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EDITION

Thursday, April 7, 2022  
Special Section • 16 pages



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FEATURE STORY



Ryan, Cathy, and Paul Fritsch stand where there used to be walls. Herald photos by Kyle Evans.

# THE FRITSCH HOME: 35 years and a lot of changes

By KYLE EVANS  
Interim Editor

**W**hen Paul and Cathy Fritsch bought their house outside of Leon 35 years ago it was a lot different than it is now.

The Fritsch's are busy renovating their main living space by removing a couple of walls to open sightlines from the kitchen to the living room.

When the whole family visited around Christmas, they brought up the idea of taking the walls out. With a couple of grandchildren on the way, Paul and Cathy thought it would be a great idea.

Like any project that you think will be nice, easy and quick, one thing leads to another and removing a wall

“

*I thought they could just take out the wall and put new flooring in”*

*- Cathy Fritsch*

turns into electrical, drywall, flooring, structure and more.

“I thought they could just take out the wall and put new flooring in,” Cathy said.

**‘FRITSCH’** cont. on pg. 6



Paul Fritsch taking down the wood ceiling.





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# Repairing the winter 'burn' for your evergreens

By UW-Extension Service

## What is winter burn?

Winter burn is a common problem of evergreens including those with broad leaves (e.g., boxwood, holly, rhododendron), needles (e.g., fir, hemlock, pine, spruce, yew) and scale-like leaves (e.g., arborvitae, false cypress, juniper) grown in open, unprotected locations and exposed to severe winter conditions. Evergreen plants that are marginally hardy in a location (i.e., not well-adapted to local winter conditions) are at increased risk for winter burn. Winter burn can be so severe that affected plants may die and/or require replacement.

## What does winter burn look like?

Winter burn symptoms often become apparent as the snow melts and spring temperatures rise. Foliage starts to brown at the tips of branches with browning progressing inward toward the center of the plant. On broad-leaved evergreens, leaf edges typically brown first, followed by browning of entire leaves. Foliage facing south, southwest or west is most often affected. Symptomatic foliage often begins to drop off starting in spring and continuing through mid-summer as new foliage is produced. In extreme cases, entire plants can brown and die.

**What causes winter burn?** There are many factors that can contribute to winter burn. In general, plants with shallow or poorly-developed root systems that do not efficiently take up water (e.g., recent transplants) are more prone to winter burn. Warm fall temperatures that delay the onset of plant dormancy can also contribute to winter burn. Under such conditions, plants are not prepared for the subsequent rapid onset of freezing winter temperatures, and as a result damage to foliage occurs. Similar cold injury can occur mid-winter when temperatures drop sharply at sunset causing foliage that has warmed during the day to rapidly cool and freeze. In addition, on sunny winter days, foliage (particularly foliage facing the sun) can begin to transpire (i.e., naturally lose water through the foliage). Because the ground is frozen, plant roots cannot take up water and replace the water that has been lost from the foliage. As a result, foliage dries and browns. Foliage under snow or facing away from the sun and direct winds is usually not damaged. Strong winter winds can lead to additional water loss making winter burn more severe. Colder than normal winter temperatures and longer than normal winters can also be factors in the



development of winter burn, especially if below normal temperatures occur into April (the time of year when plants normally come out of dormancy and are most susceptible to winter injury). Finally, exposure of plants to salt used to deice roads, driveways and sidewalks during the winter can make plants more prone to winter burn injury.

## How do I save a plant with winter burn?

For evergreens such as arborvitae, boxwoods, junipers and yews, prune out dead, brown, damaged or dying tissue in mid-spring after new foliage is produced. If new foliage has not yet emerged by spring, scratch the bark on affected branches and look for green tissue underneath. Also gently peel back the bud scales to look for inner green bud tissue. If the stem or bud tissue is green, buds on the branch may still break to form new foliage. If the tissue is brown, the branch is most likely dead and you should prune the branch back to a live, lateral bud or branch. Such buds and branches may be far back inside the canopy and pruning may remove a substantial amount of the plant. Pines, spruces and firs typically produce new

'EVERGREENS' cont. on pg. 14



HOME AND GARDEN

# 25 tasks to take care of in SPRING



When the weather starts to warm up, it's time to take care of your spring cleaning and yard work. Here's a list of tasks to complete both inside and outside your home.

