



*Fall 2025*

# HOME & GARDEN

*A publication of the Addison Independent • Thursday, October 2, 2025*



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# Fall is time to ‘edit’ your garden, not make big changes

By IAN CURRY

GOSHEN — For Judith Irven, less is more when it comes to fall gardening. The lifelong gardener, garden-writer and landscape designer says that with winter approaching, its often better to leave things be and let nature take its course.

Irven has a simple motto: “Easy on the gardener and gentle on the Earth.”

Despite living on the wooded slopes of the Green Mountains, Irven doesn’t spend too much time clearing the leaves that fall around her extensive garden, nor does she clear out all the plant stems that fill her garden bed. Instead, she lets the ecosystem take care of it for her.

“If you interfere too much to make things tidy ... there are

drawbacks,” she said.

Gardeners and homeowners sometimes ecosystem of smaller creatures, like birds, bees and other insects that rely on brush piles, stems and fallen logs for winter shelter, Irven said. She pointed to the black-eyed Susans that grow abundantly in her garden beds. She said that even in winter, when their vibrant yellow petals are gone, their seed heads remain and provide birds with a valuable food source. Their stems are also important for native pollinators

“Bees make their nests in the hollow stems of perennials,” Irven said.

Fall is still a busy season in Irven’s garden. She said that while she doesn’t rake her leaves into bags and clear out garden beds,

she takes stock of her garden and looks for things that need doing or could change. She says this helps her keep the garden healthy and prepare it for winter and the subsequent spring.

“Not exactly putting the garden to bed, but it’s what I do to get ready for winter,” she said.

As Irven moves throughout her garden, she also takes pictures and notes of the different trees and plants that will need more serious pruning in the winter. While she’s already pruned a few of her native rhododendrons to clear the space around one of her stone paths, Irven said that its far easier to prune the right branches when the leaves have all fallen and the plants’ skeletons are visible.

These thoughtful considerations

are all part of what Irven calls a “judicious cleanup.”

**TIME TO MOVE PLANTS**

Irven also told the *Independent* that fall is an especially good time of year to move plants as they aren’t using their energy to create flowers, though their roots remain active. Irven herself is moving many of her black-eyed Susans from her back garden to her road-facing front garden where they’ll brighten the view for passersby.

“I love this time of year for projects,” she said.

“You can move stuff with near complete success.”

She’s also begun moving many of her shade-loving flowers like bloodroot, wild geraniums and Virginia bluebells to a newly prepared wooded area. She says she’d like to remind herself of



JUDITH IRVEN SMILES beside a bed of black eyed Susans she’s cultivated in her Goshen garden this fall.

“Compost helps with the clay-ey soil you see in Addison County ... particularly in the valley where the soil is particularly heavy.”

— Judith Irven

her childhood in England by cultivating flowers native to Vermont.

“It’s what I would call editing,” Irven said.

This year has also presented a few challenges for Irven. She said that the current drought has withered a few of her plants, including the three crabapple trees she keeps in her garden, as well as made her vegetable garden less productive. It’s also meant a few hungry deer from the valley below have come into her garden looking for a bite to eat.

“I’m trying to adapt to the dryness we’ve been having.”

Irven said that for the most part, she doesn’t water her flower or vegetable gardens but instead relies on homemade compost, which she prepares over the course of several years, to improve soil quality and help it retain more moisture.

She said she always cautions people to find out what kind of soil they have in their gardens, as it can vary widely between the valley and the mountains.

“Compost helps with the clayey soil you see in Addison County ... particularly in the valley where the soil is particularly heavy,”

Irven said.

This is especially helpful in her fruit and vegetable garden. A healthy dose of compost combined with a crop rotation regimen helps keep her soil healthy and nutrient rich for the array of crops she cultivates, including beans, leeks, kale, squash, potatoes and tomatoes. Once fall draws to a close, Irven says she’ll compost what remains of her fruit and vegetable stems and cover the beds with tarps to keep weeds out and the soil warm for next spring.

Already, Irven is looking ahead to what the winter and spring have in store for her garden, but she’s still delighted by the late blooming flowers that fill her garden beds and brighten her view of Mt. Moosalamoo. The pink Japanese anemone planted near her window feed native bees while black-eyed Susans feed the birds and fill the garden beds she had carefully planned out when she and her husband, Dick Conrad, moved to Goshen 25 years ago. Still, Irven knows just how valuable it is to let nature have the final say.

“(It’s) all purposeful,” she said.



JUDITH IRVEN SAID that rather than spend the season clearing out her garden, she’ll let her flowers be and get a head start on other garden projects instead. These black eyed Susans provide birds with food and insects with shelter during the long Goshen winters.

Independent photos/Ian Curry

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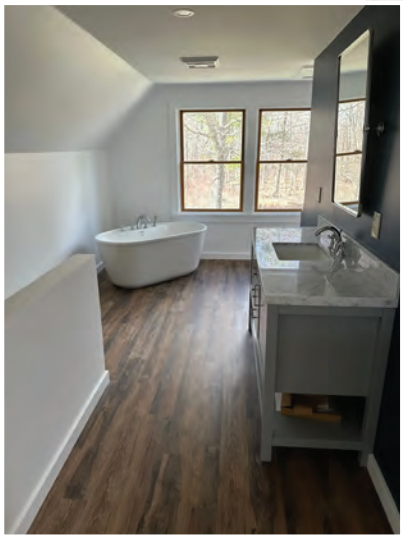
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Independent photos/Steve James

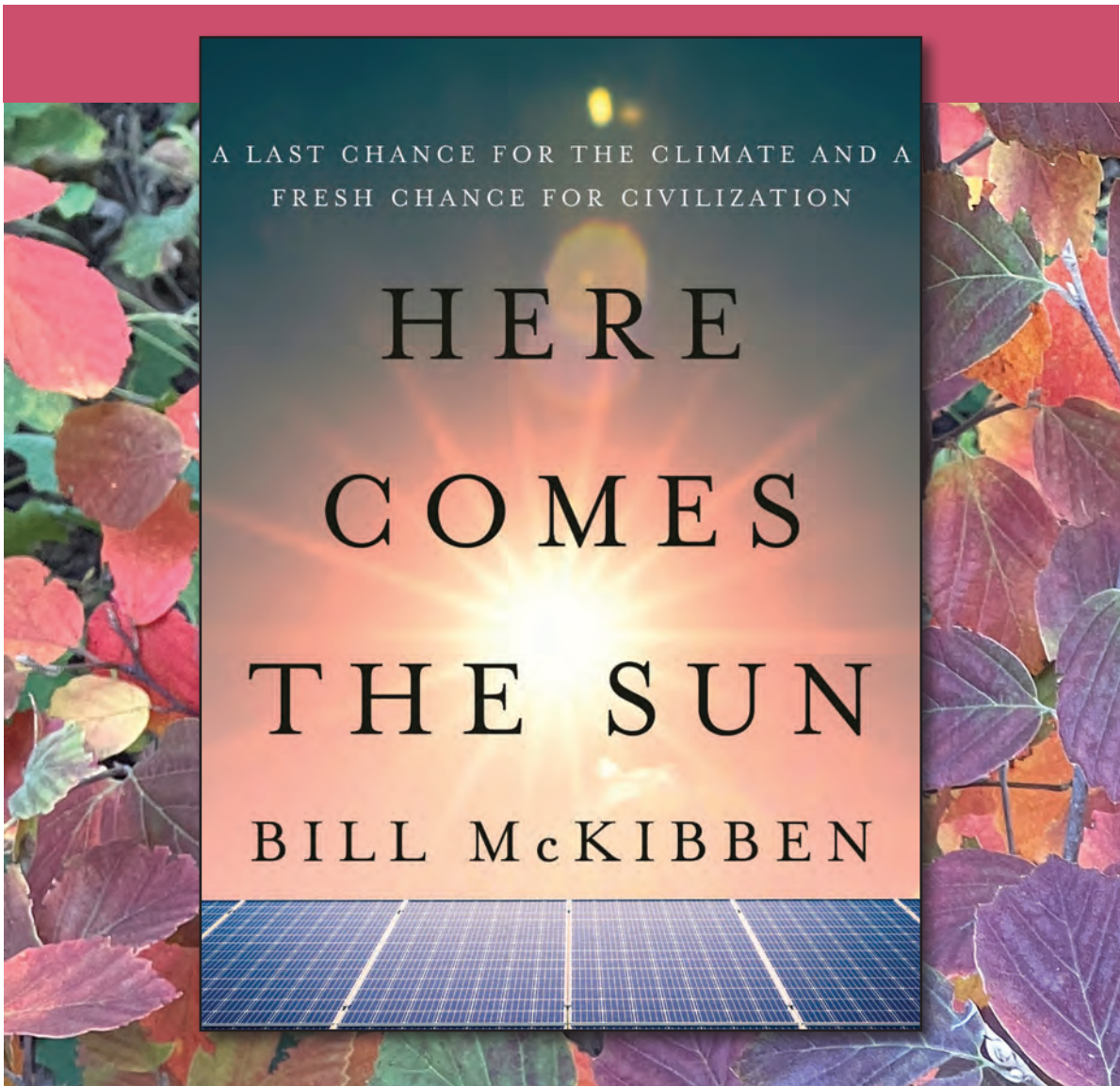


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## McKibben's new book offers ray of hope

