

Spring Home & Garden

*Paving can smooth out
the rough spots*



*Successful gardening is
possible even in small spaces*



*Clearing out the clutter
can spark joy*



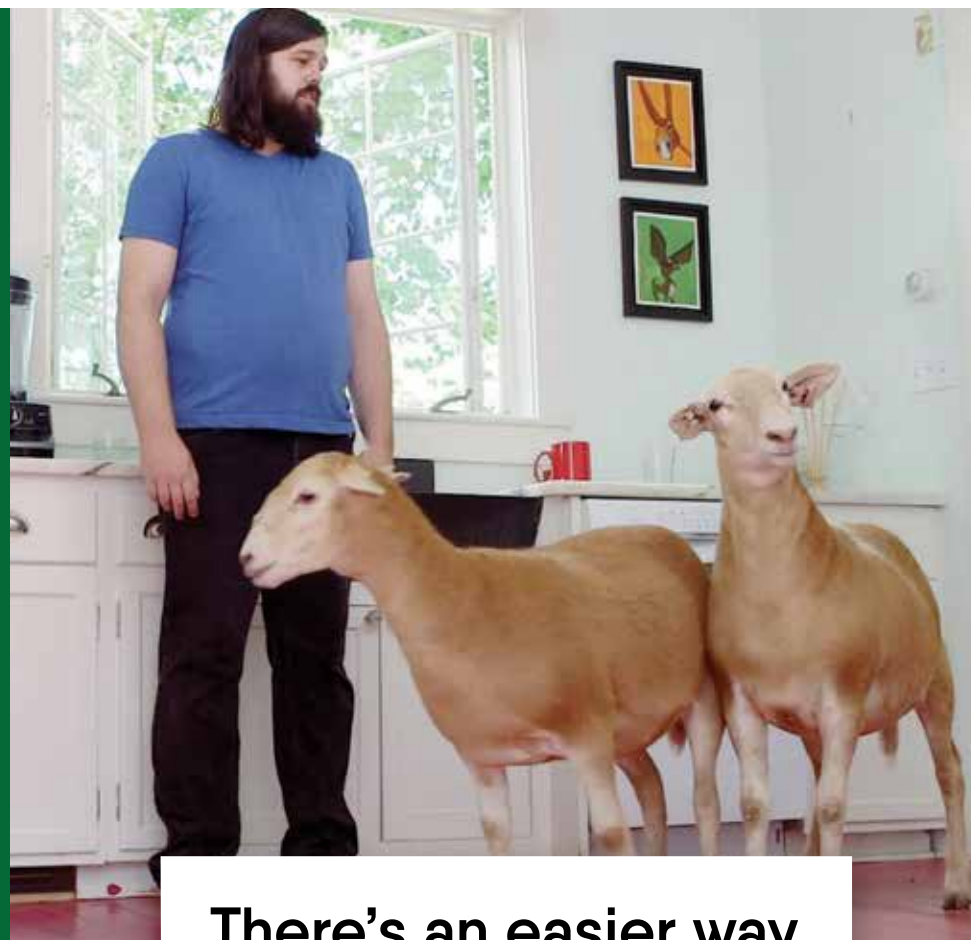
*Spring into summer
with home renovations*



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Spring is a great time for all types of home improvement

BY SCOTT LIBBY

*Owner, Royal River Heat Pumps
Special for Spring Home and Garden*

Besides the usual raking of the leaves that were still on the ground when we got our early snow, the improvements on my list include thinning of some cedar trees to make room for a relocated shed that will be used as a primitive “outdoor kitchen,” reclaiming an area of the barn that will be turned into a gardening shed, replacing another four windows and re-siding a small section of the house. Yes, the pleasures of owning a 150-year-old farmhouse. I can only hope that I complete the last couple of sections of siding before it’s time to go around the house and barn again!

Another project that is growing in popularity is adding an air-sourced heat pump (ASHP) to your home. Mainers in all types of homes and businesses will be installing one before spring turns to summer, remembering the heat and humidity that has been making their homes more uncomfortable over the past several years. ASHPs will cool and dehumidify



Contributed photo

No matter which brand of heat pump you choose, if installed and serviced properly you should get years of reliable and efficient operation.

your home, which leads to improved indoor air quality and a better night’s sleep on a hot summer night. Lower relative humidity in your home also means that your furniture and hardwood floors will be less likely to swell and

buckle.

However, the benefits of air conditioning are not the usual motivator for the purchase and installation of an ASHP. Usually it is the lower cost of heating your home and improved circulation of airflow. This leads to a space that is much more comfortable than you may be used to, all while saving money on the one thing that makes up the highest portion of your home’s operating cost. Efficiency Maine has great calculators on their website that will help you figure out the savings that can be expected.

Efficiency Maine offers rebates on qualifying systems if installed by a company that is listed as a Registered Vendor. Registered Vendors can help with the most important part of your new heat pump system...sizing and application. No matter which brand of heat pump you choose, if installed and serviced properly you should get years of reliable and efficient operation. If not, it is sure to lead to premature failure and many hours of frustration.

When choosing an installation company, check that they are registered with Efficiency

Maine so you can be sure to get your rebate. You should also make sure they regularly install heat pumps as part of their normal business offering. ASHPs are often not installed properly, and sometimes the installer has no idea how to fix it, so be leery of anyone that has “hopped on the heat pump band wagon.”

Lastly, use your heat pump properly. If you know that it is going to be a 90 degree day, close the windows and turn on the air conditioning early in the day so that the heat pump can manage the moisture and keep the space cool. It is OK to turn it off and open the windows on one of Maine’s beautiful days. In the winter, you will want to set it and forget it. Heat pumps work best when they can just “cruise along” and maintain the room temperature, but be sure to turn down the thermometer on your main heating system so that you are not using them both at the same time.

The only thing you have to do is clean the filters a few times per year and have them professionally cleaned every two years or so (which is A LOT easier than cleaning the gutters). Keep cool.

