

Over the Fence

NEWS FROM YOUR REAL ESTATE PROFESSIONAL...

Security Pacific Real Estate



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Aging Homes Spur Remodeling Trends

America's inventory of existing homes is getting older, and it's taking a toll on homeowners. The average age of a house in the United States is 32 years and rising, according to a recent Harvard University study. Residences in constant need of repair have sent remodeling spending soaring to a quarter-trillion dollars each year, with no sign of slowing.

Here is an overview of the hottest home remodeling trends on the horizon:

Return of the classics: Fashion comes and goes, but some styles endure.

Homeowners want products that will enhance a residence's original character and won't appear dated in a few years. This has led to a revival of classic architectural styles like Victorian, Craftsman, Old World and Colonial.

Low-maintenance living: Retiring baby boomers often plan to remain in their current residences or own second homes. Since most boomers prize an active lifestyle, they don't have much time to spend on home maintenance. They want top-quality products—like treated wood windows and doors—that don't require a lot of upkeep and are guaranteed to resist decay.

Hard-working rooms: Many are adding little luxuries to hardworking spaces like laundry rooms and garages. Laundry rooms are receiving luxury fittings like interior doors that reduce noise from washers and dryers. Garages are getting composite doors that are both energy-efficient and make the garage as attractive as the front entry.

Excerpted from NewsUSA



Spring is a good time to...

- Prune your trees and shrubs.
- Head to the shed and do a "tool inventory" to make sure you have all the items you'll need in the months ahead. Inspect the tools you already have. For example, test your hoses for leaks.
- Paint fences and the exterior of your home, especially wood surfaces. This way, they will be protected from summer heat and sun. Wood decks should also be sealed once a year.
- Inspect the roofing for loose or curling shingles.
- Now that the heating season is over, have a chimney sweep clean any fireplaces and flues.
- Inspect door and window screens for tears. You can often repair small tears using a kit from your local hardware store.
- Clean your gutters. Before getting out the ladder to reach them, review the safety tips on the back page.

The first day of spring is March 20th.

Spring Speed-Cleaning Tips to Help You Take Back Your Time

Many would agree that making the most of one's time is essential to achieving happiness and life balance. In the spirit of saving time, consider these time-saving tips to help you breeze through the dirty work fast.

- **Use the right tools.** Forget specialized gadgets; opt for a cleaning apron or caddy for storing cleaning supplies. They keep your supplies within reach as you move around the room.
- **Make every move count.** Work around the room once without backtracking. Carry your equipment and supplies with you so you don't have to make dozens of trips back and forth across the room. Work from top to bottom so you won't be re-cleaning surfaces with dirt from above. Follow the mantra: "dust first, vacuum last."
- **Repetition is key.** Always return your tools to the same spot in your apron or caddy. You can't spare the time to fumble around for them.

Excerpted from NewsUSA



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If you are thinking of buying or selling a home in the near future, please call for a personal interview and property assessment with no obligation.



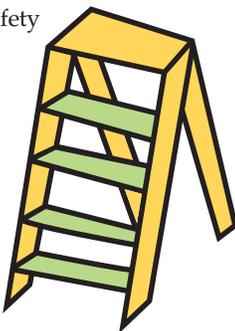
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Springtime Safety

• Before cleaning gutters or climbing onto your roof, make sure your ladder is in good shape.

• Reacquaint yourself with lawnmower safety tips and inspect all electrical lawn and garden tools.

• If you haven’t used your circular power saw since last summer, review the operations manual and safety tips before you begin cutting.



• Since it is warm enough to open windows, spring is a good time to paint wood furniture and walls. When using paint strippers on furniture, be sure to do so safely.

• Painting is a good idea in the spring, when you can keep your windows wide open. Protect yourself from the paint fumes.



St. Patrick's Day is March 17th.

The national flower of Ireland is the Shamrock. The Shamrock is 3 leaved; a 4 leaved clover is rare and therefore is considered “lucky”.



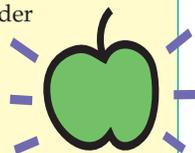
Kissing a Blarney Stone signifies luck. A Blarney Stone is an actual stone set in the wall of Blarney Castle Tower in Blarney, Ireland.

*May you always have
Walls for the winds,
A roof for the rain,
Tea beside the fire,
Laughter to cheer you,
Those you love near you, and
All your heart might desire!*



IRISH APPLE CAKE

- ¼ cup (½ stick) butter
- 1 cup sugar
- 1 egg, beaten
- 4 Granny Smith apples, cored, peeled, and diced (2 cups)
- ¼ cup chopped walnuts
- 1 teaspoon vanilla
- ½ teaspoon baking powder
- ½ teaspoon soda
- ½ teaspoon salt
- ½ teaspoon cinnamon
- ½ teaspoon nutmeg
- 1 cup all-purpose flour



Preheat oven to 350°F. Generously grease an 8-inch square cake pan. In a large bowl, cream butter and sugar together until light and fluffy. Add the egg, apples, nuts, and vanilla and stir well. Sift in dry ingredients and mix well. Pour batter into the prepared pan and bake until cake is lightly browned and a skewer inserted into the center comes out clean, about 45 minutes. Let cool in the pan for 5 minutes, then unmold and serve hot or cold with whipped cream or vanilla ice cream. Serves 10 to 12.

By Margaret Johnson