## INSIDE

1. Sort through your belongings and throw away, sell and donate what you no longer need.
2. Air out each room.
3. Dust and clean the walls, ceilings, floors and carpets.
4. Wash the windows, curtains and blinds, and reinstall your window screens.
5. Clean out the pantry, refrigerator, freezer, cupboards, drawers and medicine cabinets.
6. Wipe down the inside and outside of your small and large appliances.
7. Disinfect your garbage cans.
8. Dust all fan blades, baseboard heaters and light fixtures.
9. Vacuum your chair cushions and mattresses and turn them inside out.
10. Check the attic to ensure there's no water or pest damage.
11. Test your air conditioning unit.

## OUTSIDE

12. Examine your home's roof, skylights and chimney, and schedule any necessary repairs.
13. Inspect your home's foundation and seal any visible cracks.
14. Clean your gutters and make sure they're in good condition so water drains away from your home.
15. Check all your door and window seals and make any necessary repairs.
16. Check your home's siding, faucets, light fixtures and electrical outlets.
17. Wash your home's windows and siding.
18. Wash your deck, and sand and paint it if needed.
19. Hook up your water outlets and reinstall your garden hoses.
20. Put away your snow shovels and de-icers.
21. Open up your pool by removing the liner and turning on the water treatment system.
22. Inspect and repair your garden accessories, barbecue and tools.
23. Trim back any tree branches or shrubs that are too close to your home.
24. Pull weeds, and rake and fertilize your yard.
25. Clean up your flower beds, remove any winter coverings and prune perennials, roses, evergreens and spring-flowering shrubs.

Don't delay — it's time to get to work.



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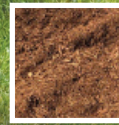
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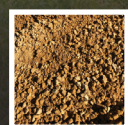
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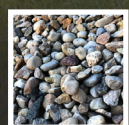
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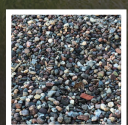
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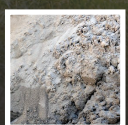
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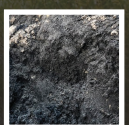
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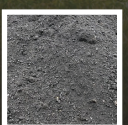
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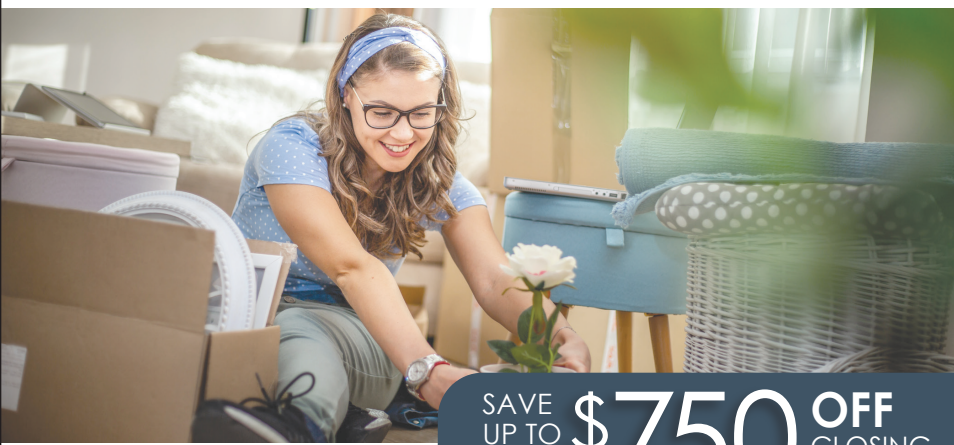
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## 'FRITSCH'

continued from page 2



Ryan Fritsch taking up old flooring. Herald photo by Kyle Evans.

Paul and their son Ryan have done a lot of the work, which can be exhausting.

"It's hard to get everything done," Paul said. "When you work all day, you don't want to come home and work some more. There's only so much time in a day."

Renovating can lead to a lot of doubt and Cathy had her moment when the project was nearly done. The flooring will be installed at the end of April and last weekend everything was complete besides the floor. This is when Cathy decided the wood on the kitchen ceiling wouldn't go well with the new flooring and she asked Paul to take it down.

