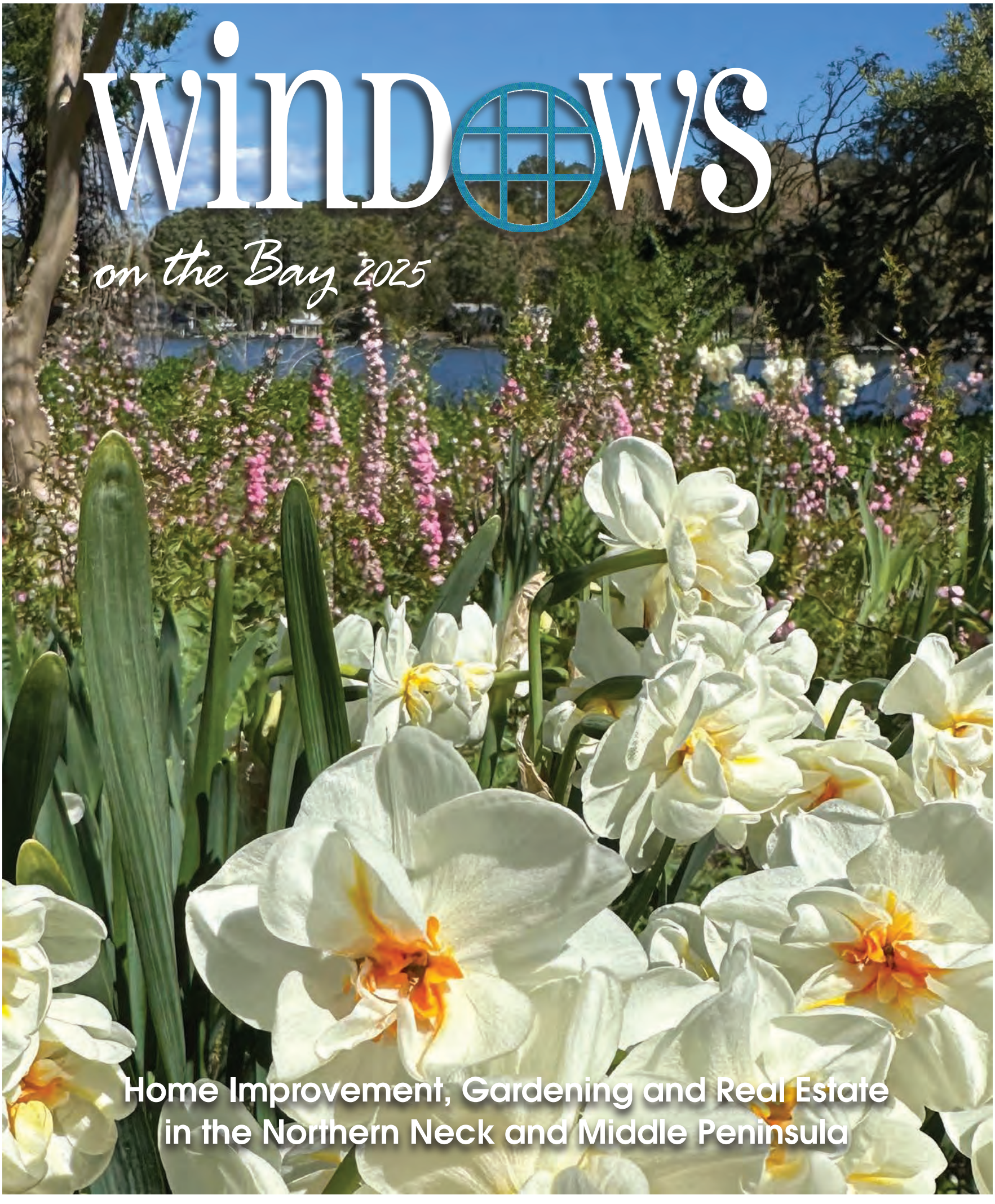
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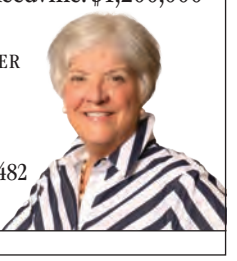
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# windows on the Bay 2025

It's time to dig out after a long, cold, snowy winter…a rare occurrence in eastern Virginia. But now, with the official change in seasons on March 20, we can start thinking about spring cleaning, gardening and home improvement projects.