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Spring into summer with home renovations

BY KATE CONE
Correspondent

LAKEHOUSE DESIGN BUILD

It's not quite summertime, but it will emerge from the late spring snow and rain showers to welcome lakeside "campers" once more. And when they arrive to their summer homes, they, like the character in E.B. White's beautiful meditation on memory and mortality, will fall into the embrace of those homes — and realize that the porch or patio or other renovation they longed for can no longer be denied.

Bill Hudson of LakeHouse Design Build can grant all those wishes.

"The people we work for just love Maine. It's their home away from home," Hudson said. "They don't want any hassles. They want to be happy. They work all year long and they want to spend two months in Maine."

Projects like that screened porch overlooking the lake, where you dwell and linger after a simple dinner of whatever fish was caught that day. The bugs can't invade the privacy and a classic rocking chair may as well have your name painted on it.

Don't yet have that lakeside home? Even better. Hudson and his crew can walk customers through from the design to the build out, ensuring they get the home they wanted and dreamed about. "We do it right the first time."

For more information call 242-3663 or 512-8161, or email lakehouserenovations@gmail.com. Visit www.lakehousedesignbuild.com.

ALL SEASON HOME IMPROVEMENT

Ask Bob Grieg whether homeowners are more informed about building renovation, and he says, "Nowadays they do quite a bit of research. I'd say about 60 percent look at other sources, get a lot of pre-information."

With just HGTV's lineup of renovation-based television shows, such as "Property Brothers," "Fixer Upper," or "Love It or List

"The people we work for just love Maine. It's their home away from home."

BILL HUDSON, LAKEHOUSE DESIGN BUILD



Lakehouse Design Build photo

The porch built by LakeHouse Design Build is a great spot for a summer retreat.



Photo by All Season Home Improvement

A new kitchen is always in season.

It," it's no wonder that prospective clients have some knowledge of the process, or at least know what they want.

"We meet with them, figure out what they want, and work up an estimate," Grieg said. "We're blessed because over 28 years, 65 percent of our business is repeat customers and referrals. Phenomenal. We are keen on what the customer wants and proud of our service records."

A graduate of Thomas College, Grieg credits his college roommate, Tim Cormier, with employing him for nine years, giving him some solid experience in the building arts.

Grieg even built the former Hazel Green's restaurant that was the darling of the 1970s in Augusta.

"My partner at the time and I were having lunch back then at Old Port Tavern in Portland. O.P.T., as it was called by regulars, was a steak and salad bar eatery in the Old Port and is still in operation," he recalled. "It was so popular we looked at each other and said, 'why don't we do this in Augusta?' That idea became one of his building projects and although meat fell out of favor in the 1980s and Hazel's closed, it remains one of his fond memories.

Getting back to experience, Grieg said, "I worked for a company with a main emphasis on garages, then became a competitor, got into siding, windows, roofing, basic exterior renovations.

"After some time, I moved into kitchens, baths and metal roofs. I've gone from three employees to 30 today. One thing we're proud of is we're probably one of the few companies to give employees year-end bonuses and have been for 28 years."

Grieg's advice for folks about to sell their homes? "Pay attention to exterior fixes; it's the curb appeal that will help sell that home."

For more information call 626-3039 or email kim@all-season.com. Visit www.all-season.com.

More RENOVATIONS, PAGE 5

Renovations

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4

HOME IMPROVEMENTS OF AUGUSTA

Winter has lingered way past its welcome and that means losing heat through windows. At Home Improvements of Augusta, the crew can replace skylights and windows that are no longer doing their jobs keeping out drafts. Are you watching television at night covered in quilts and comforters? Here's the message offered by Mike Mallar and Jeff Laffin:

"Our windows are made in Maine and our siding is manufactured in New England. We carry all styles of siding and windows, including vinyl, cedar and slate-look, as well as traditional vinyl siding. We also do wooden cedar applications. We can do either replacement windows or new construction in vinyl or wood, including double hung, sliders and picture window, as well as bow and bay windows.

But windows may wait until fall. How about a new deck? Fire up the grill and entertain all the foodies in your crowd. Or wait...they repair old decks and porches. Rebuilding accounts for over 50 percent of these types of projects. Got mosquitoes? Screen that deck and relax in the evenings without fear of being attacked by night pests.

Home Improvements of Augusta also helps find up to 100 percent financing with their choice lenders. As they like to say, "Do it once, do it right!"

For more information call 248-2726 or 242-4074 or email info@homeimprovementsaugustamaine.com. Visit www.homeimprovementsaugustamaine.com.



Put a new metal roof over your head.

Photo courtesy of Home Improvements of Augusta Maine

Explore Career Opportunities in SUSTAINABLE CONSTRUCTION

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The Sustainable Construction program now offers two different one-year certificates designed for those who are eager to jump right in to entry level positions or as a direct pathway toward the Associate in Applied Science degree. Students may choose to earn either the certificate in Framing and Craftsmanship or the Carpentry and Building Science certificate.

The two-year Sustainable Construction program takes students from start to finish in the design/build process and combines conventional stick framing and the millennia-old craft of timber frame joinery with the latest in building systems technology.

The coursework provides students with the technical knowledge and hands-on skills needed to pursue employment across many areas of the construction industry including carpentry, project management, design, building inspection, and renewable energy installation.

We challenge students to think about how buildings in New England can be constructed at a higher but achievable level of quality and energy efficiency. Key sustainability concepts include sourcing local materials, reduction of energy loads, optimization of systems, and the generations of on-site renewable energy.

What Sustainable Construction professionals do:

- Conventional construction, timber framing, or green building
- Finish carpentry and historic restoration carpentry
- Design and drafting in architecture or engineering firms
- Installation of renewable energy and weatherization

Career Opportunities:

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- Housing non-profits and building inspection agencies
- Renewable energy and weatherization services



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Greenhouses prepare for spring

BY SUSAN VARNEY
Correspondent

It's Spring. If you haven't been thinking about your garden all winter, perusing seed catalogues, planning layouts, choosing favorites varieties and gathering seeds, then it's time to get with the program. It's never too late.

A favorite place for many of us is taking a trip to the local greenhouse. It is such a relief to take a break from winter chill and piling snow to green growing things, warm air, hanging plants and blooms.