By DAVID GOODMAN, VTDigger.org

Bill McKibben is one of the world's leading writers and organizers on the issue of climate change. The Ripton resident and Schumann Distinguished Scholar in Environmental Studies at Middlebury College admits that his message about the perils of a warming planet can leave some people in despair. Now, with the U.S. at an authoritarian tipping point, McKibben has chosen an improbable time to offer hope.

McKibben has a new book, "Here Comes the Sun: A Last Chance for the Climate and a Fresh Chance for Civilization." He takes readers on a far-flung journey to show how solar and wind energy have suddenly become the cheapest power in the world. People are installing solar panels equivalent to a coal-fired power plant every 18 hours. This is the fastest energy transition in history — and it may just help save democracy.

"There is one big good thing happening on planet Earth and it's so big and so good that it actually has the capacity to help not only with the overwhelming climate crisis, but also with the crisis of inequality and of democracy that we're facing now," McKibben told The Vermont Conversation. "That one big thing is this sudden surge of clean energy, especially from the sun, that over the last 36 months, has begun to really rewrite what power means on planet Earth."

McKibben explained that what used to be called "alternative energy" is now mainstream. "Four years ago or so we passed some invisible line where it became cheaper to produce power from the sun and the wind than from burning things. And that's a completely epochal moment. Most days, California is generating more than 100% of its power for long stretches from renewable

energy."

"Here's a statistic just to stick in your mind that will give you hope, too," he offered. "A single boatload of solar panels coming from someplace like China will, over the course of its lifetime, produce 500 times as much energy as that same ship filled with coal. We're not talking about a slightly better version of what we have now. We're talking about a very different world."

McKibben is currently spearheading Sun Day, which will take place on Sept. 21, 2025. It will be a global day of action celebrating solar and wind power and the movement to leave fossil fuels behind.

"Think about what the foreign policy, the geopolitics of planet Earth would have looked like in the last 70 years if oil was not a valuable commodity," he said. "Human beings are extremely good at figuring out how to start wars, but figuring out how to start one over sunshine is going to be a trick."

Vermont is already feeling the impact of this energy shift. "The biggest single power plant in Vermont is now the collection of batteries that Green Mountain Power has helped people put in their basements and garages and

that they can call on in time of need to provide power," he said.

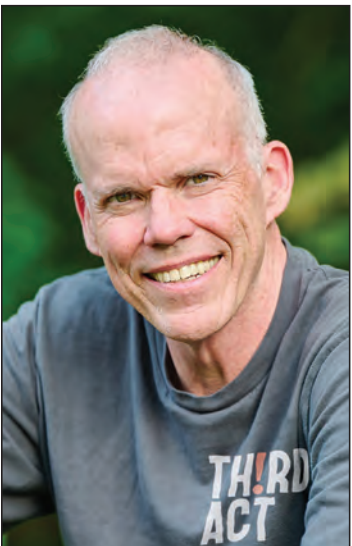
Bill McKibben is the author of over 20 books and a regular contributor to The New Yorker, the New York Times, and his Substack, The Crucial Years. He is the Schumann Distinguished

Scholar in Environmental Studies at Middlebury College. He has won the Gandhi Peace Prize and the Right Livelihood Award, known as the alternative Nobel Prize.

Alongside his writing, the Ripton resident has founded the global grassroots climate action group 350.org, and Third Act, a political movement of people over 60 to use their "unparalleled generational power to safeguard our climate and democracy." The organization now boasts some 70,000 members.

As the country and world teeter on a precipice, what gives McKibben hope? "Just that

we're still here and fighting and that we have this new tool. It's like a Hollywood movie: the bad stuff is happening all around us and here's this new force riding to the rescue over the hills carrying not carbines and repeater rifles but carrying solar panels and lithium ion batteries."



*"Four years ago or so we passed some invisible line where it became cheaper to produce power from the sun and the wind than from burning things. And that's a completely epochal moment."*

— Bill McKibben

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# Changes in federal subsidies be damned, weatherize your home

By IAN CURRY

ADDISON COUNTY — Those looking to improve their home’s weatherization before the cold weather sets in will be pleased to know that thousands of dollars’ worth of incentives and rebates remain available to Addison County residents. While the home energy tax credits offered by the federal government through the Inflation Reduction Act of 2022 are set to expire on Dec. 31, Efficiency Vermont, along with state government, continue to aid Vermonters looking to improve their home’s insulation and heating.

Efficiency Vermont offers a range of incentives that allow qualifying households to receive up to \$9,500 cash back for comprehensive weatherization projects on residential properties. Homeowners can also receive up to \$2,200 cash back on heat pumps and a \$600 rebate on heat pump water heaters. Wood users can get up to \$6,000 cash back on central wood pellet boilers or

a \$400 discount on wood stoves. Efficiency Vermont also offers a \$100 DIY weatherization that can help homeowners and renters air seal their homes, install window dressers or insulate hot water pipes.

“DIY weatherization is something where (residents) can add a little bit of comfort and energy savings ... for homeowners who are able to make the investment, a comprehensive project will give you by far the biggest bang for your buck,” said Matthew Smith, Efficiency Vermont’s public relations manager.

Efficiency Vermont provides a list of contractors located throughout the state who have the knowledge, tools and certifications required to properly weatherize homes.

“The truth is, yes you can do some things in your home...but comprehensive weatherization is really a job best done by a professional,” Smith said.

However, what programs are

available and how much money you can receive varies based on income and what county you live in. For example, Efficiency Vermont defines a low-income, four-person household in Addison County as making \$92,400 a year or less.

“If you’re a low-income household you can get up to \$9,500 back... or 90% of your project costs,” Smith said. “If you’re a moderate-income household you get up to \$9,500 back or 75% of your costs.”

Those who fall outside the low-income and moderate-income thresholds can receive 75% of project costs, or up to \$4,000 back.

*“The truth is, yes you can do some things in your home... but comprehensive weatherization is really a job best done by a professional.”*  
— Matthew Smith, Efficiency Vermont

Smith also noted it’s possible to bundle Efficiency Vermont rebates together, as well as with the separate federal home energy tax credits that are still available until the end of the year. While project costs can be a limiting factor, Efficiency Vermont offers 0% interest financing of up to \$25,000 for low- and moderate-income Vermonters as part of their Home Energy Loan program.

In addition, Vermont has five Weatherization Assistance Programs that offer free weatherization services for low-income households. In Addison County, this is administered by the Champlain Valley Office of Economic Opportunity

(CVOEO).

“The best weatherization is the best weatherization you can actually do,” Smith said.

Efficiency Vermont calculated that in 2024, weatherization rebate recipients with fueling with fossil fuels were able to save an average of \$320 on heating costs a year.

“The savings really build over time,” he said.

**HOME ENERGY VISIT**

While home improvement projects can be daunting, Smith said the easiest way to get started is to schedule a Virtual Home Energy Visit with Efficiency Vermont’s team of energy consultants.

“It’s a free service we offer to all Vermonters,” he said.

The Virtual Home Energy Visit, which can be scheduled on Efficiency Vermont’s website, involves a 90-minute video chat with an Efficiency Vermont consultant who will walk residents through their home. Smith said energy consultants help residents

look for the areas of their homes that are most in need of weatherization improvement and provide them with a customized list of next steps.

Smith noted that energy consultants can provide advice on Efficiency Vermont rebates and assistance programs, but those looking to take advantage of the more complicated federal home energy tax credits will want to speak with a tax professional, too.