In this issue of Windows on the Bay, we feature information on the upcoming historic garden week tours in the Middle Peninsula and Northern Neck, offer some tried-and-true methods of deterring deer and other animals in the garden and explore ways to turn that boring backyard into an extension of your home with outdoor kitchens, fireplaces and fire pits.

Live on the water? Do you know the do's and don't's of dock building and all the regulations involved? We've also highlighted the iconic Post Master House near Windmill Point with its history and remodel.

Speaking of remodels, one of our reporters breaks down a do-it-yourself porch repair project with woodworking tips from a non-woodworker.

The post-COVID population boom in our area has also sparked commercial growth. We've included photos and brief information about more than two dozen projects happening in Middlesex, Lancaster and Northumberland counties.

So let's shake off the winter blues and enjoy the warmer weather and longer days. Happy Spring!

*Susan & Lisa*

susan@rapprecord.com
lisa@rapprecord.com




## on the cover

Spring flowers in bloom.
*photo by Penny Johnson*

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**News** Don Richeson and Robert D. Mason Jr., editors; Larry S. Chowning, Tom Chillemi, Lisa Hinton-Valdrighi, Jackie Nunnery and AnnGardner Eubank

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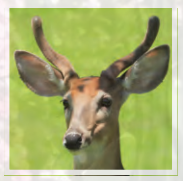
**Editorial Director** Lisa Hinton-Valdrighi

**Account Managers** Geanie Longest and Lisa Donant

**Publishers** Fred and Bettie Lee Gaskins



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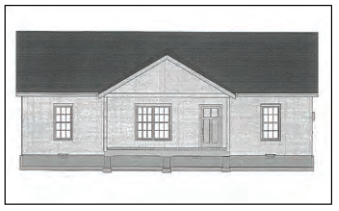
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**Circa 1899, The Post Master house in Foxwells serves as a reminder of heritage and those who helped shape the working waterfront community of Windmill Point.** Photo by AnnGardner Eubank

# The Post Master House: *a vestige to the past*

*by AnnGardn Eubank*

On the way to Windmill Point stands the historic Post Master House. Nestled between the Rappahannock River in its backyard and views of the Chesapeake Bay from the front, the home was built and occupied by William G. Foxwell.

A postmaster and figure in much of the Windmill Point community's development, Foxwell crafted a gorgeous federal style home that today serves as an important Windmill Point icon.

Much of the original property has remained intact since its initial construction roughly 150 years ago despite numerous storms, floods and renovations. From Foxwell's initial construction, to serving as the home for several prominent area figures over the span of more than a century, the Post Master House has now taken on a new life as a time capsule of the community spirit and natural beauty.

In 2018, Daniel Lang purchased the home and has been honoring its history ever since.

Before Lang acquired the two-story house, his friend Chris Stamm had lived there for a number of years. The late attorney had told him prior to Lang's acquisition that the bones of the place were good, but would need some renovations and ultimately a complete tear-down of the rear-addition that had been falling apart for years.

Willing to take on the project, Lang purchased the property and got to work.

In addition to removing the addition and razing a dilapidated accessory structure, one of Lang's first major changes to the three-acre property was relocating the home about 300 feet back from its original setting closer to Windmill Point Road so it would instead sit closer to the river.

While Lang made several notable initial changes to the property, more work has been made in an effort to preserve as much of its original features and charm as possible while extending the structure's life.

When approaching the front patio, a beautiful brick trim lines the front perimeter of the house. When Lang moved the house back from the road and removed part of the structure, he reclaimed the bricks from inside chimneys that were previously on either side of the house for the exterior detailing.

"I thought it was a great way to recycle the material," he said.

Upon entering the home, the immediate staircase is a prominent historic feature of the house. The original mahogany staircase has been well loved and appreciated and has stood the test of time.

"The stairs have never been touched or re-stained," Lang said.

