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DIY strategies to deep-clean carpeting

What's underfoot in a home can go a long way toward making residences comfortable and aesthetically appealing.

A study of home buyer preferences using data from the National Association of Realtors® found that 54 percent of home buyers were willing to pay more for a home with hardwood flooring. But that doesn't mean that carpeting doesn't still have its devotees. In 2019, the real estate firm Opendoor installed nearly one million yards of carpeting in its homes. Houzz reports that, in 2018, 17 percent of renovating homeowners purchased carpets and 50 percent purchased indoor rugs.

Carpeting and rugs can offset some of the shortcomings of hardwood, providing a softer texture that makes for a better landing spot for active young children. However, carpets will require more maintenance than hardwood floors. Learning how to deep clean carpets can help homeowners, as vacuuming is not enough to keep carpets in top form.

Spot clean stains

Stores sell a bevy of carpet cleaning solutions. When applying such solutions, do so in an inconspicuous area of the room to ensure colorfastness of the carpet and that the solution does not adversely affect the fibers. If the spot is clean and the carpet is not adversely affected, you can then apply the solution to more visible areas.

Homeowners who prefer all-natural cleaning solutions rather than chemicals can use a solution of white vinegar, baking soda and salt to make a safe cleanser, according to

Deep-Clean

Continued on Page 10



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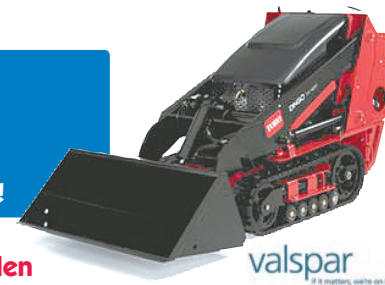
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How to address moss in the lawn

Lawn care can be a labor of love. Maintaining a pristine lawn is no small task, but it's one that many homeowners proudly take on, knowing that all the hard work and time spent outside on sunny summer afternoons is well worth the sweat equity.

After putting in so much effort to create a lush, green lawn, it's understandable if homeowners react with disbelief when something threatens the health of their turf. Moss is one such threat. Recognizing the threat moss poses is the first step to corralling it before it overtakes a lawn.

Explaining moss

Moss can be especially menacing because its green appearance allows it to blend in with grass rather easily. As moss spreads, it becomes more noticeable. According to the turf care experts at



Scotts®, moss is a plant with shallow roots that spreads by spores and root-like structures called rhizoids. Moss is opportunistic, and it will grow where turfgrass is thin and weak. However, moss does not kill the grass. Rather, the conditions that promote the growth of moss can kill the grass.

Such conditions may include compacted soil or excessive thatch, acidic or infertile soil, excessive shade, and insufficient or excessive watering.

How can moss be controlled?

Penn State Extension notes that the first step to controlling moss is to test the soil. Soil test kits are inexpensive and available at most home renovation stores. Test results will reveal if the soil is lacking nutrients or if lime needs to be applied and when to apply it. Such a report also will indicate when to fertilize the lawn, which can help restore the turfgrass so it's more capable of competing with the moss.

Moss

Continued on Page 11



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2021 Edible – Vegetable Winner

Article & photo by
 All-America Selections

Squash Goldilocks F1

Once upon a time, there was an acorn squash named Goldilocks. In summer trials



all across North America, the vigorous plant, high yield, disease tolerance, and rich nutty flavor of this variety had our judges saying, "Ahhh, this squash is just right!" like in the fairy tale. The bright orange fruits with uniform shape and color double as an ornamental decoration. Makes a great complement to AAS Winner Honey Bear acorn squash.

How to Grow

Squash don't do well in containers generally, but a large container may work due to bush growth habit. Plant in full sun, spaced two-feet by six-feet apart. No staking required. Plants will reach about 30 inches in height. The squash produced are about one-pound each, with a sweet, nutty flavor.



