average of 105 gallons of heating fuel each year, in addition to keeping your house warmer for longer.

But how many inserts does someone have to buy or make to feel the difference? Burrell says iust one.

"If you happen to have a favorite chair by a window and you put the insert by that window, you can feel that difference," Burrell said. "Wherever you put them you're going to feel that difference."

And those who have installed window inserts in their homes are certainly feeling the difference. Burrell shared the testimony of a Bristol resident who took part in a previous community build.

"Last year I had the pleasure of helping to measure and make the inserts (window dressings) to fit inside a number of my windows in Bristol. I can't tell you how much cozier my house is now! No drafts at all in those windows," they said. "Sometimes I think about how to contribute to helping stave off global warming. I have young people in mind when I think these

thoughts, and I am so glad that this was one concrete thing I could do to help make my house much more energy efficient!"

Meanwhile, Rotary Club of Middlebury is helping neighbors reduce home heating bills this upcoming winter by working with WindowDressers to provide window inserts to insulate drafty windows. Low-income households in the Middlebury area can receive 10 free window inserts.

For more information, email rotaryclubofmiddlebury@gmail. com, call us at 802-458-1210, or look online at windowdressers.org.

Whether you're ready to build inserts this year or opt to wait for next year's local community build, adding window inserts to your list of home improvement projects is worth considering before you reach for the thermostat.



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#### Compost using the lazy lasagna method

#### **By JODI LARISON UVM Extension Master Gardener Intern**

While doing your fall yard cleanup, envision and decide on an area for a new flower or vegetable garden or a space to relax.

For a garden, a sunny area close to a water source is best. As to size, for ease of maintenance, keep the width to no more than three feet.

Save the leaves that you rake up, small twigs you gather and healthy plant materials you remove. These materials can be used in creating your new garden.

A couple of years ago, I decided to develop two new grass-free areas in my yard, a garden using native plants that attract and support pollinators and a place for a hammock under a large tree.

To start these new areas, I used a method I call "lazy lasagna." To implement this method, I cropped the grass in these areas as low as possible and removed persistent weeds. Then I laid cardboard over the areas, overlapping it so there were no gaps.

Next, I wet the cardboard and then covered it with pine bark mulch. As available, I added items that will not affect the look, such as eggshells, grass clippings and coffee grounds to the garden area.

Creating the hammock area entailed covering the entire space under the tree's canopy. When mulching under a tree, never add more than four inches of mulch, less if poorly draining soil, and always keep the mulch away from the tree's trunk.

I derived my lazy lasagna recipe by streamlining a more detailed practice called lasagna mulching, a form of composting. The benefits of lasagna mulching are that you build up the area, which is easier than digging down. The mulch also smothers grass and most weeds and improves soil health.



TO CREATE A new garden space or area for a hammock using the lazy lasagna method, cut the grass low and remove persistent weeds before laying cardboard over the area, wetting it and covering with pine bark mulch.

#### Photo by Jodi Larison

a cold composting *The required* method. Therefore, it takes longer for ingredients in the materials to all composting, decompose. Lasagna mulching can be *mulching*, are done anytime, but carbon, nitrogen, fall is ideal, as the air and water. materials break down during winter, Just as there are so the area is ready many recipes for spring planting. for the lasagna required The ingredients

all

including

mulching,

you serve as a in meal, the same is composting, lasagna true for lasaqna are *mulching*. carbon, nitrogen, air

and water. Just as there are many recipes for the lasagna you serve as Most composting methods use a meal, the same is true for lasagna mulching alternates layers of heat, while lasagna mulching is mulching. Think about materials greens and browns. In the mix,

you have on hand or can easily access that can be utilized. Carbon is supplied

brown through including lasagna materials. Examples cardboard, are dry leaves, dead plants, twigs, bark, pinecones and pine needles. Nitrogen is obtained from green materials, which include grass clippings, eggshells and coffee grounds. composting, For the common

recommendation is three parts brown to one part green. Lasagna

never include anything that might attract animals, such as meat. Do not use items that will not break down, such as plastics or anything that might be toxic, such as pet waste.