The stairs lead up to charming bedrooms and a bathroom with a stunning claw-foot tub. Despite the elegance and southern charm the furnishings exude, the real worthwhile detail to note is the upstairs flooring and molding.

The floors upstairs are original and are maintained hard southern pine and replicated mortise and tenon.

To keep with the home's authentic character and design, when Lang was preparing to add an accessory structure, he made sure to use cypress wood that was configured



**Wide views of the Rappahannock River make for a scenic and tranquil setting to gather with neighbors at the end of the day.** Photo by AnnGardner Eubank




**Home owner Daniel Lang incorporates several nods to William G. Foxwell, the former inhabitant of the home and area postmaster, including this old English post box.** Photo by AnnGardner Eubank

*"I wou dn't really call it a restoration, ut rather a historic ren ation"*
*--Daniel Lang*

to be consistent with the original house.

Additionally, when preparing for alterations it was determined that just one window in the house was original, so that's what was used as a configuration model.

"I wouldn't really call it a restoration, but rather a historic renovation," Lang said.

From the moment the front door opens to the Post Master House, views of the Rappahannock River from the picturesque floor-to-ceiling glass doors that lead to the back patio are abundant.

The open-space kitchen with an adjacent dining room and entertaining living area, adorned with a gorgeous brick fireplace and chimney, offers an ideal space to enjoy the river views with company.

When Lang acquired the home, he wanted to ensure he was honoring its history. Prior to 2018, the property hadn't been known as the "Post Master House," rather, that was a name Lang assigned as a way to pay homage to its beginnings.

Since Foxwell's residency, the house became home to a couple of others of local notoriety. William Fitchett, a life-long waterman, who still goes out crabbing in his 90s, was born in the house and lived there with his family. Later, Stamm, who made lasting impressions throughout the Lancaster County legal community, made the spot his home.

Lang's work to preserve the home goes beyond recognition for Foxwell and focuses on his appreciation for Foxwells, the greater Windmill Point area, the Northern Neck and related heritage.

"There's a lot of talent, history and perspective right here that my neighbors share," he said.

Lang, who moved to the area



**Several key features add to the charm of the federal style home, including the old Southern pine floors and a clawfoot bathtub in the upstairs portion of the house.** Photo by AnnGardner Eubank



**Honoring and commemorating the working waterfront that Windmill Point still resembles, Daniel Lang proudly showcases a Ralph Higgins original painting above the fireplace.** Photo by AnnGardner Eubank



**In appreciation for the area's history, Daniel Lang refurbished a pair of original bar chairs dating from the Tides Inn's inaugural season in 1947.** Photo by AnnGardner Eubank

from Pennsylvania, said he had long admired the Chesapeake Bay and nearby waterways. When choosing a place to retire, he and his wife considered a number of different spots. Because of the area's heritage and beauty, Lang landed at Foxwells.

Lang was fascinated with how much of an autonomous community Foxwells is despite being an unincorporated hamlet.

"The fact alone that there's two churches right here makes you wonder why it couldn't keep its incorporated status," he said.

The families that have dug their roots in the community and have raised generation after generation on the same land has allowed for the traditions of the working waterfront to remain prevalent along the stretch of land.

"I love the area for what it represents historically…it brings an honest perspective for why it should never change," Lang said.

Lang said there are truly very few places left like Foxwells and Windmill Point. Areas that are so deeply connected to their heritage are hard to come by.

He has enjoyed getting to know his neighbors and listening to their family stories and their history. In addition to immersing himself into the culture of his community, Lang honors the local heritage in the decor and details of his home.

He proudly displays a Ralph Higgins original painting over his fireplace, depicting the spirit and lifestyle of working watermen.

He also has a set of the original bar chairs from the Tides Inn's first season in operation back in 1947. The chairs have been refurbished and preserved. He added plaques to the back to acknowledge the history of the leather seats.

While the world and Lancaster County are constantly changing, a seven-mile drive along Windmill Point Road will surely evoke feelings of both admiration and nostalgia. For now, driving through the various hamlets, particularly Foxwells, can feel like a small slice of the working waterfront's heritage is preserved and cherished.