A walk into a local greenhouse — Sunset Flowerland & Greenhouses, 491 Ridge Road, Fairfield, 453-2357 — found a white-haired lady transplanting seedlings. Seated comfortably on a rolling chair, wearing a purple T-shirt and blue jeans, she introduced herself as Floralie Ellis, 87. She and her husband, Richard, now deceased, started Sunset in 1952.

Sunset is a family enterprise. Floralie Ellis's children, Kathy Ellis Hebert and brother, Don Ellis, run the place with grandchildren, cousins, in-laws and others doing the work that keep it all going —from floral design by Tanya Benner, whose husband Harlan is head grower; Rachel Benner, who does the books and is crew chief; and Don and Jerry Ellis, who are mechanics. Sitting on her chair, Floralie Ellis delighted in introducing her family.

Sunset Flowerland & Greenhouses also delivers flowers to Fairfield, Waterville, Benton, Clinton, Winslow and Oakland. Seeds, soil and supplies are there for the do-it-yourselfers, as are landscape perennials, shrubs and fruit trees.

Longfellow's Greenhouses at 81 Puddledock Road, Manchester, is another great place to visit with its 21 greenhouses, it is the largest in the state. Shop for supplies such as gifts, seeds, soil, pots, mobiles, birding supplies, feeders, houses, food and garden, they even have a Winter Farmers' Market from January to March.

According to its website, Longfellow's also stocks over 800 varieties of perennials, most grown right in their own greenhouses. They have 200 varieties of herbs and scented geraniums, over half of which are grown on site; more than 500 varieties of trees, shrubs, and vines and an excellent selection of water garden plants.

"Spring is on the way," Will Longfellow said recently. "Our pansies are outside, covered, because it's still early and they need to be hardened off, in bloom and beautiful. Easter Lilies are here."

Longfellow's has garden apparel and footwear, and offers workshops, yoga demos, wellness booths, mini massage and reflexology sessions, healthy living snacks, and



"Spring is on the way. Our pansies are outside, covered, because it's still early and they need to be hardened off, in bloom and beautiful."

WILL LONGFELLOW,
LONGFELLOW'S
GREENHOUSES

Photo by Susan Varney
Pansy seedlings, always a favorite, add cheer and color to early spring greenhouses.

natural bath and body products. They also have pruning supplies and watering cans. This is the place to fill your gardening needs, while seeing and enjoying flower varieties unknown, along with old favorites. Call 622-5965, or visit longfellowsgreenhouses.com.

Johnny's Selected Seeds at 955 Benton Avenue in Winslow is the place to go for heirloom seeds, organic seeds They are employee owned. Hop on line, call ahead and pick up your order at the Confirmation Center on Benton Avenue, Winslow or call 877-564-6697, johnnyseeds.com.

Agway stores, local farm stores and hardware stores also have all kinds of things for garden lovers, including seeds and all the things needed to grow a garden. They also carry canning equipment to preserve the harvest.

For organic seedlings and a wide variety of trees, shrubs and perennials, visit Fedco Seeds Tree Sale on May 3 and 4 from 9 a.m.-3 p.m. at 213 Hinkley Rd. Clinton, or call 426-9900. You can also visit their website at fedcoseeds.com.

Photo by Susan Varney

Floralie Ellis, 87, started Sunset Gardens with her husband, Richard, now deceased, in 1952, and has worked there for 67 years. Here she is transplanting cuttings of German ivy. Her days are shorter now, but she gets to spend time with children, grandchildren and others when she works.





Contributed photo

Above: Longfellow's Greenhouses has a plethora of tools to choose from to care for your grounds and gardens, with staff like Rick Hussey to help you with your choices.

Photo by Susan Varney

Left: Harlan Benner, head grower at Sunset Flowerland & Greenhouse, watering seedlings.

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Andrew Silsby, *President & Chief Executive Officer*

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Home security systems offer multiple features

Customers feel safer, at home or away

BY WANDA CURTIS
Correspondent

There were 3,316 burglaries resulting in property loss totaling \$3,194,490 in Maine during 2017, according to Crime in Maine 2017, published by the Maine Department of Public Safety.

One burglary was committed every two hours, 38 minutes and 30 seconds. The peak time for burglaries committed in Maine was between 6 a.m. and 6 p.m., with more than half of the burglaries committed during those hours.

CAYER SECURITY

One way to decrease the risk of being burglarized is to install a home security system, according to Jenny King, vice president of operations for Cayer Security in Waterville.

“Just having an alarm system cuts the chances that your home will be targeted by a burglar,” King said. “Statistics show that if a robber approaches your home and sees stickers or a yard sign indicating that you have a security system, they will not take the chance and move on to another home that is not protected.”

King said that one of the biggest benefits of having a home security system is the peace of mind that’s made possible by knowing that a person’s home and family are protected whether the individual is at home or away. She said that individuals or families who install a home security system may also be eligible for a discounted rate for their homeowner’s insurance.

“Most home insurance companies will offer a discount on your home insurance if you have a monitored alarm system,” King said.

Cayer Security offers hard-wired and wireless alarm systems, which are able to communicate with the central station via phone line, internet connection, cellular communication, or any combination of those three.

“Our systems also allow the homeowner to connect to their panel remotely via web or mobile app login and control their system from wherever they are, including arming/disarming the system, adding/removing codes from the panel, or bypassing a zone,” said King. “We offer remote keyfobs which allow you to arm/disarm your system with the press of a button. The keyfobs also have a panic button, so if you come home to an emergency



Contributed photo

According to Jenny King of Cayer Security, individuals or families who install a home security system may also be eligible for a discounted rate for their homeowner’s insurance.

situation, you just press your keyfob panic button and police are dispatched to your home.”

King said that Cayer’s systems are as basic or complex as their customers would like them to be. She said that they offer an array of devices such as door/window contacts, motion detectors, carbon monoxide detectors, and more.

“We can build a system to suit the needs of each individual customer,” said King. “Also, we can start with a basic system and then add additional components later on if preferred.”