The pile will shrink as the materials decompose. You can start with materials you have and add additional layers as more materials become available. Stop layering about six months before you plan to plant in the new garden area.

Keep the pile moist, but do not let it get saturated. Consider covering with a tarp and removing it in the spring. If the cardboard has not fully disintegrated, by then, make holes in it to plant your plants.

This winter take time to figure out the perfect plants for your new garden. Happy gardening!

#### Gas co. giving away electric heat pump

SOUTH Vermonters who want to upgrade their home water heater have a chance to win a brand new, highly-efficient electric heat pump water heater installed at their residence thanks to a contest held by Vermont Gas Systems, (VGS) in celebration of its three decades as northwest Vermont's thermal energy efficiency leader.

The giveaway contest began Sept. 6 and will run through Nov. 6. Three randomly selected winners will be given an electric heat pump water heater (HPWH) that VGS will install free-ofcharge. The contest is open to all Vermonters who are eligible for VGS's HPWH program. To apply, Vermonters can visit the contest page (vgsvt.com/signup-for-vgss-heat-pump-waterheater-contest) and complete a form to be entered into the random prize drawing, which will be held in November.

VGS, "At we are passionate about helping our customers choose the most efficient technology to warm their homes, and installing electric HPWHs to reduce emissions is an exciting new option available for Vermonters," said VGS President & CEO Neale Lunderville. "Earlier this year, VGS was the first gas-only utility in the country to offer our customers HPWHs. We are holding this contest as part of a companywide effort to thank our customers for 30 years of successful collaboration as we have worked together to adopt more efficient heating technology and save energy. Our team is excited to help three lucky winners make the switch to a HPWH."

VGS champions electric heat pump water heaters as an efficient solution to heat water that can be installed in place of existing gas, oil, propane or electric appliances.

BURLINGTON These state-of-the-art water heaters are a key part of the Vermont Climate Council's 2021 Climate Action Plan's pathways to achieve the state's energy goals and cut greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. During the 2022 Vermont legislative session, lawmakers and the Governor appropriated \$5 million to establish a "Switch and Save" program to assist low- and moderate-income Vermonters adopt HPWHs.

VGS has provided warmth to Vermonters since it began connecting customers to its service in 1966. In 1992, VGS pioneered a program to upgrade and install efficient equipment in customers' homes and businesses, which later led to its 2016 designation as one of Vermont's three Energy Efficiency Utilities, along with Efficiency Vermont and Burlington Electric. Using less energy overall and helping customers improve the efficiency of their homes and businesses is central to VGS's climate goals and the state's push to reduce GHG emissions and fight climate change.

In 2021, VGS became the first gas-only utility of the American Gas Association to offer an electric HPWH option alongside gas appliances. VGS offers sales and leasing options for HPWHs, along with generous rebates in conjunction with Efficiency Vermont and electric utilities, as part of its water heating offerings.

Vermonters who want to participate in the contest can learn more by calling (802) 863-4511 or by visiting vgsvt.com/ sign-up-for-vgss-heat-pumpwater-heater-contest. Entries can be made using the contest form, or by sending a letter listing full name, address, phone, and email to: Vermont Gas Systems, Inc. Attn: Efficiency Team 85 Swift Street South Burlington, VT 05403.



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#### Angle cut

ANDRÉ DEERING OF Buck Ridge Construction pauses before making a miter cut on a piece of wood for a Middlebury construction project this past Friday. He and Todd Prouty were finishing up a porch project.

Independent photo/Steve James

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#### EMILY VAN MISTRI 3340 QUAKER VILLAGE ROAD IN WEYBRIDGE Spotlight shines on local gardens

#### Midd. Garden Club recognizes excellence

Every year the Middlebury Garden Club gives awards to public and private gardens in Addison County. To be considered, a garden must be able to be seen from the roadside and cannot belong to a current member of the club.

The club recently announced its awards for the summer of 2022 as nominated by Tawnya Kiernan and Barbara Blodgett.

The first public garden given an award this year is The Butterfly Garden in front of the Yellow House at the corner of High Street and Seminary Street in Middlebury. The Yellow House provides 24/7 care for adults with developmental disabilities who are unable to live independently.

