

# HOME & GARDEN

SEPTEMBER 2024

522



## SEVERNA PARK VOICE

EXIT

### HOMESTEAD GARDENS

#### *Fall Is For Planting*

**PAGE 14** The garden center offers everything needed for a good planting season, so that by spring, gardens are robust and beautiful.



#### THE ESSENTIAL FALL LAWN CARE

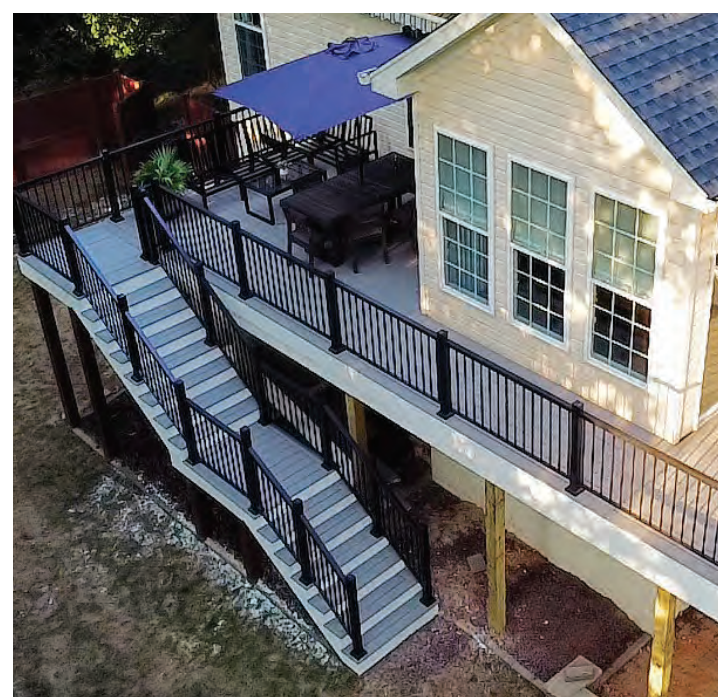
**Page 6** These two practices, when combined, can rejuvenate your lawn, ensuring it remains healthy and vibrant year-round.

#### CUSTOM KITCHEN DESIGNS

**Page 17** Personalized designs are available for everyone and every budget. Learn about thoughtful details that go a long way.

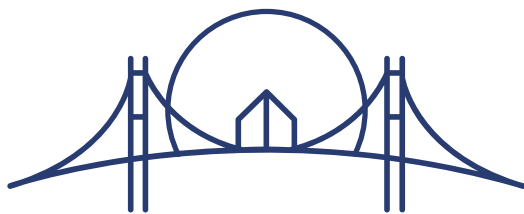
#### WHY ARE GUTTERS IMPORTANT?

**Page 22** The often-overlooked features direct rainwater away from your roof, walls and foundation, preventing potential problems.



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# That Price Is Outrageous!

**John Aliff III,  
CFA, CPA**  
Bayrise Builders



**H**ave you received a quote for a home improvement project lately and been frustrated with what seem to be astronomical prices? If so, you're not alone. Similarly, as a general contractor, sending out proposals often feels like walking on eggshells lately — afraid to hit send and trigger the backlash of the client.

"Is this price too high?" We often ask ourselves that question before sending a proposal, and then quickly answer that with a "no" after glancing at the slim projected gross margin.

Since the COVID pandemic first began a few years ago, the blame was largely placed on materials skyrocketing due to supply chain issues. Material prices subsequently began to normalize from those peak extremes, but widespread inflation followed to put further upward pressure on pricing across the board. Many clients often assume materials are still to blame for the higher cost of home improvement projects, but increased labor costs are

a significant driver, which makes a lot of sense if you stop and think about it. Every one of us has been faced with higher costs across every facet of our daily lives.

So, how do we adapt to that forced higher cost of living? We seek higher compensation, and the same is true for tradesmen and general laborers. It's a necessary increase given the widespread inflation we've all been hit with.

So, material prices have increased, labor costs have increased, and let's not forget about overhead, of course. When it comes to overhead increases, there's one main culprit: significantly higher insurance premiums. Everything has increased ... does that include net profit margins for the contractor too? We wish.

## Is spending on home improvement a bad idea then?


Absolutely not. Stating the obvious here: homes are expensive, and history tells us they will continue to get more expensive. If you shell out the cash to purchase a home, it's in your best interest to properly maintain that home in its entirety. Furthermore, if you've taken the leap into home ownership, don't be afraid to turn it into exactly what you want when the budget allows.

Spending money modifying and im-

proving your home should not be viewed as a negative type of discretionary spending, but rather a lifestyle-improving investment. That same inflation we've been discussing has driven home prices substantially higher each of the last few years especially, and over the long term in general. Real estate is considered one of the best inflation-protected investments for that exact reason — values should be expected to increase in line with inflation at a minimum. So, if you're going to spend it, why not spend it on something that will preserve the value of those dollars while simultaneously increasing your level of happiness in your home?

One funding source we've seen many of our clients utilize recently is a home equity line of credit (HELOC), allowing them to utilize the recent natural appreciation of their homes to fund desired improvements and further appreciation.

*If you're considering any type of remodeling or construction project, residential or commercial, reach out today and let Bayrise Builders simplify things by handling the process from start to finish! John Aliff can be reached at [john@bayrisebuilders.com](mailto:john@bayrisebuilders.com) or 410-561-6203. ■*



**Spending money modifying and improving your home should not be viewed as a negative type of discretionary spending, but rather a lifestyle-improving investment.**

# Landmark Roofing

## A Company On The Move!

Rob  
Calhan



Artie  
Hendricks



# LANDMARK ROOFING

**E**ight years ago, Artie Hendricks and Rob Calhan formed Landmark Roofing, located in the heart of Severna Park, Maryland. Their focus is to provide the highest quality roofing, siding, gutters, windows and doors possible to their customers. As their business continues to grow and evolve, both Artie and Rob realized that it was very important to scale their business operations and systems to continue to meet and exceed their customer's needs. So what did they do? They incorporated a core values system in the company to ensure the focus was always on the customer. Not only to have core values for core values sake but to live these core values as a company — with every employee using the values as a guiding light for the future, outlining what their customers can expect when they do business with Landmark Roofing. Artie and Rob have defined their purpose for being in business as a company. They determined that, **“Our purpose is to provide a safe, worry-free place for people to live and thrive.”** Their core values state three key areas that help define Landmark Roofing. The first core value is to **“Always Do the Right Thing”** — which is all about company integrity, reputation over profits, taking responsibility and always considering the impact of what Landmark Roofing is doing. The second core value is **“Communication”** which means to take action, be honest and transparent, listen to learn and not to respond, and know your audience and customers so that everyone is on the same page and fully aware of what is to be expected. The third core



value is **“Commitment”** — which means that Landmark Roofing focuses on attention to the details, for a customer to expect excellence, that Landmark feels no excuse is acceptable to its customers and its follow-through is second to none.

