

# FALL Home Guide

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 2, 2021

## ALSO INSIDE...

- IMHOLTE EXCAVATING
- LUKE TEAM REAL ESTATE
- LIBERTY BANK MINNESOTA
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MATT AND KIM WEBER are the owners of H2O Pro Plumbing Services out of the Clear Lake area. They have been in business since 2007 and continue to provide great service and professionalism for Central Minnesota. See their story on page 7. (Photo by Bill Morgan).

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## FHG IS A PROFUSION OF RESOURCES

As the summer season starts to come to a close, fall home construction and building projects are just getting started.

For those, “do-it-yourselfers” and for those who want to hire experts, the *Patriot Newspaper* is proud to present our annual Fall Home Guide to aid all homeowners.

In this year’s guide, look to our story on Matt and Kim Weber’s plumbing company called H2O Pro, LLC. The Webers have been extremely busy this year as many people have shown interest in getting touch-free faucets installed in lieu of the recent pandemic. Check out their story on page 7.

Imholte Excavation out of Becker Twp. is another company staying quite busy lately. Owner Marty Imholte and his crew has been immersed in installing driveways, septic systems, basement foundations, building pads and establishing hunting land for avid



By Bill Morgan  
Editor

outdoorsmen and women. See their story on page 5.

Writer Katie Cantin recently interviewed Liberty Bank’s senior vice president and formed a story on the bank’s new location in Big Lake. See Katie’s story on page 10.

Katie also wrote a story on Luke Team Real Estate of Becker where the husband and wife team of Matt and Lindsay Marquette talk about the real estate market, their business practices and how

they can help both home buyers and sellers. See Katie’s story on page 11.

The *Patriot Home Guide* also has great building, renovating, decorating and remodeling ideas in numerous DIY stories that are meant to inspire, energize and motivate homeowners who are looking to decorate for the upcoming season or get one’s home ready for the season beyond autumn.

This guide is chock full of stories but it also has a plethora of advertisers one can use to get the job done right and at fair prices and professionally. Take a moment or two to see what our advertisers offer and if what they offer is what you are looking for to help get the job done, give them a call and utilize the resources of local businesses whose families are typically your next-door neighbors.

Thanks for checking out our Fall Home Guide and for all your support!

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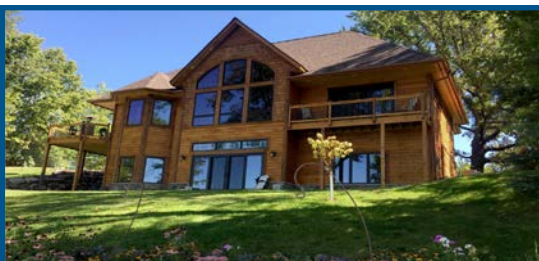


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# 2021 HOME GUIDE

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## IMHOLTE EXCAVATION PLEDGES QUALITY

By Bill Morgan, Staff Writer

Marty Imholte of Imholte Excavating and Trucking is living an entrepreneur's dream. In his 39 years of life, he has owned two companies and today his excavation and trucking business is thriving.

Marty at one time owned and operated a custom home building business for 10 years where he did framing, siding, trimming, general contracting and digging basements. In 2007, he decided to hone his business to dig footings, install septic systems, haul material, take down trees and just about anything else he can do for his clients. He has a small crew of four men and he is grateful his employees are team players.

"Everyone pitches in with any work that needs to be done," he says. "It's nice for all of us to be versatile, and have variety at work."

Imholte Excavation and Trucking has been around for 14 years and does most of its business in Becker and

surrounding areas. Marty has a girlfriend (Molly) and they have four kids together in Becker Twp. in Hayden 13, Avery 11, Parker 10, and Sawyer 7.

"They are really fun ages, and they enjoy learning how to run the equipment as well," he says.

Marty grew up in the Clearwater/ Clear Lake area and went to Annandale High school. He and his crew run their business out of a shop just

a few miles north of Becker.

"Most of the work we do is within that 20 mile range of Becker," said Marty. "But we do travel around the state for jobs as well."

Before the COVID-19 pandemic hit last year, Marty and his company were on track to hire and grow, but because of the change, they stayed the same and fit the work to his remaining crew.

"With the variety of the work we do and working outside and away from people, the working conditions have stayed the same for us," said Marty of the COVID-19 effect. "There has been jobs that have been called

**IMHOLTE to page 5**



IMHOLTE EXCAVATION has all the tools and equipment to help dig basements, dig out along foundations and move dirt and debris. (Photos captured from Imholte Facebook page)

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### IMHOLTE from page 4

off because of the crazy last two years, which we feel the effects from as well, but we keep moving forward and do what we can.”