When asked about the garden, Director of Resident Experience Hillary Warren said, "The Yellow House Community butterfly garden is the joyful result of sunshine, rain, fun work and community collaboration! This summer, Yellow House Friends and their sidekicks worked together to start seeds in our new greenhouse. Our monarch butterfly wings are the outcome of a collaboration between Yellow House Friends and local artist Erin Bettencourt. We had hoped the resulting corner butterfly garden made our neighbors feel happy, or possibly increased our likelihood of receiving "honks" when trucks drive by Our corner is a busy

Linda's Apparel is done by Cheryl Shea.

All of these Vergennes business gardens are all unique, wellmaintained and beautiful. One in particular — a new one this year - stood out. It is on the corner of Main and Green streets, directly in front of Lulu Ice Cream. This garden is larger than the others and no one felt they could easily create and maintain it. So Dawn Wagner, new owner of Daily Chocolate, stepped forward. She applied for and received a grant from Greenworks, the Vermont Nurserv and Landscape Association. Dawn designed the garden with a "river of rocks" running through it. Ashley Robinson helped her with the design. The plant material and the stones were paid for by the grant. Dawn maintains it now and will replace the annual and perennial flowers, as necessary, each year.

The garden in the roundabout of the Helen Porter Rehabilitation and Nursing Center in Middlebury also earned an award this year. It is absolutely beautiful and so well maintained. The garden was the vision of a relative of one of the residents. The garden was prepared planted professionally, and using many perennials such as hydrangeas, rudbeckia, blue salvias and others. Then annuals were generously placed on the border of the garden as well as on surrounding land facing the garden. The vision for this garden was "Where flowers bloom, so does hope" as quoted from Lady Bird Johnson. The residents at Helen Porter delight in getting their pictures taken while standing in front of the garden.

#### AT PRIVATE HOMES

In addition to the awards given to *(See Garden club, Page 7C)* 



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one, especially these days with the nearby construction, and we are happy to hear that our Butterfly Garden is making people smile. If you drive by and we're all outside, give us a 'honk" and wave! Our friends are going to feel so proud and excited to hear this news!"

The next public garden(s) given an award are the Businesses of Vergennes along Main Street/ Route 22A. As you walk along Main Street, you are greeted by many individual gardens in front of the local businesses as well as beautiful hanging baskets created by Kelly Sweeney. Each business took the responsibility to design, acquire plant material, plant and maintain the garden near or in front of their business. The garden with the yellow bicycle in front of

VERGENNES HANGING BASKETS KELLY SWEENEY



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YELLOW HOUSE BUTTERLY GARDEN

Garden club

(Continued from Page 6C) the public gardens, awards are being given to a number of private gardens.

Diane Neuse's home on Seminary Street Extension in Middlebury has a unique garden in the front of her house. It is surrounded by a historical ironwork design from an estate that Diane visited in Washington, D.C. Diane took photos of the ironwork at the estate and then well-known local artist John Baker, who owns Wildflower Ironworks in Addison, was able to replicate it.

The garden was designed by Colby Hill Landscaping to be interesting during all seasons of the year. It is a perfectly symmetrical garden. Since plants grow at different paces, it is challenging to maintain the design. The plants in the garden are all white and include hostas, white baptisia, annual grasses, cimicifuga, Miss America white peonies and hakonechloa grasses.

The garden is centered on an antique urn. In the winter, Diane likes to fill it with random for plant selections and ideas evergreen branches and decorate it on how to include them in a with tiny lights.

Mike and Beth Davis, who live on The first public Route 74 in Shoreham, have a lovely garden given an that you can see while award this year driving by. "We have dabbled

Garden in front in ornamental and of the Yellow edible gardens for as House at the long as we've owned houses, but this is corner of High probably our most Street and ambitious effort yet," Seminary Street Mike says. "This in Middlebury. particular garden was

established about three years ago, but was preceded term trends that we need to respond by an orchard and vegetable/fruit to. garden on the north side of our house. Gardening is also a full partnership between Beth and I, both getting involved in every

veggies.