Lang and many others who call Palmer, Foxwells, Fleets Island, Westland and Windmill Point home hope this stretch of paradise stays just how it is.




**An original, untouched mahogany staircase greets visitors as they first walk through the doors of the iconic home. From the first step inside, postcard worthy views of the river are seen through floor-to-ceiling glass doors.** Photo by AnnGardner Eubank

*"I l e the area for hat it represents historically...it brings an hon st p spective for hy it shou d never change."*

*--Daniel Lang*

# A spring lawn revitalization strategy

New growth is a hallmark of spring, whether it plays out in the birth of birds and bunnies or with the returned buds on trees and plant stalks. While most greenery rebounds naturally, lawns may need a little extra TLC in order to return to their once lush, green glory.

Revitalizing a lawn in spring is a multifaceted process but can be well worth the reward when green grass adds to a beautiful landscape and functional yard. Here are some tips on how to get started, courtesy of The Farmer's Almanac and The Home Depot:

• Clean up debris — Spend a few hours raking up leaves from the lawn and removing any other winter debris like twigs so that air can reach the grass below. Also remove any thatch that has developed.

• Test the soil — Take a sample of the soil to determine its pH level and nutrient needs. Then you can make adjustments to set a strong foundation for the lawn to grow.

• Do some weeding — Pull out any weeds that have poked through early on and apply a pre-emergent herbicide to prevent additional weeds from taking over.

• Start the aeration process — A core aerator punches holes into the soil. This enables air and water to penetrate through to the roots.

• Overseed the lawn — Apply grass seeds over the lawn, paying special attention to any bare or thin areas so that the seed will fill in the lawn.

• Water consistently — It is important to water the lawn deeply and consistently, especially when the weather is dry, to help promote strong root development.

• Time fertilizer correctly — Apply a spring fertilizer around three weeks after the lawn starts to turn green or after the first two or three mowings. If fertilizer is applied too early it can feed weeds instead of the grass and result in fertilizer runoff.

• Mow to an appropriate height — Begin to mow when the ground is dry enough and the grass is long enough to need cutting. Leave some length to the lawn; otherwise, sunlight will reach the soil and encourage weed seeds to germinate.


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# Brent & Becky's Bulbs free daffodil workshop coming up on April 3

A free workshop on identifying daffodils and submitting them for entry in the Gloucester Daffodil Show will be offered from 4-6 p.m. on Thursday, April 3, in the Chesapeake Lounge at Brent & Becky's Bulbs, 7900 Daffodil Lane, Gloucester. Youth and adults are welcome to attend.

Brent Heath will be on hand to identify daffodils from local gardens, and instructors from the Gloucester Daffodil Club will help participants choose and groom the best daffodils for competition. Daffodils will be available to work with for those who don't bring their own.

Participants are encouraged to bring their own daffodils, since they can only exhibit ones they've grown themselves.

Register for the class at gloucesterdaffodilclub.com or daffodilfestivalva.org, or email Katherine Mazzocco at katherinemazzocco@gmail.com.


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# Pesky critters go away!

**by Lisa Hinton-Valdrighi**

**There's an often misused Robert Frost quote—"good fences make good neighbors"—which helps justify building a fence to keep neighbors at arm's length. The truth is good fences seem to be the only barriers against pesky garden predators like deer, rabbits, raccoons, squirrels and even turtles. Yes, turtles.**

We've battled them all, or at least it seems that way.

Every year my husband and I painstakingly weed, fertilize and plant our small, raised vegetable garden. And every year without fail deer, rabbits and turtles fill their bellies on our squash blooms and tomatoes.

I believe we've tried every deterrent from human hair to chemical deer repellents, even built a less-than-attractive snow fence spaced about five feet from the garden bed's edge. That slowed them down but didn't stop them.

So this year, I reached out to social media friends to solicit their best methods of keeping gardens deer-proof.

Aside from shooting them, suggested by two friends but which is a big no-no in the village of Weems, there were some helpful suggestions.

Here's a sampling:

• Aluminum pans on trigger strings.

• Human hair clippings, spread around the garden border.

• Human urine spread around the perimeter of the garden.

