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# SIOUXLAND HOMES

**MAGAZINE** 

f Siouxland Homes Magazine

SEPT. 17, 2022

# SEARCH FOR YOUR DREAM HOME

INSIDE!



2 | SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 17, 2022 SIOUXLAND HOMES

Catios are the new craze. here's why and the benefits they provide

#### **SHAUN GOODWIN**

The Idaho Statesman

ome people have a meshed screen patio on their back porches to sit in during warm summer evenings to enjoy a drink and fresh air while staying free of pesky bugs.

Others use it as a sun and plant room, giving ample access to the sun and rain without but it may be killing innocent birds.

worrying about leaf-eating critters.

meshed screen patio attached to the back of your house: your cat loves to be outside,

Luckily, there's something called a catio But there's now a third reason to have a that can help. It's just what it sounds like: a cat version of a screened-in porch.

> The nonprofit American Bird Conservancy estimates that cats worldwide combine to kill four billion animals worldwide each year and up to 500 million birds. Cats can also pick up illnesses from hunting birds, such as songbird fever, a name for salmonella in birds which can be passed on to felines and even humans.

> "Cats are sick for a couple of days to a week or more. Up to 10% may die, especially if they are very young, very old, or otherwise immunosuppressed," Jennifer Coates, a doctor for the pet care information site PetMD, said in a blog post.

"Treatment for songbird fever includes supportive care (fluid therapy, anti-nausea cat the most space, it doesn't have to be medications, etc.), and antibiotics if the cat's condition warrants their use," Coates continued.

Most cats love going outside — they're naturally outdoor animals and love to hunt, climb trees and lounge in the sun. But it's not necessarily always good for them.

In addition to risks to wild birds, according to a study by the Animal Humane Society, the lifespan of outdoor cats is significantly shorter than their indoor counterparts. Cars, toxic plants and other wild animals are just a few of the many outdoor dangers that can shorten outdoor cats' lives by as much as 10 to 12 years, according to the study.

both worlds.

A catio is precisely what it sounds like: meshed screen walls allow cats to sit out- and Amazon.

Ansel plays near his favorite backyard hiding spot.

**DARIN OSWALD, IDAHO STATESMAN/TNS** 

side in the fresh air and sun while avoiding the dangers and temptations that the outdoors pose.

Decorations and add-ons wise, the possibilities are endless. Ledges to jump up on, thick branches to climb, comfy chairs to sit on and dangling toys to play with are just a few options.

#### Benefits of a catio

Aside from avoiding illnesses, a catio will help cat owners avoid the nasty business of disposing of dead animals that their furball brings home. The website Catio Spaces lists the top 10 benefits a catio brings for your pet.

Some benefits include protecting your cat from outdoor threats and reducing veterinary bills due to injuries, but others benefit humans, too.

If you have multiple cats, Catio Spaces notes that providing an outdoor space will give cats more territory to roam and additional outdoor simulation that could help reduce conflicts and behavioral problems between cats. Putting a litter box in the catio can also help reduce indoor odors.

If you build the catio large enough, you can also integrate a sitting chair for yourself, allowing for additional bonding time with your cat outdoors, which is healthy for both parties. Even if you're not outdoors with your pet, you'll have peace of mind knowing your cat is in a self-enclosure while still enjoying the outdoors.

#### Making or buying a catio

While a full patio-sized catio gives your large. The website Adventure Cats shows examples of two smaller types of catios that can be attached to a window.

One was made out of a chameleon cage, while the other is a dog cage repurposed to attach to the window. Adventure Cats also reminds people to build up if they can't build outward or wide. Cats; cats enjoy climbing and sitting in high places, and you can easily build ledges for your cat to tower high above in their catio.

Directions to build your own small catio that can be adjusted to fit any window size can be found on Adventure Cats' website.

If you'd rather purchase a catio, there are That's where a catio creates the best of several websites from which you can order one. Catio World provides descriptions and links to several online options, such an outdoor, enclosed patio for a cat. Its as pre-designed kits from Habitat Haven

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# False advertising in the MLS, or anywhere, is illegal

#### RICHARD MONTGOMERY

Creators Syndicate Inc.

ear Monty: I told the selling agent that the home on the MLS (multiple listing service) is falsely listing the square footage. They are advertising 1,650 square feet of livable space, but I checked with the township, and they state the house is 1,446 square feet. I put in an offer based on the actual square footage. They have other offers, but those buyers do not know the advertising is false. The listing agent wants to hold my bid until the other offers come in. Is this illegal or unethical? Also, is the false advertisement on the MLS illegal?