Paul, listened to his wife and took the wood ceiling down, then had to paint it as well.

"We haven't run into many issues on getting product for their

renovation," Paul said. "We've been trying to buy most things local, and luckily we haven't had any challenges on that front."

Originally when they bought the house, the garage was where the living room is. The Fritsch's changed that to make more room for their growing family at the time. Now, 35 years later, they are doing it all over again for their growing family. Their son Ryan and their daughter Amy both have babies on the way.

The family started renovating at the end of January and will be done later this month, when the flooring gets installed. Four to five years ago the Fritsch's renovated the outside of their home with new siding and windows.

The Fritsch's are looking forward to their next family get together when the renovation is all done.

\*Limited time offer. Wisconsin properties only. Offer valid with a Bank First checking and subject to credit approval. Closing costs generally range between \$1,000 and \$2,000.



# Modern Kitchen and Bath Upgrades

Upgrades happen for all kinds of reasons, but one of the most common purposes of a home renovation is to make essential spaces like kitchens and bathrooms more modern.

Modernizing your spaces isn't just about the aesthetic, although that is a major advantage, especially when it comes to resale value. Updating your kitchen and bath is also an opportunity to introduce new technology and enhancements that improve the function of these high-traffic rooms.

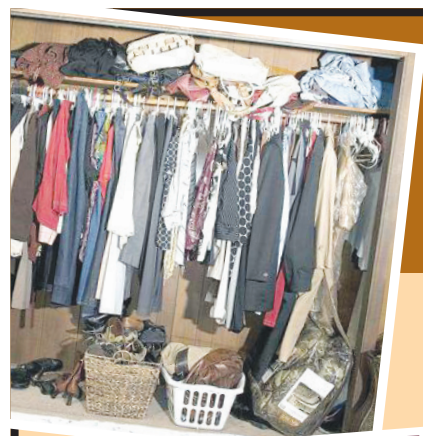
Modern styles simplify everyday living and can make contemporary entertaining more enjoyable. The sleek lines of modern design lend themselves to a clean look, which is supported by hidden features that make organization easier.

### Smart Technology

Although the idea of a connected home isn't new, technology is steadily improving. This means smart features are now often more affordable, easily integrated into the rest of your home and available to help manage a wider range of household items.

In the kitchen, you can add smart technology in numerous ways, from appliances and climate control to lighting and window treatments. For example,

'UPGRADES' cont. on pg. 15



## Is your closet unorganized and cluttered?

How about a refresh with more functional storage?



## Is your kitchen dated, dingy, and cluttered?

How about an update to suit today's lifestyle?



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## What you should do before buying new furniture

Do you want to refresh a room in your home? If so, consider buying new furniture. Here are a few tips for choosing the right pieces for your space.

### PREPARE

Start by choosing a style of furniture like Scandinavian, contemporary or farmhouse. Then, pick out upholstery and other features that complement the room. Finally, set a budget to narrow down your options.

### CONFIGURE

To ensure you choose furniture that's the right size for

your space, measure both the furniture and room. Use graph paper to draw the room, and then cut out scale models of the furniture to test out different configurations.

Alternatively, you can purchase an interior design app or software to create a three-dimensional replica of your space, and use it to experiment with different layouts.

If you need professional help to create the room of your dreams, look for an interior designer or decorator in your area.



## What you should know about paint and wallpaper

Painting and wallpapering are two effective ways to transform the look of a room. Here's some information to help you decide which products to use in your home.

### PAINT

The finish of your paint is just as important as its colour. A matte finish is ideal for living rooms, bedrooms and ceilings. However, satin and gloss finishes are stain resistant and easy to clean, making them ideal for kitchens and bathrooms. It's a good

idea to take home several paint samples to see how each colour looks in the room.

### WALLPAPER

Choose a wallpaper that's suitable for your space. For example, if you're remodelling your kitchen, choose a wallpaper that's durable and easy to clean. Moreover, make certain the pattern complements the space and will line up well when installed. Additionally, ensure each roll of wallpaper has the same batch number.

