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HOMEOWNER'S — UPDATE —

Create a Sustainable Kitchen

Energy-efficient houses are popular and trending throughout the country. One area that tends to be the most energy-draining is the kitchen, but it doesn't have to be that way. Consider these eco-friendly upgrades and features to make your kitchen a sustainable haven.

Starting From Scratch

If you're building or renovating your kitchen, keep these sustainable features in mind.

- Opt for natural materials like stone and reclaimed wood for countertops and cabinetry.
- Consider rapidly renewable and mold-resistant cork for flooring.
- Pick energy-efficient appliances, like an induction or electric stove, a low-water consuming dishwasher or an ENERGY STAR® certified refrigerator.
- Install an under-the-counter heating tank for your kitchen sink to cut down on wasting water.
- Choose triple-pane windows for optimum insulation and, if possible, install them where they'll get the most natural light throughout the day.
- Select proper venting and insulation options to keep air circulating at a comfortable temperature.

Working With What You Have

These are small steps you can take to put your kitchen on a sustainable path without the cost of a makeover.

- Replace old light bulbs with environmentally friendly LEDs.
- Choose high-quality cookware like stainless steel or cast iron — durable choices built to last a lifetime.

Also in this issue...

Pick the Perfect Paint Color

Replace Hangers with a Home "Cloffice"

Your Latest Lawn Care Hack Is a Robot!

Spinach Pasta with Feta

Print this issue.



- Conserve time used by appliances by prepping meals once a week.
- Swap out cleaning items like plastic spray bottles and sponges for refillable, reusable and nontoxic options.
- Reduce plastic packaging use by making meals with fresh ingredients, and consider composting food scraps.
- Buy local ingredients and produce — or try planting a garden to grow your own herbs and vegetables.



Pick the Perfect Paint Color

The good news is — every color imaginable is an option for your walls. The bad news is — choosing the perfect paint color can be incredibly overwhelming. Consider this sound advice to help you through the selection process.

Assess how much natural and artificial light illuminates the room. From there, you can decide if you want to bring up the vibe or tone down the mood. Think about how a color will complement the furnishings and fixtures already in the space. Before you buy, take a few paint samples home — what you see in the store may look different on your walls.

If you're still feeling indecisive, start with one or two general colors you're drawn to, such as blue or yellow, then narrow it down to the shades you like best.

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Replace Hangers with a Home "Cloffice"

Small Space. Big Productivity.

Transforming an underused closet into a functional office — now known as a "cloffice" — is a smart way to create a workspace without needing additional square footage. This approach can be particularly beneficial in smaller homes or condos where space is at a premium. Here's how to take on this innovative transformation.

- Empty the closet and measure it to determine the size of office furniture and equipment it will accommodate.
- Hire an electrician to install electrical outlets to avoid the use of extension cords. Introduce task lighting, such as clip-on lamps or LED strips, to create a well-lit environment conducive to productivity.
- Add a desk or construct a solid shelf at an appropriate working level. A foldaway desk attached to the wall is a practical choice for tight spaces.
- Utilize vertical space by installing shelves or pegboards to organize office supplies. Drawer units or baskets will help keep the area free of clutter.
- Include elements like wallpaper, artwork and an ergonomic chair to make the space inviting, comfortable and reflective of your style.
- Admire your resourcefulness and enjoy working in your creative new home cloffice!

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Your Latest Lawn Care Hack Is a Robot!

Robots can perform surgery and clean a house, so why shouldn't they cut the grass?

The robot lawn mower is gaining favor with folks who want to save time, sweat and money on fuel. Upfront prices can range from \$700 to \$5,000, however, these mowers can eventually pay for themselves by reducing energy costs and fees paid to lawn services. Because they use rechargeable batteries, these mowers are much quieter and more environmentally friendly than their gasoline-powered counterparts.

Some models are guided by perimeter wires, but those that use sensors and GPS are considered more efficient. While they don't trim and edge just yet, these robot mowers do mulch the grass, which can contribute to a healthier lawn. Just be sure to keep them away from children and pets.

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Spinach Pasta with Feta

Ingredients

¼ cup extra virgin olive oil
4 garlic cloves, minced
2 shallots, finely diced
1 tsp. dried oregano
½ tsp. salt
½ tsp. black pepper
¼ tsp. crushed red pepper
½ cup vegetable broth
1 cup frozen peas
1 (12 oz.) pkg. spinach fettuccine noodles
3 cups fresh baby spinach, *divided*
½ cup crumbled Feta cheese

Directions

Heat oil in a large saute pan over medium. Add garlic and shallots and cook for 2–3 minutes. Stir in oregano, salt, pepper, and crushed red pepper. Mix in broth and peas. Reduce heat to low.

In a separate pot, cook fettuccine according to package directions. Drain, reserving 1 cup of water.

Add cooked fettuccine to saute pan and increase heat to high. Stir in 2 cups spinach, adding reserved water as needed to wilt spinach and moisten fettuccine. Serve warm, topped with Feta and garnished with remaining fresh spinach.

Serves 4

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