"We rely on a few key resources planting," he continued. "We live

Shoreham and in Golden Russet Farm is just a few minutes drive from home. And then there are experts is The Butterfly like Charlie Nardozzi, whose knowledge is available through a variety of sources. If you need help, it is not hard to find. Also, Beth has started a diary of observations and events in the garden so we can capture any longer

Kristine Myrick Andrews has lived at 642 Smead Road in Salisbury for 20 years and has been working on her garden surrounding aspect of our ornamentals, fruit and her house, which was built in 1820-

ledge behind her house. By her own admission, it can be challenging; however, her soil is wonderful loam and not the clay that most Addison County gardeners need to deal with. She has many hydrangeas with wonderful names - Bobo, Strawberry Vanilla, Little

Lime, Pinkie Winkie and Quickfire. The gardens that can be seen from the road are best described as cottage gardens, in which she grows zinnias, amaranth, cleome, marigolds and beautiful dahlias and orienpet lilies. When looking over Kris's gardens you can't help but see her beautiful catalpa tree,

While her garden is large and keeps her busy, Kris's daytime job is as a professional gardener. She works with her daughter in many gardens throughout the county. And, if that is not enough, she is renowned for the beautiful rattan (See Gardens, Page 8C)

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HELEN PORTER REHABILITATION AND NURSING GARDEN IN ROUNDABOUT

1840, for all of those years. When she arrived, there were only a few lilac trees there. Kris's gardens surrounding her house have apple and pear trees as well as raised beds with many vegetables including garlic, sugar snap peas, four kinds of tomatoes, broccoli, peppers, zucchini, onions, winter squash and potatoes. The majority of her garden is in shade and is fairly wet from the water draining off of the

also known as the cigar tree.



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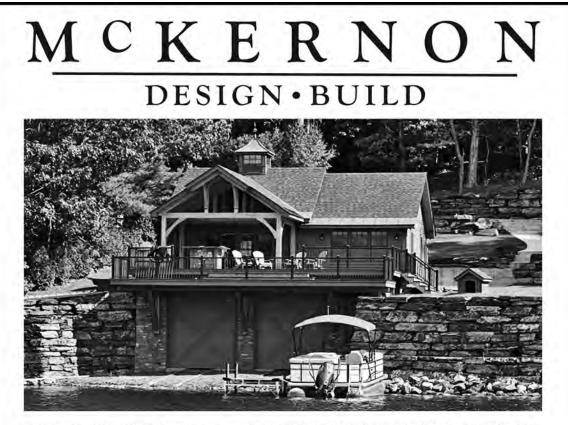


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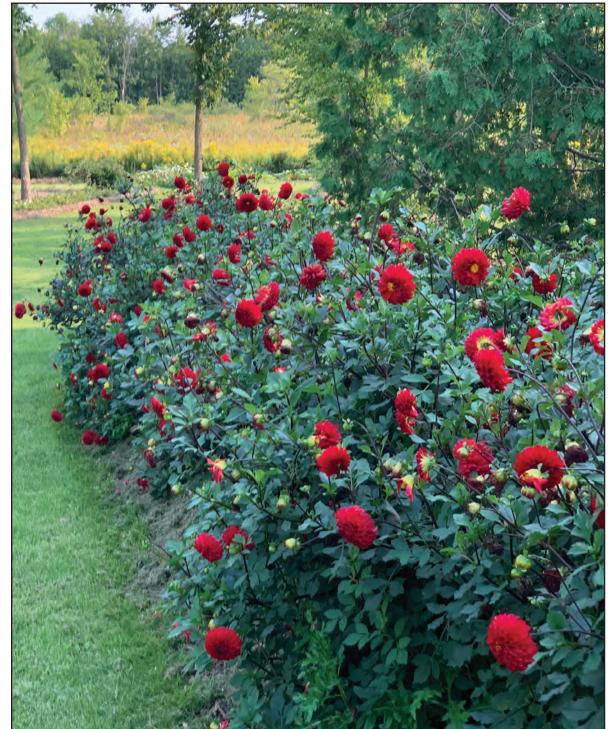
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MAHMULJIN GARDENS AT 22 TERRACE HEIGHTS IN WEYBRIDGE

#### Gardens

(Continued from Page 7C) baskets she makes and sells all over New England.

