



# HOME & GARDEN

**HOME DESIGN TRENDS  
FOR 2018**

**UPCOMING GARDEN  
+ FLOWER SHOWS**

**TIPS FOR  
AGING IN PLACE**

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On the cover: A statue is surrounded by Viburnum Opulus Sterile at the home of Greg and Pembroke Hutchinson in Frederick County, one of the stops during Historic Garden Week 2017. Photo by Jeff Taylor/The Winchester Star.

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# Preparing GARDEN BEDS FOR SPRING

*Gardening enthusiasts may have been thinking about their landscape plans throughout the winter, eager to once again get their hands dirty with soil. To establish hearty, durable plants, gardeners can focus on three main areas: addressing soil composition, cultivating and adding nutrients.*

## Soil composition

Many gardeners prefer growing a variety of plants in their gardens. Such an approach requires taking inventory of the type of soil in one's garden and making the necessary modifications so that the types of vegetables, herbs, shrubs, or flowers that will be planted can grow strongly. In fact, according to the plant company Proven Winners, the most important step to developing good roots is preparing the soil.

Take a sample of the soil and examine it to see what is present. If the soil is too full of clay, too sandy, too dense, or too loose, that can lead to problems where plants cannot grow in strong. Work with a garden center to add the right soil amendments to make a rich soil. This may include organic compost or manure, which will also add nutrients to the soil.

## Cultivation

Cultivating the soil can involve different steps. Removal of weeds, errant rocks, roots, and other items will help prepare the soil. Mother Earth News suggests working on garden soil when the soil is damp but never wet; otherwise, garden soil can become messy and clumpy. Use a digging

fork or shovel to lightly turn the soil when it's mostly dry. Gentle tillings also can open up the soil to incorporate the nutritional amendments and relieve compaction that likely occurred from freezing temps and snow pressure. Tilling also helps with drainage and oxygen delivery to roots. The DIY Network suggests turning over soil at a depth of 12 inches to work the soil - about the length of a shovel spade. However, the resource Earth Easy says that existing garden beds have a complex soil ecosystem and simply top-dressing with compost or manure can be enough preparation for planting. Gardeners can experiment with the methods that work best for their gardens.

## Nutrition

Testing the pH and the levels of certain nutrients in the soil, namely nitrogen, phosphorous and potassium, will give gardeners an idea of other soil additions that may be needed. Soils with a pH below 6.2 often can benefit from the addition of lime several weeks before planting. Soil tests will determine just how much fertilizer to add to the soil. Complete fertilizers will have equal amounts of nitrogen, phosphorous and potassium. Individual fertilizers can



amend the soil with only these nutritional elements that are needed.

Top-dressing empty beds with a layer of mulch or compost can prevent weed growth and preserve moisture until it is time to plant. If existing shrubs or plants

are in garden beds, use more care so as not to disturb roots or dig too deeply.

Preparing garden beds takes some effort initially, but can be well worth the work when plants flourish throughout the growing season.

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3

# Tips

## FOR AGING IN PLACE

*More adults are planning to stay in their homes as they age as long as possible. For that to be a reality, there are many modifications you may need to make to your house to make daily living more comfortable.*

by JENNY BAKER

**WINCHESTER** — Winchester architect Leesa Mayfield has received many calls over the past few years from clients who want to stay in their home as they age for as long as possible.

“I think it’s familiarity, it’s a big part of it. I think a lot of it has to do with the investment that they’ve made in that property, in that home, and wanting to maximize that investment,” said Mayfield.

According to a 2014 AARP survey, 87 percent of adults age 65+ want to stay in their current home and community as they age. Among people age 50 to 64, 71 percent of people want to age in place.

There are many projects, small to large, that you can do to help create a safer space to better age in place, from changing door handles to building an addition.

Here are some quick changes you could make as a weekend project:

### Weekend projects

#### SWITCH OUT KNOBS

Dexterity may wane with age, and arthritis can make grasping or turning doorknobs and faucets more challenging. Take inventory of areas of the home that could present the biggest obstacles. Replace knobs in the shower or on faucets with lever handles, which are easier to maneuver.