King said that the cost of each system depends upon which features are included. She said that they have a basic package that comes with the alarm panel, three door or window contacts, one motion detector and one remote keyfob.

“From there, we also build custom quotes to add additional components such as more alarm devices, low temperature sensors, or smoke/heat detectors,” she said.

The biggest difference in today’s home security systems when compared to those of the past, said King, is that wireless systems have become more popular than the hard-wired systems.

“Features such as the ability to control the system remotely are becoming widely popular, and you’re seeing a lot more systems communicating via Wi-Fi or cellular communications as homeowners no longer have a landline for the alarm to communicate to the monitoring center,” King said.

Cayer Security provides both residential and commercial services. They will customize an alarm system to fit the needs of individuals and businesses throughout the state of Maine.

For more information, visit cayersecurity.com.

CUNNINGHAM SECURITY SYSTEMS OFFERS MULTIPLE FEATURES

Shawn Michaud, who is a system designer at Cunningham Security Systems in Yar-

mouth, said that security systems today offer much more than just protection and notification in the event of a break-in.

“Security systems can notify you and others in the event of a fire, carbon monoxide or other gas leak, furnace fail, or other low or high temperature conditions, as well as water notification in the event of a pipe burst, foundation crack, or sub pump fail,” Michaud said. “They involve full home automation, including controlling lights, thermostats, cameras with the touch of a few buttons on a smart phone.”

Systems today can still be hard-wired, but for homes that are fully finished often the wireless solution makes the most sense for ease of installation, and avoids the challenges of trying to fish wires throughout a home that is fully finished, Michaud explained.

According to Michaud, Cunningham Security specializes in commercial and residential security systems throughout the state. Their central monitoring station is located in Wiscasset. Michaud said their employees answer the phone and alarms for their own personal customers.

“We do not third party our customer service,” Michaud said. “Today’s systems include touch screen Keypad, wireless devices, not only for security, but full environmental concerns with multiple communication options with our central station. No longer is a phone line needed.”

While some people in Maine live in an area where they may not be concerned about crime, Michaud said their home security systems offer other features as well.

“Do you want to be waiting for a neighbor or someone driving by to see that your home is on fire before the fire department is notified in the event you are not home, or worse, are trapped in the home because of the fire or smoke?” Michaud said. “How long would you like water to be backing up in your basement in the event a sump pump fails or pipes burst? Maybe you just want to know when the kids get home from school. Systems can provide notification via texting or emailing when your system is disabled or disarmed.”

Michaud also noted that many insurance companies provide a significant discount on

More SECURITY, PAGE 9

Security

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 8

homeowners insurance when homes have a certified security system. He said some of them may expect homeowners with higher-priced homes to have a security system in place in order to qualify for homeowner's insurance.

Some home security companies offer "do it yourself" packages that can be purchased online. However, Michaud said that it's always better to have a professional system designer visit to take a look and discuss concerns that could affect the type of system that should be installed.

"Cunningham Security Systems performs these site visits for free and we strongly

encourage them, as very few houses are exactly like another, and one person's situation or concerns is rarely the same as another and therefore systems should be designed for each situation," Michaud said.

For more information, visit the website cunninghamsecurity.com.

SEACOAST SECURITY ALSO BUILDS SYSTEMS TO ACCOMMODATE SPECIFIC NEEDS

Another Maine company that installs and monitors commercial and residential security systems is Seacoast Security. Marketing and Public Relations Manager Karma O'Donal said that home security systems are important because "your home protects your most prized assets and your family.

"In order to know that your home is safe at all times, you need to have someone watching, even when you can't," she said.

According to O'Donal, every system installed by Seacoast Security is different, depending on their customers' needs. She said that, "No system is too elaborate and no system should be scary for the user... That's the beauty of having a salesperson individually meet you and tour your home for the customized system to fit your needs. We build the system to your needs and the quote is free from Seacoast Security."

Seacoast Security has a 24-hour central monitoring station in Rockport. O'Donal said that it's important to have a trusted company monitor security systems. She said that takes the burden off the shoulders of homeowners to not always have to be watching their own home.

"We take the weight off of you and we watch for you," she said. "If you're not reachable, we assume you need immediate help and we get someone there."

O'Donal said that having a security system that's not monitored is a waste of money and could cost someone their life.

"Having a security system but not having it monitored is like having a security guard that sleeps on the job," she said.

Seacoast Security offers home security services with apps that allow homeowners to monitor their homes from a distance. They also offer what is described on their website as the "easy to use" Honeywell touchpad with which homeowners can monitor their alarm system as well as monitor and adjust thermostats, and lock doors and control garage doors. Homeowners can perform those actions anywhere from their personal PC, a smartphone, or tablet using Honeywell's Total Connect service, according to the Seacoast Security website at seacoastsecurity.com/honeywell-touch-control-panel. Contributed photo

HONEYWELL'S LYNX TOUCH CONTROLLER GIVES YOU COMPLETE CONTROL OVER YOUR HOME'S SECURITY SYSTEM.

With its easy-to-use, full-color touchpad, you can control your alarm system as well as monitor and adjust your thermostats, lighting, and you can even lock the doors and control garage doors. Additionally, these actions can be performed anywhere from a PC, smartphone, or tablet computer using Honeywell's Total Connect services.

Features for this system include:

- Z-Wave option
- Advanced protection logic option
- Family message center
- Energy saving options
- Voice chime by zone
- Automatic stay arming
- Remote control via phone or tablet
- 16 user codes (Installer, Master, Babysitter, Duress, and 14 secondary)
- Voice announcement of system and zone status
- Three panic functions
- Viewable event log, which stores up to 128 events
- Quick Exit feature, which enables users to leave the premises for a brief time without disarming the system



There are many security system options like the one above. Contact a security professional near you for details.

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Clearing out the clutter can spark joy

Spring cleaning is in the air

BY KATE CONE
Correspondent

Spring cleaning. The very words can provoke joy or panic, depending on how one approaches the idea of weeding out what's accumulated over the course of winter, or past winters, or decades even.