Marty says word of mouth has been his best advertising though he does run an occasional ad in the *Patriot Newspaper* to drum up business and stay viable and also utilizes the benefits of a Facebook business page. He and his company are active in the communities they serve and he is proud of his commitment to enhancing and supporting his hometown.

“We love to help out people in need where ever we can: send donations, help out folks in hard times, donate time for organizations with equipment work,” he said.

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## H2O PRO: HANDS DOWN A GREAT COMPANY

By Bill Morgan,  
Staff Writer

Looking for a reliable, honest and hard-working plumber?

Give the folks at H2O Pro a call and you'll never regret it.

Allstate claims "you're in good hands" when you are insured by them, but the same can be said for a local plumbing contractor.

H2O Pro was born in 2007 by owner Matt Weber of Santiago. He and his wife, Kim, are a two-person team that occasionally hires freelance apprentices when workloads expand.



MATT WEBER AND HIS WIFE, KIM have built H2O Pro into a solid company based on honesty, reliability and dependability company over the past 14 years. (Patriot Photo by Bill Morgan)

"I usually hire someone to help me out during peak times in the summer and winter time," said Matt.

*H2O PRO to page 16*



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# WHAT TO KNOW WHEN UPDATING YOUR HOME'S SIDING

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With climate change spurring an uptick in extreme weather events in recent years, homeowners today know that to keep their property -- and the people in it -- best protected, the siding they select matters.

"Not only will the right materials better insulate against extreme temperatures, but durable materials will also help guard against wicked weather and storms," says Jon Lapp, siding project manager, ProVia. "And of course, siding has a major impact on the look of your home exterior."

The good news is that you don't need to sacrifice curb appeal in the pursuit of high-quality siding. Here's what to know when making this important upgrade:

- **Materials:** Your choice of materials can impact how you feel about your house for years to come. To that end, consider the most popular home siding material, which, according to the U.S. Census Bureau's Survey of Construction, is vinyl siding. First introduced in the 1960s, its popularity is no accident. Thanks to its low cost, ease of installation, minimal maintenance and long-term beauty and durability,

it's a favorite choice among installers and homeowners. Just be sure that the siding you select is formulated with weather- and heat-resistant materials, as well as UV



blockers to protect against color fade.

- **Insulation:** Did you know that most wall insulation is placed only between the studs? Since wall studs represent up

to 25% of the wall surface of an average home, that's like having one entire wall with no insulation at all. Insulated siding blankets your home, providing continuous insulation between the studs and exterior wall of your home. Look for insulated siding options that are tested and proven to increase the R-value (a measure of a material's resistance to heat flow) of an exterior wall. One such option is CedarMAX insulated vinyl siding from ProVia. One of the most energy-efficient exterior claddings on the market, it can help reduce your energy bills. It's also built with a strong, rigid foam backing that can bridge the subtle bows and dips present on almost every wall. This will make for longer, straighter panels for increased curb appeal, as well as greater impact resistance against rain, hail and contact with your child's fastball. And because it resists fading, chalking,

cracking, peeling and thermal expansion and contraction, it will have a longer, more environmentally-sustainable life.

- **Color:** Color and beauty are huge factors in your home improvement decision. To get it right, start by using the color selection tools on your manufacturer's website. It's important to know that the monitor settings on your device can impact the way the color displays, so contact the dealer to see real color samples made from its actual products before making a final decision. Choose from classic whites, earth tones, bright and colorful shades, or bold, darker hues. Just be sure your beautiful new siding contains anti-weathering ingredients that prevent weather and sun exposure from causing it to fade.

Additional siding information and resources can be found by visiting [provia.com/siding](http://provia.com/siding).

"Approach this home improvement project carefully. With the power to boost your home's beauty and energy efficiency, new siding can offer a great return on investment and protect your home for years to come," says Lapp.



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# LIBERTY BANK COMES TO BIG LAKE

By Katherine Cantin,  
Staff Writer

Liberty Bank recently expanded to Big Lake.

Liberty has been serving the St. Cloud Area for 82 years, and, according to their website, they are St. Cloud's only remaining original bank with continuous family ownership. The bank has branched

out to serve other communities, including Monticello, but has people of Sherburne, Stearns, and Wright Counties.



stayed close to its home community, focusing on serving the

Big Lake as an extension of that customer base."