#### LIGHT SWITCHES

Replace toggle light switches with easier paddle-type switches that can be pushed with a hand or even an arm.

#### ADD RAMPS

One of the main projects Mayfield has helped clients with is access into the house. Mayfield recommends adding a ramp up

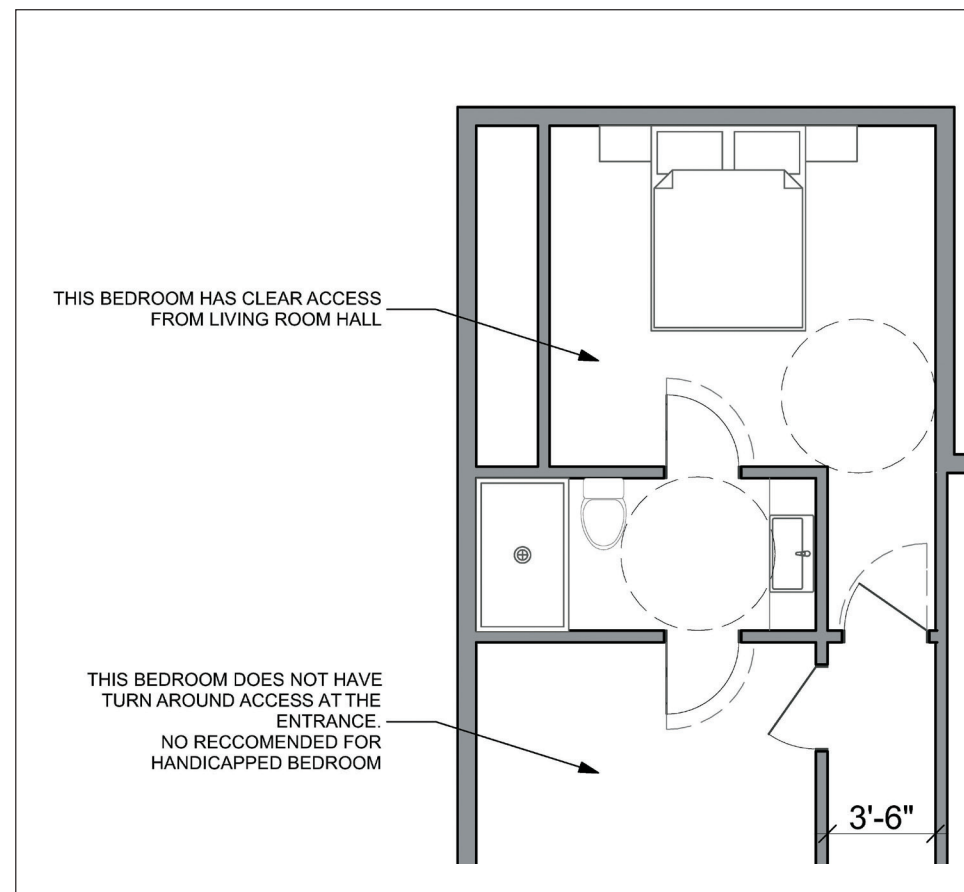
to the front door, possibly reconfiguring a front porch or walkway,

#### SWING OUT DOORS

“Most often these swing into the room, but if a person were to collapse against the door, especially in a small bathroom, they block the swing and it is difficult for a care-person to enter to help,” said Mayfield. “I suggest folks consider changing the swings out of the room for easier access in emergencies.”

#### INSTALLING GRAB BARS

“Another easy thing to do is to think about grab bars and things within the shower. I’ve seen grab bars that also look like towel hangers, they aren’t as industrial looking as they’ve been,” she said.



Courtesy Leesa Mayfield Architecture

There are many larger projects that may need to be done, which includes modifications to the bathroom, kitchen, and master suite.

#### ROLL-IN SHOWER

Besides making a shower more wheelchair accessible, a roll-in shower is also helpful to people who have trouble lifting their feet and other mobility issues, according to Elizabeth Henkel of Cavalier Kitchens and Bath, Inc. in Winchester. She said it is also on trend for its sleek look, since it doesn’t have a barrier or threshold to break up the space.