"Clearing" is another aspect of spring cleaning. Rather than focus on washing windows, clearing focuses on getting rid of objects that no longer serve a purpose.

Unless you've been hiding under a pile of laundry, you've heard of the clearing master Marie Kondo, author of the bestseller, "The Life-Changing Magic of Tidying Up."

Her trademarked KonMari method is defined as: A state of mind – and a way of life – that encourages cherishing the things that spark joy in one's life. Belongings are acknowledged for their service – and thanked before being let go, should they no longer spark joy.

Clearing your attic or an estate

"Let's begin with the objects that are not, well, junk. It might be things you own, or in the case of a death in the family, things those family members collected or accumulated."

Lisa LaGrange, co-owner of Jellison Traders in Augusta, an antiques and vintage store, specializes in "taking it all."

"We advise people to call us first, rather than make quick decisions. Those decisions, like throwing things away before consulting an expert, may not be the best ones. Someone might not think a collection of their parents' memorabilia is valuable, but it may have value in a collector's eyes. Those could bring in some money.

"What we do is different from the rubbish removal places. We like to go in and take it all. That works best for us. In some cases, we pay money because of what we see on the surface. If we can still cover our expenses of hauling it off, going through it and disposing of what's not of value, we might offer some cash compensation.

"If they want top dollar, such as for a leather couch, we advise them to sell it themselves. Online venues are great for that.

"If they just want it gone, and some money would be nice and it would otherwise cost them to have it go away, they should call us. We're estate cleanout specialists. We also act with environmental responsibility. We try to find the appropriate spot for everything. If it's not good for our store, we do summer flea markets for lower end items. We also do



Clothing and accessories tend to remain long after they are worn or used. The general rule for clothing is, if you haven't worn it in a year, chances are you aren't going to wear it again. Offer them to a friend, drop it by a consignment shop, or donate it to a charitable organization that accepts clothing. There are many closet organizing systems on the market to choose from. Visit a local hardware store after you purge to find one that best suits your needs.

Brimfield Antiques show.

"We do donate usable clothing to Goodwill. We're working on getting matched up with organizations that can legally donate beds and mattresses, and work with scrap yards for recycling metal. For paper and cardboard we try to recycle. Electronic waste – we fill up 4-foot-by-4-foot-by-4-foot crates and they come take it away for e-waste recycling."

Check their website for "How We Buy" for more information and before you get rid of your mother's Beatles albums.

For more information contact Jellison Traders 213-4063, email info@jellisontraders.com or visit www.jellisontraders.com.

From estate clearing to "stuff"

On any given day, Garrett Gordon and his crew at Dump Guy Junk Removal can be found at various sites gathering and hauling "stuff" for people who want to get rid of the clutter or debris. When asked whether it's

sometimes "gross," Gordon pulls no punches.

"Sometimes it's gross, sometimes not. If you're standing in a basement with a half inch of water, or cleaning out a building filled with bedbugs, it's gross. But other times we're just taking out clean furniture, clothing and boxes."

Gordon states quite clearly that "it's a proven fact that clearing clutter is good for you." Indeed, according to "Psychology Today's" Alice Boyes, PhD, cleaning and organizing reduce anxiety.

"We've evolved a preference for order and symmetry, because presumably those things conferred an evolutionary advantage back in our ancestral environment. When things feel out of order, it can ... make us feel scattered and anxious. Creating order relieves that anxiety," according to the article.

Garrett Gordon and his partner Jason Gilpatrick had been in the business for 17 years when, as landscapers they were repeatedly



asked by customers to do trash runs.

"I wasn't fond of landscaping so when this more year-round opportunity came up, Jason and I saw the potential for a new business," Gordon said.

With two trucks and two trailers they started hauling bulky waste and trash. The company now has 17 trucks and trailers, a flatbed for sheds and mobile home removal, an excavator for tear downs and a smart car for giving free estimates.

"We can provide a rough estimate over the phone and schedule the job around your needs. Once we arrive we will set a definitive price," he said.

The Dump Guy(s) offer more than 14 different services from furniture and appliance to brush hauling and hoarder cleanup.

"We've had 40 to 50 hoarding situations

“It’s a proven fact that clearing clutter is good for you.”

GARRETT GORDON, DUMP GUY JUNK REMOVAL



Before and after with Dump Guy Junk Removal.

Contributed photo

De-Clutter

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 10

over the years, Gordon said. “It’s amazing how much stuff can fit into a small house. We once hauled 54 tons of debris out of a three-bedroom ranch. “On jobs like these, we line up as many guys’ and trailers as we can and go at it. Often we will bring burgers and grill the guys lunch to boost morale and limit time wasted driving to get food.”

No longer want to watch the stars from your aging hot tub? Call the Dump Guy. Check their website or give them a call for all their services 450-5858.

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Disposal has a busy demolition team.

“We just completed the work on upper Main Street in Waterville. We demolished the house on the lot then hauled that away and did the site work for the new credit union,” Thome said.

Come spring, “we get a lot of cleanout—residents are renting trash dumpsters, throwing out things they don’t need,” he said.

There are also those pesky sewer and water clogs.

“Local plumbing and heating contractors will refer us to their customers if it’s something they can’t handle,” Thome said. “In one instance, a Ware-Butler customer went to unclog their sink, but it had to do with their sewer line. We put a camera in to see if it was clogged, or broken or had a root through it, then “jet” it, meaning we put a hose down the sewer line and the high pressure of warm water will break it up.”

There are many more services that Central Maine Disposal can help consumers with. Check out the website at centralmainedisposal.com or give them a call at 872-8257, or email julie@centralmainedisposal.com or mickey@centralmainedisposal.com.



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“Feed The Birds,” she cried

— Not the squirrels

BY SUSAN VARNEY
Correspondent

One of my favorite films is Mary Poppins, the original. It had wonderful songs to sing along with by interesting characters who lived in a time of transition —women fighting for voting rights in the “age of men” just before the great war. Children had a nanny and a robin flew into her hand. An old lady sat on church steps in the middle of London, selling crumbs to “Feed the birds.”

