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HOMEOWNER'S UPDATE

Backyard Beautification Projects

With summer just around the corner, are you dreaming of a backyard oasis?

These projects can transform your outdoor space into the perfect summer retreat.

Install a Patio

Whether you lay your own pavers or hire a professional to pour concrete, adding a patio creates an ideal outdoor gathering space.

Bring in Some Shade

Block the intense summer sun with a gazebo or pergola. Both options add beauty to your backyard while offering a shady place to relax.

Build a Garden Shed

A shed is a smart way to add storage for yard tools, lawn mowers and more. For a cohesive look, choose a style and color that complement your home.

Light the Way

Landscape lighting adds elegance and provides safety. Consider installing LED lights to illuminate walkways, stairs and landscape features.

Create a Rain Garden

A beautiful rain garden can be a low-maintenance addition to your yard. Rainwater from a downspout can be channeled into a shallow depression in the ground filled with native plants.

Include a Privacy Fence

If you can easily peer into your next door neighbor's yard, they can likely see into yours. A privacy fence adds interest and beauty while limiting your neighbor's view of your outdoor space.

Install a Hammock

Enjoy the tranquility of your yard in a relaxing hammock. If you don't have appropriately spaced trees, consider building or purchasing a hammock stand.

Fire It Up

A fire pit or table can be a functional focal point that encourages your family to spend more time outdoors, even as summer's warmth begins to fade.

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Knocks, Choose the Right
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When Opportunity Knocks, Choose the Right Door

Whether you're renovating to sell or simply replacing a few doors, know your options so you can select the right doors for your house.

Solid-wood doors are the gold standard. But they're expensive and may warp under certain conditions.

If you'd rather not splurge on a wood door, consider using a hollow-core door that's lighter and easier to install. Be aware that these doors can be less durable and harder to repair than their solid-wood counterparts.

As a third option, a solid-core door is a good compromise between price and durability. In fact, it's an affordable alternative that offers numerous advantages.

Aesthetics

The heft of a solid-core door suggests quality and craftsmanship. They are sturdy, attractive and easy to paint.

Noise Reduction

Solid-core doors are the perfect solution for home offices, bedrooms and other spaces where you want to create privacy or serenity.

Durability

These doors hold up to daily wear and tear, so the higher cost compared to hollow-core doors pays off over time.

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A Guide to Modern Design

Before minimalism, there was modern design. This is probably a bit of a misnomer when you consider the heyday of "modern" design was from 1940 to 1970.

Mid-century modern is the branch of modern design that's been trending heavily for decades. Devotees love its sleek, low lines and emphasis on blending interiors with exterior surroundings.

To create a modern vibe in your home, decorate with warm, natural woods and crisp, clean neutrals. Expand on the theme of open spaces with smooth horizontal surfaces made from concrete, stone or glass. A muted backdrop allows colorful artwork, textiles and furniture to pop. Saturated colors like turquoise and canary yellow don't appear overwhelming when placed within an environment of black, white, gray, or brown.

You can complement this streamlined simplicity with eye-catching textures like plush pillows, shaggy rugs or velvety throws. Try to create sleek silhouettes with unusual or curvy furniture. Dramatic pendant lighting or other stylish room lighting can draw attention to unique interior features, such as stairs, paintings or fireplaces.

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Spinach Puffs

Ingredients

1 (10 oz.) pkg. frozen chopped spinach, thawed
½ cup Feta cheese
¼ cup scallions, finely chopped
½ tsp. dried dill weed
1 clove garlic, minced
1 Tbsp. grapeseed oil
¼ tsp. each salt and pepper
1 egg
1 sheet frozen puff pastry, thawed but cold
¼ cup shredded Colby Jack cheese
1 Tbsp. butter, melted

Directions

Preheat oven to 400° F. Squeeze excess water out of spinach. In a medium bowl, mix spinach, Feta, scallions, dill, garlic, grapeseed oil,



Grease a 12-cup mini-muffin pan. Roll out pastry dough on floured surface and cut into 12 squares. Press 1 square of dough into each cup with corners draped over edges.

Divide spinach mixture into each cup and sprinkle with Colby Jack. Fold corners of dough over filling. Brush tops with melted butter. Bake for 20 minutes or until pastry is golden and puffy.

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