“Someone can plan for this at any time of their life for a great look and will benefit them for years to come,” she said.

Many larger projects may call for hiring

an architect.

“The sooner you can bring in an architect, the more advantageous it can be for you,” said Mayfield.

“The architect would be thinking critically about things you may not have even realized or considered. It’s part of our job to think outside the box, to think a bit broader, than what your immediate need is. I think that’s how an architect can help — looking at ways of using what you have within your footprint and seeing ways to make it a little bit more accessible. Or to look beyond your footprint and consider what an addition would be.”

She said she is often called in when clients have a good idea of what their design intent is, and need to get it documented.

See **Age**, Page 5



Courtesy Leesa Mayfield Architecture

**A roll-in shower installation at a home Mayfield recently worked on.**



Courtesy Leesa Mayfield Architecture

**A main floor master suite addition that Mayfield worked on to help the couple age in place.**

## Age

from Page 4

This allows the client to better communicate their project to builders to get pricing.

### KITCHEN MODIFICATIONS

Kitchens are an area where modifications can be made.

Counters may need to be replaced with a lower-height counter. Cabinets may need to be replaced with ones that glide open easily and self-close.

“Clearances are always important for the

work aisle with a minimum of 36 to 48 inches, which gives you the space for a wheelchair to get through but making everything easily accessible without having to reach and bend over is very important,” said Henkel.

“This can be accomplished by taking more advantage of base cabinet storage versus hard to reach wall cabinets. Drawer bases and roll-out trays are great options.”

Henkel recommends reconsidering the placement of appliances.

“The less bending over the better, so us-

ing built-in wall ovens and raising the dishwasher height is helpful.”

And don't forget about lighting.

“Lighting can be overlooked many times as well. Having a well-lit kitchen with proper overhead lighting and under cabinet lighting can make using the space so much easier as you age,” said Henkel.

### FIRST FLOOR MASTER SUITE

Mayfield said one of the biggest requests she gets when it comes to aging in place projects, is the need for a first level master suite.

Sometimes it's possible to turn an existing room into a master bedroom suite, but many times an addition is needed.

“I have helped clients imagine both, but what I see most of is doing an addition. I have helped a client to imagine a rarely used formal living room to become a bedroom, but then they ended up not doing the project because they didn't have access to a bathroom easily, which becomes the real quandary,” she said.

In 2016, Mayfield completed a project for a newly married couple who came to the realization that an addition would be needed.

“There wasn't room for him so they knew they wanted to do this addition, and they knew they wanted it to be age in place, and with that in mind we put on the addition that has the generous-sized master

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# Additional tips for aging in place

Content provided by Metro Creative Services

## Remove fall hazards.

The National Institute on Aging reports that six out of 10 falls happen at home, where people spend the most time and fail to think about their safety. Seniors who want to be independent may overestimate their physical abilities. Because falls can be so dangerous, leading to cuts, abrasions, broken bones, and more, seniors and their families must take steps to prevent falls in homes. Improve lighting, especially at night when sight may become diminished. Install hand rails and grab bars where possible. Pick up clutter and remove tripping hazards, such as slippery rugs or electric cords. Install an electric stair climbing seat to make traversing stairs less risky.

## Improve visibility and ability to communicate.

Vision loss may accompany aging, but technology can help mitigate such losses. Use big-button phones, remote controls and even keyboards so seniors can keep in touch. Voice-activated thermostats or smart home technology also can make it easier for seniors to voice their needs.

## Modify fixtures and other features.

Dexterity may wane with age, and arthritis can make grasping or turning doorknobs and faucets more challenging. Take inventory of areas of the home that present the biggest obstacles to seniors. Replace knobs

in the shower or on faucets with lever handles, which are easier to maneuver. Install new cabinets and doors that freely glide open and self-close. Replace toggle light switches with easier paddle-type switches that can be pushed with a hand or even arm. Motion-sensor lights also can be handy. Push-button oven controls may make cooking easier.