### PAINT AND WALLPAPER

If you want to combine paint and wallpaper, stick to a maximum of three colours; select a dominant, secondary and accent colour. Additionally, you should choose paint and wallpaper that share a common hue. Make sure you base your colour scheme on a shade in the background or foreground of the wallpaper.

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# 5 Tips for Gardening with Kids

After months of cool weather, the first hint of spring will likely have the whole family eager to dive into outdoor activities. This year, as you begin tackling the garden, find ways to get the youngest family members in on the action, too.

Not only is gardening an activity you can enjoy together, there are numerous ways to incorporate age-appropriate, teachable moments from counting and colors to responsible care of living things.

Creating a positive first experience with gardening can start with this simple advice:

**1. Dedicate a spot** for a junior garden, which allows you to instill a sense of pride and ownership in the little gardener while protecting your own garden areas from ambitious young hands.

**2. Provide appropriate tools** in child sizes. Just as you would teach a child the finer points of baseball using a bat and glove, demonstrate the joys of gardening with tools such as a rake, hoe and trowel, all of which can be found in sizes more manageable for little helpers.

**3. Let the kids choose** what to plant. Whether flowers or food plants, allow children to make their own decisions (within reason) about what they would like to grow. This can help them engage in the magic of watching items they selected emerge from the ground and grow into their finished forms.

**4. Encourage exposure** to unfamiliar plants that entice the senses with appealing smells and flavors. Herbs such as chives, mint and basil are good choices, or consider edible flowers such as pansies or violets.

**5. Set an example** for your child to imitate by giving regular and proper care to your own garden.

Remember to bring the lesson full circle by enjoying the bounty of your garden together, whether it's a small hand-cut bouquet or a meal featuring your child's fresh-grown produce. Find more tips for gardening with your kids at [eLivingtoday.com](http://eLivingtoday.com).



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# Don't miss this critical step before your next gardening or home improvement project

With spring officially here, homeowners and landscape professionals alike will be reaching for their shovels to start digging projects — from planting trees and creating garden beds to installing new mailboxes, fences or pools. Before you put your shovel in the ground, don't miss the critical step that can protect you, your neighbors and the utility services you rely on: contacting 811.

As 58% of American homeowners plan to dig this year — according to research from the Common Ground Alliance (CGA) — contacting 811 before digging is critical to avoid unintentionally striking a utility line. Unfortunately, approximately 34.9 million people across the country will skip this crucial step before starting their project, which can result in inconvenient outages for entire neighborhoods, serious harm to yourself or your neighbors, and significant repair costs.

Contacting 811 — by making a free call to 811 or, in most areas, a request online — connects you to your local one call utility notification center to have underground utilities marked so that they are not damaged during digging projects.

Every digging project, no matter how large or small, warrants contacting 811. Installing a mailbox or fence, building a deck and landscaping are all examples of digging projects that should only begin a few days after calling 811 or submitting a request online.

“A utility line is damaged every few minutes in America because someone decided to dig without contacting 811 to learn the approximate location of buried utilities in their area,” said CGA President and CEO Sarah Magruder Lyle. “With an estimated 71 million Americans planning home improvements as the weather warms up, contacting 811 a few days before any projects that require digging — including common landscaping projects like planting trees and shrubs — is critical to preventing incidents like service outages and serious injuries.”

To help keep yourself safe and connected to important utilities, follow these simple safe digging steps before your next project:

1. A free, simple phone call to 811, or a

**'DIG'** cont. on pg. 14

## The real estate market in and around Monroe County

### Local home prices up considerably

By **KYLE EVANS**  
*Interim Editor*

The real estate market is absolutely bonkers right now. If you're a buyer looking for a place, I wish you the best of luck.

February home sales slipped 4.7% in Wisconsin compared to February 2021 as inventories continued to tighten in 2022, according to the latest report from the Wisconsin REALTORS® Association. With demand remaining strong, the statewide price rose 9.3% over the past 12 months to \$235,000.

“There is record low inventory, buyers need to look at a place within the first day or two of it being on the market, and buyers need to expect to pay a premium,” said Isaac Wissestad, broker and owner at VIP Realty in Tomah.

Homes in Monroe County were on the market for an average of 66 days in February, according to the association.