Landmark Roofing has also excelled in the last eight years and has received the most prestigious awards possible from GAF, the largest roofing manufacturer in North America. In 2023, Landmark Roofing earned the GAF Master Elite Triple Excellence Award for Consumer Protection Excellence, Training Excellence and Installation Excellence. Eric Small, GAF Territory Manager, said, “This is awarded to contractors recognized for providing superior protection for their customers, showing a commitment to training and continuing education, and demonstrating a consistent installation with a high level of quality.” Additionally in 2023, Landmark also received the Master Elite President's Club Award representing its overall excellence with GAF. While only 2% of roofing contractors earn Master Elite, only 50% are Presidential Award Winners. Small said, “This is Landmark's third year in a row as a President's Award winner.” Small added, “GAF's Master Elite Contractor emblem is more than a sticker or a logo; it's an invitation. It can't be bought. It can only be earned.”

So, as you can see, Landmark Roofing and its suppliers have a lot of great things to say about the type of company Landmark Roofing is. Let's take a look at what a few Landmark customers had to say about their recent experience with the company.

**Thank you to those who voted us Best Home Improvement Contractor for 2024!**

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*“Landmark is a fantastic, honest company. I did my research on all the roofers in the area and received multiple bids. From their initial survey to final execution, the process was seamless. They gave me a fair price from the start. Others tried to negotiate, dropping nearly 50% over the course of an hour. This is a fantastic local company. They do what they say, and they do it well. Extremely positive experience. Very highly recommend. Thanks to all the Landmark guys.” – Michael R.*

*“Well, that was easy! It all started with a great conversation with Artie Hendricks. He set the stage with great communication and navigated us through the nuances and challenges with our situation. And then he assigned us the greatest Project Manager, Jimmy Moore, who led a truly efficient process — installation went smoothly and clean-up was most impressive. I was starting to think I was special to get such great service and then I read the other reviews — Looks like this is what they do all day every day! Thanks to all with a special shout out to Karina — who did a great job of answering all my questions and navigating me through the paperwork.” – Marjorie T.*



**2% of contractors nationally earn these distinctive awards.**

Landmark Roofing is an award-winning, locally owned company that offers the highest quality possible materials and workmanship for all of your roofing, siding, gutters, windows, doors and repair needs. If you are in the market for any of the offered services, check Landmark Roofing’s reviews online first and compare them to *any* competitor. Reviews are a great way to understand how a company operates and what you can expect as a client of their services. You can read firsthand from other homeowners what kind of a company Landmark Roofing is to do business with. Landmark Roofing has over 422 Google reviews with a 4.9+ rating and counting. This number of reviews and ratings from other homeowners details what you can expect when you work with Landmark Roofing. As an added consumer benefit, Landmark Roofing also has extensive expertise to help you navigate the insurance process should you experience storm damage too.

Locally, Landmark Roofing continues to support the Greater Severna Park and Arnold Chamber of Commerce as well helping other nonprofit organizations with philanthropic support. Both Artie Hendricks and Rob Calhan serve on local area nonprofits’ board of directors. Artie is chairman of the board for the Severna Park Commu-

nity Center and Rob is a board member with the Wellness House of Annapolis. These organizations focus on making our local community a better place to live and to raise our families. Additionally, for the eighth year in a row, Landmark Roofing is providing a free roof giveaway for a family in need. The winner will be nominated by someone in the community.

Landmark Roofing’s core values of “Always Doing the Right Thing” and having “Honest and Transparent Communication” with an “Unmatched Commitment” is how the team operates and leads to their purpose of providing a safe, worry-free place for families to live and thrive.

As Artie Hendricks said, “We do our best to be the best company every day and try to respond as quickly as possible to every client when they call for whatever reason. Rob and I are homeowners too and understand your urgency when you call; we will always treat your home like it is our home.” ■



**For more information:** Contact Landmark Roofing, located at 540 Baltimore Annapolis Boulevard in Severna Park, Maryland, for all your roofing needs including roofing inspections and assistance with the insurance claim process. Landmark Roofing, over the last five years, has successfully assisted over 1,700 Anne Arundel County homeowners with navigating the insurance claims process for a full roof replacement.

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# The Essential Fall Lawn Care

## Why Core Aeration And Overseeding Matter



As the summer heat wanes and fall approaches, it's time to start thinking about preparing your lawn for the cooler months ahead. One of the most crucial tasks in this process is core aeration and overseeding. These two practices, when combined, can rejuvenate your lawn, ensuring it remains healthy and vibrant year-round.

### Why Core Aeration Is Key

Core aeration is the process of removing small plugs

of soil from your lawn. This process plays a critical role in maintaining a healthy lawn as, over time, the soil becomes compacted, especially in high-traffic areas. Compacted soil restricts the movement of air, water and nutrients, making it difficult for grass roots to penetrate and grow.

Core aeration relieves this compaction, allowing your lawn to "breathe" better, and enhances the efficiency of other lawn care practices. For instance, fertilizers and water can more easily reach the root zone, leading to better nutrient absorption and stronger grass.

Additionally, core aeration helps to break down thatch, a layer of dead grass and roots that can suffocate your lawn if it becomes too thick.

### The Role Of Overseeding

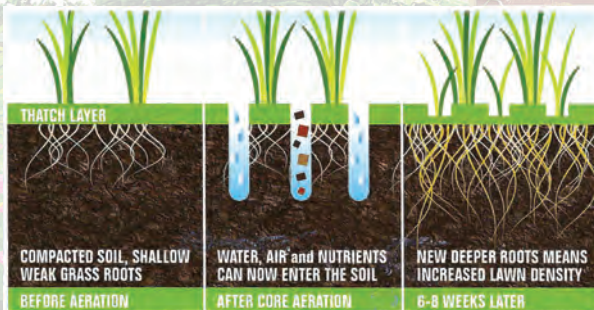
Overseeding involves spreading new grass seed over your existing lawn. This process fills in bare spots, improves the density of your turf, and introduces more resilient grass varieties that can withstand the stresses of weather, diseases and pests. Overseeding is particularly beneficial for lawns that have experienced thinning due to summer heat, foot traffic or other factors. By introducing fresh grass seed, you're effectively giving your lawn a new

*Continued on page 25*

# Transform Your LAWN!

## Now is the time to schedule Core Aeration & Overseeding

As temperatures start to cool, it's the perfect time to revitalize your lawn with core aeration and overseeding. Of all the things that build a healthy, thick lawn, core aeration and overseeding are secondary only to lawn fertilizing and are the secret to getting the most out of your other lawn care services.



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# Give Your Door Hardware An Upgrade



**Rick Miller**  
Park Hardware

Your front door is more than just an entry point — it's a statement of style. If your locks are outdated, this fall is the perfect time to consider an upgrade. Whether you're enhancing the aesthetics, boosting security, or adding smart features, upgrading your locks can have a big impact on your home and convenience for your family. Here are five compelling reasons to give your doors a lock upgrade:

## Aesthetics

Modern locks come in a variety of finishes and designs that can complement the style of your home. From sleek, contemporary options to classic, traditional designs, the right lock will enhance your door's appearance, giving your entryway a fresh, polished look.