## Prepare for medical emergencies.

Invest in medical alert systems, such as necklaces or bracelets, that can be used to contact police or emergency medical personnel directly. Make phones available in commonly used rooms in the home, such as bedrooms, the living room, bathrooms, and the kitchen.

## Install ramps and nonslip flooring.

Ramps can make it easier to reach the front door or cross over elevated doorway thresholds. Nonslip flooring also can prevent falls around the house, offering more traction for feet, walkers or canes.

## Repair cracks in walkways and driveways.

Safety should also extend to the outdoors. Be sure to repair cracks or uneven pavement. Replace loose patio blocks or bricks with a more stable design or with concrete or asphalt. While outdoors, trim back bushes and make sure there are no tripping hazards outside as well.

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# A HIGH-TECH *bathroom*

*Technology is infiltrating every room of the house. Many new home buyers are millennials, and this tech-savvy demographic covets technological innovations.*

A recent survey by Better Homes & Gardens Real Estate indicates 77 percent of Generation X and Y home buyers want their homes equipped with the tech capabilities they have grown accustomed to. Many of these involve smart innovations, including those that can transform one of the most private rooms in the house — the bathroom.

According to the home improvement resource The Spruce, bathrooms have the most potential of any rooms to be improved with technology. The following are just some of the bathroom gadgets and gizmos no one should resist before giving a try.

## AUTOMATIC FAUCETS

Infrared sensors have been helping keep public restrooms more hygienic for years. The same technology can be used in home bathrooms to curtail water waste and keep faucets and sinks from becoming infested with germs. In addition, faucets

with built-in timers can be programmed to set tasks for brushing teeth or washing your face.

## MUSICAL SHOWER

Instead of having to blast the volume on the portable speaker you use in the bathroom, a wireless speaker is built into some showerheads. This enables those who like to sing in the shower or listen to podcasts while washing up to enjoy this luxury effortlessly.

## SMARTER WEIGHT MANAGEMENT

Bathroom scales have gone high-tech as well, with various options enabling users to measure weight, BMI and body fat percentage before sending the data wirelessly to a phone, tablet or computer. This can put you in greater control of fitness goals.

## HIGH-TECH TOILETS

Borrowing ideas from bidets and trends around the world, modern toilets do not require hands or paper. These toilets have

temperature-controlled water, spritzing wands and air dryers to clean and sanitize. Self-cleaning toilets help busy professionals save time and are ideal for those who always want their bowls as clean as possible. And if you desire extra comfort, toilet seat warmers are available, while LED lights can make nighttime restroom visits easier.

## SOAKING TUBS


As fast as stand-alone showers were introduced to the modern bathroom, tubless designs have been replaced with streamlined soaking tubs. Tubs come with different features, including chromotherapy, which employs colored lights to enhance mood. Air baths are controlled electronically and provide different levels of sensation for those who are skipping the hot tub.


Round out these innovations with automated lights, chilled medicine cabinets and aromatherapy, and your bathroom will indeed become a technological spa.



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# Design Trends

## FOR 2018

*We speak to local design professionals about emerging trends for 2018, from paint colors to kitchens and bedrooms.*

by **JENNY BAKER**

**Winchester** — A new year means new interior design trends. One of the most notable for 2018 is the return of color.

“Design in recent years has celebrated open floor plans and white to neutral color palette,” said Paul Miller, designer and owner of Make Nest Interiors in Old Town Winchester.

“In 2018, these trends continue to have relevance, but new trends will help to balance and fill in the gaps in earlier designs. Think of interior design trends in recent years as a prepped artist canvas.”

Miller recommends using deep colors like Midnight Blue and Ashwood Moss from Benjamin Moore, which provide drama but are less expected than black. One of the firm’s recent projects (see photo, right) utilized this concept.

“For our clients at Stonecleft we used dark blue on the bar cabinetry. In a palette of yellows, taupe, and greige, the cabinetry finish adds striking contrast.”



photo courtesy Matthew Lofton for Make Nest Interiors



### KITCHEN TRENDS

Color is returning to the kitchen as well. While white is always a classic and timeless choice, an injection of unexpected color in cabinetry is the latest design trend.