"We've been in Monticello for 30 years," said Senior Vice President Robin Gohman. "We see the move to

With the hot housing market, Liberty is excited to be able to offer its services to the Big Lake Community. One thing that makes Liberty unique is when they give a home loan, they don't sell that debt, like a lot of other banks do. Instead, they hold onto the loan so customers always know exactly who to go to with questions or concerns – customers don't

have to worry about taking a home loan from the bank and having to pay the loan back to another, unfamiliar company.

Gohman says that sort of confidence is important, as lots of people are building, buying, or refinancing right now.

Liberty also is special in that it is a large residential construction lender, which is a specialized service.

On top of these more unique services, Liberty offers all of the traditional banking services: electronic and mobile services, traditional deposit, mortgage and car loans, drive-up ATM and banking services, and more.

Liberty is a big supporter of the St. Cloud area community, Gohman said. She gave an example of the old St. Cloud Headquarters building. When Liberty moved to a new lo-

LIBERTY to page 16

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# LUKE TEAM REALTY IS READY TO SERVE

By Katie Cantin,  
Contributing Writer

Becker's Luke Realty Team, consisting of married couple Matt and Lindsay Marquette, is ready to rock and roll in this crazy housing market.

The two have been in realty for 21 years, as both got their licenses at a very young age. Lindsay's father was a developer, which got the young couple interested in housing.

"We're both entrepreneurial and independent," Lindsay said.

Matt added, "We like to help people. It's great to get to know them and build relationships."

Which is good, he said, because buying or selling a home can be an emotional experience for people, and it's important to build a personal relationship with the client.

They've been working with Luke Realty for the last 10 years.



## Current Market

When asked to describe the current market, Lindsay stated it was like "trying to drink out of a fire hydrant."

The average number of days a house was on the market in 2020 was 28, while that number has jumped to a mere six days for 2021. The average price of a home sold in 2020 was \$298,000, which has risen quite a bit to \$352,000.

Matt said the couple has never seen a market like this one, even before the housing crash in 2008. The couple said that, to stay competitive, they've made themselves

available "on-call" for their clients, since anything on the market is moving so quickly.

They said the hot market is being driven by three factors: a lack of inventory, very low interest rates, and an exodus from the cities.

"People [from the cities] see a great community here," said Matt.

And the quality and size of a median-sized home is quite a bit better than what a buyer can find in the cities.

## Time to Buy or Sell?

The Marquettes said that this is, of

LUKE to page 14



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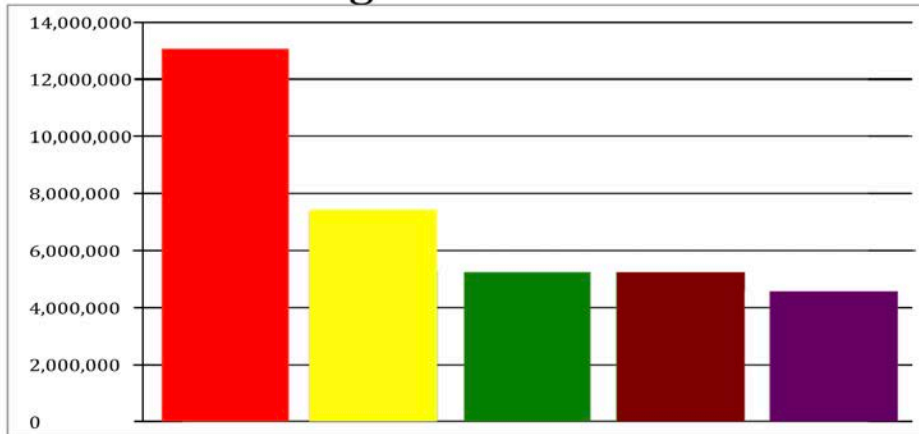


# — MARKET LEADER FOR 21

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## Who's Selling Homes in Becker?\*

### Who Is Selling Homes In Becker?



#### Market Share Leaders

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<span style="color: yellow;">■</span> RE/MAX Results	\$7,460,999
<span style="color: green;">■</span> Coldwell Banker Realty	\$5,271,300
<span style="color: brown;">■</span> Keller Williams Integrity NW	\$5,262,650
<span style="color: purple;">■</span> National Realty Guild	\$4,582,000

Based on information from the REGIONAL MULTIPLE LISTING SERVICE OF MINNESOTA, INC. for 2021 and for the leading market share Brokers with greater than 1/5 market share. This report is based on closed transactions (closed sales by listing company plus closed sales by selling company) for all property types and is deemed reliable but not guaranteed.