While federal tax credits will soon be going away, it’s important to note Efficiency Vermont is already offering alternatives to most of those federal tax credits. However, Efficiency Vermont doesn’t offer incentives for solar panels or electric vehicles. The federal tax credit for electric vehicles expires on September 30.

“Our (programs) are still going to be here for years to come. No question there,” Smith said.

“We’re constantly changing and updating what we’re offering.”

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# Even with more VT homes on the market, prices are still rising

By CARLY BERLIN, VTDigger.org

Vermont’s COVID-era home-buying frenzy — marked by an extremely tight supply of available homes and sight-unseen offers — has now eased somewhat.

“I think that the balancing of the marketplace is kind of starting to occur,” said Peter Tucker last month. He’s a lobbyist for the Vermont Association of Realtors.

An uptick in real estate listings and home sales show that the market has loosened. Fierce bidding wars are less common than they were just a few years ago, realtors say, and for-sale signs are a more common sight in many neighborhoods. Yet home prices continue to rise.

In 2024, the statewide median sale price for a primary home was about \$353,000 — a 9% jump from the prior year. That’s according to state property transfer tax records collected by the Vermont Housing Finance Agency, which weeds out seasonal or occasional-use homes.

Preliminary data for the first half of 2025 shows that prices have continued to escalate this year. The median sale price had risen to about \$370,000 as of June, according to Maura Collins, VHFA’s executive director.

That metric varies widely

across the state. In 2024, the median sale price for a primary home in the state’s poorest and most rural county — Essex — was \$200,000. In Chittenden County, Vermont’s population and job center, the median sale price reached \$500,000 last year.

**ADDISON COUNTY NUMBERS**

The median sale price for a home in Addison County was approximately \$477,500 for single-family homes as of July 2025, with the overall median sale price slightly lower at around \$430,300 as of July, according to Coldwell Banker Hickok & Boardman and Zillow.

Other sources show slightly different numbers, with Redfin reporting a median sale price of \$425,000 last month and ATTOM showing a median home value of \$431,621 as of August.

During the hot market of the pandemic years, home prices shot up while the number of homes sold plummeted. The rate of home sales now appears to have reversed course. In 2024, 9% more homes were sold than during the year prior, according to the state tax data.

The volume of sales appears to be stabilizing thus far in 2025, though different data sources paint slightly different pictures of the market. The state tax data shows

a modest drop in the number of primary home sales during the first half of 2025 versus the first half of 2024. Slightly more current data on all single family home and condo sales collected by the Realtors’ association shows a 2.2% rise in homes sold as of August compared to the same period last year. The number of home listings has also jumped over 8% as of August, according to the Realtors’ association.

It’s still a seller’s market, and inventory remains well below pre-pandemic levels. But now, buyers have more options, said Brian Boardman, a real estate agent and co-owner of Burlington-based Coldwell Banker Hickok and Boardman.

During the tight COVID years between 2021 and 2023, an agent could show a potential buyer maybe one or two homes within their given price range in Chittenden County, Boardman said. “Now, those buyers have, you know, maybe six or seven choices, or more — and so they can get more of their wish list.”

A number of factors could be driving more people to sell their homes. Some homeowners may have been waiting for the pandemic to ease before retiring or moving closer to family, said Tucker, from the Realtors’ association. Some may have been waiting for interest rates to lower. The entrance of newly-constructed homes into the market has helped somewhat, said Boardman.

There’s also a domino effect once inventory starts to open up, Boardman said.

“The people that are in the family homes for 30 or 40 years are going to go to a retirement home, which opens up their house, which gets the young family out of a rental or maybe a two-bedroom condo,” which they can then put on the market, he said.

So why are home prices continuing to rise steeply even as more homes are selling? Collins, from the Vermont Housing Finance Agency, sees that as an indication that Vermont needs to continue building more homes to fill its deep deficit. The state is far

from reaching a glut that would drag home values down, she said.

“Our goal is not to depress home values, but to slow the ever-increasing sales prices,” said Collins, who serves on the board of the pro-housing lobbying group Let’s Build Homes. “Even with more homes being listed for sale this summer than last summer, we don’t see that home prices are yet lowering,” she said.

Homes are also still selling quickly during the peak summer season, according to real estate data. That’s one sign that demand remains high.

Data on rentals in Vermont tends to be geographically patchy and outdated. But a recent survey of apartments in the state’s largest rental market — Chittenden County — shows that the razor-thin rental vacancy rate of the COVID-era years has begun to ease, according to Brad Minor, a partner at Allen, Brooks & Minor, a real estate appraisal and analytics firm in South Burlington.

As of June, the area’s rental vacancy rate had risen to 3% — up from under 1%, where it had hovered for over a year beginning in December 2021, Minor said.

Sources have pointed to a rental vacancy rate as low as 1% in Addison County in the past year.

That easing is likely tied to the elimination of COVID-era eviction restrictions and rental assistance, but it is also likely the result of new apartments going online, Minor said. In 2024, his firm identified 824 new apartments built in Chittenden County — more than twice the annual rate of building in any given year for the past two decades.

The firm has yet to tabulate how much average rents have changed in the area in 2025, though Minor said that now some landlords of higher-priced rentals with more vacancies are considering making price cuts to attract tenants.

“It’s possible that we may see maybe less dramatic rent increases, because we’re appearing to move towards a state of balance,” he said.



**DIY**

SOME HOME IMPROVEMENT jobs definitely demand a hired professional, others can be done by homeowners. Daniel Houghton demonstrates one of those tasks that falls in the grey area between as he prepares to install an outdoor light fixture. You can tell by his easy-going demeanor that this is not his first rodeo when it comes to home repair.

Independent photo/Steve James





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## Q&A: Answers to your solar questions

Catamount Solar of Randolph is an employee-owned solar company that sells an array of renewable energy products to homeowners and businesses. It produced the following answers to Frequently Asked Questions on solar energy. This is not an endorsement for the company, but published solely for educational purposes.

**How does a solar panel work?**  
A solar panel works by capturing energy from sunlight and converting it to direct current (DC) electricity. A solar inverter then converts the DC power into Alternating Current (AC), which is what your home uses. Solar energy created this way can be used to power your home, stored in batteries for later use, or sent out to the grid. You get credit for all the electricity your system sends to the grid. You can use this credit to offset your electric bill.

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**What is a battery backup system?**  
Battery backup systems such as the well-known Tesla Powerwall store energy produced by solar power systems so it can be drawn on during power outages. Green Mountain Power has programs that subsidize the cost of these systems if you allow the utility to draw the battery power on peak load days.

Such batteries are especially helpful when installed into off-grid systems, so they can provide power during times of low electricity production.

**What is a grid-tied solar system?**  
Grid-tied power systems are connected to the main power grid. When your photovoltaic system produces electricity, the power is first used to satisfy your electricity needs at that time. Excess electricity produced by your is sent to the grid and you get utility credits on your bill.

**What is an off-grid solar system?**  
In an off-grid system, you are not connected to the electrical grid. Therefore, you can only use the amount of electricity you produce and store. Most off-grid systems include batteries, ensuring access to power on days when solar production is low, such as cloudy or short winter days. Off-grid systems require more of a hands-on approach; you need to be aware of your electrical production and use to ensure that you don't run out.

(See Solar, Page 12C)

## Strengthen your homeowner IQ at Home Owner University

Champlain Housing Trust is offering a series of workshops this fall that it is calling Homeowner University. “We want you to enjoy living *in* your home and not *for* your home,” organizers of the series said. HomeOwner University (HOU) offers a wide array of online classes to help homeowners achieve financial and housing stability to be a happy homeowner. CHT staff and local area experts instruct classes on topics such as managing finances, building equity, home maintenance and protecting your asset — the home. The classes, which began in September, cost \$10 per class. Courses still on the syllabus for October include:

- **Savvy Saving & Investing**  
Thursday, Oct. 2, 6-7:30 p.m. (Virtual)  
Instructors: Barbara Geries (CHT) with Joe Bol (TD Bank)  
Saving and investing are very important parts of being a successful homeowner. This class will review some strategies that work, including using CDs, retirement and education specific accounts, as well as savings for housing needs. This class will help you identify the reasons to have a healthy savings plan. It will define and explain different types of saving and investing accounts as well as how you develop a plan that works for you.
- **Not My Circus, Still My Neighborhood**  
Thursday, Oct. 16, 6-7:30 p.m. (Virtual)  
Instructor: Allison Roark (CHT)  
Does it feel impossible to navigate interactions with your neighbors? Have you ever wondered if the people next door have lost their minds? This class will take a look at different communication styles, boundaries, and boundary disputes! With relevant information for single family homeowners as well as those living in associations, we will explore how to create successful communities while still respecting and celebrating our differences.
- **Wills & Trusts**  
Wednesday, Oct. 22, 6-7:30 p.m. (Virtual)  
Instructor: Brian Stark (Stark Law)  
This class will examine reasons for having a will and what happens if you don't. This class will help you understand the steps to setting up a legal will and how you could use a trust to help ensure your wishes are met. It is also a way to save your family or friends money, time and paperwork. The class will define what is estate planning is and why you need a plan.
- **Enhanced Life Estate Deed, Advanced Directives & Power of Attorney (POA)**  
Wednesday, Oct. 29, 6-7:30 p.m. (Virtual)  
Instructors: Grace Pazdan & Leah Burdick (Vermont Legal Aid)  
Planning for end-of-life decisions can be complex, let CHT and Attorneys from Vermont Legal Aid to make it easier. In this class you will learn about how to use an Enhanced Life Estate Deed to provide for real estate to be passed to heirs without going through Probate Court. The class will cover how to create an Advanced Directives to outline your wishes for medical treatment at such a time as you are unable to make those decisions and how to use a Power of Attorney to give someone authority to take care of your legal or financial affairs.  
To register at \$10 per class, head online to [getahome.org/hou](https://getahome.org/hou). Email questions to [education@getahome.org](mailto:education@getahome.org).

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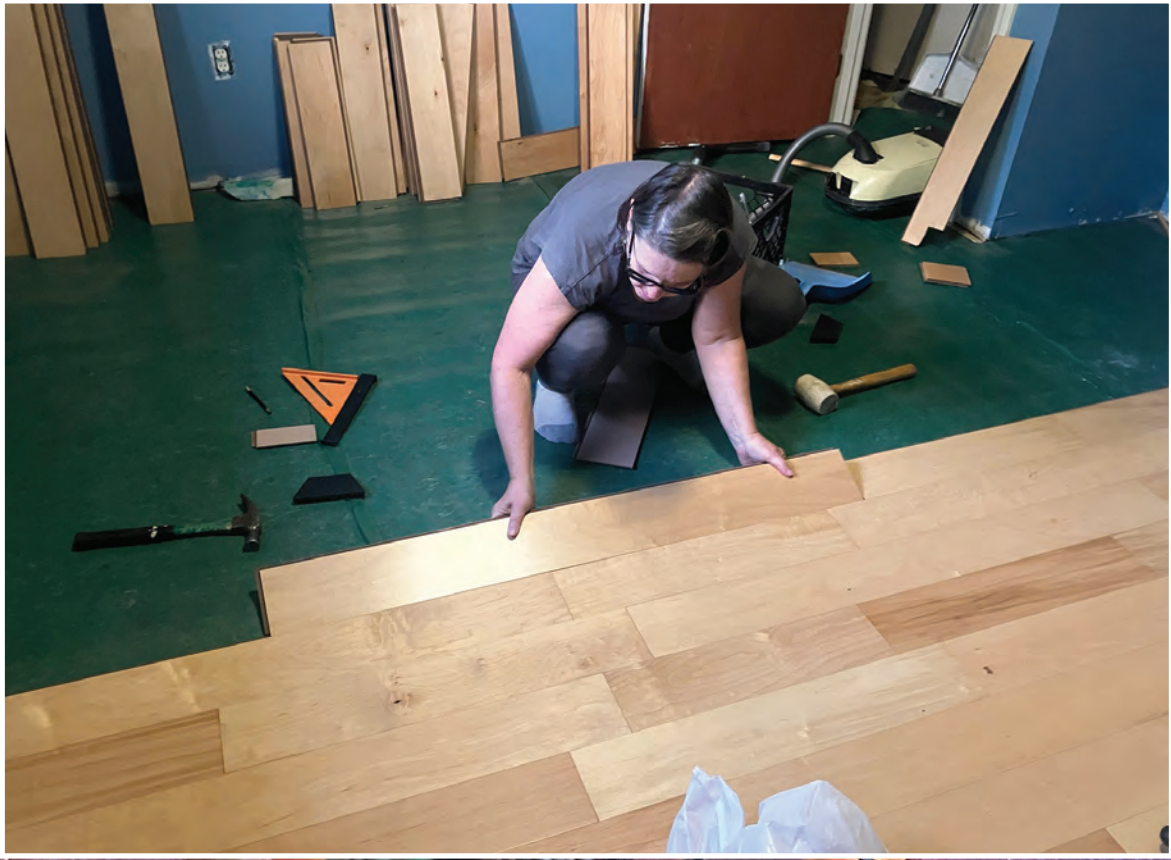
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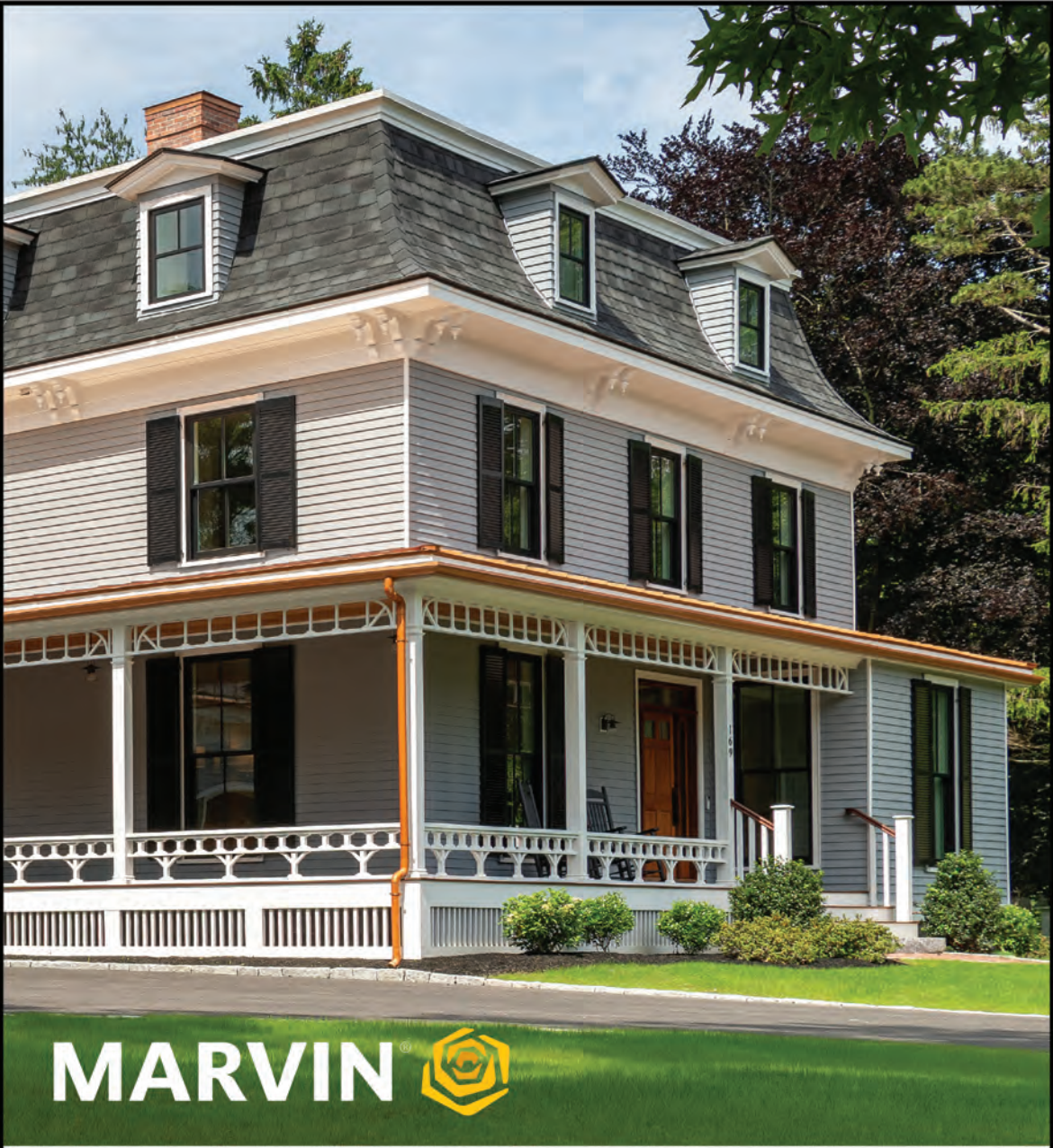
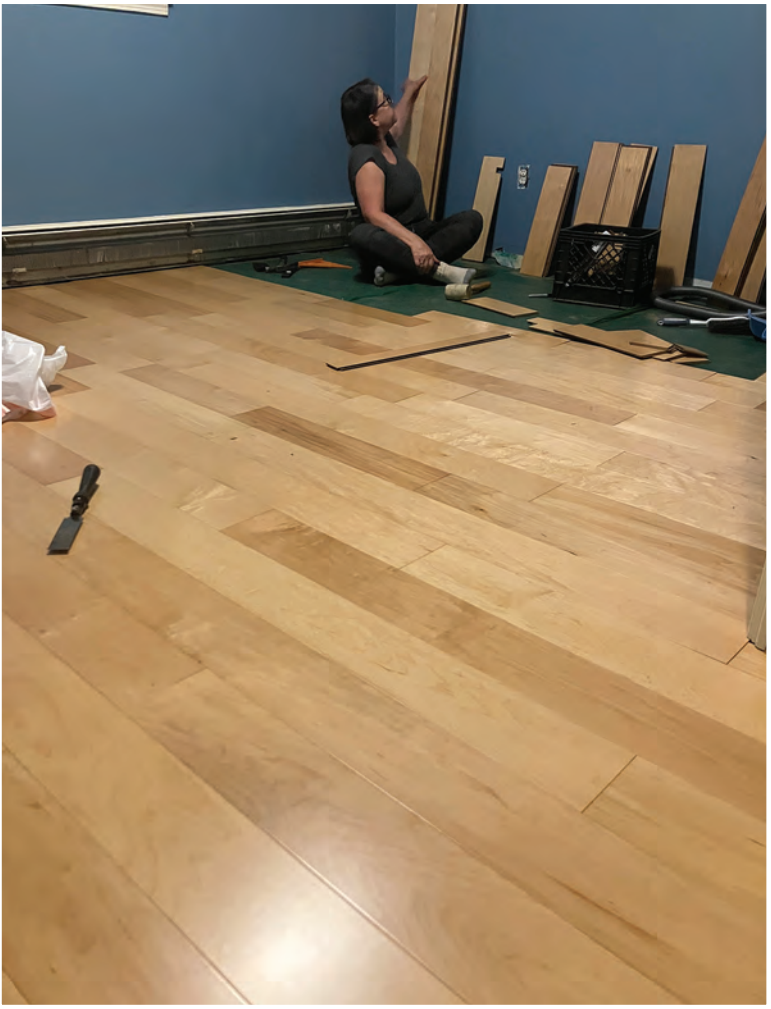