*Continued on page 20*

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# Oil Based Vs. Water Based: The Truth About Modern Pavement Sealers

**Ian Chapat**  
TruSeal Asphalt  
and Concrete



In today's day and age, with a plethora of information channels at our fingertips, it can sometimes be difficult to sift through all that information to find what is relevant and accurate. Those who have ever done a sealcoat on their driveway probably have heard the verbiage "oil based" vs. "water based" sealers casually thrown around by friends, neighbors or contractors they have spoken to. Here are the differences:

Many products are made using raw asphalt, which is an extreme-

ly viscous byproduct of the oil refining process, called bitumen. These products are used for a variety of purposes including pavement sealers, paving tack coats, waterproofing, roofing materials, etc. The two main categories of products used in pavement sealers can be classified into "asphalt cutbacks" and "emulsions."

## Asphalt Cutbacks/ Gilsonite

These are made with raw asphalt (bitumen) dissolved in petroleum solvents, also called distillates. The amount of solvent added impacts the overall product viscosity and cure rate of the asphalt cutback. The most used solvents include naphtha, gasoline, mineral spirits (paint thinner) and kerosene.

*Continued on page 26*

The two main categories of products used in pavement sealers can be classified into "asphalt cutbacks" and "emulsions."



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# Ensuring Electrical Safety:

## Essential Tips For Homeowners



**Ryan Deshaies**  
President and CEO  
Chesapeake Electric



**E**lectrical safety is paramount in maintaining a secure and stable home environment. As our reliance on electrical devices grows, so does the need to understand how to manage and safeguard our home's electrical system. Here's a comprehensive guide for homeowners on common electrical issues, safety measures, and when to call a professional.

### Common Electrical Issues and How to Address Them

#### 1. Flickering Lights

Flickering lights can indicate a range of issues, from a loose bulb to a more serious problem like a faulty connection or a failing circuit. If replacing the bulb doesn't resolve the issue, it's wise to consult an electrician to inspect the wiring and ensure everything is up to code.

#### 2. Circuit Breaker Trips

Frequent tripping of circuit breakers may signal that the circuit is overloaded or there's a problem with the wiring. Overloading occurs when too many devices are plugged into one circuit. If this problem persists, seek professional help to evaluate your home's electrical load and make necessary adjustments.

*Continued on page 16*

## Get Fall Ready With Your Local Electrical Experts

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# A Guide To Fall Plants And Colors

**John Benoit**  
Estate Manager  
Barks Road  
Landscape  
Architecture  
Ltd.



**A**utumn is my favorite time of year. I like it for the cooler temperatures, the fall harvests, Thanksgiving, my birthday and especially the fall colors. It goes without saying that fall is also my favorite time of year to be in the garden.

Since I was a kid, I have been in awe of the colors in autumn landscapes – the deep reds of oakleaf hydrangea, serviceberry's show of oranges, the golden yellow of spicebush, and the carnival of color that is fothergilla – and the processes by which plants prepare themselves for the winter.

During the spring and summer months, trees and shrubs are actively producing chlorophyll so that photosynthesis can occur. As the days get shorter, chlorophyll breaks down and the plant no longer produces replacement molecules. The leaves change colors.

Plants contain pigments called carotenoids. Carotenoids are responsible for the yellows we see in plants in the fall. Though carotenoids are present in all plants, they are overshadowed during the growing season by the green of chlorophyll. Some plants also produce anthocyanins in response to bright light and excess plant sugars within leaf cells. Anthocyanins are responsible for the darker shades of red that certain plants exhibit in autumn.

Temperatures and rainfall leading up to, and during, the fall season impact the intensity of fall colors. Warm, sunny days and cold nights bring about the most impressive color displays. During the warm days, plants continue producing sugars, but the cool nights and the closing of veins in the leaves prevent the sugars from moving out to other parts of the plant. Sugar and light spur production of the anthocyanin pigments, which tint reds and purples. Because carotenoids are always present in leaves, the yellow and gold colors remain fairly constant from year to year.

Rainfall also affects the colors we

see in autumn. That the weather is so unpredictable and variable, no two fall seasons can be the same. A late spring or drought conditions can delay the fall display. An exceptionally warm fall will result in less intense color. A warm wet spring, a fair summer, sunny autumn days and cool nights will result in the most spectacular show of fall colors.

As the summer of 2024 comes to an end, plants are stressed and gardeners are tired. The record heat and the inconsistent rainfall has impacted all of us. Though it is tempting to turn one's back on their garden for fall festivals, football games and camping trips, I'd urge all of my gardening friends to keep on keepin' on. Don't give up now.

Plant your cool weather vegetables, and your cover crops. Plant bulbs and spring-blooming perennials. Amend the soil as you go. And water your plants – especially the newly planted ones. Fall is the ideal time to prepare your garden for the winter, and for the following growing season. Above all, I hope that you take the time in your garden to enjoy the fruits of your labor. Look around you and revel in the colors of fall!

Contact Barks Road Landscape Architecture, located at 1197 Baltimore Annapolis Boulevard in Arnold, for all your landscaping needs. You can reach Barks Road Landscape Architecture at 410-647-2090 or [www.barksroad.com](http://www.barksroad.com). ■





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# Is Your Home Ready For The New Season?

**By Alexander Santiago**  
Beltway Builders

**W**ith fall and winter on the horizon, preparing your home for the approaching cold months is important. The dramatic change in temperature and weather takes its toll on your home's exterior, so making sure you find potential problem spots before they become a headache is essential. Here are some easy areas a homeowner can inspect to find out how ready they are:

**1. Deck:** Inspecting your deck for warped or damaged boards is the first step. A board with a small crack can easily turn into a split board with enough precipitation and freezing. Depending on how the boards look, re-staining them to protect existing boards and replacing cracked ones



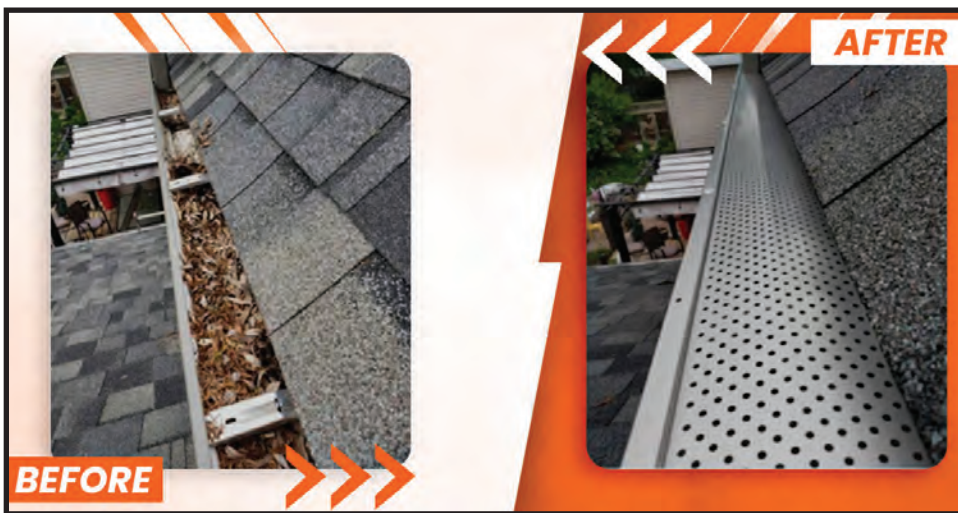
will ensure that you can go into spring strong. Examining the structural framing for mold, cracks or other damage is also a must because it could become a safety concern if left untouched.