“Pops of color are gaining popularity and using it just on the island and/or the base cabinets is an easy way to mix it in without it being overwhelming,” said Elizabeth Henkel, designer at Cavalier Kitchens and Baths in Winchester.

“Blue has most recently been a popular color to use, but look for green to be gaining in popularity. Another subtle way to add color is by doing a contrasting interior color on an open shelf cabinet or one with glass doors. This can be a fun way to add some pop to your kitchen,” she said.

Henkel said that stainless kitchen sink styles are still popular in this area, but other styles are gaining ground.

“Copper has been popular and still is, but composite granite sinks are becoming more appealing,” she said.

“Composite granite sinks can come in different colors like black, gray, and whites. These sinks have real granite particles along with polymers that make it very durable, being scratch and chip resistant. One trend with sinks, in general, are the extra-large deep single bowl sinks versus the equal double bowl sink,” she said.



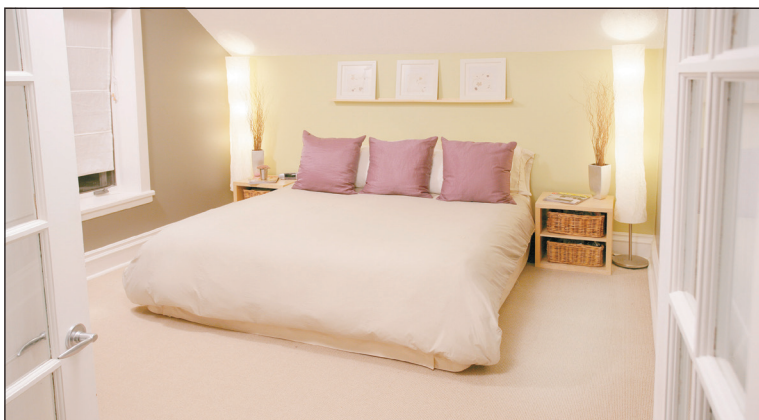


## OPEN FLOOR PLAN EVOLUTION

For years, open floor plans have ruled blueprints for new home construction. Now, that trend seems to be changing a bit.

“The open floor plan trend continues to evolve, but in a recent project we added wide pocket doors between rooms to give the homeowners to option to divide the larger spaces into intimate nooks as needed,” said Miller.

“Much of modern life involves being social and plugged in online; creating quiet retreats within the home nourishes health and balance,” he said.



## CALM BEDROOMS

The place you sleep should be reflective of that goal — calm, neutral or soft colors, an uncluttered environment, with simple decor. Houzz, a home remodeling and design website, recommends ditching the heavy decorating, because too much decor can make your bedroom feel overly busy and energizing, which is not an ideal combination for helping you rest and relax.

photo courtesy Matthew Lofton for Make Nest Interiors



## WALLPAPER

Wallcoverings are not what they used to be. Beautiful patterns and colors are used to add depth and character to a room. Miller used a yellow and white wallpaper in the dining room of a Stewart Street home (pictured above) to establish a cheerful elegance.

“Some geometric wallpaper designs have become oversaturated in recent years, such as the quatrefoil or curving lattice, so choosing wallpaper should be done thoughtfully,” he advised.

“A good rule of thumb is that if you’ve already seen a motif a lot by the time you warm up to using it yourself, you should keep digging for a more interpretive and less literal version of it.”

## MORE TRENDS

### Wallpaper-like tile

If you’re looking to refresh your kitchen or bathroom, Houzz recommends staying away from subway or hexagon tiles and instead consider contemporary tiles that look like wood, concrete, resin, fabric or even wallpaper. These tiles are prized for offering the elaborate pattern look of modern-day wallpapers while being durable enough to wipe down with a sponge and detergent.

### Florals

The tropical palm print may have flooded your Instagram feeds this year, but people aren’t yet tired of eye-catching, oversized graphic florals. Houzz expects even more interpretations of over-scaled floral patterns, in high-contrast colors, in the new year.