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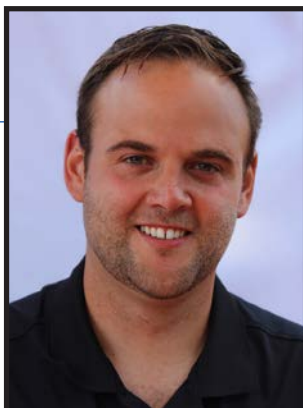
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course, an excellent time to sell a home. It's a seller's market, and homes are going for quite a bit more than asking price.

But some of the Marquettes' clients are skeptical about whether this is the right time to buy, and they assure anyone who is thinking of doing so that it's a great time to buy, as well.

With interest rates being so low, buyers can save quite a bit of cash on what they would otherwise pay in interest.

Going back to 2010, Matt pointed out that the average interest rate was right around 8.05%. So, for a 30 year mortgage, the buyer would end up paying approximately \$660,000 in interest on a median-sized home.

Now, the interest rate is around 2.9%. For the same home, the buyer would end up paying only \$200,000 in interest.

Besides that, buyers may be approved for a larger home loan, based on the low interest rates, and could end up getting something better than they would otherwise afford.

Some people still think they'd prefer to buy after the market corrects itself, but the Marquettes warn that the low interest rates will go away when that correction comes.

#### All About Service

Matt and Lindsay work together to offer as much as they can to their clients, based on their individual skills. Matt is a contractor as well as being a realtor, and Lindsay has an eye for staging and interior design. Together, they always make sure to go the extra mile for their clients to make sure they are putting the best possible product on the market, to get the best possible price.

On the buyer side, the Marquettes will help a buyer find homes that are a good fit. They keep their eye on the local market and let the client know if anything comes up that would be a good fit.

They also keep themselves in tune with the market. They are well-versed in negotiating contracts due to their many combined years in the industry. They also know how to navigate multiple offers, noting that the highest offer is not necessarily the best one. For example, one using a local lender may be a better option than one using a lender who is based out of state.

The Marquettes especially love helping first-time home buyers find a new home.

"It's a hard market for them," Matt said.

But the Marquettes have found that the people in the Becker and Big Lake community are very generous people, often going out of their way to show kindness to a young family, and being willing to find a deal that works for all parties.

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LUKE from page 14

“It’s so much fun to see the care the sellers have for the buyers, and it’s so cool to be a part of a new start,” the Marquettes said.

They said this level of care and kindness towards the buyers is not very common in the industry, which is why they love being a part of this community.

The Marquettes say that Becker/Big Lake has some of the best realtors around. They say that, while it is a competitive business, the realtors in the area know it’s important to collaborate together to get the best service for their clients.



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Weber gained a lot of experience in the plumbing business when he was an employee at Neil's Plumbing in Buffalo for around eight years. He has used that experience and the skills to build a company that has a reputation for being reliable and professional.

Weber, 55, has been in the business of plumbing for over 25 years. He takes pride in ensuring his customer service is the company's top priority. He is licensed, bonded and insured and his services include residential, commercial and industrial, specializing in water purification. He is hired for remodels and new construction projects and focuses on water heating, water softening, filtering, reverse osmosis drinking water, boilers, in-floor heating and faucet repairs and replacement.

Matt's wife, Kim, handles the bookkeeping, ordering, planning and scheduling of the business. The Webers have three children and have been married for 24 years.

With the pandemic rearing its ugly head these past few years, Weber has seen an increase in his business — especially for products like touchless faucets and dispensers.

Weber's business is a home-based business but his office is a large white truck with his logo and phone number on it. Towards the front there is an American Eagle and United States Flag to show his patriotism for the country he works in.

