

SPRING HOME IMPROVEMENT



Learn more about growing food indoors with hydroponics

CHARLESTOWN, N.H. - Lifestyle Matters of Charlestown, N.H. will sponsor a hydroponics workshop given by Casey Hodge, owner of Southern Vermont Hydroponics in Mount Holly, Vt. Hodge will discuss how to grow your own nutritious food indoors year round. His presentation will introduce you to the exciting world of hydroponics and will include a general overview of the different types of systems with an emphasis on the method which is most used for the home.

Come and learn why hydroponic growing is an excellent option in many different situations on April 22, 2018 at 5 p.m. at St. Luke's Parish Hall, 188 Main Street, Charlestown, N.H.

PHOTO PROVIDED

Cold climate heat pumps, do they make sense for you?

WEATHERSFIELD, Vt. - The Weathersfield, Vt. Energy Group is holding a free cold climate heat pump workshop on April 25, 2018 at 6 p.m. at the town library on Route 5 in Ascutney. Learn how heat pumps save money operating in winter and summer. Bring along your questions - remember that all renewable energy systems work far more efficiently when installed in weatherized buildings.

Town Select Boards appoint Energy

Commissions and Energy Committees, but independent teams or groups also work with municipalities to advise on energy policy and efficiency, resulting in savings for taxpayers. Energy Coordinators serve as ex-officio members of Town Planning Commissions and liaisons with Regional Planning Commissions.

Some Energy Committees team up to work together on mutual programs to advise and help homeowners

with weatherization and renewable energy projects.

Energy Committees are invaluable resources for information on Federal rebates and Efficiency Vermont; they pass along contacts for energy audits and conduct energy walk-throughs looking for air leaks and escaping heat. They advise on energy-saving light bulbs and appliances, promote hybrid and electric vehicles, and hold workshops on renewable energy systems.

Weathersfield produced a flyer with a check list for homeowners to improve energy efficiency and energy-saving tips including renting a Green Mountain Power Heat Pump, riding a bike, and growing your own vegetables, etc. Conservation, weatherization, and using energy wisely are first steps to reducing costs.

For more information, call Weathersfield Energy Group at 802-674-5280.

Six home décor trends to make a statement

StatePoint - Is your home décor starting to feel a bit stale? Spruce up your interiors with some of the hottest home design trends for 2018 - from customized cozy to natural textures to retro touches.

Here are some stylish ways to incorporate new trends, from one of

the nation's most sought-after celebrity interior designers, Taniya Nayak.

1. **Create an oasis** Make your home a tropical escape all year long. Add floral or banana leaf accents to form a staycation-worthy "at-home paradise" no matter the temperature. Nayak suggests pairing pops of



Spruce up your home's interiors with some new decor and style. PHOTO PROVIDED

metallic gold with plush greens and crisp white to build a look that is sophisticated, yet fun and exotic.

2. **Keep it simple** In 2018, Nayak encourages DIYers to "go big or go home...in the simplest way imaginable." An easy way to accomplish this is to paint your baseboards, trim or window mullions a dramatic contrasting color, like black against a white wall, for an effortless, yet powerful effect. And when it comes to achieving clean, sharp paint lines, one of Nayak's vital, go-to tools is a premium painter's tape, like FrogTape brand painter's tape that delivers the sharpest paint lines possible. Treated with patented PaintBlock Technology, FrogTape is a foolproof way to get professional-looking results and eliminate the need for touch-ups.

3. **Incorporate natural touches** This trend is all about nature's textures - think wood grain, geodes, or ocean waves. One way to incorporate this look is to combine earthy tones like browns, beiges, and deep blues with vibrant neon colors to generate the effect of the northern lights around the home.

4. **Get back to the future** Give what's old a modern, futuristic update to achieve this trend. Try painting a vintage chair with a pop of color, like the Sherwin-Williams 2018 color of the year, Oceanside, a combination of rich blue with jewel-toned green. This creates an eye-catching masterpiece that seamlessly integrates into both retro and modern home décor. Introducing bright colors to antiques produces a beautiful new spin on a classic look.

5. **Design it with love** What's "in" in home design this year? Creating warm and cozy spaces that are customized just for you. This is the true essence of DIY. Painting an accent wall in a pastel color, like lavender, will set a relaxed and comforting tone in the room. From there, add personal pieces like a soft woven blanket, a macramé wall hanging, or ivory plates on a wall to transform any room to "your" room.

6. **Embrace New England prep** This style embraces the timeless combination of crisp white linens and navy blues, but what really gives a room an authentic New England vibe is the addition of camel-colored leather décor accents. Nayak recommends adding monogrammed pillows to a leather accent chair, or whitewashing your brick fireplace to create a look that never goes out of style.

Get started on your home projects now so you can enjoy your refreshed décor all year long. Visit www.Frog-Tape.com for more trend information and inspiration.