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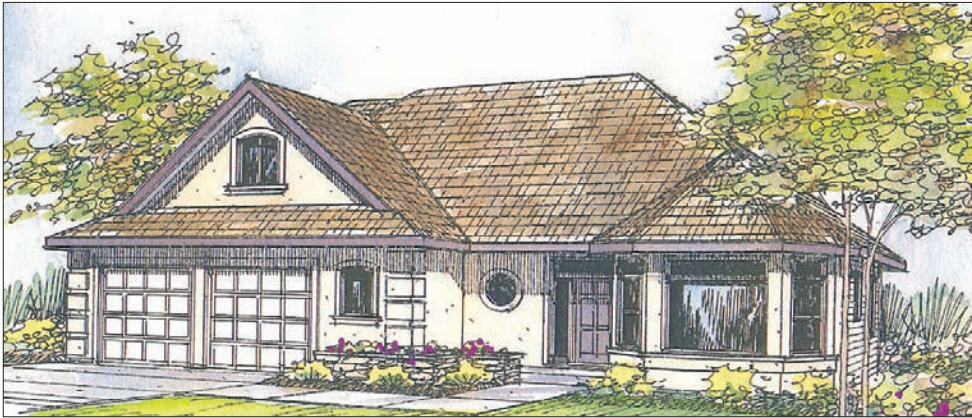
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Midsize Strasbourg has eye-catching details

Raised corner quoins, interesting roof lines, and a variety of window treatments draw eyes to the Strasbourg, a midsize contemporary home with a large bonus room over the garage.

The great room is huge, and the vaulted ceiling makes it feel even larger. Tall slender windows flanking the fireplace provide plenty of natural light. Storage is also more than ample. A wide, deep closet is tucked under the stairs, and another nestles into a nearby nook.

An open wall bounds the great room and country kitchen. Windows on two sides brighten the nook, with the rear

sliders opening onto a partially covered patio. The raised eating bar is handy for ladling soup directly from the pot to waiting bowls. It can also double as a buffet or serve as additional counter space when needed.

Here again, storage space is abundant, thanks in part to the large step-in pantry. A small bathroom and a large utility room are nearby. The utility room has direct access to the garage, which makes it a handy mudroom for taking off dirty footwear and/or drying muddy paws.

Amenities in the Strasbourg's owners' suite include his-and-her walk-in closets (one larger than the other) and a luxuri-

ous two-section bathroom. A sliding glass window over the soaking tub provides soft, natural illumination, while a pocket door offers privacy and steam containment. Sliders at the rear open onto a private patio.

Upstairs, two more bedrooms share a bathroom with combination tub and shower. More storage space is available in the closet on the landing. The large bonus room could be put to countless uses.

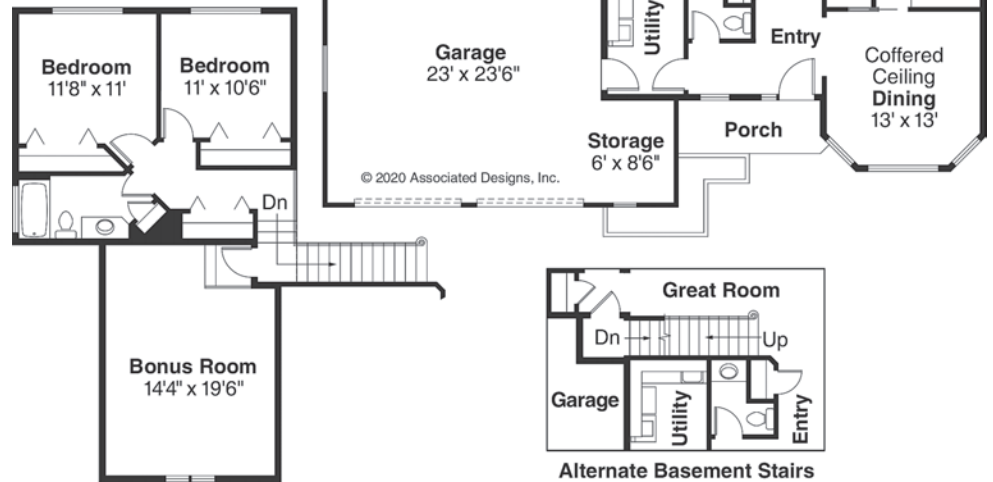
Associated Designs is the original source for the Strasbourg 30-146. For more information or to view other designs, visit www.AssociatedDesigns.com or call 800-634-0123.

