

# YOUR HOME

NOVEMBER  
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TIPS AND TRENDS FOR HOMEOWNERS, BUYERS AND SELLERS



## BATHING BEAUTY

The bathroom. Big or small, it's one of the rooms in your house that gets a lot of attention — from you, your family and friends, and potential buyers. And as one of the most popular rooms in the house, it deserves an update every now and again. Even if renovations aren't in your plans, there are some easy ways to update it on a budget. The key is to revamp focal points, such as mirrors or rugs, and then focus on unique additions. Consider these tips from Apartment Therapy.

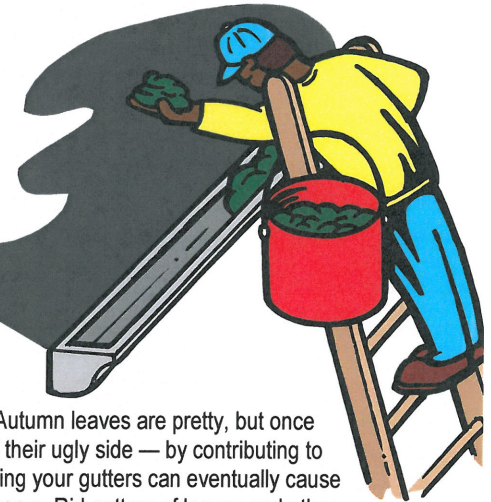
Start by replacing the mirror — a bathroom staple — with a more contemporary shape and style. For big impact with minimal effort, reduce clutter on the bathroom counters by repurposing mason jars from the kitchen to hold makeup brushes and pencils, small combs or extra toothbrushes, and store makeup or other odds and ends in stylish mini baskets or ceramic pots. To refresh the counter without replacing it, change out the fixtures and accessories like the soap dispenser and towel rack.

Pull together the entire bathroom with complementary or matching hues for bathroom essentials such as towels, washcloths and a shower curtain, or stencil an easy, colorful border around the mirror or ceiling for an added pop of color.

Treat your bathroom like any other room in the house. Use framed postcards, vacation photos or pressed flowers to create inexpensive artwork to deck the walls. Consider repurposing other household items to give the bathroom a welcoming vibe, such as wine racks for rolled up towels.

## SEASON PASS

The weather may not be as chilly in California or Florida as it is in New York or Wisconsin, but getting your home ready for a new season is still a good idea. Put these "winterizing" tips from MSN Real Estate on your to-do list.



**Clean your gutters.** Autumn leaves are pretty, but once they fall, they can reveal their ugly side — by contributing to clogged gutters. Neglecting your gutters can eventually cause water to seep into your home. Rid gutters of leaves and other debris by hand (be sure to wear thick gloves) or with a scraper and rinse with a powerful hose to ensure proper drainage.

**Plug leaks.** Avoid leaks from rain or snowstorms with a simple maneuver. On a windy day, walk around the inside of your home with a lit incense stick or candle and hold it near commonly drafty areas — windows, door frames, electrical outlets — and apply caulk or other sealants to gaps. For more protection against the elements, install storm windows or buy a window insulator kit (about \$5 per window) for a cheaper fix.

**Bundle up.** Insulation, no matter where you live, is a necessity. Experts say that regardless of where you call home, attics should contain a minimum of 12 inches of insulation. Ensure that your insulation is adequate to help you avoid wasted money in heating or energy bills.

## Christopher Tenggren

ABR, AHWD, BFOR, CDPE, CLHMS, CNHS, CRS, ePRO, GREEN, GRI, PMN, RECS, RFS, SFR, SRES  
REALTOR/BROKER

RE/MAX Great American North  
40W160 Campton Crossing Drive - Suite E  
St. Charles, IL 60175  
P: 630-408-2750  
F: 630-313-4220

CRS@HomesInTheFoxValley.com

**HomesInTheFoxValley.com**



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## GUEST LIST

The holidays bring food, gifts, good times — and guests. Hosting houseguests can be joyful *and* stressful, but you can minimize the hassle with thoughtful planning and preparation. Consider these tips from *Real Simple* and *Woman's Day*.

**Get your house in order.** Cut out any unnecessary drama by discussing — and approving — houseguests (who, how many and for how long) with your spouse and the rest of your household well before anyone arrives on your

doorstep. Next, ensure you have adequate space for the number of guests you'll have. Sleeping arrangements will be different depending on your guests' situations. For example, young children may need to sleep in the same room as their parents, so you might want to provide a futon or air mattress.

**Stock your kitchen.** Avoid the stress of creating daytime meals on the fly by stashing a few easily defrosted dishes that guests can help themselves to throughout the day, such as lasagna or baked mac 'n' cheese. And be sure to set a specific dinnertime so everyone can plan accordingly. For breakfast, opt for small baskets of muffins or bagels with jellies and butter, and keep a pot of hot coffee with ample supplies of cream and sugar so that guests can wake up and feed themselves at their own pace.

**Don't forget about it.** Help your guests settle in by stocking up on the often-forgotten necessities, such as toothbrushes, travel-sized toothpaste and shower products, disposable razors and makeup-remover wipes. Equip each bedroom with extra linens, and add a scented candle or two to make rooms feel like a posh hotel.

## DID YOU KNOW?



The U.S. delivers more than 15 billion cards and packages between Thanksgiving and Christmas Eve.

## Say Yes to CRS

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RE/MAX Great American North  
40W160 Campton Crossing Drive - Suite E - St. Charles, IL 60175