Some of us are still feeding the birds, while looking for the perfect bird feeder to thwart the indomitable squirrels. The squirrels never give up and will destroy any feeder given enough time.



Photo by Susan Varney

A noisemaker for frightening squirrels away, temporarily, that and shouting. Flannery, my dog the size of a cat, loves to bark and chase — good exercise but squirrels are faster.

even miss the tree the squirrel was on—my neighbor would pick up my lost marbles when he mowed his lawn.

Sara Knight at Knights Farm Supply in Augusta said the Squirrel Buster is their most popular feeder. I laughed and said mine was on the porch in pieces waiting for a new application of duct tape before returning to the tree.

“They like to break feeders,” Knight said. Yup, they love seeing them on the ground emptying their cargo ready for gorging. Oh, those rascally devils!

Knight said they sell a variety of seeds; Black Oil Sunflower seeds, everyone’s favorite, Thistle for the finches, Safflower for the cardinals, Millet for the Mourning Doves.

“We have sunflower chips and hearts, as well as peanut hearts. They are easier for the birds to eat,” Knight said. She also said if you want to mix your own blend, depending on the birds you want to attract, “We sell seed by the 5-pound bag.”

“Birds tend to toss the millet seeds from the feeder, which attracts the ground feeders like the Mourning Doves,” Knight

FEED BIRDS, NOT SQUIRRELS

We, too, are clever people always inventing a better feeder, a better way. Not that we don’t love watching the squirrels, but they will wipe out a feeder in no time while chasing the birds away.

So what’s new in baffling the rascally squirrel? A few years ago I got a sling shot. I hit my neighbors garage once, put a crack in one of my bird feeders another time.

I even hit a squirrel once, but I felt so bad about those black eyes looking back at me as if to say, “What was that for?” I just can’t do it. My ammunition was peach pits, small rocks picked up from the street after a winter of sanding and white marbles sold as ammo to go with the sling shot. Sometimes I would

even miss the tree the squirrel was on—my neighbor would pick up my lost marbles when he mowed his lawn.

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Staff photos by Chuck Barnes

Knights Farm Supply has a large supply of bird seed and feeders for all your needs.

added. Yes, I’ve noticed that and since I love the doves, I welcome the other birds tossing them to the ground. I usually buy the bird seed mix and add more sunflower seeds to it since I don’t think there are enough.

“I agree,” said Knight.

We all have our favorite way of attracting the birds and thwarting the squirrels and it’s fun to watch the birds and come up with ways of baffling the squirrels. I have invented a noise maker made of three discarded cans, a big coffee can, a small coffee can and a bean can. They hang from large to small on the porch, I can “ring” it to frighten away squirrels—that and shouting seems to work. Temporarily.

I make roof protectors too. Sometimes it’s an old plastic cake cover or tray placed between the hanger and the feeder. The Squirrel jumps on it to get at the feeder and spins off. YES!

Check out your favorite hardware and farm supply store for more feeders and seeds supplies. Randolph Hardware on Water Street, Randolph is another place to find bird supplies in the Augusta area. Also, many greenhouses carry bird supplies.

When looking for suet be sure to get the stabilized one that doesn’t melt for summer use. Also, store the seed in tins or plastic trash containers that keep the mice from raiding your seed stash.

You can get creative with bird feeders, depending on your situation. If you don’t have a squirrel problem, you can drill holes in a birch log and fill them with a peanut butter and seed blend you make. Great project for kids, too.



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Spring bursts into life at Coastal Maine Botanical Gardens

BY KRIS FOLSOM

Director of Marketing, Coastal Maine Botanical Gardens
Special to Spring Home & Garden

Though it's sometimes hard to believe that, as naturalist Hal Borland puts it, "no winter lasts forever; no spring skips its turn," we know that despite even a Maine winter, spring eventually bursts into life. And though that transition sometimes seems sudden, the shift begins deep below the surface and long before the thaw.

At the Gardens this year, we're celebrating that element of the unseen with our theme, *Roots: The Other Half of the Story*, by exploring the larger narrative of our foundations through an investigation of roots, from classes and workshops to art exhibitions.

As always at CMBG, no matter what your age or level of experience, you'll have plenty of opportunity to cultivate your own interests, from creating outdoor spaces that connect children to the natural world (April 30), to a visit from The Caterpillar Lab, a functioning caterpillar rearing, researching, photographing and educating facility. (July 25-29).

During the Cat Lab residency, visitors can watch metamorphosis play out firsthand, learn about caterpillar rearing tools, gather host plants with Lab staff, and become involved in the day-to-day running of the Lab.

And if bugs are your thing, be sure to attend our second annual moth lighting—the practice of gathering in the dark, illuminating a white sheet and sitting back and watching what flies in, (June 17).

Then, on June 21, join us for our 15th Annual Garden Symposium. In a nod to the connection we feel to our own gardens, this year we'll feature stories, share the latest strategies and expose attendees to new plants to develop a garden rooted in what you love.

Our triptych of seminars will begin with garden designer Gordon Hayward's "The Inevitable Garden." A deeply resonant garden comes from a design that embodies and engages the existing land, its history, its native plants, the house on that land and the people in that house who develop the land.

When all three are equally engaged—house, people, land—the result is a garden with soul, a garden with a feeling of love and inevitability. Just as CMBG's gardens reflect the love their designers feel for the Maine coast, Hayward will share the story of his own landscape and its evolution, exploring how being rooted in your garden is to know yourself, your land, your family and your home.

Then CMBG's Plant Curator, Andy Brand, will present "Follow Your Nose." When designing our own gardens, we usually gravitate towards plants with showy, colorful flowers and rightly so—we want our landscapes to look beautiful. But adding fragrance to our gardens is just as important—certain scents may conjure up a fond memory from our past, invoke particular emotions or alter our mood. Join Brand as he explores those plants that stimulate and delight our sense of smell with their flowers, foliage or fruit.