**Floor installation**

ENGINEERED HARDWOOD FLOORING is easy to install — right? This little job in Middlebury proved to be within the homeowners’ skill set. The flooring features a real hardwood veneer attached to composite plywood core, which adds stability but is cheaper than solid hardwood. The segments are cut so that they “click” together when set into place. Installation was reasonable and the result warm and inviting.

Independent photos/John S. McCright



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# Solar

(Continued from Page 9)  
**What if I produce more electrical energy than I use?**

If your solar system produces more energy than you use, you get a net metering credit that can be used toward future electric bills. The way these credits can be used vary depending on your utility company.

**How much does a residential solar system cost?**

The price of a residential solar system will vary depending on location, availability of mounting space and more importantly your annual electricity usage.

**How soon can I get a return on my investment?**

The return on investment will vary

depending on the size and type of system installed.

With solar, you pay more to install a system up front, and enjoy a steady, predictable power cost for decades. With conventional grid electricity, you are subject to the whims of the marketplace, and often to increasing energy costs over time. In addition to saving you money on your power bills, your solar power system is an improvement that will add value to your property.

**How long will my PV system last?**

Catamount uses solar components that are built for the long haul. They can withstand the worst that New England weather can dish out, and keep producing energy for 25-35 years.

**What is net metering?**

Net metering is the way in which power companies keep track of the energy your solar panels produce and gives you credit for that energy. With net metering,

you only pay for electricity if you use more than your solar system can produce.

**What happens when the sun isn't so shiny?**

Solar energy systems produce more power on cloudless days, and less when it is cloudy. They produce no power at night. Despite this, they will produce enough power year round to provide you with significant cost savings over time.

**How will snow affect my solar production?**

Snowy days are cloudy days, so your system will produce less electricity. Solar panels are tilted so that in most cases, snow slides right off. Occasionally, snow can build up over panels, and they will produce no power. But it's important to remember that even with these occasional solar blockages, your system will still provide significant amounts of power and save you money over time.

As more homeowners invest in solar and battery storage, many are wondering what it really takes to keep their systems performing at their best year round. Solar care looks different in January, when dealing with snow loads and ice, vs. spring's heavy pollen. The company Catamount Solar is distributing this checklist of things that owners of residential solar power systems should think about during each of the four seasons.

## The Four-Season Solar Checklist for Homeowners

### 1. Winter: Snow, Ice, Short Days

- Keep panels clear of heavy snow using a soft brush or roof rake (avoid sharp tools that can scratch).
- Trim back overhanging branches that could drop ice or snow onto panels.
- Check battery storage capacity before storms. Make sure your system is fully charged ahead of outages.
- Monitor production through your system's app to confirm panels are performing even in low light.

### 2. Spring: Clean and Inspect

- Wash off pollen, dirt and debris that can reduce panel efficiency.
- Inspect wiring, inverters and mounting after winter storms.
- Have a professional check seals, roof penetrations and connections for any weather damage.
- Consider system upgrades if energy needs have changed (like adding an electric vehicle

charging or heat pump).

### 3. Summer: Peak Production Season

- Track your production closely. This is when you'll generate the most energy.
- Optimize battery settings to capture and store midday solar for evening use.
- Keep an eye on shading from fast-growing trees and trim if needed.
- Check ventilation around inverters and batteries, which can overheat in high temps.

### 4. Fall: Prepare for Shorter Days & Storms

- Clear fallen leaves and debris from panels and gutters.
- Test backup power settings on your battery storage system before winter outages.
- Schedule professional maintenance before the busy winter service season.
- Evaluate your energy use heading into colder months. Adjust storage and consumption patterns as needed.



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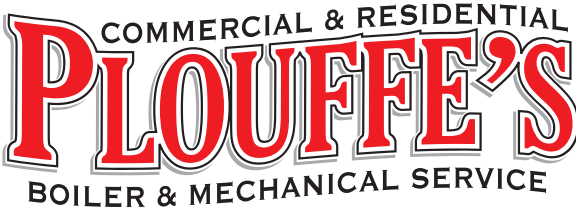
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# Middlebury Garden Club announces its 2025 Roadside garden winners



Sharon Liljestrand's Cornwall garden



Sharon Liljestrand's Cornwall garden

By ELIZABETH KARNES KEEFE and BARBARA GREENWOOD for the Middlebury Garden Club

ADDISON COUNTY — Ever year the Middlebury Garden Club looks for the best gardens in the county. Its annual Roadside Attractions Awards recognize gardens cultivated by people around the region who are not members of the club.

In 2025, the awards went to the Monkton Town Hall, Sharon Liljestrand in Cornwall and Alya Baker in Middlebury.

**MONKTON WINNER**

Monkton Town Hall, on the Monkton Ridge just north of the town green, has a stunning and flourishing pollinator garden. The planning for the pollinator garden started with a landscape design committee, a subset of the Monkton Town Hall building committee. Changes were proposed to an initial landscape plan, including adding pollinator areas.

The town selectboard, with a forward-thinking attitude, was all in for creating pollinator habitat and gave the green light. There was a very limited budget for the entire landscape, so many trees and shrubs were donated and all of the plantings were done and are maintained by volunteer efforts.

Once the Town Hall building and site work were completed in spring 2021, the garden area was sheet mulched for the growing season. With economy in mind, the pollinator garden area was seeded in the late fall instead of using plants.

Debra Sprague, the Monkton Pollinator Pathways coordinator, as well as a tireless volunteer, tells us that both the front garden and the back larger area were planted with a seed a mix of perennials and annuals from Ernst Conservation Seed Co. Since this is a very visible entryway, colorful reseeding annuals and biennials were added to the mix of native Northeast perennials. It took a couple years for the perennials to grow to mature blooming size.