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SPRING HOME IMPROVEMENT

Past prizewinner pushes Curb Appeal creativity

BY KAREN ENGDAHL

The Vermont Journal & The Shopper

SPRINGFIELD, Vt. - Three days into her Curb Appeal project of applying German "schmeer" mortar to the facade of her house, Janalene



An array of colorful flowers up the walk. PHOTO BY JANALENE GOULD

Gould almost bailed. "It was the hardest job I've ever done!" said Gould, who eventually won the "Biggest Bang for the Buck" award in the 2017 Curb Appeal Challenge. "I really had to psych myself up to finish it." The German "schmeer," a cement-based mortar is quite heavy and Gould needed a lot of it to cover the brickwork on the front of her ranch-style home. "It looked a lot easier on the video I saw when I started learning about the process," she laughed.

Eventually, Gould mastered the technique and finished the job. But her Curb Appeal efforts didn't stop there. With the help of family members, she jackhammered the original walkway and concrete steps in front of her house and



Janalene Gould's home before her curb appeal transformation. PHOTO BY JANALENE GOULD



Gould's home after all of her hard work. PHOTO BY LORI CLAFFEE

rebuilt the steps using lumber and recycled railings. She then dug out original plantings from around the house, moved the plants, regraded the beds with three yards of topsoil, and replanted the flowerbeds. Throughout the project Gould added recycled objects, including a set of shutters found along a roadside and a baby crib up cycled as a trellis for roses.

"I won the 'Biggest Bang for the

Buck' award because I was able to make use of so many 'found objects,'" she said. "It's really dangerous for me to go to a recycling center! My mind just races to what I could do with all the materials."

Gould, who describes herself as an "Upcycling Artist," has made a specialty of creating fine art as well as practical pieces using materials others have cast aside. Her home is full of handcrafted ceramics and

woodworking projects she made using skills that were mostly self-taught.

"I see objects - and then I see the possibilities," she said. "Really, everyone can be creative. I believe everybody has creative ideas - you just need to put them out there!"

What are her plans for the 2018 Curb Appeal Challenge? Gould isn't sure yet, but thinks she might tackle building a stone walkway. "There's a lot of prep work involved," she sighed, "but it could be beautiful."

The Curb Appeal Challenge, which kicked off on April 14, offers homeowners or tenants the chance to enter their home or garden improvement to win a Grand Prize of \$500, a second prize of \$200, or a Biggest Bang for the Buck prize of

\$150. Bibens Home Center, Woodbury's Landscaping, and Sherwin-Williams Paints are offering contest entrants discounts on materials to improve the landscaping of their yard or the exterior of their home; entrants may also have a free one-time consultation from the Springfield Garden Club or real estate professional Lori Muse.

For more information about the contest, call 802-885-6388 or request information from upnainc@gmail.com. The Curb Appeal Challenge is sponsored by Mascoma Bank, Bibens Ace Home Center, Woodbury's Landscaping, Sherwin-Williams paints, the Springfield Reporter, Muse & Associates, and Union/Park Neighborhood Association.

Spring planting workshops and live caterpillar exploration

WALPOLE, N.H. - The Cheshire County Conservation District invites the public to celebrate the onset of spring at Alyson's Orchard in Walpole, N.H. on Saturday, April 28 from 9 a.m. - 1 p.m. As part of their annual Plant Sale Pick-Up Day, this year the Conservation District is offering two informative planting workshops free to the public and will be hosting interactive exploration tables full of live caterpillars from the Caterpillar Lab of Marlborough, N.H.!

Join us at 9:30 a.m. for "Planting with Bareroot Stock," facilitated by Michael Nerrie of Distant Hill Gardens. Nerrie will guide attendees through the process of handling bareroot plants and share his methods of planting and holding for more growth. Those who purchased plants

from the CCCD Plant Sale or are unfamiliar with bareroot plants are encouraged to attend this workshop.

At 11 a.m., join us for "Getting Started with Fruit Trees & Shrubs," facilitated by Carl Majewski of UNH Cooperative Extension. Majewski will share information on the best ways to care for the fruit trees, shrubs, and bushes on your property - including but not limited to planting, pest management, and site considerations. Come ready with your questions for this informal, but informational workshop.

In between workshops, we invite you to explore "Live Caterpillars" and talk with the knowledgeable and passionate staff members of the Caterpillar Lab! Founder Sam Jaffe and Lab Manager Jesse Varga will be on

site all day from 9 a.m. - 1 p.m. with exploration tables filled with their invertebrate friends! Come out and meet some live caterpillars and learn about the exciting things the Caterpillar Lab is bringing to the Monadnock Region! This kid-friendly event

is one you won't want to miss!

For questions regarding this event, please contact Lola Bobrowski, outreach coordinator with the Cheshire County Conservation District, by email at lola@cheshireconservation.org or call 603-756-2988 x115.

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