

APRIL 2022 | DAILY JOURNAL

HOME TRENDS

MAGAZINE

the
best
blooms

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garden pop**

TREES: Plant to save the planet // **WILDLIFE:** Attracting hummingbirds

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the Colorful season

Make your garden a
showplace this summer.

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Prioritize your projects based on needs.

HOME TRENDS MAGAZINE

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HOT SUMMER BLOOMS

Create the right space for your sun-loving flowers

BY JENN WILLHITE | PHOTOS BY ADOBE STOCK

Spring is right around the corner, which means now is the time for careful planning and preparation for planting summer flower gardens.

Before picking up a shovel, determine the right location for the size and style of garden you intend to plant. Summer blooms are sun-lovers by nature and most require partial to full sun, so position the flower bed where it can get the most benefit, area experts say. If you intend to grow delicate flowers or plants that need some extra support from the elements, consider planting them close to a structure or windbreak, like a burm, says Jennifer McCarty, vice president of McCarty Mulch and Stone in Greenwood.

Regardless of the type of garden space you envision, you have to start from the ground up and that means prepping the soil.

McCarty recommends beginning by getting rid of the old to make way for the new.

“A lot of times when people do spring prep they are going to be cutting back some of the existing bushes, shrubs and things that are in the flower beds and to get out the leaves from fall,” she says. “Just get your beds ready for what you are going to be putting in there, whether that is soil and then flowers and mulch or decorative rock on top. It is a matter of cleaning up, is what we call it.”

A healthy, happy garden requires good soil and nutrients, McCarty says, and that means not using just any dirt.

“If someone was going to build a vegetable or flower garden I would recommend they use some garden compost mixed in with top soil,” McCarty says. “That way, they are not just planting into dirt, they’re planting into something that has more organic material and nutrients.”

Good soil is essential for plants to thrive and the darker and richer the soil the better, McCarty says. And that means using a 50/50 blend of equal parts soil and compost. Yard waste, such as grass clippings and leaves,

make great fodder for nutrient-rich compost, she adds.

If composting isn’t on your radar there are alternatives that are less dirty and smelly. Landscaping companies, such as McCarty’s, offer pre-blended top soil and compost mixtures that make the job much easier. Purchasing ready-made soil also takes the guesswork out of knowing if the soil has enough compost versus dirt, as well as the right balance of nutrients.

Meg Jones, a volunteer with Franklin Parks and Recreation, has done landscaping and gardening work for years and says when deciding what to plant it is always a safe bet to go native.

Online resources, like the Department of Natural Resources, are great for researching what grows best in the area, she says.

“Going native is always safe because you know these things have been growing in this environment for a long time,”

Jones says. “Always make sure you are planting something that is going to grow well in your space. After that you can go for whatever color and attributes you like or want.”

Before choosing the plants and color scheme of the garden space, figure out how you envision the space. And this is also the time to decide whether you want flowers that will return each year or if you want a clean canvas at the start of each season.

The rule is annuals bloom one summer and they’re done, Jones says. However, the tradeoff is the flowers not only bloom the entire summer, but they are very dynamic and bold in the coloration. On the other side are perennials, which come back every year. The caveat with perennials is that they bloom for shorter stints in the neighborhood of six weeks or so, Jones says.

“When you put perennials out, you aren’t out there planting annuals, because you have the color from the perennials that is going to be coming up every spring,” McCarty adds.

The best time to plant bulbs is in the fall, however, in



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Indiana, the general rule for planting from seed or start is Mother's Day, after which there is no more frost at night, McCarty says.

"We always get these little tidbits and tastes of spring in February and March, but we know April can be really iffy, as well as May," McCarty says.

Springtime is synonymous with daffodils and tulips as they are the heralders of spring, however, the different plant combinations that complement one another in color and growing season are far too numerous to count.

"I really like a combination of evergreen shrubs like fox wood with flowering shrubs like hydrangea and you can throw in some daffodils," Jones says. "That is pretty classic and you can't go wrong. If you want to go out on a lark and just plant a lot of prairie flowers like cone flowers and bee balm, those work well together, too."

For a pollinator garden, going native remains the best bet. Consider what kinds of pollinators you want to attract while being mindful that they require nectar straight away, so planting a variety of flowers that take turns blooming from spring through the end of the season will serve you well.