### Concrete accents

Step aside, white marble — it’s concrete’s time to steal the spotlight. Already used for floors and countertops, the versatile, accessible material is now being utilized in more interesting and unexpected ways, including in home accessories, such as pendant lighting, lamps, and furniture.



# This weekend: TACKLE SPRING CLEANING

*Spring cleaning tasks can be stretched out across several days to make the jobs more manageable. While certain spring cleaning tasks can be time-consuming, many projects can be started and completed in 30 minutes or less.*

## Look up

Start by looking up at ceilings, molding and ceiling fans. Chances are strong that some cobwebs and dust have formed in these areas. Always begin cleaning by working from the top downward so you don't have to clean any tables, countertops or floors twice. Static-charged dusting cloths work well to catch and contain dust. Use a pillowcase on ceiling fan blades to clear the dust and keep it from cascading to the floor.

## Vacuum vent intakes

Many houses are heated by forced-air systems. The air intake vents can become clogged with dust and

other debris. Vacuum these vents so that air flow is not impeded. Let the heat run for a few minutes to catch any small particles that become dislodged, and then change the furnace filter.

## Grout cleaner

Grade school science lessons can be put to use as you look to remove stubborn dirt. Combining baking soda and vinegar produces a reaction that causes the formation of gassy bubbles. These bubbles can help to break up dirt that clings to crevices, such as grout between tiles. Light scrubbing and then subsequent rinsing can rid surfaces of hard-to-remove dirt.

## Change linens

Remove and launder bed linens. While the linens are in the wash, thoroughly dust all furniture and vacuum the carpets. Move furniture so you can reach areas where dust gathers, such as under the bed or dresser.

## Clean out the refrigerator

Now is a great time to remove any of those mystery containers growing fuzzy experiments in the back of the refrigerator. Take the food out of the refrigerator and use a food-safe cleaner to scour the shelves and inside of crisper drawers.

## Blinds and curtains

Heavy window treatments can be removed and replaced with more gauzy fabrics. This lets in more light and warmth from the sun. Many curtains can be freshened up right in the laundry, but blinds may require a bit more effort. If the blinds can be snapped out of the brackets, place them in a tub full of vinegar, dish soap and water. Allow them to soak and then rinse with the shower nozzle. Stationary blinds can be cleaned with using an old sock over your hand dipped in a vinegar-and-water solution.

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# Tips for **SPRING CLEANING SUCCESS**

*The warm weather associated with the arrival of spring makes many people who have spent the previous months indoors less than enthusiastic about spending a spring weekend indoors cleaning and clearing away a season's worth of clutter. But homeowners who organize their spring cleaning projects can ensure such efforts take just a weekend or less.*

## **Enlist the whole family**

Chances are everyone who lives in the home can lay claim to some of the dirt, grime and clutter that built up over the winter. So it only makes sense that everyone then pitches in to clean the home come springtime. Parents and heads of household can delegate tasks to everyone, incentivizing cooperation with the promise of rewards if the cleaning is completed in a single weekend.

## **Clear your schedule**

Another way for homeowners to ensure their spring cleaning projects are started and finished in a single weekend is to clear their schedules for the entire weekend. Homeowners who expect to spend part of their day away from home and still finish their spring cleaning projects will likely find the job unfinished come Sunday night. When planning a spring cleaning weekend, schedule projects for a weekend when you have no pri-

or commitments or plan far enough in advance that you can avoid making plans on a given weekend. While it might not make for the most eventful weekend, it will greatly increase your chances of getting everything cleaned and cleared out in two days.

## **Do your homework**

Homeowners who want to complete their spring cleaning in a single weekend should do their homework with regard to finding local recycling centers or charitable organizations to

whom they intend to donate items. Many charitable organizations will come to private homes to pick up donations, but such pickups often must be arranged in advance rather than on the morning of the day homeowners want items to be taken away. In addition, if recycling will be a part of your spring cleaning efforts, familiarize yourself with the weekend hours of nearby recycling plants so you can drop items off on your cleaning weekend instead of leaving them lying around to be donated later.

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# Spring GARDEN SHOWS

by JENNY BAKER

Get your calendar and save the date for some of springtime's favorite events, from Historic Garden Week to garden fairs.