The list of the annual seeds for the front garden are on the Monkton Pollinator Pathway website [tinyurl.com/MonktonPollinatorGarden](http://tinyurl.com/MonktonPollinatorGarden).

Over the few years the garden has been in existence, the plant mix has evolved as some plants have flourished more than others and a few potted perennials have been added. Annuals include perennial dianthus ("Sweet William"). Over time some other mature plants have been added. This past season, some anise hyssop and some white Chelone were added.

The trees and shrubs planted around the Town Hall include: Serviceberry, Chokeberry, Red twig Dogwood, Native Honeysuckle, Witch hazel, Hydrangea, Winterberry, Bird's Nest Spruce, Cape Breton Spruce, Dark American Arborvitae, Viburnum, Korean Spicebush, Viburnum, and

Red Maple. The Monkton Town librarian now volunteers in the garden tells us that volunteers collect and dry some of the flowers, which are then made into bookmarks and wreaths in workshops in the off season.

The Monkton Central School, just to the south of the Town Hall, shows off a pollinator boulevard strip in the parking lot. The school vegetable garden lies below the parking lot. The entrance to the garden is through an arch in a fantastic stone wall encircling the garden, intended to be a reading nook for the library. The arch and the wall were designed and built by Jamie Masefield, a talented Monkton stone mason and musician. Julie Parker-Dickinson, a teacher at the Monkton School, collected information about the gardens for a Master Gardener project proposal, and organized the gardens there.

**ALYA BAKER IN MIDDLEBURY**

Alya Baker has lived in her vernacular brick gable-front cottage on South Street in Middlebury since the 1960s. Over the years she has surrounded it with gorgeous landscaping.

She has a collection of artfully cultivated plants and flowers, including both perennials and annuals. The list includes Shasta daisies, yarrow, Echinacea, coreopsis, and bee balm, planted in extensive islands of flowers all around the house. Susan Longe of Perennial Passion GardenScaping in Vergennes has helped Alya with design and garden maintenance for many years.

Susan has a wealth of knowledge about plants and offers practical advice to give gardeners the courage to experiment: "Plants can't read — give your own ideas a try!" H

er passion and love of color and texture is reflected in Alya's gardens, which evolve into something new every year.

**LOVELY LILJESTRAND GARDEN**

Just a few years ago, Sharon Liljestrand and her husband, Erik, built a new house on Sperry Road in Cornwall, at the edge of a hayfield. Sharon rose to the challenge of having to design and create her gardens from scratch.

Having studied botany in college, Sharon says she was more interested in the process of gardening than the beautiful outcomes she has planned and created.

After just a few years, there are now peonies, hydrangeas, a variety of roses, marigolds, Shasta Daisies, hostas, Montauk Daisies, and Cranesbill, all arranged in a very natural way along multiple paths. She and Erik have also built raised beds for growing vegetables, and encouraged the growth of tall hedgerow along the road. Sharon planted a striking Chinese Maple tree near the driveway, which has now grown to several feet in height. A windmill turns in the neighbor's field in the northern distance.

Sharon says she "loves the work" of maintaining and developing her own gardens. She has also assisted in tending to other gardens in Addison County.



Alya Baker's Middlebury garden



Monkton Town Hall's pollinator garden



Stone mason Jamie Masefield created this entrance arch at the Monkton Central School vegetable garden

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# Painter prolongs pantry progress

*Editor's note: Our longtime humor columnist brought us many chuckles around the subject of home improvement. We couldn't help but reprint one of our favorites from 2021.*

By JESSIE RAYMOND

In the past few weeks, I've called all my friends and relatives to tell them the great news: "Mark is gonna redo our kitchen!"

They all react the same way: with a long pause and a stifled giggle, followed by "OK, sure. Congratulations."

I'm pretty sure I can hear their eyes rolling.

That's fair. They know that four years ago, Mark began building me my dream walk-in pantry from scratch. In that time, he's worked on it intermittently but never with any enthusiasm.

I've used the situation to my advantage. If Mark gets annoyed because I left the Christmas ornaments in the upstairs hall for six weeks, I say, "Well, at least it hasn't been four years." If he trips over a bag of returnable bottles in the kitchen, I say, "I would have put them in the pantry. If we had one."

Zingers like that are priceless in a marriage, and the pantry has given me a lot to work with.

But believe it or not, Mark is actually about to remodel the kitchen. (I'll thank you to roll your eyes more quietly.) While it will take him longer than most kitchen jobs — given his bias toward working for paying customers rather than a deadbeat spouse — it's unlikely to be another four-year project; we've already ordered the cabinets, counters, lights, appliances and windows, and they have to go somewhere.

Work, however, can't begin until we have a completed pantry in which to store the current kitchen's contents. So Mark has, finally, risen to the occasion.

In two weekends, he's installed the pocket door, finished up the last few drawers and milled out and put up the trim. Just like that, save for the painting of the cupboards, the pantry is done.

But the painting, I'm afraid, is my job.

I had it all planned. On a Saturday, I'd lay out the shelves, drawer fronts and doors on a drop cloth on the kitchen table and paint them all in one go.

But I overlooked two issues. The obvious is that it's not a one-and-done procedure. First you have to prime one side of each piece and

then, once that's dry, prime the other. Then you have to paint each side — twice. And the paint needs to dry between coats.

Less obvious is that this particular pantry, designed to my specs lo these many years ago, has somewhere between 200 and 300 doors and shelves (I haven't actually counted, but it's a lot). And our kitchen table only holds four or five at a time.

In the long run, I'll be grateful that the pantry, five by 10 feet before Mark built the cabinets, defies the laws of nature by being larger on the inside than it is on the outside. Seeing the linear footage of storage that magically appears as he installs each painted shelf makes my heart flutter; it's all I've ever wanted.

But I have to ask myself why I went with cabinets instead of simple shelves that could have been painted in place. (I know why: I had a pantry like that when we were first married, and the open shelves combined with my wherever-it-lands organizational style gave me fits. Having to look at the mess every day didn't inspire me to be tidy, but it

did teach me to appreciate doors.) I made the right choice. As the doors gradually go on, the pantry is beginning to look downright classy. While I envisioned it as a functional place to stash peanut butter and plastic storage containers, now I picture myself saying to dinner guests, "Please excuse me while I run to the pantry and retrieve the glass dome for the roast pheasant."

At the moment, however, I fear the painting will never end. Every time I finish a set of doors and shelves, Mark brings me more. I'm starting to think he's just giving me random boards from his workshop to pay me back for the four years of snark I've subjected him to.

These days, before work and after, and all weekend, I paint. I haven't changed out of my painting clothes in weeks. Now and then, Mark wanders through the kitchen, making a point of reaching across me to measure a doorway or wall and subjecting me to a bit of his own snark.

"I can't wait to get started on the kitchen," he says, looking around and sighing. "But it's taking you forever to finish the pantry."



Classic  
Jessie  
Raymond

# Bristol contractor trained as energy pro

MONTPELIER — The Vermont Sustainable Jobs Fund (VSJF), in collaboration with Efficiency Vermont and Vermont Gas Systems, recently graduated its inaugural cohort of Tools of the Trade—Business Fundamentals for Energy Pros, a business coaching program designed to support weatherization and clean energy contractors across the state.

The program offered participants practical training in business fundamentals tailored to weatherization contractors, energy audit businesses, electrician firms, and builders who specialize in renewable energy and energy efficiency. Monthly in-person sessions, one-on-one coaching, and peer learning helped contractors strengthen skills in workforce recruitment and retention, financial management, operations, customer engagement, and leadership. The program was made possible through funding from the State of Vermont, Efficiency Vermont, and Vermont Gas Systems.

A graduate of the inaugural Tools of the Trade program was Thomas

Halpin of Vermont Exergy LLC of Bristol.

"Watching these business owners grow over the course of the program has been incredibly inspiring," said Kurt Erickson, Vermont Sustainable Jobs Fund's Tools of the Trade Program Manager. "They showed up with curiosity, a willingness to learn, and a deep commitment to their craft and communities. Their progress is a testament to what's possible when we invest in workforce and business development as much as investing in technology and infrastructure."

Graduates are now better equipped to grow their businesses, serve more Vermonters, and contribute to the state's clean energy goals by helping residents save money, improve home comfort, and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

The Vermont Sustainable Jobs Fund (VSJF) provides tailored business management coaching, entrepreneurial support, and training to position Vermont entrepreneurs for growth and long-term success.