Strasbourg PLAN 30-146

First Floor	1653 sq. ft.
Second Floor	477 sq. ft.
Living Area	2130 sq. ft.
Bonus Room	300 sq. ft.
Garage	622 sq. ft.
Dimensions	56'x46'

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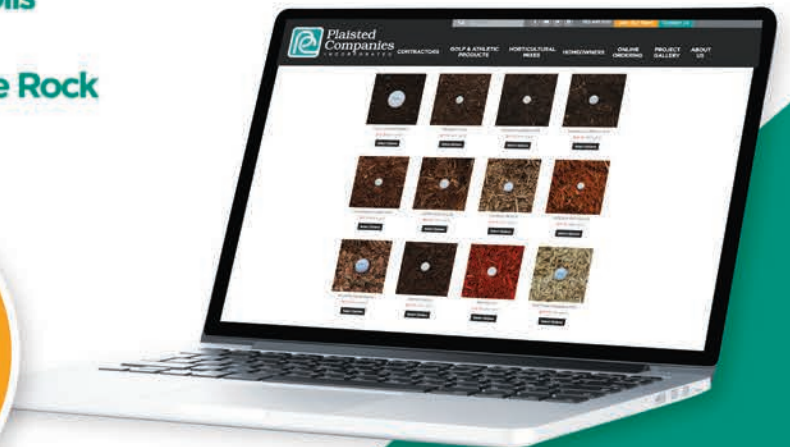
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Renovation trends that figure to be popular in the year ahead

Home renovation trends are ever-changing. Renovations that might have been de rigueur 20 years ago may seem dated now. Recognizing the potentially popular trends of tomorrow is a great way for homeowners to give their homes a fresh new look and put themselves in position to capitalize on popular trends when they put their homes on the market. That's especially so after 2020, a year when millions of people spent more time at home than ever before. All that time working from home and relaxing at home gave millions of homeowners ideas about what they like about their homes and what they hope to change. The following are some renovation trends that various experts suspect could emerge in 2021.

- **Eco-friendly living:** Climate change, and how to combat it, was a hot button issue during the 2020 presidential election in the United States. So it should come as no surprise that urdesignmag.com, a web magazine that showcases creative trends in design, architecture, art, technology, and fashion, predicts that eco-friendly living solutions figure to be hot commodities in 2021. Eco-friendly appliances, furniture and designs can help to conserve energy and reduce waste, which environmentalists and government agencies like the Environmental Protection Agency note are two critical components in the fight against climate change.

- **Large windows:** Large windows can provide stunning views of the outdoors and allow ample natural light



into a home. It may not be a coincidence if large windows prove to be a hot trend in 2021. The COVID-19 pandemic that dominated much of 2020 forced many people to spend considerably more time at home. Darker homes without much natural light can

adversely affect mood, especially when people are spending more time at home. HGTV predicts that homeowners will seek ways to bring more natural light into their homes in

Renovation

Continued on Page 11

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The differences between organic and inorganic mulches

The benefits of mulch are widely known among lawn and garden enthusiasts. By insulating soil from extreme temperatures, helping soil to retain moisture and preventing weed growth, mulch can help plants, trees and gardens thrive, even during periods when Mother Nature can make that very difficult.

Novice gardeners may find themselves a little confused when visiting a lawn and garden center to purchase mulch. That's because there are various types of mulches. One of the ways to simplify that is to break mulches down into two main classes: organic and inorganic. Learning to distinguish between these two classes can help homeowners choose the best mulch for their properties.