## Historic Garden Week

Saturday, April 21  
10 a.m. - 5 p.m.

Various locations in Clarke County

The Winchester-Clarke Garden Club and The Little Garden Club of Winchester host the local homes and gardens tour, a much-anticipated event each year. Local homes this year include Clarke County homes The Cliff, Woodside, Stonefield, and Kildere.

The Cliff in Boyce is situated on a bluff facing over a bend in the Shenandoah River and was built between 1941-1942 of native limestone. The landscape and house were renovated in 2003, and in 2005, the gardens were honored with a Potomac Chapter American Society of Landscape Architecture award.

Woodside is nestled at the edge of the woods of the White Post property, giving the home 240 degree views of the Clarke County vistas. The stone house, built in a

transitional architectural style, was finished in 2014 and is surrounded by extensive perennial gardens.

Stonefield in Boyce, an alabaster-painted brick residence built in 1983, features a circular staircase and a cherry-paneled library which was added in 1989. The working farm includes a practice polo field with stables for ponies, and a whimsical patio that was designed to mimic the ballroom at the Homestead Resort. Dances with live music under twinkling lights happen all summer long.

Kildere, a 1941 Federal residence, sits on a 162-acre former working farm in Boyce. The home features Flemish bond brickwork, a slate roof, and working louvered shutters. The grounds include a stone-walled sunken garden and sweeping vistas.

The tour includes complimentary refreshments at Kildere, a box lunch (\$15

pre-purchase only) at The State Arboretum of Virginia, and a special presentation at Blandly Experimental Farm, "The Importance of Pollinators," at noon.

*Details: Full tour \$40 per person; single site admission \$20. Advance tickets \$30 per person until April 13. Tickets available at Kimberly's, The Museum Store at the Museum of the Shenandoah Valley, The Winchester-Frederick County Tourism and Visitor Center, and in Berryville at The Firehouse Gallery and Mt. Airy Market in Boyce.*

[www.vagardenweek.org](http://www.vagardenweek.org)

## 29th Annual Garden Fair

May 12 & 13

9 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

The State Arboretum of Virginia

A Mother's Day weekend tradition, the State Arboretum of Virginia's 29th Annual Garden Fair is a great kick-off to the spring planting season. The fair is a huge



Jeff Taylor/The Winchester Star

The raised box garden featuring lavender and English boxwoods at the home of Greg and Pembroke Hutchinson, one of the stops during the 2017 Historic Garden Week.

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plant and garden supply sale, with dozens of vendors of high-quality plants including annuals, perennials, small trees, shrubs, boxwood, bonsai, and more. The Foundation usually sells a selection of plants divided or propagated from the Arboretum collection. In addition to the plant sale, free events include Arboretum tours, native plant walks, children's nature walks, and other activities for kids. The event is held rain or shine.

*Details: \$10 advance or \$15 per car day-of. The State Arboretum of Virginia. [blandy.virginia.edu](http://blandy.virginia.edu)*

**15th Annual GardenFest**  
June 2  
8 a.m. - 3 p.m.  
Belle Grove Plantation

A great opportunity to get your garden into gear this season, GardenFest features a master gardener plant sale, garden and specialty vendors, garden crafts and events for kids, a second hand rose's garden table, and tool sharpening.

There will be a workshop on flower imprinting, and a speaker at 10 a.m. and 1 p.m. will talk on gardening with wildlife.

*Details: Free admission, free parking. Belle Grove Plantation.*



Crowds packed the Garden Fair at Blandly Farm in Clarke County last year.

Scott Mason/The Winchester Star

## Age

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bedroom, that great turnaround radius in the bathroom, and their own little sitting room," she said.

"Upstairs there are two really big bedrooms, and the idea was that that could be a nurse's space, or a place for their children to come back to."

Many homes built post-1990s have a main floor master suite in addition to an upstairs master suite, almost to the point that it's expected, said Mayfield. In this case, being able to move downstairs and have help — whether it's a family member or a live-in nurse — move in to the second

floor master suite is something to consider.