For this region, Big Bluestem, Little Bluestem and Switchgrass are native grasses that thrive in wildflower beds, as well as specialty pollinator and butterfly beds. There are dozens of wildflowers that get along well with Indiana's native grasses, including Black-Eyed Susan, cornflowers, various types of milkweed, and sunflowers.

Butterfly gardens flourish with butterfly bushes, which are quick to grow and certainly bring the blooms that butterflies love. Coneflowers (also known as Echinacea), marigolds, sage and phlox,

which takes longer to grow but offers blankets of color, are great go-to's for attracting butterflies.

Once you have the plants in the ground, all that's left are finishing touches like incorporating edging, mulch or rocks. Before you lay down any kind of border or ground cover, start with a barrier.

"A lot of times when people put down mulch or rock the very first time they use something called weed fabric," McCarty says. "It is a material you put down as a weed barrier. Not being a plastic, the fabric lets the water through it, but the weeds not come up through it. It is definitely something for someone establishing a flower garden if you don't want to be out there picking weeds all the time."

Historically, light or cypress mulch was the most sought after. Today, homeowners are leaning more toward darker, bolder mulches, McCarty says. Darker mulches tend to hold their color longer, she adds, and the longevity allows for a nicer looking bed for longer.

If mulch is not your thing, rock is a great substitute.

"I would also say rock is definitely a great alternative if you are looking for something that is more low maintenance," McCarty says. "Once you put that rock out there it doesn't compost or go away; it stays put. So you have a lower maintenance landscaped area."

Caring for these types of garden spaces requires relatively low maintenance. For the occasional pests or stray weeds, applying a pesticide or herbicide won't hurt, however, when needed be sure to apply the treatment to the desired location only.

"Generally, when applied correctly, pesticides and herbicides should not hurt the surrounding vegetation," McCarty says.

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Petite powerhouses

Tips to make your home a hummingbird haven

BY FAMILY FEATURES | PHOTO BY COLE'S WILD BIRD PRODUCTS

Throughout the warmer months, many backyards play host to a variety of birds, including hummingbirds. When you see flowers and trees begin to bud and bloom and other migrating birds, like warblers, that's nature's way of letting you know it's time to ready your yard for hummingbirds.

It's enchanting watching hummingbirds — named for the humming sound of their fast-flapping wings — as their tiny size and speed make them natural wonders. Hummingbirds can fly 25-30 miles per hour, flapping their wings an estimated 70 times per second. They fly in every direction, even backwards, which only hummers can do and float majestically in midair.

The birds get their brilliant color from the iridescence in the arrangement of their feathers, not color pigment. Plus, they have the fastest metabolism of any animal on Earth, burning 1 to 2 times their body weight in food daily. Hummingbirds draw nectar from its source into their mouths, lapping it up almost 12 times per second.

To increase your chances of observing these petite powerhouses at home, consider these tips from the experts at Cole's Wild Bird Products:

- Be conscious of beneficial insects. Hummingbirds rely on insects, which provide essential protein, to complement the nectar they crave. To attract insects, try placing rotting fruit near feeders and

leave it until insects arrive for hummers' easy eats.

- Leave spiderwebs alone. Hummingbirds use spiderwebs as construction material to hold their nests together and pluck insects caught in the webbing.

- Offer a water mister. Hummingbirds adore bathing; a mister gives them the fine spray they prefer. Once soaked, they're off to find a preening perch.

- Provide tiny perches. Leave small, sturdy, bare branches for hummingbirds, to perch on for rest, preening and hunting. Perches provide vantage points to see danger and launching pads to swiftly pounce on insects. Once hummingbirds find a favorite perch, they'll use it repeatedly.

- Hang hummingbird feeders. Feeders are one of the most effective ways to consistently entice and encourage hummingbirds to come visit. Cole's Hummer High Rise Feeder is scientifically designed with elevated perches to make hummingbirds feel safe and comfortable, which encourages their consistent return.

- Hummingbird feeders can attract bees and ants, so look for one designed to keep pests at bay and one that doesn't drip, so large bees can't get to the nectar. A built-in ant moat will keep ants away from nectar when filled with plain water. Since birds drink from the moat, never use any repellents or additives.