Trent Ziegler, owner and broker

at Coulee Real Estate & Property Management in Sparta said, “there are lots and lots of buyers, but there isn't much for sale. Now that spring is in the air, the inventory should pick up, as it usually does in the spring. We're also seeing an increase in interest rates, but I don't see that slowing down the market this year.”

The association reports the median price for a home in Monroe County in February was \$230,000. That is up 28% over February last year.

“It's a wild market, when we have new listings, we're listing them at new highs (compared to comparable homes in the area) and most homes are still going over list price,” Wissestad said.

Wissestad and Ziegler agree, It's a great seller's market, but if you don't have a place lined up to live when you sell your house, it can be tough. You can sell your home for a good price, but you'll most likely also pay a premium for the house you want to buy.



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# Old is in for saving rain water

By UW-Extension Service

A wooden rain barrel was a familiar sight in many backyard gardens at the turn of the century.

Its purpose was simple – collect rainfall running off a roof and store it for future use. Often, that use would have been watering flowers and garden plants when the weather turned dry.

Turn-of-the-century gardeners knew by experience what chemistry teaches us today: rain water can be better for plants than water pumped from the ground or piped through a city water main. It's not chlorinated, fluoridated or loaded with dissolved salts.

And, rain water is mildly acidic, which helps plants take up important minerals from the soil. Today, electric well pumps and city water pressure make storing water in rain barrels seem like more work than it's worth. Nevertheless, we might reflect upon the past and consider what the rain barrel can symbolize.

A rain barrel reminds us of a simpler, in some ways more sensible, approach to yard care. It shouldn't imply that conscientious people must go out, buy a rain barrel, and place it under a downspout. But there are applications today of what we might call a rain-barrel ethic.

A rain-barrel ethic suggests an awareness of personal actions and their effects on the environment, with the knowledge that simple and natural methods are sometimes the most effective ways to care for your yard. In practice, such an ethic could mean the difference between clean and polluted lakes and streams.



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# 5 natural, and pretty, alternatives to grass

If you're tired of mowing, watering and fertilizing your lawn, consider replacing your grass. Here are five alternatives that can be used as ground cover.

**Creeping Jenny (*Lysimachia nummularia*):**

The golden-tinged leaves of this evergreen perennial prefer direct sunlight over partial shade. Creeping Jenny can withstand being walked on occasionally, and it produces vibrant yellow flowers in June and July.

**Rupturewort (*Herniaria glabra*):**

Perfect for high-traffic areas, this resilient evergreen can tolerate harsh growing conditions and survive with very little water. Rupturewort's dense leaves thrive in full sun, and its tiny green flowers line the stems in early summer.

**Creeping thyme (*Thymus serpyllum*):**

Fragrant and beautiful, this herb is characterized by small leaves and flowers that range from pale pink to bright purple. Tolerant of foot traffic, this plant is a good choice for homes in wooded areas because deer and rabbits won't eat it.

**White clover (*Trifolium repens*):**

This plant is ideal for regions that get little or no rain because it thrives even during hot, dry summers. However, its delicate leaves and small white flowers are easily trampled.

**Bird's foot trefoil (*Lotus corniculatus*):**

This adaptable plant can grow in almost any climate, so long as it gets plenty of sun. As summer progresses, its flowers will gradually change from yellow to red.

Since many ground cover species are more delicate than grass, consider creating a stone foot path to avoid stepping on your new lawn.

## 'EVERGREENS'

continued from page 4

growth at branch tips in spring that will replace winter burn-damaged needles, and thus pruning may not be required on these evergreens. After a couple of growing seasons, new foliage will fill in the areas that were damaged. If an entire evergreen is brown, recovery is unlikely and the plant should be replaced with something (e.g., a deciduous shrub or tree) that is better-suited to the site.

**How do I avoid problems with winter burn in the future?**

Use a variety of strategies to prevent winter burn before winter arrives. Plant the right plant in the right place. Buy plants that are rated as cold hardy for your location and are well-adapted to local growing and soil conditions. Plants exposed to drying winter sun and winds are more likely to be injured. Therefore, avoid planting winter injury sensitive evergreens, particularly those that require shade or that are marginally cold-hardy, in exposed, sunny, windy areas. Plant

them on the northeast or east side of a building or in a protected courtyard. Plant boxwoods, hemlocks, rhododendrons, and yews in partial shade to provide them added protection from winter sun and wind.