"Emina's Garden" is a favorite of Barbara's, perfect for a roadside garden award. Dzavid and Emina Mahmuljin moved to 22 Terrace Heights in Weybridge in 2016. Their property has evolved over the years into the beautiful space it is today, and as a neighbor Barbara

grow.

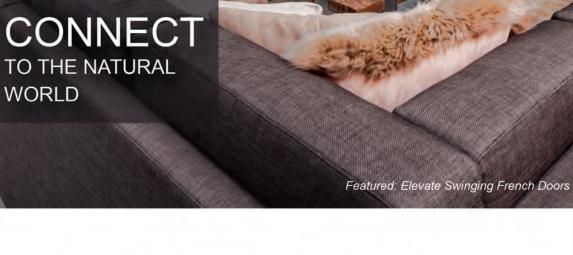
Dzavid and Emina have somehow found the time, despite busy work lives, to completely change their yard's purpose to one of providing beauty as well as food. They have transformed unused space in their backyard into garden patches full of delicious fruits and vegetables for themselves and for

has had the pleasure of watching it sharing with lucky neighbors and friends.

> "My car slows every time I drive by to see what is new in the garden-a new bed, the vegetable garden expanded, a new tree growing in the hedgerow, perennials and bulbs planted, the fruit trees ripe with fruit," Barbara says. "Above all, I look for the red dahlias from (See Winners, Page 9C)







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MAHMULJIN PLUMS



**KRISTINE MYRICK ANDREWS GARDEN AT 642 SMEAD ROAD IN SALISBURY** 

#### Winners

(Continued from Page 8C) Bosnia. First I spot where Dzavid has planted them and then I wait with the rest of our neighbors for the day they bloom, a stunning deep red you can't stop admiring. On my most recent visit to let them know about their garden award, we finished our garden tour, and in their true spirit of generosity I left with my hands full of delicious ripe plums fresh from the tree to share with my family, thankful for the lovely neighbors we have.'

A beautiful garden has sprung out of the earth at 3340 Quaker Village Road in Weybridge and is deserving of another of our roadside awards. This is a garden created by Emily Van Mistri and her family. Emily began planting her beautiful garden in June 2017. Their new property was a blank slate without any previous landscaping to interfere with a new garden design. Without a strict idea of how she wanted to fill her space and feeling somewhat daunted by the task, she began planting bit by bit, letting the garden inform her what came next.

Emily took me to a circular garden where she placed the first plants with a group of friends.

"This is where it all began," she said.

Emily wandered with me through her garden, down paths and through arbors, telling me the story of the garden and which plants she loved and how much joy and peace she felt in her garden. Pollinators flitted about in the sunshine as we strolled. Emily has created a spectacular garden, an oasis filled with nooks and paths to discover and places to sit and rest (though she agrees she never sits for long before she is up and tending her garden again). Emily smiles as she reveals her future garden plans and ideas. She is always thinking about what comes next in the garden. I drove away from my spontaneous garden tour feeling uplifted and full of gratitude for the shared time in Emily's garden.

Congratulations to all of the 2022 Middlebury Garden Club winners! To learn more about the club, visit middleburygardenclub.org.



MIKE AND BETH DAVIS GARDEN **ON ROUTE 74 IN SHOREHAM** 



HELEN PORTER REHABILITATION AND NURSING PLANTINGS NEAR WINDOWS







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#### Time to move houseplants back indoors

#### By DEBORAH J. BENOIT **UVM Extension Master** Gardener

Did you know that many houseplants sold in stores are actually tropical perennials? That's right.

The spider plant (Chlorophytum comosum, native to Africa) and peace lily (Spathiphyllum, native to rainforests of Venezuela and Colombia) that make themselves at home in your home originated in tropical climates. So did the Boston fern (*Nephrolepis exaltat*) from Central and South America, Africa and the West Indies. It is no surprise they don't like the cold of our New England winters and therefore will not survive outdoors after the first frost.

As temperatures (particularly those at night) drop into the 50s, the time has come to bring houseplants back indoors. While it can be as simple as moving your plant from its location outside to a winter home indoors, for the best results for the plant, you and other houseplants in your home, taking a few precautions will be well worth the effort.