- Hummingbirds are territorial, so hang multiple feeders far enough apart to attract more birds. To ensure a steady stream of birds, hang feeders in the shade to avoid fermentation of sugar-based liquids. Check feeders bi-weekly to keep food fresh and clean feeders as needed with one part white vinegar to four parts water.

- Plant flowers. Trumpet honeysuckle, bee balm and sage plants are particularly attractive to hummingbirds and provide rich nectar. Hummingbirds consume 1 1/2 times their body weight daily, eating every 10-15 minutes and visiting 1,000-2,000 flowers per day.

- Choose the right nectar. Not all nectar is alike, and hummingbirds can taste the difference. Almost all commercial nectars contain one sugar source — sucrose — because it's cheaper to make. However, real flower nectar contains three sugar sources — sucrose, fructose and glucose — in varying amounts depending on the flower. Researched and designed to attract the greatest variety of hummingbirds, Cole's Nature's Garden is a high-energy, nutrient-rich nectar that combines all three types of organically sourced sugars North American hummingbirds love.

- Don't forget, hummingbirds have memories like elephants. Once they discover your hummer-friendly habitat, they'll come back every year if there's a reliable food source. Learn more at coleswildbird.com.



TREE TALK

4 tips for planting trees (and saving

BY FAMILY FEATURES | PHOTOS BY GETTY IMAGES

Trees are virtually everywhere you turn, from your own backyard to nearby parks and forests where you enjoy hiking. They provide shade and beauty, and some even bear fruit. Beyond all the immediate benefits, you may be surprised to discover trees are also a critical key to the future.

These facts and tips from the book “Now is the Time for Trees” offer practical insight on the importance of trees and how to nurture one from selection to planting and beyond.

A compelling and ever-growing body of evidence generated by scientists, health care professionals, conservationists, humanitar-

ians and both public and private corporations supports the critical importance of trees and their impact on the human condition. Trees filter pollutants out of the air and water and provide protection for people and communities from dangerous heat and flooding. They lower urban temperatures, reduce energy bills and sequester carbon to slow the rate of climate change.

When you plant a tree in your yard or neighborhood, that tree goes to work filtering out pollutants, intercepting stormwater and capturing carbon. With proper placement, that tree can also help lower household energy use by as much as 20%.

You can engage in the tree planting movement and make a difference by planting trees around your home and surrounding community with these tips.

CONSIDER THE GROWING REGION

Choosing a tree that will flourish in your growing region is fundamental to becoming a successful tree planter. Start by getting familiar with the growing conditions of your planting site, including factors like sunlight, soil condition and room to grow.

The amount of available sunlight at your planting location will determine which tree species will be successful. Most trees