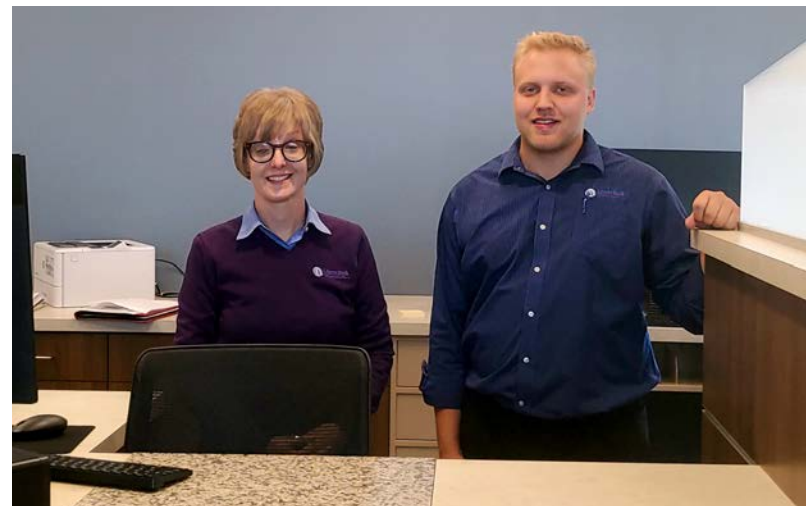
Matt is also a firefighter and EMT specialist with the Becker Fire Dept. He has been with them for 14 years and he also helps out the City of Santiago by maintaining the township hall and scheduling and renting the building for inside events. He and his wife are long time members of the Santiago Lions Club and volunteer to help at events throughout the year.

Though Matt and Kim's customers are typically from the area of Central Minnesota, there are times Matt gets a call for a job closer to the cities.

"I take pride in following up on my projects, being reliable, dependable and provide good, old-fashioned customer service," said Matt.

For plumbers, a good popularity is a seal associated with public approval with regard to plumbing excellence. Regarding homeowners, a plumber's good reputation will be a barometer regarding quality and dependability. Check out Matt's comments and reviews on his website ([h2oprollc.net](http://h2oprollc.net)) or Facebook page ([www.facebook.com/H2OProLLC](http://www.facebook.com/H2OProLLC)) and anyone can see, his reputation precedes him.

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**LIBERTY BANK COMES TO BIG LAKE.** Liberty Bank's Senior Vice President, Robin Gohman, and Branch Manager, Parker Friedman, prepared the new Big Lake branch for its official opening. (Photo by Katherine Cantin.)

#### LIBERTY from page 10

cation recently, they donated the old building to an organization who intends to make it into a children's museum.

Anyone who is interested in learning more about the Big Lake branch should keep their ears open, as Gohman said they would be offering an open house event sometime in October, with fun treats and mugs to take home. At the writing of this article, that date had not yet been set.

Gohman said they hoped to have the bank open at the end of September or early October, though the official date, as well, had not been set at the time this article was written.

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# REDUCE YOUR ENERGY BILLS THIS FALL WITH THESE TIPS

## StatePoint

The updates you make in fall can prepare your home for the long winter months ahead, helping you stay more comfortable all season while reducing your energy bills and other expenditures. Here are some home improvements to consider:

- Select insulated siding: Did you know that most wall insulation is placed

only between the studs? Since wall studs represent up to 25% of the wall surface of an average home, that's like having one side of your home with no insulation at all! Check out siding that provides continuous insulation, such as CedarMAX insulated vinyl siding from ProVia, which is not only one of the most energy-efficient exterior claddings on the market, but offers enhanced curb appeal and durability.

- Improve windows and sliding glass

doors: New windows can make a substantial impact on your overall energy efficiency, if you select wisely. To identify the most energy-efficient windows for your home, refer to the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) climate zone map, which divides the country into four regions. For each region, the agency provides recommended values for the two major characteristics that affect the energy efficiency of vinyl windows: the U-Factor (which measures the window's insulating value) and the Solar Heat Gain Coefficient (which represents the amount of heat from the sun that passes through the glass). Learn the specs of any windows you're interested in before making a purchase to ensure they're a good fit for your region.

Wherever you live, make sure the windows and sliding patio doors have been independently tested to meet strict EPA energy efficiency standards, and check to see that the windows are ENERGY STAR

Certified. Finally, be sure any new products are delivering their full value with a proper installation that eliminates drafts.

- Seek further savings: Did you know that by installing energy efficient products, you may be eligible to receive an energy tax credit? When purchasing products for your home, consider shopping with companies that are clear about the status of their products, as well as provide needed documentation certifying your eligibility.

- Pass it on: Environmental stewardship is a valuable lesson to impart to the next generation. While you make energy-saving updates to your home, consider checking out free resources that can help your children understand why this matters. For example, the "Sammy the Star" ENERGY STAR Educational Program, found at [provia.com/energy-star](http://provia.com/energy-star), teaches children about the importance of saving energy.

Energy savings and environmental protection go hand-in-hand. This fall, consider home upgrades that prioritize both.