Finally, Brie Arthur, author of "The Foodscape Revolution," will present a seminar by the same name. Arthur has fine-tuned her signature design technique of Foodscaping, a

sustainable landscape practice that embraces beauty and bounty. Aiming to change the way landscapes are designed and managed, Arthur encourages everyone to think outside the box, integrating edibles into ornamental landscapes, increasing biodiversity and adding a sense of purpose to everyday spaces. She'll share the best edible and ornamental plant combinations, inspiring attendees to create purposeful landscapes that more deeply engage the gardener.

Later in the summer, our 9th annual Heafitz Lecture, "Who Will Feed the Earth?" will feature National Geographic's Jim Richardson who, after spending nearly a half-century as a professional photographer, has become ever more focused on the subject of agriculture. Richardson's lecture will offer a broad overview of the problem and key elements of the solution.

Agriculture has created vast civilizations and made our modern world possible, but it also has altered the biosphere along the way, contributing to changes in the earth's air, water and soil. Farming and grazing now use 39 percent of the world's ice-free land. Human appetites demand more and better food

as billions are introduced to new ways of eating. Must we double food production in 35 years? Is that even possible? Most importantly, can our planet withstand the strain? Can we? Join us Aug. 29 to find out more.

Other highlights of CMBG's season include practical classes, such as extending your growing season by building a cold frame (May 17) or creating a bird-friendly habitat in your own backyard (Aug. 18-21). No matter what, whether you're dropping in to see what's new since last season, or if this is your first visit to the Gardens, we know you'll enjoy the many discoveries available to you this season. For a full list of our programs, visit our website, MaineGardens.org.

Coastal Maine Botanical Gardens is a nationally-recognized public garden located in Boothbay, Maine. The mission of the Gardens is to inspire meaningful connections among people, plants and nature through horticulture, education and research. Its annual visitation includes guests from all 50 states and 65 foreign countries. We look forward to seeing you at the Gardens.

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Successful gardening is possible even in small spaces

BY WANDA CURTIS
Correspondent

One of the hindrances to gardening that some people face is lack of space. City dwellers especially must often find creative ways to grow a garden.

Anna Brown Longfellow, from Longfellow's Greenhouses in Manchester, said that most flowers can be grown in a limited space. She said that even larger ones, such as dinner-plate dahlias, can be grown in containers if the pot is large enough and the soil space is deep enough.

"Trying to grow in shallow soil is not a good idea, such as on top of a pavement substrate," she said.

CONTAINER-GARDENING HAS MANY BENEFITS

Growing plants in a container instead of in the ground has become a very popular method of gardening. Containers can range in size from small flower pots to much larger containers such as tubs, barrels, even wheelbarrows. Containers can be placed on the side of the driveway, on stairways, patios, porches, balconies or decks.

Containers are not only ideal for small spaces, but can also eliminate the need for frequent weeding.

Containers can be moved to avoid pests that may invade a garden or to a spot with maximum sunlight. Container gardening on a deck or patio is also ideal for anyone who is unable to walk on rough terrain, but who would still like to grow a garden.

When selecting a container, it's important to select one that has adequate drainage to prevent root rot. To ensure adequate drainage, holes can be drilled in the bottom of most containers. Gravel can also be placed in the bottom of the container to prevent soil from draining out with the water.

Using a container that's clean and free from harsh chemicals is also important. Chemicals can be harmful to plants and to those who consume the vegetables from plants. So it's best to avoid using any containers that were previously used to store chemicals.

According to Brown, not only flowers but also most vegetables can be grown in containers. She recommends growing lettuce, beans, carrots, radishes, spinach and Swiss chard directly from seed.

She said that Bright Lights Swiss chard (whose seeds are produced by Johnny's Selected Seeds) is attractive as well as edible.

She advised that peppers and tomatoes are best grown from pre-started seedlings because they need time and warm soil to mature.

In regards to vegetable varieties stocked at Longfellow's Greenhouses that could be planted in small spaces or containers, Brown said any of the following could be used: Bush Beefsteak tomatoes with 8-ounce fruits, Bush Early Girl tomatoes (one of the earliest), Totem tomatoes, and patio tomatoes.

She said Tumbler tomatoes are good for hanging baskets. Kale, lettuce, Pac Choi, sweet or hot peppers, scallions, Fairy Tale or Classic eggplants and Bush Crop cucumbers also work well for small spaces or containers, Brown said.

Steve Bellavia, product manager at Johnny's Selected Seeds in Winslow, advised that once plants are growing in a container, those that are growing slowly or are stunted or yellow may need to be fertilized. He said that the amount of fertilizer needed for plants depends on the particular soil media used.

"Some have more nutrition than others," he said.

When setting plants outdoors, Brown said that hardy flowers such as pansies, herbs like rosemary, and vegetables like spinach can be placed outside in containers in April. She said that if the weather is very cold at night the containers can be moved indoors for the night.

"Wait 'til the end of May before you move warm-loving plants like zinnias, basil, tomatoes and vine crops outdoors," said Brown.

Bellavia advised that plants that are grown indoors should be hardened off before moving them permanently outdoors. Hardening is the process of preparing plants to withstand the change in temperature and environmental conditions when transferred from a greenhouse or home to outdoors.

University of Maine Cooperative Extension Service offers detailed instructions on how to harden plants on its website extension.umaine.edu/gardening/manual/propagation/plant-propagation.

WINDOW BOXES AND HANGING BASKETS

Window boxes and hanging baskets are also options for growing flowers or vegetables with limited space. Flowers and vegetables, or a combination of both, can be grown in window boxes and hanging planters. Lettuce is a good

More CONTAINER GARDENS, PAGE 15



Photo courtesy of Johnny's Selected Seeds

When planted in container gardens, plants can be set outdoors during the day and moved inside at night if the weather is cold.

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Photo courtesy of Johnny's Selected Seeds

Container gardens can be set on stairways, alongside the driveway, on patios, decks, porches, or balconies. They are much easier to access for people with limited mobility.

Container Gardens

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 14

vegetable to grow in a window box because it has shallow roots.

Bellavia said that lettuce grows very quickly and can be reseeded several times.