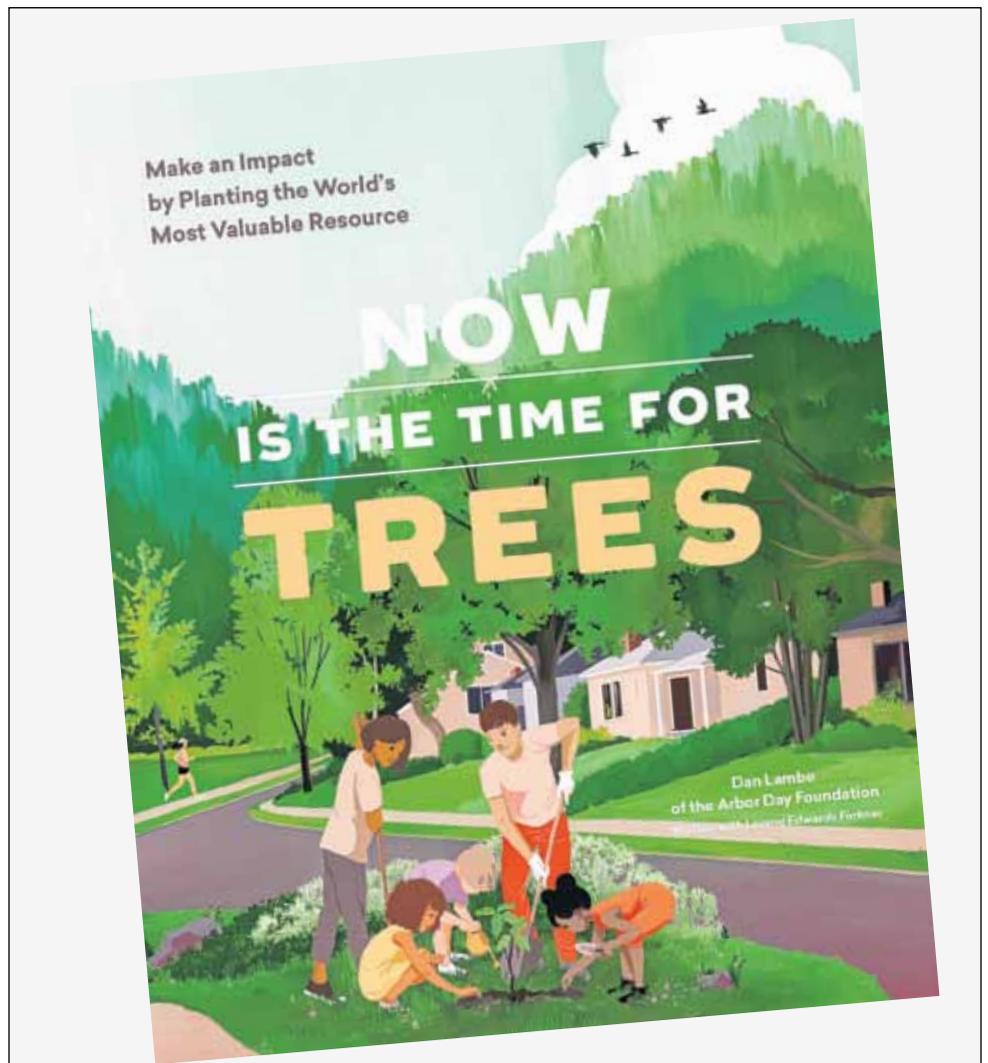
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require full sunlight for proper growth and flowering. Some do well in (or even prefer) partial or light shade, but few perform well in dense shade.

Before you plant, get your soil tested by a lab to evaluate what's happening underground. Test results, which are usually returned in a couple of weeks, provide a complete analysis of nutrients, possible contamination and pH (alkalinity or acidity), as well as directions for correcting problems.

Be conscious of overhead or underground utilities, pavement, buildings, other trees, traffic intersections and other factors that may impact your planting space.

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A handy guide to planting trees

A rally cry against climate change, “Now is the Time for Trees” is an inspirational and informative guide that explains the important role trees can play in preserving the environment.

Author Dan Lambe, CEO of the Arbor Day Foundation, offers compelling reasons to plant more trees while providing simple, actionable steps to get involved, choose the right tree and achieve planting success. For each book sold, the foundation will plant a tree in a forest in need.

Pick up a copy wherever books are sold or visit arborday.org/TimeforTreesBook.

THE POWER OF TREES

From backyards to tropical rain forests, trees provide the necessities of life. Trees clean air and water, provide habitats for wildlife, connect communities and support human health.

- Trees are a proven affordable, natural way to pull carbon dioxide out of the atmosphere.
- Trees filter water and slow storm surge and flooding in cities.
- Trees provide shade, cooling cities by up to 10 degrees, which can help prevent heat-related deaths.
- Neighborhood trees can reduce stress, improve overall health in children and encourage physical activity.
- Trees support wildlife and aquatic life by providing habitats and helping keep waterways healthy, which ensures ecosystem balance and promotes biodiversity.
- Trees and other forest life work together to ensure a clean source of drinking water, buffer against extreme weather, provide medicines, offer outdoor recreation and enrich human culture.

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SHOPPING FOR A TREE

When choosing which kind of tree to plant, be conscious of details like size, flowering, color (including how colors may vary through the seasons) and your view from inside the house. While shopping, you can rely on plant labels to learn details about a tree's growth pattern, sun requirements, watering needs and soil requirements.

Two common styles of trees are container-grown trees, which spend their entire nursery lives growing in a container, and ball-and-burlap trees, which grow in the ground until they achieve a targeted size.

A well-tended container-grown tree has been carefully monitored and moved into larger containers as the plant grows. Be wary of a tree with roots that circle or twist within the container, which may cause roots to die. For a ball-and-burlap tree, look for a firm, securely tied root ball that is large enough to support the mature tree; it should be about 10-12 inches wide for every inch of trunk diameter.

