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HOMEOWNER'S UPDATE

Get Your Garage in Gear With Clever Storage Solutions

If your garage is stuffed with stuff and in need of crafty ways to clear clutter, look no more. Here are five easy fixes to get organized.

1. Add pegboards for wall organization. Use hooks of various sizes to hang tools, cleaning supplies, cords, and more.
2. Wire shelving along walls provides another storage option. These open shelving units hold a variety of items and serve as an affordable alternative to more expensive cabinetry.
3. Build cubbies for family organization. Assign one cubby to each family member for an easy and convenient storage solution.
4. Use clear plastic containers with lids and labels to store loose items like toys and sports equipment.
5. Repurpose tackle boxes to store hardware. Nuts, bolts, screws, and nails fit perfectly into the compartments.

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Underrated Places to Paint

A little bit of paint can go a long way in refreshing the look of your rooms. And you don't have to use it on walls to get dramatic effects. Consider painting these items for a quick upgrade.

Cabinets

Replacing cabinets can be costly, but painting existing cabinetry with on-trend colors is a great way to refresh your kitchen without the expense of hiring a contractor.

Light Fixtures

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If your fixtures are outdated or dull, a couple of coats of spray paint may be just what you need to brighten them up.

The Inside of Shelves

Add interest to a bookcase or glass-front cabinet by painting the inside with an accent color.

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Moldy Menace Removal

Let's say you're not just imagining those dark splotches. Let's say the nightmare is real: Your house has mold. How you respond holds significant financial and health implications.

Here are a few guidelines to help you decide on your next move.

If the mold covers less than 10 square feet, you can usually clean it yourself. Always wear gloves, safety goggles and long sleeves to keep your skin protected from any contact with mold.

The Environmental Protection Agency recommends using an N-95 respirator, which filters out 95% of airborne particulates. You can find respirators at most hardware stores and through many online retailers. Check out *RemoveMoldGuide.com* for a safe DIY process to eliminate mold from your home.

If you can smell mold but aren't able to see it, you'll likely need to hire a professional. You'll be solely responsible for vetting any company you hire because these businesses aren't regulated by any state or federal agencies. Be sure to check references and look for any complaint records on *BBB.org*.

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Landscaping Mistakes & Solutions

You don't need to have a green thumb to enjoy a beautifully landscaped lawn and garden. You can achieve surprising improvements in your landscaping just by avoiding these common mistakes.

Cutting the Grass too Short

Cutting grass too short can harm your lawn, causing it to dry out quickly. This creates bare patches that attract insects. During the warmest months, cut your lawn high to create shade and slow evaporation. In cooler temperatures, cut grass shorter to let sunlight reach the soil.

Planting in the Wrong Location

Before choosing any plants and flowers, consider your home's sunlight exposure, climate and soil quality. Pay attention to the information on each plant's tag, and make sure you're selecting varieties known to flourish in your area.

Planting too Deep

Did you know planting too deep can actually suffocate a tree? A tree's root system needs air — covering it with too much soil can choke it and cause root rot. A good rule of thumb is to dig a hole as deep as the tree's container.

Forgetting About Future Growth

It may be tempting to plant flowers, bushes, and trees close together for an instantly landscaped yard, but this may be detrimental later on. It's important to know how big each plant will grow in order to allow for proper spacing.

Ignoring Curb Appeal

Of course, you want the inside of your house to be beautiful, but don't overlook the view from the street. To enhance your home's curb appeal, keep the grass mowed, plant flowers for pops of color and trim trees and bushes as needed.

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Cranberry Oatmeal Muffins

Ingredients

2 ripe bananas, mashed
¼ cup melted coconut oil
¼ cup milk of choice
¼ cup unrefined sugar
1 egg
1 cup whole wheat pastry flour

1¾ cups rolled oats
¼ tsp. cinnamon
3 tsp. baking powder
1¼ cups fresh cranberries
¼ cup chopped walnuts
¼ cup quick oats (optional)

Directions

Preheat oven to 350° F. Line muffin pans with 16-18 baking cups.

In a large bowl, whisk together bananas, oil, milk, sugar, and egg. Add flour, rolled oats, cinnamon, and baking powder. Stir until well combined. Fold in cranberries and walnuts.

Scoop batter into baking cups, filling ¾ full. Sprinkle each muffin with quick oats, if desired. Bake for 25-30 minutes or until a toothpick inserted in the center comes out clean.

Remove muffins from pan immediately and cool on wire rack.

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