**2. Roof and Gutters:** Inspecting the roof for missing, frayed or damaged shingles is the best first step. About 20% to 25% of your heat escapes through your roof, and loose or missing shingles can oftentimes exacerbate any issues through the winter if

one already exists. Accessing the attic and inspecting the roof for damp spots or mold from the inside will help indicate whether you have a leak to worry about.

Checking the gutters for wear and damage before the leaves start falling will help avoid a clog or leak from ruining your day in the future. If you have trees near your house, ensuring the gutters and roof are clear of debris and leaves before the snow starts falling will help prevent ice dams and rot.

*Continued on page 20*



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# The Essential Role Of Water Treatment For Your Home



**Michael Heidler**  
Heidler Inc.



**W**ater is the lifeblood of any household, flowing from our taps to hydrate, clean and nourish. But how often do we consider the quality of this vital resource? Treating your household water isn't just an option — it's a necessity for safeguarding your family's health, extending the life of your appliances, and ensuring peace of mind.

### PROTECT YOUR HEALTH

The water entering your home might look clean, but it can carry contaminants

like chlorine, lead, bacteria and even pharmaceuticals. Over time, exposure to these substances can have serious health implications, from skin irritation to more severe conditions like gastrointesti-

nal issues and neurological disorders. Treating your water with a reliable filtration system can remove these harmful elements, providing your family with safe, clean water for drinking, cooking and bathing.

### EXTEND THE LIFE OF YOUR APPLIANCES

Untreated water isn't just a health risk —it can also be a silent threat to your household

*Continued on page 20*

## CLEAN WATER, HEALTHIER LIVES

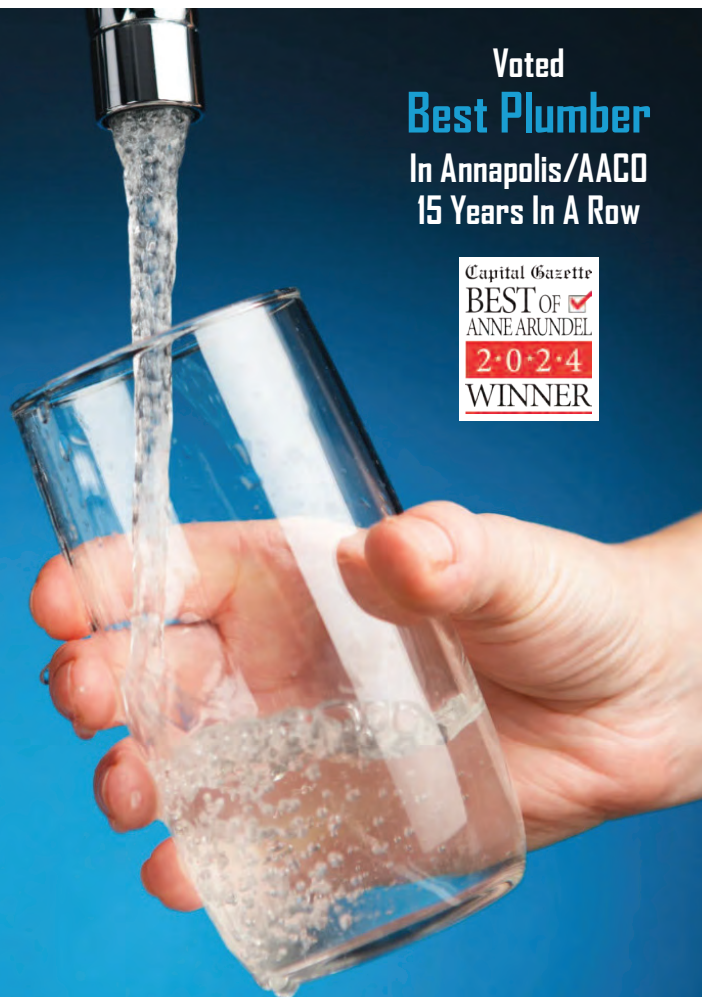
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# Homestead Gardens: Rooted In The Community

By Lauren Cowin

**P**umpkins and hay bales are in, humidity is on its way out, and the team at Homestead Gardens wants to get you set for next spring, now.

“Fall is the best time to establish your plants for next year,” said Aimee Miskimon, general manager of Homestead Gardens in Severna Park. “We will continue to get fresh inventory so that our fall gardeners have everything that they need to have a good planting season and allow those plants to establish over the winter months so that in the spring

your garden is robust and beautiful.”

Pointing to a hydrangea past its summer prime, Miskimon explained that now is actually the perfect time to put the beloved summer stunner in the ground. The slightly cooler temperatures and more frequent rain showers make for ideal conditions for the thirsty plant and less maintenance for the gardener. Though the plant may present as bare sticks in the dormant winter months, patience in the process will pay off next year.

Another advantage to fall planting is the ability to see the product in a more mature stage. Miskimon said it's com-

mon for customers to purchase young plants in the spring, and possibly not account for the amount of space they will take up as they grow. Waiting until fall allows for a more complete picture of what the selection will look like in a yard or garden, particularly when it comes to trees.

Homestead Gardens is offering local gardeners more than just planting materials this fall. The center is hosting a free educational series called “Garden Chores and Coffee” every Saturday in September and October, explaining in-depth the steps to take to ensure a



***Homestead Gardens in Severna Park has an array of fall plants and decorations ready for the season.***





**“We can be a one-stop shop for checking things off your list.”**

**— AIMEE MISKIMON, GENERAL MANAGER, HOMESTEAD GARDENS**



***In addition to fall planting lectures, Homestead Gardens will host a “Houseplants Rx” series, to keep gardening going year-round.***

beautiful spring.

Hayley Bush, Homestead Gardens' marketing manager, explained that these types of events have traditionally been available at the flagship store in Davidsonville, and the staff is excited to begin offering them in Severna Park.

“Even though we're 25 minutes down the road, it is a different gardening journey here in Severna Park,” Bush said, explaining that the high volume of oak trees in Severna Park creates a need for more shade-loving plants for the local clientele. “We're hoping it turns into this little garden community over a cup of coffee.”

While the lectures and coffee are free, it is recommended to reserve a spot ahead of time.

Like well-established plants that require attention and care over time, so too do businesses. One way that Homestead Gardens has adapted to customers' requests is an expansion of Evelyn's Boutique, which features high-end women's apparel and accessories. This season, customers will find the boutique area doubled in size and selection.

Shoppers will also find pet care

items moved to the front of the store, highlighting the array of organic and high-quality pet food Homestead Gardens has to offer.

Sometimes, change is provoked by external forces. For Homestead Gardens, that came in the form of a new neighbor earlier this year. Rise Up Coffee Roasters, a popular Maryland coffee chain, opened in the adjoining business space formerly occupied by Zachary's Jewelers. With a door open between the two businesses, freshly caffeinated patrons can sip as they shop.

“It's really become a win-win kind of relationship for our community and for us,” Miskimon said. “You can get yourself a cup of coffee and start at the front of the store and go to the back of the store and just check so many things off of your list.”