**Other tips**

**Plant evergreens at the right time of year.** Optimally plant evergreens either in early spring (before buds break) or in late summer (i.e., August through September). Evergreens can be planted in the summer if you provide supplemental water. Avoid planting after early October in northern Wisconsin and after mid-October in southern Wisconsin as this will not allow sufficient time for roots to grow adequately before the ground freezes.

**DO NOT prune evergreens in late summer or early fall.** Late season pruning of some non-native evergreens may encourage a flush of new growth that will not harden off properly before winter.

**Mulch evergreens properly.** Apply

## 'DIG'

continued from page 14

connected to important utilities, follow these simple safe digging steps before your next project:

1. A free, simple phone call to 811, or a visit to [www.811beforeyoudig.com](http://www.811beforeyoudig.com) to submit an online request, makes it easy for your local one call center to notify appropriate utility companies of your intent to dig. Contact 811 a few days prior to digging to ensure enough time for the approximate location of utility lines to be marked with flags or paint.

2. Know where you plan to dig and have a basic idea of what you plan to do. When you contact 811, your local one call center will ask you to provide the location and description of your digging project.

3. Your local one call center will notify affected utility companies, which will then

send professional locators to the proposed dig site to mark the approximate location of buried utility lines with colored flags and paint.

4. Wait the required amount of time for the lines to be marked. Once all lines have been accurately marked, carefully dig around the marked areas.



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two inches (on clay soils) to four inches (on sandy soils) of loose mulch (e.g., shredded hardwood, pine, or cedar bark; leaf compost; or wood chips) around the base of evergreens out to at least the drip line (e.g., the edge of where the branches extend). Keep mulch at least three inches away from the trunks of trees and the bases of shrubs.

Proper mulch insulates roots from severe fluctuations of soil temperatures and reduces water loss. It also helps protect roots from injury due to heaving that occurs when soils go through cycles of freezing and thawing during the winter. Heaving can especially be a problem for shallow-rooted and newly planted evergreens. DO NOT mulch excessively or too close to plants as this can lead to damage by providing shelter for mice and voles (which can girdle trunks and branches) and by providing a favorable environment for disease development as well as insect activity and feeding.

**Water plants properly.** Plants that are well-hydrated are less prone to winter burn. In particular, newly planted or young evergreens, especially those planted in open, exposed sites, those

planted under eaves, or those planted in dry falls may suffer severe moisture loss during the winter and consequently severe winter burn. Established evergreens should receive approximately one inch of water per week and newly transplanted evergreens up to two inches of water per week during the growing season up until the soil freezes in the autumn or there is a significant snowfall. If supplemental watering is needed, use a soaker or drip hose to apply water near the drip lines of plants rather than using a sprinkler.

**Avoid late summer or fall fertilization.**

Applying quick-release, high-nitrogen fertilizers in late summer or fall could potentially stimulate growth of new foliage (particularly on some non-native evergreens) as well as inhibit proper onset of dormancy which can lead to damage over the winter. If you are concerned that your evergreens may need to be fertilized, submit a soil sample from around your plants to a professional soil testing lab that can provide specific information on what fertilizer to use and when to fertilize. Contact your county Extension agent for more information.

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# 'UPGRADES'

continued from page 7

Upgrades happen for all kinds of reasons, but one of the most common purposes of a home renovation is to make essential spaces like kitchens and bathrooms more modern.

Modernizing your spaces isn't just about the aesthetic, although that is a major advantage, especially when it comes to resale value. Updating your kitchen and bath is also an opportunity to introduce new technology and enhancements that improve the function of these high-traffic rooms.

Modern styles simplify everyday living and can make contemporary entertaining more enjoyable. The sleek lines of modern design lend themselves to a clean look, which is supported by hidden features that make organization easier.

### Smart Technology

Although the idea of a connected home isn't new, technology is steadily improving. This means smart features are now often more affordable, easily integrated into the rest of your home and available to help manage a wider range of household items.