RAISED BEDS CAN ALSO WORK

According to the website www.gardenguides.com, raised beds are another option for gardeners with limited space. The authors of that website note that raised beds, which lift the garden above ground level, are also easier for gardeners with mobility restrictions to plant and maintain. They report that raised beds are perfect for lettuce, tomatoes, beans and root crops such as carrots, onions, beets, and potatoes.

They note that looser soil allows for better root development and easier harvesting than hard ground.

Many different varieties of flowers and vegetables can be grown in raised beds. Some gardeners have found it beneficial to plant certain species of flowers and vegetables together in a raised bed.

Marigolds planted in a vegetable garden can help to repel different types of insects that can be harmful to vegetable plants. At the same time, marigolds add a nice touch of color to any garden.



Photo courtesy of Longfellow's Greenhouses

Raised gardens are another option for growing flowers and/or vegetables with limited space.

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Paving can smooth out the rough spots

Professionals add a polished touch

BY VALERIE TUCKER
Correspondent

In Maine, winter takes a heavy toll on asphalt driveways and parking areas. When property owners decide it's time for those ruts, unsightly cracks and axle-deep potholes to disappear, they search the phone book or go online to find an expert. Whether the job requires new paving or maintenance and repairs, customers may find the menu of services and costs confusing and difficult to understand.

Doing some careful research before selecting a contractor is an important step. Each company will offer a range of services: asphalt sealcoating, rubberized crack filling, pothole repair, driveway removal, excavation and paving. They'll bring the tools, machinery and the gravel, loam and stone.

Often, they'll fix drainage problems that cause driveways and parking lots to fail. Good contractors will offer several references and will be happy to explain the work they propose to do. Customers also should ask about proper maintenance after the paving work is done.

Tom Cameron, owner of Belfast-based Cameron Paving Inc., does residential, commercial and municipality paving in nearly every part of the state. For nearly 40 years, his family-run company has grown most of its successful business through repeat customers, he said. He said spring is always a busy time of year for him.

"People with a gravel driveway get sick of the mud this time of the year," he said.

Asphalt is the most popular choice to weather Maine's seasonal changes. It's relatively inexpensive to pour and is easy to maintain. The most important step in planning, Cameron said, is starting with a properly-built base. Drainage problems must be addressed before all other work. When he goes to a potential job site, he can tell a lot about the work he'll need to do from the condition of existing paving and the underlying base.

Waterville-based ProSeal owner Tom Boyce and his son offer three decades of paving experience. He suggests that property owners think about new asphalt when the sealing and crack filling are just going to waste money and make surface problems worse.

If the pavement is deeply rutted, severely broken or resembles alligator hide, he'll inspect the surface carefully to determine the cause. Years of repeatedly filling cracks can turn the area into a continuous sheet of material that can stick to vehicle tires in hot weather.

"When pavement gets to the point you really can't crack fill it any more, customers have options," Boyce said. "We can work with almost any budget challenges."

Oversealing will create a surface alligatoring effect, but it doesn't impact the pavement underneath, he explained. On the other hand, asphalt alligatoring will produce cracks wide and deep enough to insert a knife. Another sealing won't really cure either condition, he said. He takes a close look at the type of cracking to determine whether the customer's water drainage system is working properly. He explains to do-it-yourselfers that applying another sealcoat makes everything look nice again, but the problem still will be there, he said.

"A lot of cracking underneath the pavement happens because poor drainage lets water seep into the base," he said. "That problem gets worse during seasonal freezes and thaws."

Sealcoating will protect the asphalt if done regularly.



Keith Howe, owner of Howe's Sealcoating in Waterville, said that some off-the-shelf sealcoating products don't match the quality and durability of the custom-mix sealer products that professional contractors use. Professional mixes are thicker and made from materials that pass strict commercial standards. Some retail products include latex, which will start peeling off the pavement's surface.

"The sealer we use has a coal tar base," he said. "That allows it to adhere properly to the surface of the existing pavement and creates a durable and longer lasting surface protection."

He also recommends fixing potholes and frost heaves that cause existing driveways and walkways to deteriorate more quickly than necessary.

Property owners should be wary of contractors making unsolicited offers. These companies say they can do the work for an unusually low price because they have extra material left over from another job.

They often use diluted sealcoat or substandard paving materials that are part of these types of offers, and if there's a problem, those fly-by-night companies have disappeared.

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The benefits of a seller's home inspection

BY TERRY TRAVER

Special to Spring Home and Garden

Most people think of house inspections as taking place after a buyer's offer has been accepted. But there are a number of reasons that sellers should have an inspection done before listing their home. Would you like to market your house as truly "move-in ready"?

Consider the benefits of a seller's home inspection:

- You, the seller, can accompany and assist the inspector. This is not always an option with a "buyer" inspection.
- You will gain firsthand knowledge of any issues discovered prior to a buyer inspection.
- You will have plenty of time to resolve any issues that need attention – and you can do so according to your own schedule.
- The report can be used as a marketing tool during an Open House and/or on-line, or even offered to the prospective buyer.
- An inspection report will help eliminate any last-minute negotiations regarding the sale of the home, and help ensure that a deal does not fall apart.
- A seller's move-in-ready inspection may save a buyer's having to do an inspection. A home inspection is easy to arrange. Real estate brokers work with a network of professionals, and your real estate professional will be happy to recommend a home inspector.

Terry Traver owns and operates Traver Home Inspection, LLC.
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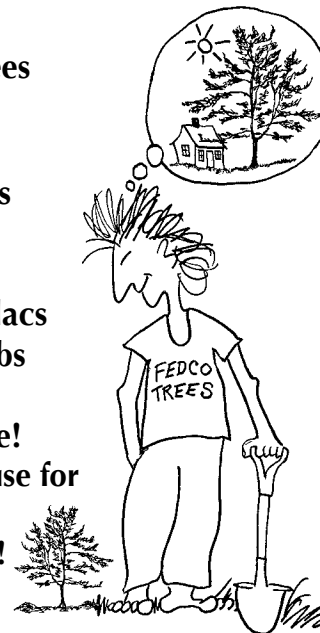
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