What started decades ago as a family roadside produce stand is now a bustling three-store business, with roots firmly planted in the community – both literally, from the plants grown in the Davidsonville greenhouse, and figuratively, through partnerships with smaller businesses and commitment to various local

charities. Homestead Gardens' third and newest location is in Smyrna, Delaware.

The Severna Park store alone has donated hundreds of dormant perennials to the Friends of Anne Arundel County Trails, whose Master Gardeners plant them along the local trails for patrons to enjoy in spring and summer.

“They've remained so true to who they are as an organization,” Miskimon said of the Riddle family, who founded Homestead Gardens in 1973.

When Miskimon began at Homestead Gardens roughly one year ago, she arrived early her first morning to walk the entirety of the store before it opened. The feeling she experienced as she roamed each aisle is one she aspires to share with her customers.

“I want them to come in and I want them to feel like this is their happy place,” she said.

*Homestead Gardens Severna Park is open from 9:00am-6:00pm daily, and is located at 522 Ritchie Highway. For more information, call 410-384-7966 or visit [www.homesteadgardens.com](http://www.homesteadgardens.com).* ■

Photos by Lauren Cowin

# Ensuring Electrical Safety

Continued from page 9

## 3. Outlets Not Working

Dead outlets can result from various issues, including faulty wiring or a broken outlet. If resetting a tripped breaker doesn't fix the problem, contact an electrician to diagnose and repair the issue.

## When to Call an Electrician

While some electrical issues are manageable on your own, many require professional expertise. You should always call an electrician if:

- You experience frequent power outages or tripped breakers
- You notice burning smells or sparks from outlets or switches
- Your home has outdated

wiring or non-functional ground-fault circuit interrupter (GFCI) outlets

- You are unsure or uncomfortable with electrical repairs

## The Importance of Ground-Fault Circuit Interrupters (GFCIs)

GFCI outlets are crucial for preventing electrical shock, especially in areas prone to moisture, such as bathrooms and kitchens. These devices monitor the flow of electricity and cut off power if they detect any irregularities, such as water exposure. Regularly test your GFCIs to ensure they're functioning properly by pressing the "test" button and then the "reset" button.

## Surge Protection: Why It's Essential

Power surges, caused by lightning strikes or electrical issues, can damage sensitive electronic devices and appliances. Surge protectors act as a barrier, diverting excess volt-

age away from your devices. Installing whole-home surge protectors can offer comprehensive protection, safeguarding all your electrical equipment from potential damage.

## Smart Home Safety Enhancements

### 1. Span Panels

Smart panels, like those from Span, provide real-time insights into your home's energy usage and enhance overall safety. These panels allow for precise control over energy distribution and can alert homeowners to potential issues before they escalate.

### 2. Safety Protection Systems (PSP)

PSP safety protection offers advanced solutions for monitoring and managing your home's electrical system. Its systems can detect anomalies, alert you to potential hazards, and integrate with smart home technology for enhanced safety.

## Benefits of Smart-Home Technology

Smart-home safety features offer numerous advantages:

- Real-Time Monitoring: Allows you to track your electrical usage and spot issues early.
- Remote Control: Enables you to manage and adjust settings from anywhere.
- Enhanced Security: Provides alerts for unusual activity, helping to prevent accidents and damage.

## Conclusion

Maintaining electrical safety in your home requires vigilance and proactive measures. Understanding common electrical issues, utilizing safety devices like GFCIs and surge protectors, and investing in smart-home technology can significantly reduce risks and enhance your home's safety. For comprehensive safety and peace of mind, consider exploring brands and solutions like PSP safety protection and Span panels, backed by their proven track records and benefits. ■



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# Custom Kitchen Designs For Your Family

**Kristy Wallace**  
Severna Park Kitchen & Bath



**Y**our home is your harbor. It's a place to gather and rest, to celebrate and grieve, to make memories with the ones you love, and to find peace and comfort in a hectic world. At the start of a kitchen renovation, when we meet in a client's home, we talk a little bit about the aesthetics of the new space and a lot about the family who will use it. From clients who are aging in place all the way to first-time homebuyers growing a family, our clients' stories shape the way we personalize the space. Custom designs are available for everyone and every budget, and here we



break down some thoughtful details that go a long way.

## Zones

If you are a family who uses the kitchen to cook, it is important to establish three work zones. Organizing your kitchen layout to accommodate cooking, cleaning and storing

are essential elements. We will set the trash near the sink, spice drawers near the range, and a pantry near the refrigerator to organize the layout in a functional way. We understand necessary clearances for workflow depending on your family's size and lifestyle.

We once helped family mem-

bers who were particularly tall, so we elevated the island by an inch and a half to make prep work more comfortable. Do you have younger ones at home? Consider storing your dishes in a drawer for easier reach. Learning how your family works and lives in your home is the first step to building that dream kitchen.

## Storage Solutions

Once the layout is established, we start diving into personalized storage solutions. Furry children need a place for food? We have an idea for that! Messy chef who needs quick access to paper towels? Let's build a cabinet for that! Love to bake but hate stacking your sheet pans under one another? Let's steal space above the refrigerator and store them vertically!

We've even gone so far as to measure dinner plates to

**Continued on page 24**



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# How To Design A Fall-Friendly Outdoor Entertainment Space

**Nicole Bailey**  
Fence & Deck Connection



## Set the Mood

As the weather cools and the leaves change, it's an ideal time to transform your outdoor area into a fall-ready entertainment space. Whether you love hosting gatherings or want a cozy retreat for yourself, designing an autumn-friendly outdoor entertaining area requires thoughtful planning and consideration.

For help designing your outdoor space, optimizing it for fall activities, and maximizing enjoyment in cooler weather, follow these tips.

When it comes to designing a fall-ready outdoor entertainment space, you definitely need to consider functionality and ambiance. Select outdoor furniture designed to withstand the elements and provide am-

ple seating. Choose materials like teak, aluminum or synthetic wicker that can withstand moisture, sunlight and temperature changes. This ensures your furniture remains durable and weather-resistant throughout the changing season. Opt for cozy seating options like

deep-cushioned chairs and sofas, adorned with fall-themed throw pillows and blankets.

In addition to choosing your fall-friendly furniture, you can continue to create your cozy outdoor living room that is functional for both day and nighttime use. Incorporate string lights, lanterns or deck lighting on the railing or steps for a beautiful after-dark glow.

## Deck it Out

Arrange your furniture in ways to promote conversation and interaction, creating a welcoming environment for socializing. Consider a dining area for outdoor meals or a designated space for games and activities.

Enhance your get-togethers with a fire pit or television. An outdoor patio heater or fire pit provides warmth and creates the perfect autumn ambiance. A fire pit also serves as a focal point for intimate conversations,

*Continued on page 24*

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# Maintaining Your Home With Power Washing And Soft Washing



**Alex Prevezianos**  
CheckMark  
Power  
Washing

## What Is Power Washing?

Power washing, often referred to as pressure washing, utilizes high-pressure water streams to remove stubborn dirt, grime and stains from various surfaces. This technique is particularly effective on hard surfaces like concrete driveways, patios, sidewalks and brick walls. The powerful jets of water can blast away embedded debris, oil stains, and even chewing gum, leaving surfaces looking new again.