Organic mulch

Organic mulches are made up of materials that decompose over time. The experts at BobVila.com note that, because they decompose over time, organic mulches must be replenished on a regular basis. Hardwood and softwood chips are among the most popular and recognizable organic mulches. Evergreen needles, leaves, grass clippings, and compost mixes also fall under the organic mulch umbrella.



Many gardening enthusiasts prefer organic mulches because they help soil retain moisture, improve soil fertility and help to deter weed growth.

Inorganic mulches

Inorganic mulches are per-

manent because they do not decompose over time. Gravel, brick chips and crushed stone are examples of inorganic mulches. Homeowners who do not intend to plant after laying mulch may lean toward inorganic mulches,

as they won't require much work, if any, after being laid. However, the Chicago Botanic Garden notes that inorganic mulches do not improve soil quality. In fact, because inorganic mulches like rocks and stones absorb heat, they can be detrimental to plants in areas where weather tends to be very dry and hot.

The right mulch for a given property depends on a host of factors. Understanding the differences between organic and inorganic mulches is a great first step toward finding the right mulch for your landscape.

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How to choose the right lighting inside your home



Lighting in a home serves both practical and aesthetic purposes. It's easy to maneuver around a well-lit home, reducing the risk of slips and falls, and the right lighting can help homeowners create their desired ambiance, which typically changes depending on which room you're in.

When choosing lighting for their homes, homeowners must walk a fine line between appearance and functionality. A fixture in the foyer that

instantly impresses visitors likely won't prove as awe-inspiring if it's installed in the living room. When choosing lighting for a home, some general rules about what works in each room can help homeowners make the most informed decision.

Kitchen

Kitchens are often the busiest room in a home, so lighting here can be especially important. A kitchen often benefits, both practically and aesthetically, from different types of lighting. For example, pendant lighting above kitchen islands can make meal preparation easier and safer, but such lighting likely won't work in breakfast nooks

and informal dining areas in the kitchen. Recessed lighting works best in such areas. In kitchens with no island, under-cabinet lighting can be used to illuminate countertops and simplify meal preparation.

Formal dining room

Many people enjoy the look of chandeliers in formal dining rooms, and such fixtures can be installed directly above the dinner table. The interior design experts at *Better Homes & Gardens* advise hanging chandeliers roughly 33 inches above the table in

dining rooms with eight-foot ceilings, adding three inches for each additional foot above eight feet. Darkened dining areas may be ideal in restaurants, but homeowners may want to split the difference at home and choose dimmable chandeliers for their dining rooms. This allows homeowners to dim the lights for romantic dinners but turn them up for family gatherings with lots of people around the