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# IS YOUR HVAC SYSTEM READY FOR COOL WEATHER?

## StatePoint

As you enjoy mild autumn weather, take time to ensure your home is equipped to handle the chilly months ahead. Following these steps will mean a more comfortable, energy-efficient winter:

- Clean your air filters monthly. Dirty filters make HVAC equipment work harder and cause more wear and tear on your system. They also increase your energy bill and reduce indoor air quality.

- Compare the Annual Fuel Utilization Efficiency of your heating system with newer models. If it's below 13, you may want to consider a new, more efficient system. Remember, the higher the rating, the less wasted energy for a reduced carbon footprint. Be sure to choose equipment bearing the ENERGY STAR logo. High-efficiency systems reduce your impact on the environment and can also save you money. You may also be eligible for a Federal Tax Credit if you select a qualifying model.

- Use a humidifier during colder months. It not only adds moisture to your home, it can actually make it feel warmer. In turn, you'll be more apt to lower your thermostat, saving money and consuming less energy.

- Check and maintain your insulation. Improperly insulated walls, floors, attics, basements and crawlspaces drain away heat and can also lead to moisture imbalance. Adding weather stripping and caulk around windows and doors can also go a long way to improving your home's insulation.

- Turn down your thermostat. Keeping your thermostat

five degrees cooler can lower your heating bills without affecting your home's comfort. Install a programmable thermostat to regulate temperatures.



- Clean the furnace area. Don't keep chemicals or products near your heater, and don't store anything next to it that could impede ventilation. Keep vents and returns free of obstructions. Don't lay carpet over vents, place furniture over or in front of them, or obstruct the flow of air.

- Have a technician give your HVAC system a pre-season tune-up so that everything is running efficiently before temperatures plummet. Even the most efficient system can suffer if it's not properly maintained. Just be sure your HVAC equipment is installed and serviced by a North American Technician Excellence (NATE)-certified HVAC technician, as they have demonstrated their knowledge of today's increasingly sophisticated heating and cooling systems by passing a nationally recognized test developed and supported by all segments of the industry. Working with a NATE-certified technician translates to a longer life for your HVAC equipment, increased energy efficiency and fewer callbacks and warranty returns. To find a NATE-certified contractor in your area and for more HVAC tips and insights, visit <https://www.natex.org>. With a few simple considerations in fall, you can reduce your home energy bill and improve your home's comfort all winter.

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# STILL COOKING WITH GAS OR ELECTRIC? A CASE FOR INDUCTION COOKING

## StatePoint

The best kitchen updates don't just enhance the beauty of your space. They allow you to simplify your life, make better choices, and improve your relationship with your kitchen. And who knows? They may even make you a better cook! To that end, you may want to consider trading in your gas or electric cooktop for an induction model. If you've been keeping up with the Joneses and haven't considered induction technology, that's not surprising. While popular in Europe, adoption in the United States has been slower.

"Outdated misconceptions about the cost and reliability of induction cooking have prevented many American households from making the switch," says Peter Weedfald, senior vice president of Sales and Marketing, Sharp Electronics Marketing Company of America. "However, induction

technology offers quicker heating and boiling than gas or electric counterparts, more precise temperature control, easier cleanup, enhanced safety, and key eco-friendly perks."

To help demystify induction cooking, Weedfald is offering some insights into how the technology works and how it can benefit your kitchen:

- **Magnetic technology:** Induction cooking skips the need to heat a burner, increasing the overall heating efficiency. Instead, it automatically detects when magnetic cookware is placed on the cooking zone. An electromagnetic field located below the cooktop transfers current (heat) directly to the cookware. The good news? You probably already own magnetic cookware. Many stainless steel, enamel-coated iron, and cast iron pots and pans are magnetic, and some manufacturers have added steel or iron plates to the bottom of

ceramic, copper, aluminum, and other pans. If you put a magnet to the bottom of your cookware and it sticks, it's magnetic and will work on induction. Concerned that one of your faithful pans won't work? You can purchase an induction transfer plate, which is a simple steel disk that transfers heat to your non-magnetic cookware.

- **Precise cooking:** Some induction cooktops offer a wide range of temperature settings from low to high, as well as timers, for super-precise heating and overall faster boiling.

- **Eco-friendly design:** Induction cooking can help you reduce your carbon footprint at home. With induction, up to 90% of the energy consumed is transferred to food, compared to approximately 74% for traditional electric systems and 40% for gas, according to the Electric Power Research Institute.