First, check your plant for any problems. Give it a gentle shake to dislodge any loose debris. Trim off any dead or dying foliage, and check for any obvious pests.

Get out the garden hose and give it a good shower, not just a misting from above, but a good spray to top and bottom leaf surfaces and the stem to clean off pollen, dust and anything else that's settled there.

Check for any unwelcome tagalongs as you gently wipe off the leaves and examine all surfaces. Any pests, including eggs laid in the top layer of potting soil, can become an indoor annoyance and a problem for other houseplants already inside.

If your plant has grown considerably over the summer, this is a good time to repot. Use a pot one size larger, and be sure to use quality potting soil. If you don't need to or don't want to repot, top dress the soil instead.

Remove any debris such as fallen foliage from the soil surface along with the top layer of soil, being careful not to disturb the roots. Apply a fresh layer of potting soil



BEFORE YOU MOVE your houseplants inside for the winter, give them a gentle shake to get rid of dead leaves and outdoor debris that have accumulated over the warmer months. These beautiful houseplants were seen outside a local nonprofit business on Merchants Row in Middlebury last week. Independent photo/John S. McCright

and give your plant a good drink if or west window is a good choice. it needs watering. It may not if it's already had a shower.

When you move a plant inside, keep it separate from any alwaysindoors plants for a few weeks in an enclosed porch or spare room to avoid any pests or problems that might not be readily apparent. Short-term isolation will allow time for any problems to become known and be dealt with before they can spread to other plants.

Providing similar light conditions will help lessen the shock from a sudden change in environment. If the plant was growing in full sun, find a place near a sunny southfacing window and consider using supplemental grow lights to be sure it continues to get sufficient light. If your plant was growing in full or partial shade, placement in a northfacing window or near a sunny east

When selecting a location, be sure the foliage won't come in direct contact with window glass.

The cold will damage the foliage. Likewise, avoid placing houseplants close to a heat source such as a radiator or stove. Both the resulting direct heat and its drying effect can damage foliage.

Take your time and enjoy reacquainting yourself with your houseplants as you bring them indoors. They've been on vacation. Welcome them home with a little TLC and plenty of light, and they'll bring a bit of green indoors while the garden outside takes its winter nap.

Deborah J. Benoit is a UVM Extension Master Gardener from North Adams, Mass., who is part of the Bennington County Chapter.







#### Jack of many trades

ANDY NEIL, WHO runs a home construction business under the name "Handy Andy," works on his own house on Middlebury's Court Street last week. In closing in a porch to make it weather-ready for three seasons, he practiced many of the tasks he completes in his day job installing windows, hanging cedar shakes and lining up trim.

Independent photos/Steve James





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HARDWOOD FLOORING, SUCH as in this photo taken in Vergennes a few years ago, looks beautiful in any room when accompanied by light streaming in through large windows. Independent file photo/John S. McCright

#### Wood floor dos and don'ts

make it nice to return home and they can sell a home in a heartbeat if that is your goal. A house or apartment with floor-to-ceiling windows and a panoramic view of the Vermont landscape likely won't prove a hard sell. As awe-inspiring as such features can be, some more subtle components, such as authentic hardwood floors, also can do much to make a home more appealing to prospective buyers.

Hardwood flooring is a soughtafter commodity. Data from the National Association of Realtors indicates that 54% of home buyers are willing to pay more for hardwood floors. In fact, NAR figures indicate that 28% of buyers between the ages of 35 and 54 consider hardwood floors "very important" when looking for a home. Homeowners who want to upgrade their existing flooring or are considering selling their homes may want to consider installing hardwood flooring. Though it's a project best left to professionals, hardwood flooring can be installed by skilled DIYers. In such instances, homeowners may want to keep these dos and don'ts in mind.

Jaw-dropping features always have limited or no do-it-yourself result in gaps during the winter flooring experience. Hardwood flooring installation is not generally a project for novice DIYers. Hardwood flooring projects may present some common challenges, but no two homes are the same. So unless they have prior experience installing floors in multiple rooms or homes, homeowners may save themselves time, trouble and a significant amount of money hiring a professional to do the job.