VSFJ is accepting applications to its next cohort of "Tools of the

Trade — Business Coaching for Energy Pros" program. This is a business training program for energy contractors.

Master a proven framework for building and sustaining your energy services business. With Tools of the Trade, you'll gain new insights into recruiting and retaining your workforce, improving the financial viability of your business, understanding the needs of your customers and capitalizing on Vermonter's growing interest in clean energy and energy-efficiency oriented solutions.

Expand your capacity to assist everyday Vermonters save money, improve the comfort of their home and reduce their greenhouse gas emissions.

Tools of the Trade is an in-person, nine-month business training program designed to support the needs of weatherization contractors to improve your executive business skills, enhance core operations, expand your workforce and improve your work-life balance.

More information is online at [tinyurl.com/EnergyProCoaching](https://tinyurl.com/EnergyProCoaching).



## Let there be light

DANIEL HOUGHTON MAKES it look easy to wire a box and mount some outdoor lighting on his Middlebury home last week. Houghton runs Middlebury College's Maker Space, which is available to give advice to local residents with building/decorating of other construction projects.

Independent photo/Steve James



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ALTHOUGH OUTDOOR FURNITURE and other items tend to be durable, the impact snow, wind and ice can have on them may lead to damage over time.

Independent photo/John S. McCright

# Winterize you outdoor spaces

When the summer entertaining season draws to a close, homeowners need to ensure their outdoor living areas can handle weather that's right around the corner. Although outdoor furniture and other items tend to be durable, the impact snow, wind and ice can have on them may lead to damage over time.

If you live in Vermont, we're sure we don't have to tell you that. But there are many steps homeowners can take to winterize their outdoor spaces and protect their belongings. Here's a look at how to prepare for the winter to come.


- Furniture: Cover or store furniture to protect it from the elements. Covering it with weather-proof covers can be adequate if storing items indoors is not possible.
- Deep clean: Items that will be covered or stored should be thoroughly cleaned prior to being removed from spaces for the season. Lingering dirt and moisture can cause damage.
- Insulate and drain: Don't risk damage to pipes, which can freeze and crack in the cold. Shut off the water supply to exterior faucets and drain water lines to prevent pipes from freezing and bursting. Use foam pipe insulation to prevent freezing and cover any exposed pipes.
- Apply mulch: After cleaning up garden debris, think about applying mulch to garden beds and cover tender plants to protect them from the weather.
- Check gutters: Be sure that gutters and downspouts are clear of leaves and any additional debris. If gutters and downspouts are not cleaned, ice dams may form on the roof and cause water damage.
- Inspect and repair: Inspect walkways and driveways for any damage and make repairs now so water will not seep in and cause further issues with freeze-thaw cycles. Consider applying a sealant to protect surfaces from snow and ice.

• Pools and spas: It's essential to follow the industry or manufacturer recommendations for closing down swimming pools and spas for the season. While covers may not be essential in all climates, covering can help prevent leaves and other debris from getting in the water. Water should be expelled from pipes and tubing to prevent freezing and bursting. If space allows, consider moving the pool pump indoors to prolong its longevity. Turn off the electricity to the outlet where the filter is plugged in.


There may be additional, region-specific steps to winterize a property, but these pointers are a good starting point to protect outdoor spaces.

— Metro Creative





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# Making bathrooms safer for seniors

Maintaining a sense of independence throughout retirement can inspire seniors to live their golden years to the fullest. For many seniors, nothing is more emblematic of their ability to stay independent than remaining in their homes. A number of variables can affect how long seniors stay in their homes, including the layout of the property and any potential safety threats that may arise as men and women age. Some small, safety-centric tweaks to a property can help men and women remain in their homes for as long as possible.

- **Increase lighting** in bathrooms throughout the home. Lighting is easily overlooked as a safety measure, but a well-lit space is easier to navigate. Increasing lighting in the bathroom and upgrading existing features to LED lighting can make it easier for seniors to navigate bathrooms at night. That's a notable benefit, as seniors may need to make routine

bathroom trips overnight.

- **Install grab bars.** Grab bars are often found in public restrooms, but they're equally useful in the bathrooms or private homes, particularly in seniors' residences. Grab bars can be installed on both sides of all toilets and in the bathtub/shower stall so seniors can get up and down easily and reinforce their stability on wet surfaces.
- **Invest in bathroom storage** systems. A cluttered bathroom is a potential safety hazard. Items in cluttered bathrooms can easily end up on the floor, and that goes for bathing items like shampoo and soap as well. A bathroom storage system for a vanity and an organizer for bathing items inside a shower or tub can decrease the chance that items end up on the floor, where they can pose an injury risk for seniors who might struggle to bend over to pick them up or slip on fallen items when bathing.
- **Renovate your existing shower.** Seniors whose current

bathrooms house a traditional shower setup that requires them to step over a tub can renovate the space and replace that feature with a walk-in shower. A walk-in shower does not require seniors step over a bathtub, greatly reducing the risk of falls while bathing. Some additional shower renovations include installing a bench so seniors can sit down while bathing, ideally while using a hand-held shower head.

- **Purchase non-slip materials** for the bathroom. Non-slip floor mats in a bathroom are essential for anyone, and especially beneficial for seniors. A non-slip vanity storage bin and toothbrush holder also can ensure daily accessories remain accessible.
- **Elevate toilet heights.** Elevating toilet heights in bathrooms throughout the home can make it easier for seniors to sit down and get up when going to the bathroom. Toilets compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) are roughly 18 inches taller than



standard toilets, which can make a big difference for seniors. These are just a handful of ways seniors can make their bathrooms safer as they aspire to stay in their homes longer. — Metro Creative



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## Siding replacement has many components

The longer a person resides in a particular home, the greater the likelihood that various components of that residence will need to be replaced. Driveways, roofs, HVAC systems, and even appliances all have expiration dates.

Although siding on a home can be quite durable, there may be specific reasons why homeowners choose to or need to replace it at some point. Understanding what's to come of the job can help homeowners prepare. No two siding jobs are exactly the same, and each project will be dictated by a host of variables, including which type of siding homeowners choose. However, these general steps are commonplace during siding replacement projects.

- Choose siding: Homeowners are urged to consult with various siding installation companies about which products are available and ask each for an estimate. Budget, climate and other factors will narrow down siding materials. Popular siding types include vinyl, wood, fiber cement, metal and stone. Siding can have almost any color or texture as well.

- Remove and relocate: Outdoor items close to the perimeter of the home will have to be moved out

of the way so workers can access the siding. The job will require a dumpster to be dropped in front of the home or in the driveway to collect debris, so homeowners should be prepared to leave space for it.

- Siding delivery: The new siding should be delivered prior to the installation start day. These materials will take up a lot of room and space should be made available so the installation team can access them without difficulty.

- Interior decor: Siding installation will include hammering, which can disrupt items on interior walls. It is best to have all wall hangings taken down to prevent damage.

- Old siding removal: On the first day of installation, removal of the old siding will happen first, according to Smart Exteriors. Siding, insulation and trim will be removed. In the event that older, asbestos-based siding is on a home, contractors may safely remove and discard it, or go over that type of siding. Homeowners should inquire about this step during the company vetting process.

- Home inspection: Once all old material is gone, the exterior sheathing will be inspected

to ensure it is in good shape. Signs of rot or loose boards will be considered and repaired, if necessary.

- New siding install: First workers will put on house wrap or some sort of insulation/water barrier product. Afterwards, siding boards are layered on in the design chosen. Nails or screws are used to attach the siding and seams will be caulked to prevent moisture penetration. If the homeowner has chosen to have gutters and downspouts installed during the siding job, those will be fitted and installed as well.

- Clean up: The installation team will begin the process of thoroughly cleaning up the property. All tools will be removed and the property will be swept or blown to clean away debris. Crews typically use powerful magnets to grab stray nails and screws that have fallen into the lawn and elsewhere. The dumpster will be taken away shortly after the work is completed.

Siding replacement is a big job but one that can offer immediate curb appeal once completed. It typically is not a do-it-yourself project since it requires specific skills to ensure durability.

— Metro Creative

## Home office still seen as a perk to some homebuyers

Professionals might be returning to work in offices after years of pandemic-related remote work, but that doesn't mean home buyers aren't still prioritizing home office space when shopping for a new place to call their own.

According to a recent survey of home buyers conducted by the National Association of Home Builders, 66 percent would prefer to buy a home with exactly one home office space and 13 percent want at least two offices. Just one in five buyers indicated they do not want any home office space.