**Monty's Answer:** There are several conceivable possibilities regarding the square footage discrepancy that may explain why there are 204 square feet unaccounted for in the township records:

No. 1: The homeowner finished a 14-by-15-foot room in the basement and did not obtain a permit.

No. 2: The township would not record the improvement if they required no permit.

No. 3: The township may have a building permit on file but failed to update the assessment card.

No. 4: You may have checked with a person unqualified to provide the answer in the town office.

#### **Verify information carefully**

You may have asked all the right questions, and the home may be 1,446 square feet. The right person in the township office is the town assessor. That individual or an experienced person in the assessor's office can find the correct answer. Consider checking again because if someone at the town office made an error and there are 1,650 square feet of living space, you are bargaining at a significant disadvantage. It is likely 1,650 square feet if a finished room is in the basement.

On the other hand, some real estate agents have been known to be very creative (it's never a lie, it's always a mistake) in stating square footage. In fairness, it could be a mistake. If three people measure a home for square footage, it is not unusual to see three different sizes.

According to Nolo, it is illegal to advertise false information. Whether in an ad, data sheet or even verbally, it is also



unethical. For a home that size, over 200 square feet would be a significant misrepresentation. It also may be difficult to prove it was deliberate.

In some municipalities where an owner got no permit where it was required, it can be difficult for both the buyer and seller. Some municipalities will require an after-the-fact permit, which can be expensive. Still, there may need to be dismantling of the work to ensure the installation meets code requirements. At that point, it may mean that the buyer, now the owner, must litigate to force the seller to pay. Litigation can be complicated when the seller has moved across the country, left no forwarding address or does not have the money to pay.

#### **Delay presenting offers**

The listing agent is representing the seller. The seller may have told the listing agent that they would not look at offers until they were all in hand. The agent may have suggested that tactic to the seller. In either case, it is not illegal or unethical for a seller to seek the best offer by waiting. Offers can be withdrawn before presentation. Sometimes, the seller may have done better by not waiting.

Richard Montgomery is the author of "House Money: An Insider's Secrets to Saving Thousands When You Buy or Sell a Home." He advocates industry reform and offers readers unbiased real estate advice. Follow him on Twitter at @dearmonty, or at DearMonty.com.

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4 | SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 17, 2022 SIOUXLAND HOMES

#### **ASK ANGI**

## How should I maintain my chimney?

**PAUL F. P. POGUE** Ask Angi

Vour chimney and fireplace work together to create an eye-catching home centerpiece and a source of warmth and comfort. (Plus, without them, how does Santa Claus slide down or Mary Poppins' chimney-sweeping friends pop up?) Chimneys often appear to be the essence of durability — literally rock-solid home features that don't need much attention. But despite their stalwart appearance, chimneys require regular cleaning and care inside and out to maintain.

Masonry chimneys are the most common, built from brick or stone and mortar and integrated into the home's structural design. They're highly durable; when properly maintained, they'll last more than 100 years. "If you use your chimney regularly, you should have it cleaned once per year," says Rupa Mehta, Angi Outdoor & Everyday Services Home Expert. "You should address cracks and leaks as soon as they appear." The most common repairs include filling brick and mortar cracks and installing new caps or crowns.

Repairing simple cracks or leaks on a chimney runs between \$160 and \$750, and completing them as needed can add decades to your chimney's life. However, even the best chimney needs to be replaced after enough decades in service.

"When a pro tells you that your chimney has suffered a lot of damage or is approaching its end of life, it's time to rebuild," Mehta says.

A partial rebuild costs \$1,000 to \$3,000. Completely rebuilding a chimney can cost as much as \$10,000.

When hiring a masonry pro to work on your chimney, ask about their experience with your specific type of chimney and materials. Chimneys come in a variety of types, and the right skills and experience play a big role in doing the work correctly. Ask for photographs of any damage they propose to repair.

Chimney and fireplace damage can be hard to see without being on the roof or inside the flue itself, particularly with masonry designs. Requesting photos will



DREAMSTIME/TNS

Keeping your chimney swept is a vital component of chimney maintenance, but not the only one.

# A partial rebuild costs \$1,000 to \$3,000. Completely rebuilding a chimney can cost as much as \$10,000.

help you understand the scope of your job — and ensure your pro's suggested repairs are accurate.