However, power washing is not suitable for all surfaces. Materials like wood, vinyl siding, and shingles can be damaged by the intense pressure, which is why it's crucial to use this method selectively and with caution. Hiring a professional service with experience

in power washing ensures that the correct pressure levels are used, preventing unintentional damage to your property.

## What Is Soft Washing?

In contrast, soft washing employs a low-pressure water spray combined with specialized cleaning solutions to gently clean more delicate surfaces. This method is ideal for roofs, siding, decks and other surfaces that could be harmed by high-pressure water. Soft washing not only cleans but also disinfects by killing mold, algae and bacteria, which can thrive in damp environments.

The cleaning solutions used in soft washing are biodegradable and safe for plants and

*Continued on page 26*



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## Give Your Door Hardware An Upgrade

*Continued from page 7*

An upgraded lock is an easy way to add curb appeal without a major renovation. Also consider changing the color of your door to better match your favorite hardware finish, or to make your new hardware “pop.”

### Increased Security

With security being a top priority for everyone, upgrading your locks will provide an added layer of protection against intruders. Newer models offer advanced features such as bump-proof and pick-resistant technology, making it much harder for burglars. With a sturdier, more secure lock, you can rest easy knowing your home is well-protected. Visit your local hardware store or lock specialist for inexpensive upgrades to your door jamb and strikes, which can be easily upgraded and are typically the weakest point in your front entry system.

### Smart Functions with Digital and Wi-Fi Locks

The rise of smart home technology has revolutionized door locks. Digital and Wi-Fi enabled locks offer convenience and control that traditional locks simply can't match. Imagine locking or unlocking your door from your smartphone or giving temporary access to a friend while you're away. These smart locks can also integrate with other smart home devices, providing a seamless experience.

### Improved Feel and Function

An upgraded lock not only looks good but also feels better in your hand. The smooth operation of a new, well-engineered lock makes it easier to enter and exit your home. Over time, older locks can become stiff or difficult to turn, or may not easily latch when closing your door, risking your home accidentally being unlocked while you are away. A new lock eliminates these issues, ensuring reliable performance every time you use it.

### Key Convenience: One Key for All

One of the best-kept secrets about lock upgrades is the ability to have all the new locks in your home keyed alike. One key can open every door, simplifying your life and reducing the need for a bulky keychain. This includes the back-up key used in Smart Lock applications. Alternatively, you can purchase new locks that are keyed to match your existing house key, offering convenience without compromising security.

With so many options, it's easy to find the perfect lock that meets your needs and enhances your home. Consider giving your doors the upgrade they deserve — you'll appreciate the benefits every time you turn that key. ■

## Is Your Home Ready?

*Continued from page 12*

### 3. Paint and Caulk:

Look around your windows to make sure there is a good seal. If you see cracks in the caulking, it might be time to consider re-caulking or a replacement if there is an existing leak. If exterior paint is starting to fade, getting a fresh coat to protect the wood from water and ice can help prevent expensive repairs in the springtime. The same applies to the weather stripping around your exterior doors, ensuring there are no gaps for water to seep in!

*It is easy to be overwhelmed when looking at your fall home to-do list, particularly if you have procrastinated in previous years. If you are unsure about how ready your home is for the winter, call Beltway Builders to have an experienced project manager come out and go through the checklist with you for a free in-home estimate. Big or small, Beltway Builders does it all. Visit [www.beltwaybuilders.com](http://www.beltwaybuilders.com) or call 410-REMODEL today. ■*

## The Essential Role Of Water Treatment For Your Home

*Continued from page 13*

appliances. Hard water, which is water high in calcium and magnesium, can cause scale buildup in your pipes, water heater, dishwasher and washing machine. This buildup reduces the efficiency of your appliances, leading to higher energy costs and the need for more frequent repairs or replacements. By investing in a water softening system, you can extend the lifespan of your appliances, saving money in the long run.

### ENHANCE THE TASTE AND SMELL OF WATER

Have you ever noticed an unpleasant taste or odor in your tap water? This is often due to chemicals, like chlorine, which are used to disinfect municipal water

supplies. While effective at killing bacteria, these chemicals can leave a lingering taste and smell that affects everything from your morning coffee to your evening pasta. A proper water treatment system can eliminate these unwanted elements, leaving your water tasting fresh and pure.

### ENVIRONMENTAL BENEFITS

By treating your household water, you're also making an environmentally conscious choice. Bottled water is often seen as a convenient alternative to tap water, but it comes with a significant environmental cost. The production, transportation and disposal of plastic bottles contributes to pollution and waste. With a home water treatment system, you can reduce your reliance on bottled water, minimizing your environmental footprint.

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*Treat your water, treat your home, treat your family — with Heidler Inc. You can trust that the Heidler team is making the best choice for your water needs. ■*



# Trying To Outsmart The Seasons In My 100-Year-Old Home



**Dan Stefany**  
Operations  
Manager  
50 East  
Remodeling

the next family. We live in an early century Craftsman-style American Foursquare. What a name, right? Well, my mom had a saying, "You don't truly know someone until you've lived with them through all four seasons." The same holds true for a house, I've come to learn.

Our house is the opposite of an open floor plan. French doors close off each room on

the main level. Up the stairs is a windowless hallway leading to the four kids' rooms and bath. Another closed door to another staircase leads to the recently finished attic space, now our primary bedroom.

By the heat of the summer, you can hear the white noise of seven window-mounted air conditioning units to keep all living zones comfortable. I

eventually removed the French doors throughout the living and dining rooms, mud room and kitchen for airflow. As gorgeous as our front-facing stained glass windows and sidelight are, there is little to no insulation value. Through some renovations, I found my exterior walls have no insulation. Chocolate would melt inside

*Continued on page 24*

**M**y family isn't the first to live in my house. I like to think that we are keepers of the house until

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# Why Are Gutters Even Important?

**Joshua Hahn**  
Guardian Gutters



**G**utters may seem like a minor component of a home's exterior, but they play a crucial role in protecting your property from water damage. These often-overlooked features direct rainwater away from your roof, walls and foundation, preventing a host of potential problems that could otherwise arise. Understanding why gutters are important and the challenges that can occur when they're not functioning properly is key to maintaining a safe and durable home.



ble home.

The primary function of gutters is to manage rainwater and direct it away from your home. When it rains, gutters collect water from the roof

and channel it through downspouts, which then guide the water safely away from the foundation. This process prevents water from pooling around your home, which can

lead to various structural and aesthetic issues.

Without gutters, rainwater would cascade directly off the roof, creating a waterfall effect that can cause soil erosion around the foundation, damage to landscaping, and even leaks in the basement or crawl space. Over time, this constant exposure to moisture can weaken the foundation, leading to costly repairs. Gutters also protect your siding and exterior walls from water damage, which can cause paint to peel, wood to rot, and mold to grow.

