

*Brought to you by*

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## Homeowner's UPDATE



### Essential products for smarthomes

If you'd like to make your life easier, try taking advantage of these smarthome products.

**Voice assistants** – Probably the most popular smarthome product, a voice assistant can answer questions, play music, set alarms, and connect to your other smart devices, simplifying your smarthome systems even more.

**Security** – With a smart security system, you can rest easy whether at home or away. Video doorbells allow you to talk face-to-face with visitors. Floodlight cameras have built-in night vision and employ LED floodlights, alerting you in case something goes bump in the night. Locking and unlocking your front door from wherever you are is simple with an electronic door lock that is synced to your smartphone.

**Lighting** – You can set smart lights on a timer to help you wake up more naturally than by the jarring sound of an alarm. Take

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your home to the next level with voice command color-changing lights and special dimmer settings.

**Appliances** – Most people have heard of robot vacuums, but did you know about robot mops? There are many other smart appliances that can make your home life a breeze, such as smart air purifiers and a home weather station.

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## Is your wall décor outdated?

No matter which decorating style you prefer, updating your walls is a simple, cost-effective way to freshen up the interior of your home.

If you love the "Fixer Upper" look that Chip and Joanna Gaines have made popular, then hang some vintage metal signs and a letter board on a white wall to mirror the couple's relaxed, farmhouse style.

Or, maybe you would rather walk into your home and immediately be transported back to the mid-century modern style of the 1960s. Look for a mix of patterns or colors and even black-and-white graphics. Choose a colorful print by Andy Warhol as a focal point. Complement it with a yellow slipcover on a sofa or chair.

If you are looking for a style combining aspects of farmhouse and mid-century modern, the Scandinavian style is the place to start. Clean, simple walls mixed with modern furniture are key features of this style. Try hanging some honeycomb shelves on the wall for a functional design. Three-dimensional shelving is a way to display books and personal items without making the walls look cluttered.

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# Creating a greener kitchen

When it comes to the kitchen, cork can be an eco-friendly substitute for hardwood. Cork is made from the bark of the cork oak tree, grown in Mediterranean countries such as Portugal, Italy and Spain. From a cutting board to your kitchen flooring, try replacing conventional materials with cork, which reaches maturity in one-third of the time of an oak tree.

Investigate countertops made from recycled materials – such as paper and glass – and sealed with polymers to ensure durability. Recycled materials can provide longevity similar to quartz or stone while also being a more sustainable option.

Replacing single-use paper towels with cloth napkins or hand towels can drastically reduce the amount of waste in the kitchen. By investing in a washer with an Energy Star rating, you can help minimize the amount of water and electricity used.

Another suggestion is to exclusively use green cleaning products. The consumer demand for these types of cleaners has increased their availability from local health-food stores to nationwide grocery chains.

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## Clean those hard-to-reach places with ease

Some areas in the home are much harder to clean than others, which often means they're rarely touched. Here are a few tips for cleaning those places you may have been missing.

**Ceiling fan** – Throw a pillowcase over the fan blades and gently remove the dust one blade at a time. Not only does the pillowcase act as a dust cloth, but it also catches all the dust as you remove it.

**Air vent registers** – Take a dull butter knife and wrap it in a microfiber cloth. The resulting tool easily fits between the slats in air vent registers and return air grilles to catch the accumulated dust.

**Blinds** – Use a pair of tongs, two microfiber cloths and some rubber bands. Secure the cloths around both sides of the tongs with the rubber bands, then run your new cleaning device along each blind.

**Window tracks** – Vacuum attachments work wonders with most household crevices, but some places are still too small for them to reach. Easily clean dirt out of window tracks by placing an empty toilet paper roll over your vacuum's nozzle and pressing the cardboard roll together until it fits right into the cracks.

**Carpet** – Hair always seems to get stuck in carpeting, especially if you have pets. If a vacuum just doesn't do the job to your satisfaction, use a clean squeegee to force the hair out of hiding before you vacuum.

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## Roasted Brussels Sprouts and Spaghetti Squash



### Ingredients

1 spaghetti squash, cut lengthwise and seeded  
2 Tbsp. grapeseed oil, divided  
1 tsp. kosher salt, divided  
½ tsp. pepper, divided  
1 lb. Brussels sprouts, halved  
4 cloves garlic, minced  
1 tsp. lemon juice  
¼ tsp. red pepper flakes  
¾ cup shredded Parmesan cheese, divided  
2 Tbsp. roasted pepitas, for garnish

### Directions

Preheat oven to 400° F. Drizzle 1 Tbsp. oil over squash halves and season with ½ tsp. salt and ¼ tsp. pepper. Place squash cut-side up on baking sheet.

Add Brussels sprouts, garlic, lemon juice, 1 Tbsp. oil, red pepper flakes, ½ tsp. salt, and ¼ tsp. pepper to large bowl and mix. Spread on separate baking sheet. Place both sheets in oven and bake 45-60 minutes or until squash is fork tender.

Shred squash into spaghetti strands using a fork. Transfer squash strands to serving dish and mix in ½ cup Parmesan. Top with sprouts mixture and garnish with remaining Parmesan and pepitas.

*Serves 6*

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