#### **Maintenance tips**

Protect your chimney by paying attention to detail and addressing problems as they arise rather than putting them off. Good usage habits will save trouble down the road as well. Here are five ways to keep your chimney in tip-top shape:

■ Keep your chimney cap tight:

Chimney caps protect your chimney from the elements. Without them, rain can go down the flue and deteriorate the mortar joints. Plus, animals love to use uncapped chimneys as hiding places, so you'll do both yourself and them a favor by keeping them out. When a chimney cap is damaged, it's often a better idea to replace rather than repair it.

■ Get your gas fireplace inspected annually: Gas fireplaces offer easy and convenient flames, but don't take that simplicity for granted. A malfunctioning gas fireplace can release odorless carbon monoxide into the air. Get your gas fireplace inspected and checked by a proevery year. This service will cost between \$75 and \$125.

■ Pay attention to masonry: You'll catch minor repairs before they become

big and save money by regularly checking the exterior of your chimney for problems. Pros say a chimney neglected too long might need to be rebuilt from the roofline up. Replacing old mortar with newer materials, known as tuckpointing, costs an average of \$200.

■ Don't skip chimney cleaning: If you use your fireplace more than once or twice a week, you should hire a chimney sweep yearly. If you use it only for holidays or occasional weekends, you can go two or three years between cleanings. However, it would be best if you didn't go longer than that. This service usually costs between \$130 and \$380.

Tweet your home care questions with #AskingAngi and we'll try to answer them in a future column.

# Wall-hung vanity can be a versatile bathroom choice

**ED DEL GRANDE** 

**Tribune News Service** 

uestion: Ed: Read your previous column on installing pedestal sinks to create a more open look. We're building a new home and the contractor suggested a wall-hung vanity. We like the storage aspect, but what other advantages can we expect?

- Jennifer, Texas

Answer: A wall-hung vanity is basically a raised vanity cabinet that is supported to the wall and installed above the floor. Since it doesn't sit on the floor, it's often referred to as a floating vanity. This open-style unit is usually an upgrade because of the extra work to properly anchor it to the wall according to any codes and/or manufacturer's instructions.

But even with the upgrade costs, wall-hung vanities do have additional advantages aside from the storage space. Advantages can include:

■ Installation versatility: Height

can be adjustable as long as you stay within local codes. This can be helpful for special need users and aging in place bathroom remodeling jobs.

**■** Extra space under the vanity: Having open space under the unit allows the user to get comfortably close to the sink, faucet and mirror. Also, this space can be a nice place to store things like a scale when not in use.

**Easier bathroom cleaning:** With a finished open floor under the unit, cleaning around the vanity can be a simpler

Add up all these features and it's easy to see how you can be floored by your wallhung vanity choice!

Master Contractor/Plumber Ed Del Grande is known internationally as the author of the book "Ed Del Grande's House Call." the host of TV and Internet shows, and a LEED green associate. Visit eddelgrande.com or write tors and codes.



SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 17, 2022 | 5

eadelg@cs.com. Always consult local contrac- A wall-hung vanity is basically a raised vanity cabinet that is supported to the wall and installed above the floor. Since it doesn't sit on the floor, it's often referred to as a floating vanity.









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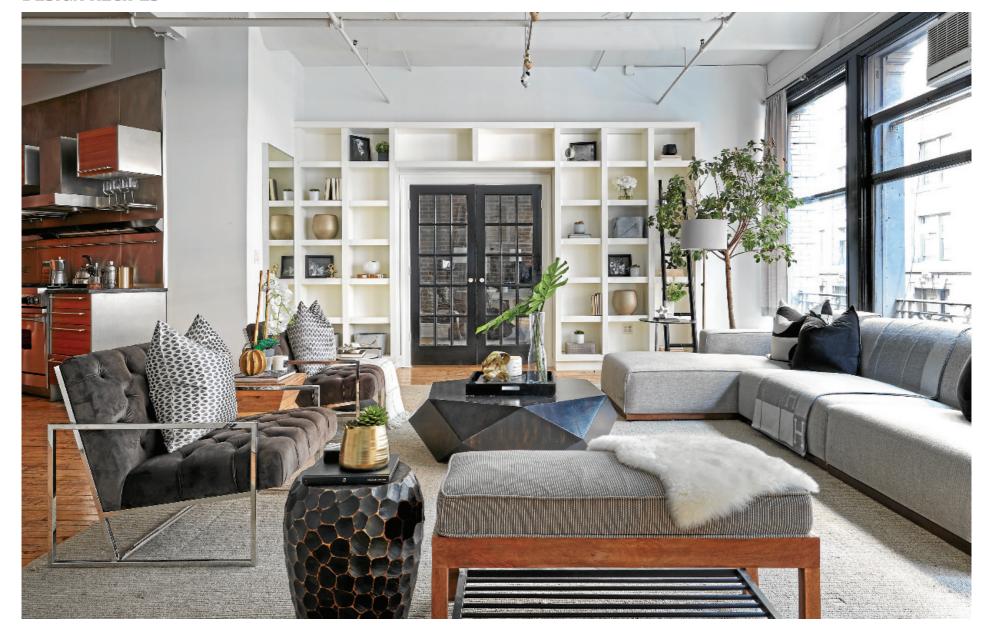
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#### **DESIGN RECIPES**