When gutters fail to perform their job effectively, the consequences can be significant. Clogged gutters, for example, are a common issue that can lead to water over-

*Continued on page 25*

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# Fall Landscaping



**Jay Hudson**  
Evergreen Gene's



**F**all is often overlooked as a prime time for landscaping, but it's actually a season of significant advantages for professional landscape design and installation. The cooler temperatures and increased rainfall create ideal conditions for planting and establishing new plants.

One of the most significant advantages of fall landscaping is the cooler temperatures. Unlike the scorching heat of summer, fall provides a more comfortable environment for both plants and landscape professionals. Cooler temperatures help reduce the stress on plants, allowing them to focus

*Continued on page 24*

*Fall is an ideal time for professional landscaping. The cooler temperatures, increased rainfall, and plant dormancy create favorable conditions for planting and establishing new plants.*

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# Trying To Outsmart The Seasons

*Continued from page 21*

my kitchen cabinets mounted to the exterior wall. I felt spring and summer had the last laugh.

Into the fall months, I removed the window air conditioning units one by one. For a few weeks, we got by with opening our mostly original wood frame windows to let the fall air in during the day and close them at night. The whirring of the AC units was eventually replaced by the ping-pong of our cast iron radiators.

Rooms aren't heated evenly, so some bedroom doors stayed open; others shut. It was time to DIY heat shrink those same windows to keep the draft out and the heat in. The stained glass was cold to the touch. The exterior walls were chilly. We had to hang blankets on the walls at our beds to keep from touching the chilly wall in the middle of the night. No more melting chocolate at least!

Eventually, we saved enough to initiate our plan of attack. The house was long overdue for a

siding upgrade. We paid to have the house wrapped and taped in an insulation board before the new siding was installed — encapsulating and insulating the house from the outside.

The next year, we had the remaining original windows replaced with period-looking but high insulation value modern windows. We also had the stained glass covered with clear plexiglass inside and out, protecting it and adding a bit of insulation value.

Finally, we had two multi-zone mini split heating/cool-

ing units installed, feeding all rooms of the house. This was a non-invasive way to upgrade to a heating/cooling system and still keep our radiator system intact as backup.

We donated the AC units, rehung the doors, took down the blankets, and don't even think about heat shrink and window tape, and most importantly, my chocolate doesn't melt in my cabinets in the summertime. We finally outsmarted the seasons in our 100-year-old home. ■

## Custom Kitchen Designs

*Continued from page 17*

make sure they'll fit in a cabinet near the dishwasher. When you design your kitchen, think about maximizing space by adding smart storage solutions.

### Finishes

Form follows function, so once we've established the perfect layout for a project, we hone in on the finishes. Trends will come and go, but it is important to follow your own sense of style to create a space that feels good to you. A recent client selected stone countertops that mimicked the water view from her window. Another wanted to match her cabinetry to a specific blue in a painting of Annapolis. We've designed whole kitchens around

a piece of beloved pottery.

What inspires you? Connecting with a designer who can help you filter and balance what works in your design will allow you to create a space that feels like home.

*The team at Severna Park Kitchen & Bath truly believes in designing for their clients. The kitchen design process is personal, and they are grateful to share their expertise and care with the community. Call the shop or stop in to schedule an appointment.*

*Severna Park Kitchen & Bath is located in the Park Plaza shopping center at 580 Ritchie Highway, Suite C. To learn more, call 410-777-9526 or go to [www.spkitchenandbath.com](http://www.spkitchenandbath.com). ■*

## A Fall-Friendly Space

*Continued from page 18*

while an outdoor TV allows for movie nights, sports games or an evening under the stars.

### Go Under Cover

While a well-crafted pergola or retractable awning can offer some shelter from the elements, a screened porch or covered deck provides a much more enjoyable "outdoor" experience.

A screened porch during the fall offers a perfect blend of outdoor and indoor living, allowing you to enjoy the crisp, cool air without worrying about bugs or falling leaves. It provides a cozy space to savor autumn's vibrant colors and gentle breezes while staying sheltered from any

unpredictable weather. Additionally, a screened porch extends your living space, making it an ideal spot for relaxing with a warm cider, reading a book, or entertaining friends and family in a bug-free environment.

*Fall is the perfect time to upgrade your outdoor space! The summer busy season is winding down, which means quicker installation times for Maryland and Delaware customers. Contact Fence & Deck Connection at 410-757-5511 or visit [www.fenceand-deckconnection.com](http://www.fenceand-deckconnection.com) to learn more about its many fence, deck and screened porch options, as well as its free deck heater promotion. ■*

## Fall Landscaping

*Continued from page 23*

on developing strong root systems. This helps plants withstand the harsh winter months and thrive again in the spring.

Fall often brings increased rainfall, which is essential for helping new plants establish their root systems. The ample moisture helps plants absorb nutrients and stay hydrated, promoting healthy growth. This natural rainfall can reduce the need for frequent watering, saving both time and water resources.

Many plants enter a state of dormancy during the fall and winter. This means

they slow down their growth and conserve energy. When you plant in the fall, your new plants can use this dormant period to focus on root development, preparing them for vigorous growth in the spring. This helps them establish a strong foundation for future seasons.

Hiring a professional landscaping company can be a valuable investment during the fall season. This company should be able to create a customized plan that complements your home's architecture and your personal style. Its team can also select the most suitable plants for your climate and soil conditions, ensuring long-term health and beauty.

In conclusion, fall is an ideal time for professional landscaping. The cooler temperatures, increased rainfall, and plant dormancy create favorable conditions for planting and establishing new plants.

*Evergreen Gene's will handle all aspects of the landscaping process, from site preparation to planting and ongoing maintenance. The staff has the expertise and equipment to create stunning landscapes that will enhance the value and appeal of your property. Contact Evergreen Gene's today to schedule an appointment with an experienced estimator. Call 410-766-6877. ■*



# The Essential Fall Lawn Care

Continued from page 6

lease on life. The new grass fills in weak areas, enhancing the overall appearance while also crowding the turf to lessen the ability of invasive weeds to continue to spread.

## The Best Time For Aeration And Overseeding

Fall is the ideal time for core aeration and overseeding, especially in Maryland. The cooler temperatures and increased rainfall provide the perfect environment for grass seeds to germinate and establish strong roots before winter. By taking these steps in the fall, you're setting the stage for a lush, green lawn come spring. Whether you're dealing with compacted soil, thinning grass, or want to improve the overall health of your lawn, these practices are a wise investment in your landscape.

## Addressing Summer Damage With Topsoil

If your lawn has suffered significant damage over the summer, such as bare patches or areas where the grass has died off, you may need to add a layer of topsoil before overseeding. Topsoil improves soil structure, adds essential nutrients, and creates a better-growing environment for the new grass seed while also ensuring that the seed has good contact with the soil. By addressing any damage with topsoil before overseeding, you can help your lawn recover more quickly and effectively.

For more information, contact Cynthia Probst at [cynthia@turfandlandscapemanagement.com](mailto:cynthia@turfandlandscapemanagement.com) or 410-255-7402 or visit [www.turfandlandscapemanagement.com](http://www.turfandlandscapemanagement.com). ■

# Why Are Gutters Even Important?

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flow. Leaves, twigs and other debris can accumulate in gutters, blocking the flow of water and causing it to spill over the sides. This overflow can result in water pooling near the foundation, increasing the risk of basement flooding and foundation damage.