- **Cleaner indoor air:** A study

conducted for Southern California by the Environmental Health Perspectives found that residential natural gas cooking burners can emit air pollutants, including nitrogen dioxide, carbon monoxide, and formaldehyde. Unlike gas stoves, induction cooktops don't release the airborne pollutants associated with burning natural gas.

- **Safety first:** Induction cooking carries less risk of burns and fires. Only the area the cookware occupies is transferring heat, not the surrounding area. Plus, the cooking zone stays cool even when turned on and is only activated when magnetic cookware is placed on top of it.

- **Sleek design:** Induction cooktops have a sleek glass-ceramic surface that not only looks great in any style kitchen but makes cleanup as simple as wiping down the surface.



- **Cost:** Upgrading to an induction cooktop was once expensive. But like with most innovations, not only has the technology substantially improved over time, the prices have dropped. For example, the 30-inch option from Sharp Appliances is commonly sold at just above \$1,000.

To learn more about induction technology and smart home appliances, visit [sharpusa.com](http://sharpusa.com).

Whether it's time to replace your cooktop or you simply want to try something new, consider induction technology for an overall improved kitchen experience.



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# 3 WAYS TO FUSE ART AND NATURE IN YOUR HOME

## StatePoint

Beyond sprucing up your work and living environs, there's certainly much to love about houseplants, whether it's the simple act of taking care of something or the fact that some varieties can even improve the air quality in your home (peace lilies, we're looking at you).

However, if you're like many people who have done virtually everything from home this past year, your living room has turned into a veritable plant nursery. Rather than add more plants to your living spaces haphazardly, consider these easy tips from LiveTrends, a company that creates and designs over 500 original living art product collections each year:

- Befriend color. When it



comes to pots for your greenery, succulent and shrubs, you may think neutral is the way to go. Think again. Right now, it's all about attention-grabbing colors, such as the mustard, navy and wine, which are featured in the Harvest Votive and Agatha styles from LiveTrends' fall 2021 collection. When you fuse

nature with bold hues, you can easily elevate a houseplant into art status. Bonus: You don't have to shell out serious dough like you would for framed wall art or a sculpture.

- Add joy.

The pandemic accelerated the plant parent trend and many found themselves deeply embracing "biophilia," or the innate desire to connect with nature -- from the great indoors that is. To give you a moment of joy during your day or even perk up your Zoom back-

ground, look for whimsical and fun plant designs.

- Make holiday swaps. Add vitality to your holiday home decorating game by swapping in festive plants for elements in your regular lineup. During Halloween for example, LiveTrends offers designs like the delightfully ghoulish yogi skeleton mini plants, a collection of skeleton figures seated in Sukhasana pose. During the winter holiday season, their "Sno-

mann" plants make a cute and festive addition to your mantel or tablescape.

For more design inspiration and tips or to view the latest collections, visit [instagram.com/live-trendsdesign](https://www.instagram.com/live-trendsdesign).

By fusing nature with art, you can elevate your houseplant collection and create truly beautiful living spaces in your home.

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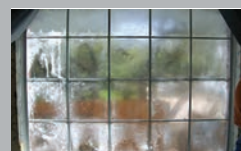


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# HATE BUGS?

## HERE'S HOW TO REMOVE THE ICK-FACTOR FROM YOUR HOME

### StatePoint

Hate bugs? You're not alone. Nearly seven in 10 Americans can't sleep if they know there's an insect in the room, according to a recent survey conducted by OnePoll for Zevo. The same poll also found that two in three Americans would give up a month's pay to not deal with bugs!

Science says your visceral reaction is actually quite rational. According to researchers at the University of California, Davis, those creepy-crawly feelings you may experience upon seeing a bug is simply nature's way of helping you avoid pathogens and parasites.

The good news? Insect experts say that there are steps you can take to protect your home turf from disgusting bugs and other pests.

"While you should not lose your healthy distaste for bugs, you can take steps

to keep them out of your home," says Daniel Perry, entomologist at Procter & Gamble.

Here are a few ways to help keep America's top three hated bugs: cockroaches, spi-



dows sealed when they're not in use. If you love a fresh breeze, be sure that your screen doors and windows are in tip top shape and contain no holes. Don't have a screen door? Consider quickly installing a mesh door screen over your front door or patio door that seals up the middle with a magnet.

This is a good choice for renters and others unable to make more intensive home updates.

#### 2. Seal holes:

Use an afternoon to caulk small cracks in your home's foundation and siding. This is a quick, easy and affordable way to seal these common entry points for bugs.