# How to freshen up your midcentury modern decor

#### **CATHY HOBBS**

**Tribune News Service** 

idcentury modern remains a staple in home decor. Whether you desire a dining chair, table, sofa, side tables or consoles, a myriad of choices will help you bring a fresh modern vibe to nearly any space.

Not sure where to begin, or how to incorporate midcentury modern elements into your home? Here are some key elements to look out for.

1. Look for wood elements. Wood can help to achieve an instant midcentury modern vibe.

2. Purchase classic or vintage elements that are authentic for a midcentury design aesthetic.

3. Create elements of warmth through portable design elements such as toss pillows and throws.

4. Think neutral. Neutral colors such as taupe, cream and soft gray can help create a soothing, calm, midcentury modern

5. Consider textured materials for upholstery pieces, such as boucle or neutral cotton and even velvet.

Cathy Hobbs, based in New York City, is an Emmy Award-winning television host and a nationally known interior design and home staging expert with offices in New York City, Boston and Washington, D.C. Contact her at info@cathyhobbs.com or visit her website at cathyhobbs.com.

SIOUXLAND HOMES SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 17, 2022 | **7** 



Hardware is one selection that should not be done to keep up with trends.

Hardware, in fact may stay on a home longer than appliances, wall color, wallpaper and even flooring.

Therefore, it is imperative to give the selection some serious thought.



# HOW TO SELECT FASHIONABLE HARDWARE FOR YOUR HOME

Part of the

selection

process is

choosing

hardware that

is in sync with

the type of

architecture

and millwork

used

throughout

the home.

**JOSEPH PUBILLONES** 

Creators Syndicate Inc.

remember not so long ago when a home renovation required changing all your hardware to "update" the home's look. Just when you thought you had rid yourself of brass hardware of the gilded '90s decade, or the satin nickel finish of the millennial, new finishes and redesigns of the old came to the marketplace. This will both dazzle and confuse you. Brass, chrome, nickel, oil-rubbed brass, copper, stainless steel and black stainless steel are just some of the metallic finishes avail-

able for the hardware of furniture, cabinetry and elsewhere in your home. Just like hemlines and shoulder pads, these details can make your home seem either out-of-date or in style.

Homeowners and designers alike find selecting hardware a bit tedious. Questions such as the following arise: Should all hardware inside a home match? Which finish will look timeless? Is there a finish that feels more at home in a bathroom or kitchen? Should a door's inside and outside hardware be the same? Is it OK to change the hardware of an old home? Is there

a significant benefit of new hardware? These are all valid questions that do not have absolute answers, but I will attempt to simplify the subject.

Your hardware doesn't all need to match. However, there should be continuity of color or design to keep a certain flow throughout the home. Part of the selection process is choosing hardware that is in sync with the type of architec-

ture and millwork used throughout the home. For example, choosing an ornate door handle or hinges for a contemporary home likely will not work aesthetically. Similarly, choosing simple geometric-shaped handles for a traditional paneled door may not flatter the doors. Timeless is a good thing to aim for, but more important is keeping things appropriate.

Considering the type of dwelling you have may help you find the answer to this design dilemma. If dealing with a historic home, try to maintain its character and hardware. This may mean taking off all the

hardware and stripping off layers and layers of paint, rust or grime buildup from years of use. It may also require the expensive task of re-plating the hardware to its original condition. In the case of a newer home or architecturally insignificant dwelling, it is quite all right to change hardware to keep the home's appearance upto-date.