In the kitchen, you can add smart technology in numerous ways, from appliances and climate control to lighting and window treatments. For example, touch-to-open and push-to-open doors and drawers create a sleek, modern design while opening and closing with either a push or touch of a button for convenience.

Similar diversity is available in the bathroom, where you can incorporate connected health and fitness monitors,

touchless toilets, mirrors that double as information centers, towel warmers and even showers that automatically adjust to your preferred temperature.

### Paint

Changing the colors in a space is one of the most effective ways to transform the decor, but the walls aren't the only place where paint can make a big impact, especially in rooms like the kitchen or bathroom, where the cabinetry can make a bold statement.

Black is a hallmark of modern design and installing cabinetry with a black finish can instantly upgrade a room. To create visual interest, consider incorporating accent cabinets in a coordinating finish. For example, you could pair Wellborn Cabinet's Midtown wall cabinets finished in Matte Ebony with upper center cabinets finished in Putty Oak. An island in Bel-Air can incorporate both dark and light tones for a cohesive look.

### Decorative Range Hoods

An exposed range hood is a trendy look that can add sophistication to your kitchen. Treating this functional element as a statement piece gives you another place to showcase your style and create a sleek and modern look. If your hood is covered, consider making the cabinet door a focal point with a material such as back-painted glass.

### Multi-Purpose Sinks

While your sink has some obvious



functions, you can upgrade the space for even more practical use. Some of the latest sink design innovations include built-in features such as cutting boards, colanders, bowls, drying racks and compost areas. In addition, motion activated wastebaskets with separate compost or recycling containers provide hands-free access to reduce unwanted messes.

### Touchless Faucets

Public restrooms aren't the only places you can benefit from a touchless faucet. At home, the feature may come in handy when your hands are full or filthy. An automatic water flow is convenient and can help keep germs and grime under control. For the most on-trend, modern look, coordinate your faucets with other bathroom elements finished in gold hues, such as a laminate veneer vanity in a high-gloss gold finish.

### Cabinetry

Collectively, cabinets are the biggest component of most kitchens. Since kitchens tend to be the hub of the home,

it's important to maintain a homey feel while adding the luxury of modern features. Using warm colors, gold-toned hardware and sleek door styles can deliver a glamorous yet welcoming design.

For example, Wellborn Cabinet's Aspire Full Access Frameless line features flat moulding and flush lines to create a thoughtfully integrated flow throughout the kitchen. A Morristown door in the Smokey Walnut finish and Serenity metal doors in Sand Gloss Glass marry heirloom quality and contemporary finishes for a beautiful and functional space.

### Wood-Look Flooring

Natural wood floors were once the gold standard, but thanks to improvements in the quality and appearance of laminate and vinyl products, you can find alternative flooring in even high-end homes. Laminate and vinyl planks give the same look as wood (or stone, if you prefer) to complement a modern aesthetic, usually at a lower price point and with greater durability over time.

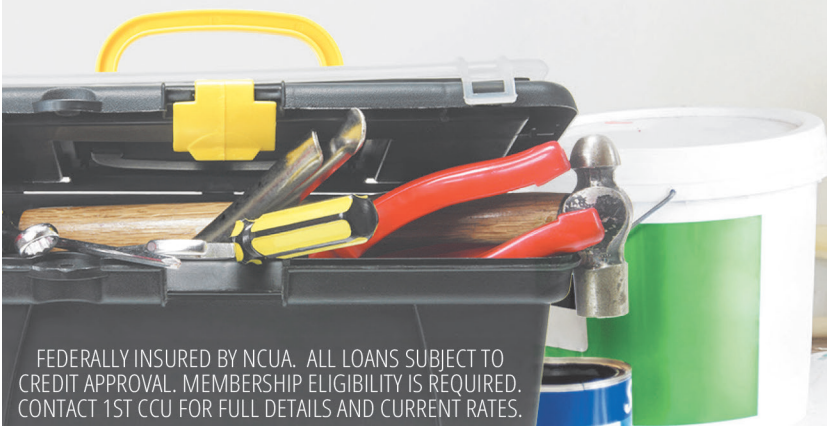
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