Lighting

Continued on Page 11

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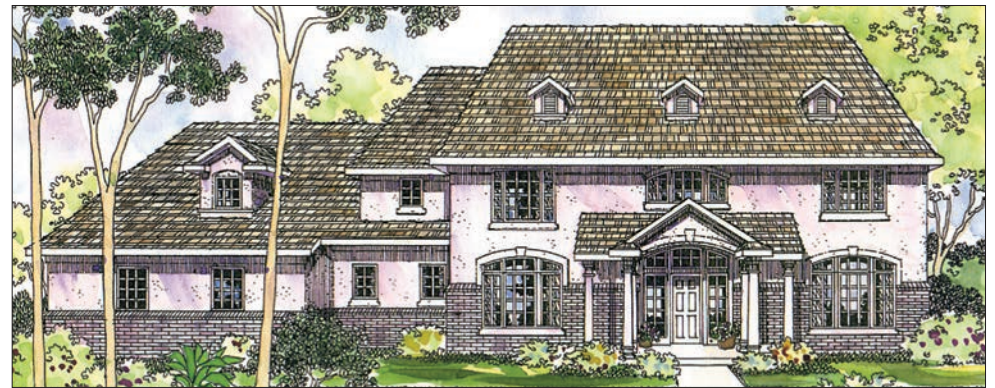
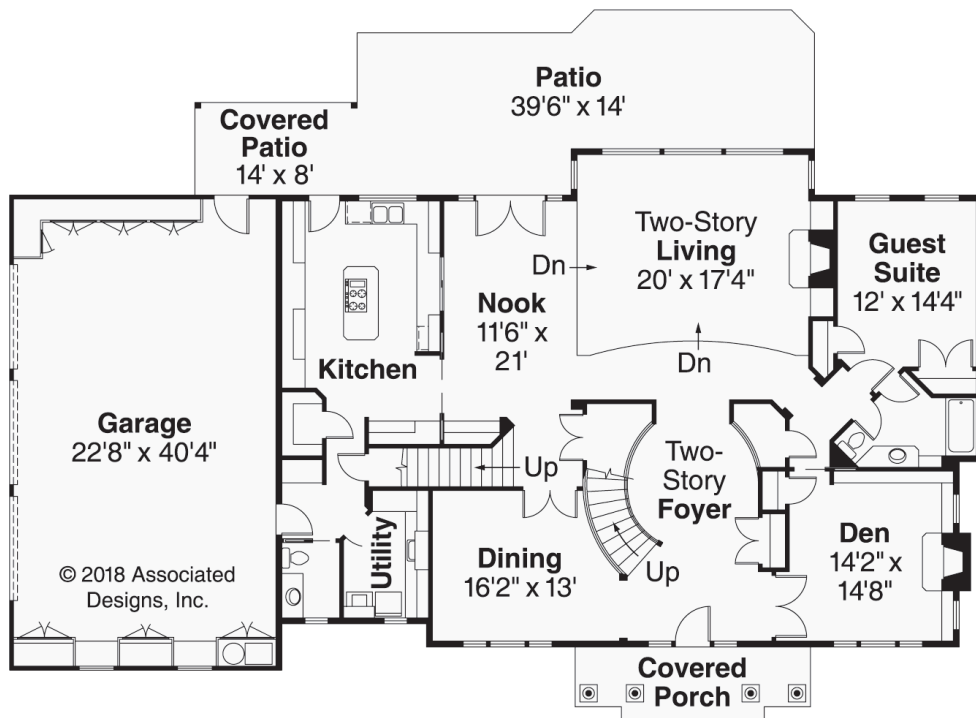
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Stately Roxbury has contemporary plan



nient to the three-car garage with built-in storage closets. The hallway bench is ideal for removing muddy footwear.

Except for the guest suite, bedrooms are upstairs, and every bedroom has its own bathroom.

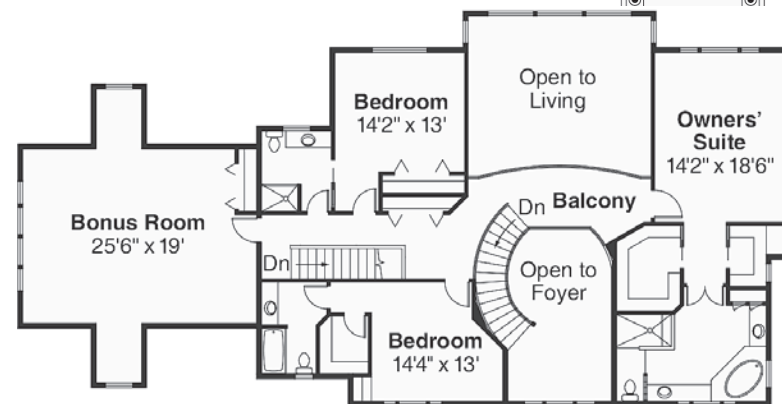
The Roxbury's owners' suite is large, private and luxurious.

His-and-hers walk-in closets flank the passageway to a tiled bathroom with two vanities, a spa tub, and enclosed toilet and shower.