Hardware is one selection that should not be done to keep up with trends. Hardware, in fact may stay on a home longer than appliances, wall color, wallpaper and even flooring. Therefore, it is imperative to give the selection some serious thought. Im-

proving and enhancing your home is about maintenance. If your hardware is worn or feels inexpensive, then by all means, improve the hardware, and this will in turn increase the value of your home.

Joseph Pubillones is the owner of Joseph Pubillones Interiors, an award-winning interior design firm based in Palm Beach, Florida. His website is www.josephpubillones.com.

8 | SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 17, 2022 SIOUXLAND HOMES

## It is easy to install PEX pipe

Creators Syndicate Inc.

ear James: We are remodeling our garage into a family/ entertainment room. It has a faucet with copper pipes now, but I plan to add a sink. Is using PEX piping a wise choice? - Karen D.

Dear Karen: Your project is one of the most costeffective ways to get extra living space. A garage lends itself nicely to a conversion because it has a stable concrete floor and a garage door. It is less expensive to install a new wall with a sliding glass door over the opening than to have to first tear out an existing wall.

Plan both your water and electrical requirements before you begin building materials and knocking holes in walls. Running piping, no matter what type you select, is simple to do before any of the walls are finished. Run extra plumbing in the walls even if you may not need it now. It can be capped off and easily accessed at a later time by just making a hole in a wall.

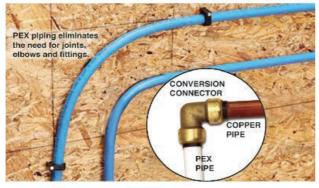
Using PEX (cross-linked high-density polyethylene) is becoming more popular for domestic water systems in the United States. It has been used somewhat longer in Europe as many new products often are. Copper is still used most often here, but this does require you to have some basic pipe soldering skills.

PEX plumbing has several advantages over traditional types of piping. The most significant advantage, particularly for your remodeling project, is that PEX is flexible. This reduces the number and complexity of joints in a system. Joints are the locations of most leaks in doit-yourself projects.

Since the PEX tubing is flexible, it is available in long rolls instead of

#### **PEX Piping**

Cross-linked polyethylene (PEX) is a high-temperature, flexible, polymer pipe. There's no need for solder, glue or pipe wrenches, making it easy to work and less expensive.



THREE DIFFERENT TYPES AVAILABLE

#### **PUSH-FIT**

The push-fit method is great for quick repairs and requires no special tools other than a pipe cutter. When the pipe is pushed into the fitting, the stainless steel tines of the fitting grip tight, while a specially formulated O-ring compresses to create a perfect seal.

#### BARB

This traditional method utilizes a crimping or clamping tool with barb fittings and "crimp" or "clamp" rings. The connection compresses the tubing between the barbed fittings and crimp ring for a secure connection

#### **EXPANSION**

This method is considered the best method by professionals. This system uses a special tool to expand the PEX piping end. The pipe is fastened together by the process of the expanded end contracting and compressing over the

relatively short pieces of various length as is rigid plastic pipe. If you need a run that is 25 feet long with several bends, you can make it from a simple piece nection method. It is ideal of PEX without any fittings for connecting the PEX to other than at the ends.

There are three basic types of connection fittings used with PEX tubing. A "push-fit" fitting is the easiest to use and is a favorite for most do-it-yourselfers. It is ideal for attaching the new PEX plumbing to your existing copper pipe without using heat and solder.

Use a tubing cutter to make a clean square cut on the end of the PEX tubing. This works better and is safer than using a utility knife. Insert a support sleeve into the PEX so it does not crush. Slide the end of the PEX into one end of the fitting. Slide the other end of the fitting over the copper pipe. Push the pieces firmly together for a

good seal. You can also use this type of fitting to connect two pieces of PEX.

A "clamp-ring" fitting is another effective coneither copper or threaded iron pipe. If you are attaching it to a copper pipe, the fitting will first have to be soldered to the pipe. A male end of the fitting slides inside the PEX tubing. Using a special clamping tool, a metal ring is crimped around the PEX.

You may also need to use some "in-line" fittings when connecting two pieces of PEX together. This fitting has two male ends, which slide into the PEX ends. A metal ring is crimped over the PEX to clamp it to the fitting.

Send your questions to Here's How, 6906 Royalgreen Dr.. Cincinnati, Ohio, 45244, or visit www.dullev.com.

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#### 914 Lakeshore

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