**DON'T** ignore the subfloor. New hardwoods won't erase the problem of subfloors in poor condition. According to the home renovation experts, squeaky floors could be an indication that the subfloor has begun to warp or twist. Sinking floors are another indicator of deteriorating subfloors. Subfloors should be somewhat level before new hardwoods are installed, so DIYers should inspect and address subfloor issues before installing new flooring.

**DO** expose wood flooring to the elements in your home prior to installation. The home improvement resource BuildDirect recommends acclimating hardwoods to the space where they will be installed. DO hire a professional if you Skipping this important step could

and cupping over the summer. To acclimate hardwoods, open the boxes and spread them out for about a week while running the air conditioner or heater at normal levels. When storing hardwoods prior to installation, avoid keeping them in potentially moist areas like a basement.

DON'T skimp on tools. A DIY hardwood flooring installation might be less expensive than hiring a professional, but homeowners should resist any temptation to increase those savings further by purchasing less costly tools or fewer tools than is necessary to complete the job. BuildDirect notes that DIYers will need at least a miter saw, table saw, cleat-nailer or stapler,

finish nailer, compressor, jamb saw, chalk line, nail set and tape measurer when installing hardwood floors. Purchase all necessary tools and read product reviews to ensure each tool is up to the task.

Wood floors can be awe-inspiring. Some homeowners can install such flooring on their own, and the project can be much easier if they learn as much about installation as possible prior to beginning the project.

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#### Racing into winter

THEY'VE DONE IT again. For the umpteenth year running Doreen and Bill Peterson have prepared for the winter by stacking their wood outside their Middlebury home in a way that is sure to catch the eye of passersby. Last year a couple cords of firewood took the shape of a butterfly. This year it's an elegant old sedan; or is that a race car? Independent photos/John S. McCright

#### With homes, what do you call modern?

Houses contain a variety of components that appeal to homeowners with different ideas about the perfect place to call home. That starts with the style of a home.

Buildings are classified according to shared components. Modern houses are sometimes called contemporary homes even though the terms are not interchangeable; each has its own sets of unique characteristics. Here's a look at features that make modern and contemporary homes unique.

1. Minimalist approach: Contemporary and modern homes both employ an approach that leans toward minimalism, including clean design lines. Spaces are open and airy without the clutter of too many ornate architectural details. While modern homes may have some curvature to their design, contemporary ones are all about an angular look.

**2. Neutral color palette:** Modern homes tend to use a neutral color palette, and may include "earthy" elements, such as wood and brick, in ways that do not look rustic. Contemporary homes rely on a color palette of black and white with shades of gray or other neutral colors.

**3. Geometric shapes:** Modern homes have strong horizontal and vertical elements that showcase geometric shapes in their designs. Contemporary homes often have flat roofs, while modern homes may not.

**4. Large, unadorned windows:** Most modern homes showcase a lot of natural light with large windows that are not covered up by heavy window treatments, shutters or thick trims. Large windows are the focus of the interior and shift attention to the view outdoors.

**5. Open floor concept:** A hallmark of modern interior design, the open concept floor plan removes many of the walls that tend to separate common areas of a home. This helps to foster the spread of natural light and maintains the emphasis on simplicity of design.

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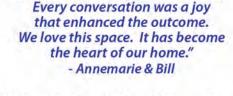


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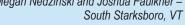










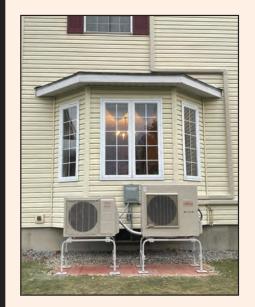














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because I truly believe in their product and company. They are highly skilled and professional in every respect. Stephen and his crew encouraged my children's curiosity and made learning fun for them. Little things like making handprints in the cement of our solar system sparked talks about reducing your carbon footprint and how everyone can help, even children. The whole experience could not have been easier or better. Seeing the power mater run backwarde is just icing on better. Seeing the power meter run backwards is just icing on the cake.'

Heather Shepard – Bristol