Skylights brighten the owners' suite, a bedroom, and a huge bonus room over the

garage.

Associated Designs is the original source for the Roxbury 30-187. For more information or to view other designs, visit www.AssociatedDesigns.com or call 800-634-0123.



Symmetry, columns, and keystone-accented arched windows give the Roxbury a distinctly colonial flavor. But inside, this estate-size home is clearly contemporary.

Entering through the barrel-vaulted porch, you step into an elegant and spacious tiled foyer with a graceful curved staircase.

The ceiling here, and in the living room, is a lofty two stories high.

To the left is a stately dining room; to the right, a large room with a fireplace. This room could be furnished as a den, home office, library, or entertainment center.

A railed balcony overlooks both the foyer and sunken living room. With windows filling most of the rear wall, and more light spilling down through twin skylights, this expansive space is also exceptionally bright. The gas fireplace provides warmth and color when the weather turns dark and cold.

In the nook, French doors offer access to a large patio, and sliding doors allow separation or openness to the kitchen.

Cupboard and counter space wrap around four sides of the comfortably large kitchen. Features here include a central work island, built-in appliances, skylight, walk-in pantry, and a desk. Utilities and a half-bath are nearby, equally conve-

Roxbury PLAN 30-187

First Floor	2410 sq. ft.
Second Floor	1612 sq. ft.
Living Area	4022 sq. ft.
Bonus Room	598 sq. ft.
Garage	945 sq. ft.
Dimensions	84'x55'2"

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How ergonomic tools can help gardeners

Gardening is a rewarding activity that has been found to provide a host of benefits beyond ensuring readily available access to fresh fruits, vegetables and awe-inspiring blooms.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention says many gardening tasks qualify as light to moderate exer-

cise, which means raking the leaves and cutting the grass can be just as beneficial as cardiovascular activities like brisk walking or jogging. In addition, a 2017 study published in the journal Preventive Medicine Reports found that gardening can help aging men and women offset age-related weight gain. And

the health benefits of gardening go beyond the physical. In 2014, a systematic review of randomized controlled trials published in Complementary Therapies in Medicine concluded that horticultural therapy may be an effective treatment for people with dementia.

Gardeners have a host of tools at their disposal to help turn their lawns and gardens into awe-inspiring landscapes. Among those options are ergonomic tools. Ergonomic tools can benefit gardeners of all ages, but they may prove especially valuable for aging men and women.

How ergonomic tools differ from traditional gardening tools

Ergonomic gardening tools are designed to ensure that using them has as little effect on the body as possible. Ergonomic tools align with how a person naturally moves his or her body, which can reduce the likelihood that gardeners will suffer any strains or sprains while gardening or

experience any aches and pains after a day spent tending to their landscapes.

Choosing the right tools

The West Virginia University Center for Excellence in Disabilities notes that gardeners will know they have chosen the right ergonomic gardening tool for the job when they do not have to adapt the tool. Ergonomic tools should match gardeners' heights, fit their grip and feel comfortable when in use.

Specific benefits of ergonomic tools

Ergonomic gardening tools are designed in a way that can reduce stress on the body while performing various tasks. Gardeners know that aches and pains can add up after a day spent kneeling in the garden, raking soil and carrying supplies from a shed or garage around the property. But the WVUCED notes that ergonomic tools do more than just reduce gardeners' risk of injury.

- Ergonomic tools increase



efficiency. Wasted motions are less likely when using ergonomic tools. That can improve efficiency in the garden, allowing gardeners to get more done in the same amount of time. And because ergonomic tools are designed to work with the body, gardeners likely won't need to take breaks due to aches and pains, which also makes it easier to be more efficient when working in the garden.

- Ergonomic tools increase gardeners' capabilities. The

WVUCED notes that principles behind ergonomics keep gardeners using the tools in natural positions. That means gardeners won't lose power to bending and twisting, enabling them to do more in the garden than they might be able to do when using non-ergonomic tools.