The majority of buyers who want home office space prefer a medium-sized space, which the NAHB defined as between 100 and 150 square feet. Just 22 percent of buyers prefer a home office space larger than 150 square feet, while only 19 percent want a small space (less than 100 square feet). The NAHB survey indicates the

enduring popularity of home office spaces, recognition of which can be particularly useful for current homeowners preparing to put their homes on the market as well as those looking to add office space.

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CEMENT BOARD, ALSO known as fiber cement siding, which is being added to this Middlebury home, is a durable, long-lasting exterior building material made from a mixture of Portland cement, sand, water and cellulose fibers. It's durable, as well as resistant to weather, fire and pests. Homeowner Daniel Houghton can tell you first-hand how heavy it is.

Independent photos/Steve James



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# Try these remedies for a creaky floor

Hardwood floors are coveted features in many homes. The National Wood Flooring Association says wood floors are the most environmentally friendly flooring options available. In the United States, the hardwood forests that provide flooring products are growing twice as fast as they are being harvested. Wood floors can last for many generations and require fewer raw materials to produce than other flooring options. That means less waste may end up in landfills.

While hardwood floors can endure for decades in a home, over time they may need some tender loving care to keep them looking good and working as they should. Squeaky floors are often caused by movement and friction between floorboards. Treating the problem involves identifying the underlying issue.

**Loose hardware**  
When nails or screws no longer

are secured tightly, floorboards can rub together. The noise heard is the sound produced by rubbing. Tightening or replacing the hardware can help reduce the squeaking.

**Counter-snap kit method**  
Some home repair experts say this kit method is a good enough way to fix squeaks without damaging the floor. Once the source of the squeak is located, drill a 3/32-inch pilot hole through the hardwood flooring. Then insert a screw through the kit's depth-control fixture and into the pilot hole, and drive it until it automatically snaps off below the wood surface. Follow this up by filling the hole with wood putty that matches the floor color. Once the putty is dry, lightly sand the area to blend.

**Use a shim or shims**  
Sometimes the floor may squeak because of a gap between the joists and the subfloor. Filling the gap with a small piece of

wood called a shim can help alleviate the gap or gaps.

**Drive up screws**  
If a squeak is just in one spot, you may be able to drive short screws from below into the subfloor.

**Small gaps**  
For small gaps between boards, sprinkle talcum powder or powdered graphite between squeaky boards to reduce friction. Wood filler applied with a putty knife also may work. For larger gaps, use a liquid filler designed for wood floors.

Homeowners also can visit their local home improvement center for other hardware solutions designed for underfloor repairs to remedy squeaks. Many work from underneath the floor and involve mounting plates or brackets to sure up the floor.

Squeaky floors can be problematic, but noises can be banished with some repair work.

— Metro Creative



# Maximize your closet storage with these tips

Who couldn't use a little more closet space at home? As individuals accumulate more belongings, they need places to store all of these items. While modern homes may be built with extra storage in mind, older homes often place a premium on closet space. Homes built earlier than the 1980s may have small closets in bedrooms and only one or two additional closets around the home for linens and other items.

The most obvious solution to a lack of closet space is to build more closets. But too often home floor plans cannot accommodate new closets. Therefore, homeowners may have to get creative to maximize their space.

**Sort and discard**  
Individuals can take some time to empty closets and assess what is in them. Sometimes more space can come from simply thinning out belongings that are no longer used. Take off the plastic coverings on dry cleaning and discard bulky shoe boxes.

**Invest in thinner hangers**  
Clothes hangers come in all types, but the thinnest and most durable ones tend to be the no-slip velvet variety. Such hangers keep garments from slipping off and feature an ultra-thin design, says *Real Simple* magazine.

**Use storage containers**  
Grouping items together and condensing them can free up space. Tuck belts, handbags and other items into storage bins that can be labeled and stacked. Loose items can look more cluttered and even take up more space when spread out.

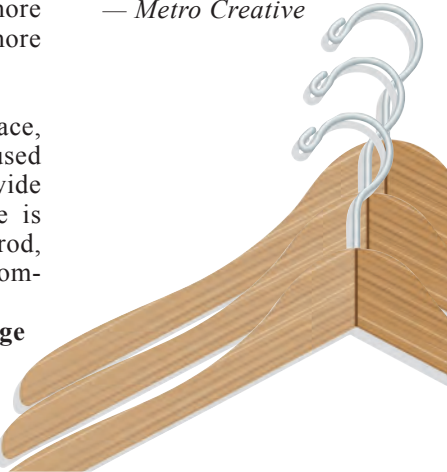
**Pair shelves with rods**  
For those with enough space, hanging a few shelves in unused areas in the closet can provide more storage space. If there is sufficient space above the rod, install a shelf and place seldom-used items up high.

**Choose other storage solutions**  
In addition to closets, people can identify other spaces to store items. This

can include bins under beds, storage benches or ottomans, the back sides of doors, or in furniture with built-in drawers. Individuals also can purchase free-standing closets or armoires that can fill in when rooms do not have enough closet space or no closet at all.

Maximizing closet space comes down to some creativity, de-cluttering and utilizing additional furniture to meet needs.

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# Multigenerational households can create one answer to housing crisis

The modern real estate market has led millions of aspiring home buyers to reconsider their approach to buying a home. Low inventory has led to high home prices. When paired with mortgage interest rates that have remained north of 6 percent for years, the high sticker price of homes has made many buyers wonder if homeownership is simply beyond their means.

It's impossible to know if or when home prices will come down, but some buyers have chosen to seek homes that can accommodate multiple generations. According to the Pew Research Center, the share of multigenerational homes rose from 7 percent in 1971 to 18 percent in 2021. A multitude of factors have contributed to that increase, and housing affordability is one such variable. In 2024, researchers studying multigenerational households at the Wharton School at the University of Pennsylvania noted that housing affordability declined considerably in recent years but also had been on the decline for decades. As homes become less affordable, the number of multigenerational households tends to increase, and that's something modern buyers can keep in mind as they look for a home.

In-law suites that accommodate multigenerational households can provide a pathway to homeownership for buyers who otherwise may be priced out of the market. Buyers considering homes with an in-law suite or those who want to add one to their existing homes can familiarize themselves with these convenient and potentially cost-saving features.

• Note the significance of a separate entrance. Whether you're looking for a home with an in-law suite or hoping to add one on to your existing home, a separate entrance for suite residents can allow them to come and go as they please. That sense of independence is significant. In addition, a separate entrance can make a home seem less like a multigenerational residence, which at times can feel crowded, and more like a single-generation home. That can afford all residents a little more peace and quiet in a

typical day.

• Expect an increase in taxes if you're adding on. As with any addition to a home, adding an in-law suite to an existing home is likely to result in an increase in homeowners' property taxes. The amount of that increase is contingent upon variables unique to each residence, like location and the size of the addition. When shopping for homes with existing in-law suites, buyers can request existing tax information so they are not surprised by the number like they might be if they add on to an existing home. Despite that, it might still be in prospective buyers' best interest to add on to an existing property and pay the additional taxes than it would to buy a new home.

• Try to include features residents have come to expect when living independently. An in-law suite should include its own private

bathroom, a washroom for a washer and dryer and a kitchen or kitchenette. If everyone in a multigenerational household is forced to use the same bathrooms, washers and dryers, and kitchens, then the home might begin to feel cramped rather quickly.

• Try to secure off-street parking. Though it might not affect the ambiance within the in-law suite itself, an off-street parking spot is a convenience residents will appreciate. Such a space will allow residents to come and go as they please and save them the headache of moving their vehicles for snow plows and street cleaners.

In-law suites could be an in-demand feature as more homeowners and aspiring buyers seek to reduce housing costs by embracing multigenerational living arrangements.

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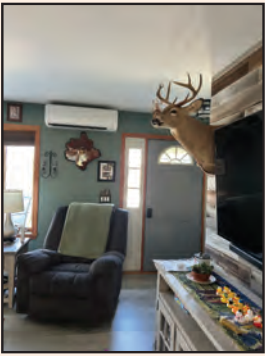
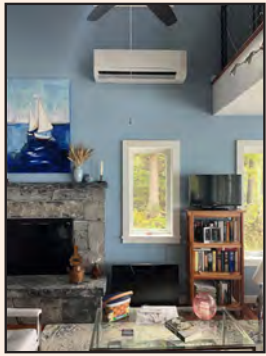
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