PREPARE PLANTING SITE

Properly preparing your planting site is one of the best things you can do to get your tree off to a strong start. Before you plant, make sure your tree is thoroughly hydrated by watering the container or root ball several hours before proceeding. When planting a tree into a lawn, remove a circle of grass at least 3 feet in diameter where the tree will go to reduce competition between turf and fine tree roots.

START DIGGING

Dig a broad, shallow planting hole with gently sloping sides 3-4 times wider than the diameter of the root mass and the same depth. Mound removed soil on a tarp for easy backfilling. Loosening the soil on the sides of the hole allows roots to easily expand and establish faster, but don't disturb soil at the bottom of the hole.

Once the tree is positioned, replace the soil while firmly but gently tamping the original soil around the base of the root ball to stabilize it. Create a water-holding basin around the tree by building up a ring of soil and water to settle roots. Spread protective mulch 2-4 inches deep in a 3-foot diameter around the base of the tree, but not touching the trunk.

Find more tips to successfully plant and care for your trees at arborday.org.





Room by Room

Take a systematic approach to renovations

BY FAMILY FEATURES | PHOTOS BY GETTY IMAGES

When your home needs updating in multiple spaces, you may find yourself wondering where to begin. Prioritizing the rooms you use most and those in the greatest need of attention can allow you to work through your renovation at a reasonable pace while bringing greater enjoyment to your home

one room at a time.

There's no rule about where to start; it all comes down to your budget and how your family uses your home. The true beginning of any project is defining your vision for the finished space. These on-trend ideas can help you get started.

MULTI-PURPOSE ROOM MAKEOVER

If you spend any time on social media, you know laundry and multi-purpose mudroom updates are popular. Having a well-organized, attractive workspace can make the less glamorous aspects of homeownership more appealing. Today's mudrooms are more than a pass-through space. With thoughtful planning, you can create a more functional area for laundry, a drop area for book bags and other daily necessities and even grooming space for a pet or a potting area for an avid gardener.

With a space that gets used in so many ways, cabinetry plays an important role in keeping your cleaning equipment and belongings tidy and neat. You'll be able to find shapes and sizes to fit practically any need you can imagine, like tall hideaways for brooms or gardening tools and low-profile options that can double as bench seating. If your footprint allows it, consider an island for added storage and workspace.

UPDATED KITCHEN

A stylish, functional kitchen is a must for anyone who enjoys culinary arts or the simple pleasure of gathering family or friends around the dinner table. Cabinetry is a focal point in most kitchens, so it's an element that many homeowners give plenty of consideration. Today's looks are commonly painted, and black is a surprisingly neutral option that can be adapted to numerous styles. Medium density fiberboard is ideal for painted cabinetry because it provides a smooth surface for even coating and stands up to the temperatures and humidity commonly found in the kitchen.

To create visual interest and contrast, take a different approach with your island, such as a Concord Maple door in Drift Slate finish. Don't forget to give extra attention to what's inside the cabinets, too. Options like adjustable slide-out shelving make it easy to access even more storage space.

BATHROOM REFRESH

Whether you're breathing new life into an outdated bathroom or converting unused space into a new one, practical design is essential. This



is especially true if you're working on a full bath with a smaller footprint where storage space is at a premium. While a powder room may not require much in the way of storage beyond space for extra rolls of toilet paper and hand towels, a full bath demands much more.

Using the right cabinetry for your vanity can create architectural detail that makes even this small space feel special. Consider built-in cabinets in the corner. This is a smart way to use square footage that might otherwise be wasted. For visual interest, match the cabinet door style to the vanity but in a complementary way. One on-trend example is a soft, creamy gray mist vanity paired with a rich willow gray.

Make function a priority with deep drawer dividers, sliding shelves and other creative solutions, such as repurposing a silverware tray insert to organize your toiletry drawer.



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SPRING CLEANING

Is your junk worth a fortune?

BY STATEPOINT | PHOTO BY ADOBE STOCK

If your family is like most, you have “junk” in your basement, garage or attic, such as sports cards, memorabilia and toys. Before you toss them out during spring cleaning, consider that the prices of sports cards, games and other ephemera are skyrocketing.

How can you determine if your stuff is valuable and, if it is, how can you sell it?

A widely accepted rule for sports cards, memorabilia and toys is that older items are worth more. However, these days even more recent items are also commanding high prices.