Gardening is a rewarding and beneficial activity. The right ergonomic tools for the job can enhance those benefits and make gardening even more enjoyable.



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Deep-Clean

Continued from Page 2

The Spruce. Soak the stain, use a scrub brush to work in the cleanser and then blot up the liquid with a clean cloth. According to the lifestyle resource First for Women, club soda also works as a cleanser when it is sprayed on a stain.

Deep cleaning

Carpets periodically need to be revitalized, and that can be accomplished with a specialized cleaning machine. Many are available for purchase (a good investment for homeowners with kids and/or pets), while others can be rented as needed.

Remove all of the furniture from a room and vacuum to clean dust, dander and any other debris. Address any darker stains first by pretreating with a cleaning solution. Let sit for around 20 minutes. While waiting, learn how to operate the machine, fill it and clean out the soiled water. Never allow the machine to oversaturate the carpet with water, as it can get into the padding and subfloor, causing problems like mold or wood damage. Spray the water-detergent solutions, and then pass the carpet cleaner over spots repeatedly until the carpet feels only slightly damp. DoItYourself.com advises running the machine at the pace of one foot per second.

Removing shoes when entering the home can keep carpets clean and reduce wear and tear.

With frequent deep cleaning, carpets can maintain a like-new appearance for years.

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Moss

Continued from Page 3

If the underlying cause of moss is shade and/or moisture in the yard, homeowners can speak with landscaping professionals to discuss their options. Replacing existing turf with one that is well-suited to shade and/or moisture may prevent mold from overtaking the lawn in the future.

Penn State Extension notes that some turfgrasses may be best-adapted to shaded, well-drained soils, while others may be more likely to thrive in shaded, moist soils. A local landscaping professional can help homeowners find a turf that will not only thrive in the conditions in their yards, but

also in their local climates.

Moss can quickly take advantage of conditions that make it difficult for turfgrass to

grow. Homeowners who recognize that moss is overtaking their lawn can address it in various ways.

Renovation

Continued from Page 6

2021, and large windows naturally brighten homes while making rooms appear bigger, helping people feel less cramped. That's an especially beneficial characteristic when spending more time indoors at home.

- **Minimalism:** The anticipated popularity of minimalism in 2021 may also be connected to the pandemic. As

professionals were forced to work from home and many families spent more time together inside their homes than ever before, they may have recognized a need to cut back on clutter, including extra furniture. A minimalist approach is both simple and clean, which can make homes feel less claustrophobic.

- **Multi-functional spac-**

Lighting

Continued from Page 8

table.

Living room

Adaptability also is important in the living room, where homeowners may host anything from movie nights to parties for the big game. It can be a tall order to accommodate such a wide range of activities, and many homeowners come down to deciding between recessed lighting and track lighting. If the living room currently has neither style, homeowners should recognize that it will cost considerably less to install track lighting than recessed lighting. Better Homes & Gardens notes that flexible track lighting provides ambient, task or accent lighting, and track lights can even be moved to change lighting schemes at any time, making them a budget-friendly option for homeowners whose living rooms are multi-purpose spaces. Recessed lighting also works well in living rooms, especially ones with low ceilings. That's because recessed lighting is installed into the ceiling, meaning it does not take up any visual space in the room. That can help living rooms feel bigger.

Bedroom

The home improvement experts at BobVila.com note that bedroom lighting should provide enough light when getting dressed, but also be able to be toned down as residents prepare for their bedtime routines. Both portable and installed lighting can be used in bedrooms to serve these various functions.

es: Homeowners asked a lot of their homes in 2020, as rooms were transformed into multi-functional spaces seemingly overnight. HGTV notes that spending more time at home showed homeowners that it may not make sense

to dedicate entire rooms of a home to a single purpose. Renovations that can help homeowners transform rooms into multi-functional spaces figure to be hot commodities in the years ahead.

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