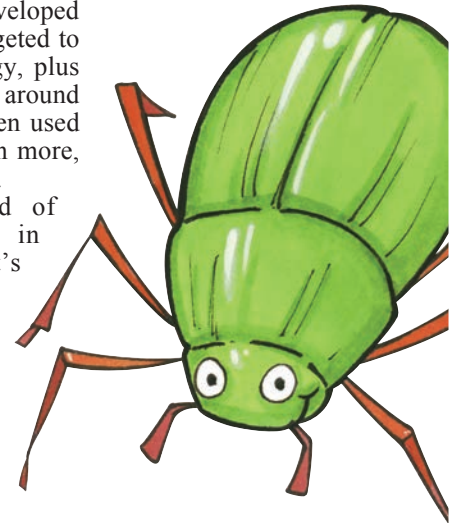
#### 3. Remove their food

source: Bugs need a food source to survive, so keep your home clean. In the kitchen, seal your trash bin and remove its contents regularly, wipe down surfaces -- especially after spills, and sweep up those crumbs. A cockroach can survive months on a single crumb of food! Be sure to regularly vacuum furniture, rugs and carpets in any room where you eat.

4. Blast bugs: Bugs will find their way into your home no matter how hard you try to keep them out. Because a small bug problem can spread quickly, it's important to be ready to meet them head-on. Zevo sprays, including the brand's Multi-Insect Killer Spray, are powered by essential

oils. Zevo's BioSelective Technology was developed by experts to be targeted to bugs' unique biology, plus Zevo is safe for use around people and pets when used as directed. To learn more, visit [zevoinsect.com](http://zevoinsect.com).

If you're tired of being grossed out in your own home, it's time to take charge. Not only can you help prevent insects from invading your home, you can swing into action at the first sign of bugs to make sure it doesn't become a bigger problem for you and your family later.



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## HOW TO PERSONALIZE ANY SPACE USING CUSTOM-DESIGNED WALLPAPER

### StatePoint

In case you missed it, wallpaper has made a comeback in the interior design world. This is for good reason. Today, there are literally millions of designs from which to choose. Not only that, new types of wallpaper can make application and removal easier than ever.

Need a little inspiration? The world's largest custom, print-on-demand fabric, wallpaper and home decor digital marketplace, Spoonflower, recently challenged home decorating bloggers to “facelift” a small space using wallpaper. Having successfully completed their updates, these DIY-ers are sharing tips and insights for enhancing your own spaces:

- Create a focal point. Bethany Sy, the blogger behind Reality Day Dream, who enhanced the wall behind her mantel with wallpaper says, “A little color and pattern can create the perfect focal point in any room.”

- Think beyond walls: With a little creativity, wallpaper doesn't just have to be for walls, you can use it to update furniture too. Take a cue from Victoria Ford, the Prepford Wife blogger who recently refreshed an old dresser with the Bee Life Toile wallpaper designed by independent artist, Lucinda Wei. “This dresser has lived many lives in our homes and it was time for it to get a little update with a design that

was irresistible and perfectly on brand,” says Ford.

- Complement your current style: As Ashley Dusing of Our 1917 Farmhouse notes, wallpaper can be paired with any room's current design elements to enhance its overall style. “We selected a wallpaper with a vintage style to complement our mid century bedroom decor and offer a bold pop of color. It was everything this bedroom (turned office space) needed.”

- Consider your needs: Before selecting wallpaper, think about your home decorating habits. For example, Spoonflower offers three wallpaper options: Prepasted Removable Smooth wallpaper, Peel and Stick Removable wallpaper and Non-Pasted Traditional Pebble wallpaper. If you love to mix things up every year or every season, Charlotte Smith of At Charlotte's House says peel and stick is the way to go. She recently wallpapered the fireplace surround in her family room, but already has sights on the future.



“I used removable peel and stick wallpaper so I can easily change things up in a year or two if I want a different vibe.”

When redesigning your space with wallpaper, consider shopping with a company that supports independent artists, such as Spoonflower, which connects artists and makers with consumers in the creative economy, and pays a commission to an independent artist with every purchase. With over one million unique designs

available and the ability to upload your own design, you can easily use wallpaper to create your own signature style at home. To learn more or to shop styles, visit [spoonflower.com](http://spoonflower.com).

Whether you wallpaper an entire room, create an accent wall or revamp a piece of furniture, adding style and personality to your interior spaces can be easy with this impactful DIY project.



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