“Vintage sports cards from the early periods of a sport are almost always highly collectible, especially of Hall of Famers,” says Al Crisafulli, Auction Director at Love of the Game Auctions, an internet sports and memorabilia auction that helps families sell collectibles. “But don’t assume sports cards or other memorabilia have to be old to be valuable. Modern cards of such stars as Tom Brady, Mike Trout, LeBron James, Michael Jordan, Derek Jeter and others can sell for lots of money.”

He is offering tips to help determine if your belongings are valuable:

OLDER SPORTS CARDS

Cards from the 1960s and earlier are collectible, and those from before the 1940s can be extremely valuable. Big-name Hall of Famers like Babe Ruth, Ty Cobb, Lou Gehrig, Honus Wagner, Mickey Mantle and others bring high prices.

With old cards from the 1880s and early 1900s, look for tobacco and candy brands, such as Old Judge, Piedmont, Sweet Caporal or American Caramel. Really old Sports memorabilia from the 19th and early 20th Century, such as photographs, postcards, bats, gloves and balls are also collectible.

When opting to sell sports items, consider a specialty auction, such as Love of the Game, which has the expertise to professionally research sports items and maintains lists of bidders specializing in this area, to get top dollar. More information is available at loveofthegameauctions.com.

MODERN CARDS

Prices on recent baseball, basketball and football cards have risen rapidly. The three keys are condition, star power and cards from early in player careers.

Do you have major current stars, like Mike Trout, Patrick Mahomes, Tom Brady and LeBron James? Or do you have greats from the recent past, like Michael Jordan, Kobe Bryant, Magic Johnson, Derek Jeter or Joe Montana?

Check if your cards are denoted as Rookie, Prospect, Draft Pick or other indicators they’re from a player’s first season. And condition is



king,

as cards that look

pack fresh with sharp corners and a well-centered image command highest prices. Additionally, unopened packs and boxes from almost any year can be valuable.

MEMORABILIA

Do you have old advertising posters depicting sports stars or famous entertainment personalities together with food, tobacco or sporting goods brands. Many original signs, store displays and promotional items are collectible, especially those dating from the early 1900s into the 1960s. But low-quality reproductions aren’t. Look for memorabilia spotlighting sports heroes, superheroes, early Walt Disney characters and Star Wars subjects.

So, while you’re spring cleaning that attic, basement or garage, don’t rush to the garbage. Before throwing out old “junk,” determine if it’s valuable!



8 tips for energy efficiency

BY MENARDS | PHOTO BY ADOBE STOCK

There are many ways to reduce a household's energy use from simple adjustments in behavior to comprehensive home improvements. The main reasons to conserve energy are to save on utility bills and protect the environment.

Some of the more common ways to conserve energy are:

REPLACE LIGHT BULBS

Traditional incandescent light bulbs consume an excessive amount of electricity and need replacing more often than energy efficient bulbs.

Halogen incandescent bulbs, CFLs and LEDs use 25-80% less electricity and last 3-25 times longer than traditional bulbs.

SMART THERMOSTAT

Automatically turn off or reduce heating and cooling during times when you're away or sleeping.

Depending on the model, programmable thermostats can save you \$180 per year.

ENERGY EFFICIENT WINDOWS

To prevent heat loss through your windows, replace single-pane windows with double-pane ones.

In warmer climates, heat gain through your windows may be a problem.

Window shades, shutters, screens and awnings can also provide an extra layer of insulation between your home and external temperatures.

WEATHERIZE YOUR HOME

Sealing air leaks around your home is a great way to reduce your heating and cooling expenses.

Apply caulk or weather stripping to seal air leaks or cracks

EFFICIENT APPLIANCES

On average, appliances take up about 13% of your total household energy use.

Energy-efficient appliances may have higher purchase prices but cost less to operate

A NEW WATER HEATER

Purchasing an energy efficient water heater will reduce your water heating expenses.

USE SMART POWER STRIPS

Advanced power strips can shut off the power to electronics when not in use and can be turned off at an assigned time, during inactivity or through remote switches.

ADJUST DAY-TO-DAY BEHAVIOR

Energy conservation is as simple as turning off lights or appliances when not in use. You can save energy hang drying clothes, washing dishes by hand, turning down the heat and using your air conditioner less in the summer. Heating and cooling expenses constitute nearly half of an average home's utility bill.

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