Overall, mobility is what needs to be considered, not only for you or your spouse but for help as well.

"It's something a lot of people forget. They think that they don't need ADA, they don't need to worry about accessibility because they're not going to be in a wheelchair," said Mayfield.

"It has to do with people using a cane or a walker, or it's a way of thinking particularly in a bathroom, the five foot turn around radius you need for a wheelchair.

But it's also for space for a second person to be helping you in the bathroom, at the toilet, or helping you stand at the sink. So that's a real way to think about navigating space, is it enough for two, for you and/or equipment you may need."

No matter your age, it's smart to consider these improvements over time.

"I think that it's a strategy too that's really helpful so that everything is in place, so that it doesn't become an emergency and you're not trying to problem-solve in a panic state because you have to figure out how to get a hospital bed in your house."

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# *This weekend:* **TACKLE HOME IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS**

*'Tis the season for home improvement projects. Here are smaller projects that can yield impressive results and be completed over the course of a single weekend.*

## **Install stair runners**

Dress up hardwood stairs with decorative carpet runners. Runners come in elongated pieces of carpeting or individual pieces that can be placed on each step. If carpeting doesn't fit with the home's design, painting individual stair treads also can create visual appeal.

## **Create an accent wall**

Painting a focal wall in a home can create a serious impact. The bonus is it will not take as long or require as many materials as painting an entire room. Accent walls frequently feature a bold color, so decide on placement and tackle this project in less than a day.

## **Dress up the entryway**

An entryway is a guest's first impression of a home. Many entryways can use a minor overhaul, both inside and outside. Paint the front door a different color so it pops from the curb. Install a new mailbox or decorative house numbers. A new welcome mat can change the look as well. Inside, consider laying a new floor. Resilient vinyl tiles come in many different patterns and can mimic the look of wood, travertine or marble. Installing a floor can take a day or two.

## **Create a gallery on the staircase**

Gather and arrange framed photos, artwork or wall accents so that they ascend the wall of a staircase. This creates a designer touch and can dress up an often barren area of wall space.

## **Install a new faucet**

Instantly improve a kitchen or a bathroom with new fixtures. New faucets can provide aesthetic appeal and low-flow faucets can help conserve water.

See **Projects**, Page **15**

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# Projects

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## Install a fresh light fixture

Improve drab spaces with a little illumination. Better Homes & Gardens suggests replacing an existing fixture with something new and vibrant. If hanging a new fixture is not within one's skill set, free-standing table or floor lamps also can cast a new glow on a space.

## Update kitchen or bathroom hardware

Replacing hardware is a fast and easy project, but one that can have immediate impact. Swap out tired or outdated hardware for newer brushed metals and more impactful shapes and designs.

## Add molding

Molding can add instant aesthetic appeal to a room. Molding is appropriate near the floor, at the top of walls where they meet the ceiling, or even mid-wall as a chair rail. Some homeowners like to create framed molding on walls in formal living spaces.

## Powerwash

Make your home really pop by renting a powerwasher and tackle the exterior. Decks, patios, and porches are also areas to consider powerwashing to have them ready for outdoor entertaining this season.



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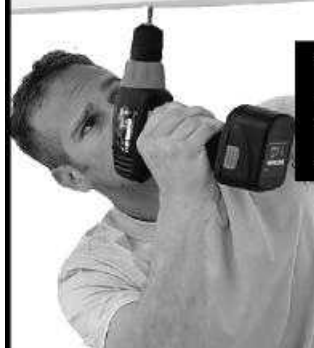


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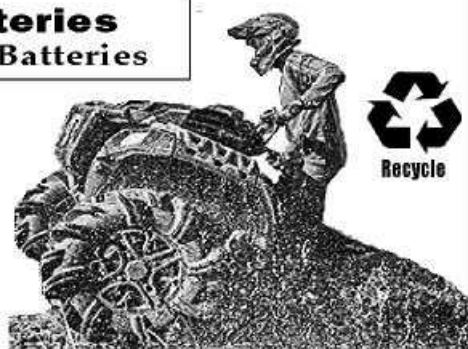
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