Another challenge is gutter sagging, which occurs when gutters become too heavy due to accumulated debris or standing water. Sagging gutters can pull away from the house, leading to gaps between the gutter and the roofline. These gaps can allow water to seep into the fascia boards, causing wood rot and potentially compromising the roof structure.

Improperly installed or undersized gutters can also lead to problems. If the gutters are

too small to handle the volume of water during heavy rainfall, they may overflow, defeating their purpose. Additionally, gutters that are not correctly pitched (set at the right angle) can cause water to stagnate, leading to rust, leaks and further damage over time.

Gutters are a vital part of your home's defense against water damage. Ensuring they are correctly installed, adequately sized, and well-maintained is essential for protecting your property. Regular cleaning and inspections can help prevent clogs, sagging and other issues that could compromise your gutters' effectiveness. By taking care of your gutters, you can avoid the costly and inconvenient problems that arise when they fail to do their job, keeping your home safe and sound for years to come. ■

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# The Truth About Modern Pavement Sealers

Continued from page 8

Most commonly, when you hear the term “oil-based sealer,” it is referring to an asphalt cutback sealer used with mineral **gilsonite**, a naturally occurring form of bitumen that forms in regions of Northern Utah when petroleum solidifies. Compared to refined bitumen, it is extremely brittle and can be crushed into a dark brown powder. A telltale sign that a gilsonite-based sealer has been applied is an extremely shiny

and crystallized appearance.

## Emulsions

Emulsions are a combination of bitumen, water and an emulsifying agent that helps with colloidal suspension. Emulsions are macroscopically homogeneous and microscopically heterogenous. Sand and additives are agitated into asphalt emulsion sealers prior to application to enhance surface traction, drying and durability.

## The Breakdown

Some people in the asphalt

industry will refer to asphalt emulsions as a “water-based” sealer to create a negative connotation around it. They will try to sell you by saying that their “oil-based” sealers are superior because they “penetrate the asphalt.” In actuality, when applied to your driveway, the solvent in the material breaks down the existing binder in your asphalt pavement. Once the material is fully cured off, it leaves the asphalt worse off than if nothing had been applied in the first place.

On top of that, the brittle gilsonite has a higher softening point (200 or more degrees) than the natural binder in your asphalt. When applied, it will leave the surface of the pavement extremely brittle once dry. Comparatively, asphalt emulsions fill in the voids of the surface asphalt aggregate to form a protective film, creating a barrier from harmful environ-

mental elements.

Lastly, the released solvents from cutbacks are high in volatile organic compounds (VOCs), which have a negative impact on the environment. As asphalt emulsions cure and harden, harmless water is released into the environment.

As asphalt emulsions continue to improve, they remain the best option to seal and protect your asphalt pavement investment, not “penetrate” it. Don’t be fooled by asphalt salesmen; do your research and ask prospective contractors the right questions on what product will be applied to your driveway.

*For more information or to ask questions about your asphalt or concrete driveway, sidewalks and patios, contact TruSeal Asphalt and Concrete at 443-223-9491 or visit [www.truseal-asphalt.com](http://www.truseal-asphalt.com).* ■

# Maintaining Your Home

Continued from page 19

pets, making it an eco-friendly option. This method is particularly beneficial for homes in humid climates where mold and mildew are prevalent. Regular soft washing can prolong the life of your roof and siding, saving you costly repairs or replacements in the long run.

## Benefits of Power Washing and Soft Washing

- 1 Enhanced Curb Appeal.** First impressions matter. A clean exterior boosts your property’s visual appeal, making it more inviting for visitors and potential buyers. Regular washing keeps your property looking well-maintained and cared for.
- 2 Preventative Maintenance.** Regular power washing and soft washing can prevent the buildup of grime and organic growth that can lead to long-term damage. Mold, mildew and algae can eat away at surfaces, leading to costly repairs if left untreated.
- 3 Increased Property Value.** A well-maintained property holds its value better than one that is neglected. By investing in regular cleaning, you enhance your property’s marketability and can potentially increase its resale value.
- 4 Health Benefits.** Mold, mildew and allergens can thrive on dirty surfaces, posing health risks to you and your family. Regular washing helps mitigate these risks, promoting a healthier living environment.
- 5 Time and Cost Efficiency.** While you might consider doing the cleaning yourself, hiring professionals can save you time and ensure the job is done correctly. The right equipment and expertise can lead to a more thorough cleaning in a fraction of the time it would take an inexperienced individual.

Power washing and soft washing are essential components of property maintenance that shouldn’t be overlooked. By investing in these services, you not only enhance the beauty of your property but also protect it from damage and increase its overall value. Consider scheduling regular cleanings as part of your property maintenance routine to ensure your home remains a safe, healthy and attractive place to live.

*For more information, contact CheckMark Power Washing at 443-848-0581 or visit [www.checkmarkpowerwash.com](http://www.checkmarkpowerwash.com).* ■

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Install new composite decking
Install new railing system

New Build Package

- Design work, structural drawings and 3-D renderings
New deck footers and posts
Construction of new composite deck and railing
We handle all permit submissions and HOA approvals as needed



VETERAN OWNED

0% FINANCING OPTIONS AVAILABLE

SCHEDULE YOUR FREE AT-HOME ESTIMATE



FAOutdoorSpaces.com 844-4FA-DECK



# THE CARPET AND AIR DUCT MAN

## 443-452-6003

### WE PROVIDE A TOTAL SOLUTION FOR YOUR HOME AND BUSINESS!

- Carpet sales, installation, cleaning, and repair
- LVP sales, installation, service, and repair
- Hardwood sales, installation, sanding, and refinishing
- Ceramic tile floor cleaning
- Furniture and upholstery cleaning
- Air duct cleaning
- Dryer vent cleaning and repair
- Mold remediation
- 24 Hour flood and fire response, water extraction and clean up

**CALL TODAY FOR YOUR FREE FLOORING ESTIMATE OR TO SCHEDULE AN APPOINTMENT.**

THE CARPET AND AIR DUCT MAN IS YOUR BEST "ONE STOP" SERVICE PROVIDER.



### DUCT CLEANING SOLUTIONS

Regular duct and dryer vent cleaning is essential to your health and safety and your equipment's maintenance and lasting performance. We provide superior services!



### CUSTOM SOLUTIONS

We can meet all your custom flooring needs. Our installers are the best in the business! Revived flooring and a custom carpet runner make a spectacular presentation!

### CLEANING SOLUTIONS

Our experienced Technicians have impressive skills and can often bring "life" back to carpet and upholstered furniture. Regular, professional cleaning is essential to maintaining and even extending the life of your carpet and furniture! Our cleaning rates are extremely competitive, and we don't use "bait and switch" tactics. With us you get full-service cleaning!



### REFINISHING SOLUTIONS

Sanding and refinishing hardwood floors restores beauty to tired and worn out floors! We can often customize the finish color to your specification!



*Here's Johnny!*

8461 FT. SMALLWOOD RD, STE A  
PASADENA, MD 21122  
[thecarpetandairductman.com](http://thecarpetandairductman.com)