

Revitalize Your Lawn After a Long Winter

Every spring, homeowners head outside to take stock of how the winter treated their lawn. Homeowners in areas that experience heavy snow or rainfall each winter likely do not look forward to this inventory, fearful of what another harsh winter did to their property. Fallen tree branches, frozen ground and winter wind storms can do a number on even the most well-manicured lawns, turning a summertime labor of love into a nightmare.

While homeowners might not be able to do anything about the weather, there are ways to revitalize a lawn each spring. And you don't have to be an accomplished landscaper to handle the task. The following tips can help bring your luscious lawn back to life, helping make winter a distant memory.

* Remove all debris from your yard. Debris includes any trash in the yard, wood, large roots, fallen branches, and even stones. The presence of trash such as broken glass or even faded paper products such as cups or bags is not only unsafe for the environment, but it can prove harmful to any-

one who might be out in the yard once your grass grows, especially if you have children. Oftentimes, winter winds can blow trash from nearby garbage cans across the yard, no matter how neatly homeowners put out their trash.

* Smooth the soil. Once all debris has been removed, examine the soil for any abnormalities that might need to be smoothed out. Use a spade or rake to smooth any areas that aren't up to par. Next you'll want to loosen the soil as well, something that can be done with a garden rake. Any unsightly areas, such as humps or ditches, should either be smoothed out or filled in, depending on which is appropriate. This can be done with some soil and should not prove too costly.

* Consider seeding the lawn if need be. For lawns that took a particularly harsh beating over the winter, consider seeding the lawn to help revitalize it. When seeding a lawn, be sure you choose the right seeds. Different regions respond better to different types of grass. But don't be intimidated if you don't know the correct grass to choose. Simply

ask a landscaper or consult a lawn care specialist at a nearby home improvement center as to which type of grass is the best fit for your region and your yard.

When you're ready to seed, the seed can be scattered by hand for smaller yards, or with a drop spreader for larger lawns. When spreading with a drop spreader, use the suggested amount of seed on the bag (even a little less seed should do the trick) and make sure you spread out the rows evenly in the same direction. Once you've sowed the first part of your lawn in one direction, you can crisscross back over that part at a 90-degree angle, making sure you keep equal distance and calibrate your spreader at the same speed.

* Add mulch for aesthetic and practical appeal. Moist helps the soil, and can also add aesthetic appeal to a lawn. Moist helps the soil by allowing it to retain moisture, making it more conducive to growing healthy grass. When laying mulch down, keep the mulch at roughly a quarter-inch to ensure your lawn will grow in nicely.



COURTESY OF METRO CREATIVE SERVICES

Homeowners can revitalize their lawn after a long winter in a number of ways.

Top 10 Kitchen And Bath Trends For 2010

(ARA) - Does your kitchen or bathroom look like it's stuck in a time warp? Then it might be time to update the most-used rooms in your home. For inspiration, look no further than the National Kitchen and Bath Association (NKBA), which recently shared its top 2010 kitchen and bath trends.

To compile the findings and determine the latest kitchen and bath trends, the organization surveyed those members who designed a kitchen or bathroom during the last quarter of 2009. According to NKBA, the top 10 trends for 2010 are:

1. Shaker style kitchen design
2. Maple and alder cabinetry finishes
3. Quartz countertops
4. Pull-down/pull-out kitchen faucets
5. Polished chrome finishes
6. Under-counter refrigerator drawers
7. Dishwasher drawers for small loads
8. Marble vanity tops
9. Integrated sink tops, drop-in sinks, vessel sinks and pedestal sinks
10. Bronze and stainless steel finishes

In the kitchen

Making a big statement throughout the kitchen in 2010 is the addition of functional drawer appliances. One such example, which has been specified by nearly a third of NKBA's kitchen designers, is modern refrigeration technology. Turning convenience into a luxury, under-counter refrigerated drawers feature adjustable horizontal and vertical dividers to keep frequently used items close at hand. Perfect for the ultimate entertainer, refrigerated drawers are quite roomy, typically tall enough to store a 2-liter bottle and wide enough to hold items such as serving trays and pizza boxes.

If you're tired of running the dishwasher when it's only half-full, consider installing a dishwasher drawer. Because it's independently operated, you can wash small loads as economically as large ones. Plus, the extra flexibility to run cycles simultaneously with your traditional dishwasher makes clean-up quicker and easier, explaining why nearly a third of designers are incorporating this new trend into kitchens, as well.

Another popular element to include in the kitchen in 2010 is a pull-down or pull-out faucet. Utilized by 85 percent of kitchen designers, it's an easy way to make a design statement at the kitchen sink while increasing functionality. The new Arbor pull-down kitchen faucet from Moen seamlessly brings simple sophistication to the kitchen with its transitional styling that comple-

ments virtually any decor. It's available in a chrome finish, which is another 2010 trend to look for in appliances, accents and hardware throughout the entire kitchen. For more information about the Arbor pull-down kitchen faucet from Moen, visit moen.com or call (800) BUY-MOEN (800-289-6636).

In the bath

Granite is the dominant material chosen for vanities in current remodels - used by seven of every eight designers - however, in 2010 alternative natural materials, like marble, will continue to grow in popularity.

According to NKBA, just under half of bathroom designers utilize marble, as it provides a sophisticated look that's reminiscent of Roman baths with its regal, refined detail that exudes a sense of luxury. Plus, marble countertops provide a stain-resistant, water-resistant, rugged and durable surface - ideal for child-friendly bathrooms or homes with just one bathroom that see a lot of traffic throughout the day.

NKBA also forecasts that integrated sink tops will be a popular choice this year, as you can easily use existing items to achieve this look. By adding a sink into an antique dresser or chest, design-

ers are creating one-of-a-kind vanities for nearly 30 percent of all clients.

Polished chrome finishes are another bathroom design trend for 2010. Look to incorporate this chic metal accent into all your hardware by updating the accessories in your bath, as well. You'll be able to make a big impact with small updates like new towel bars and robe hooks, for a completely coordinated look.

\$1,500 Tax Credit for Homeowners

(MS) - Homeowners looking to upgrade their windows and take advantage of the government's energy tax credit have until the end of 2010 to qualify for up to \$1,500 in federal tax credit.

"Now is the time to save green - both in your wallet, with lower long-term energy bills, and with the federal tax credit," says Christopher Burk, product manager for Simonton Windows. "With energy-efficient vinyl windows you can start saving on energy bills the day your new windows are installed. Then you get additional savings at the end of the year from the government."

According to the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, homeowners can gain a tax credit of up to 30 percent of the cost of qualifying energy efficient upgrades to a maximum of \$1,500 per household until the end of 2010.

To make life easier for homeowners, Simonton Windows offers a variety of competitively-priced Energy Tax Credit (ETC) glass packages that are guaranteed to qualify for the tax credit and are built to provide optimal

thermal performance.

"It's easy to match up the qualifying windows with your home's personal style and design," says Burk. "Simply visit www.simonton.com/taxcredit to learn more about windows that can add comfort and beauty to your home while giving you a substantial tax credit at the end of this year."

CAPTION: This new energy-efficient replacement window allows the homeowner to qualify for up to \$1,500 in tax credits this year.

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