• Milorganite fertilizer hung in pantyhose around the garden.

• Native plants to create a barrier such as mountain mint, yarrow, golden ragwort, boneset, lyre-leaf sage and gray goldenrod.

• Chunks of Ivory soap or Irish Spring soap hung in cheesecloth.

• Protect new shoots, like young trees, with netting or chicken wire.

• Flashing red laser lights which mimic the eyes of predators.

• Deer blocks placed at the far edge of the property, away from plants. The deer will eat the blocks and not the plants. However, that does draw deer to your yard and the blocks need to be replaced.

• Deer resistant plants like jalapeños, butterfly bushes, ornament grasses and daffodils.

• Strong smelling scents like hot pepper, garlic, rotten eggs are also a turn off for deer.



**Acrobatic squirrels crawl up a hanger to access a bird feeder. To help keep these cute but pesky little critters from eating your seed, sprinkle in some cinnamon.** Photo by Penny Johnson



**While beautiful to observe in nature, deer and other animals like rabbits and squirrels, love to eat vegetables and blooms on flowers and trees.** Photo by Bob Waldrop

• Solar electric fence system.

Along with these more natural remedies, home and garden stores, or gardening sections at hardware stores, include dozens of chemical repellants. Liquid Fence's Deer & Rabbit Repellent is popular and harmless to plants and animals. Deer Stopper II was also recommended and doesn't contain harsh chemicals.

Sylvia Cassillas, greenhouse manager at True Value in Kilmarnock, said one of her favorite repellents is Deer Scram for residential gardens. "Even the bunnies and squirrels don't like it," she said. "It has a very strong odor."

Another popular product at True Value is Safer DeerOff, which includes six stations containing dried blood to trigger the flight response in deer. And it's safe to use around pets and children. It also lasts the entire season.

Unfortunately the only tried-and-true method of keeping deer at bay, aside from a round-the-clock watch dog or that gun thing that was suggested, is building an eight-foot-tall fence around the garden.

**Squirrels in my feeders**

One day my husband woke up, declared he'd become his father and then set about hanging bird feeders all around the yard. So far, the squirrels have kept their distance, mainly I believe, because they feast on our pecan trees. We've lived in our house for over 28 years and only harvested pecans one of those years. Not sure exactly what happened that year but I'd love to replicate whatever kept them away. Those cute, but pesky, buggers seem to actually throw the pecans at us when we emerge from the house.

I think all hope of keeping them out of our pecan trees is lost but for those battling them at their bird feeders there are several deterrents.

In fact, the answer to keeping ants and squirrels out of your bird feeder is probably already in your cupboard. A little powdered cinnamon or a dab of cinnamon oil around the feeder, may deter insects and mammals without harming your feathered friends. There are even bird seed varieties that contain cinnamon. Cinnamon is also a great ant deterrent.

Cassillas said fortunately there are multiple companies producing squirrel resistant feeders that are surrounded by caging that allows the birds to eat but keeps the squirrels out.

Cassillas also suggests oiling the bird feeder line or holder with cooking oil or spray. One social media friend suggested putting petroleum jelly on the line. Another said to put baffles on the bird feeder poles.

Most suggested dogs and cats to keep the critters away.

Some say cayenne pepper also works, when added to bird feeders, or sprinkled around the garden to keep critters at bay.

Truth is country living allows us to enjoy gardening and bird watching but it also means battling the wildlife that also enjoy the fruits of our labor.

Guess we can't have one without the other.

Happy gardening!



**Sylvia Cassillas, greenhouse manager at True Value in Kilmarnock, displays several bird feeders which are billed as squirrel-proof.** Photo by Lisa Hinton-Valdrighi




**True Value in Kilmarnock, along with other stores with a home and gardening section, offers dozens of chemical options for ridding gardens of deer, rodents and insects. Greenhouse manager Sylvia Cassillas said one of her favorites is Deer Scram.** Photo by Lisa Hinton-Valdrighi




**Many claim Milorganite fertilizer, hung in pantyhose around the garden's perimeter, is a great deer deterrent.** Photo by Lisa Hinton-Valdrighi

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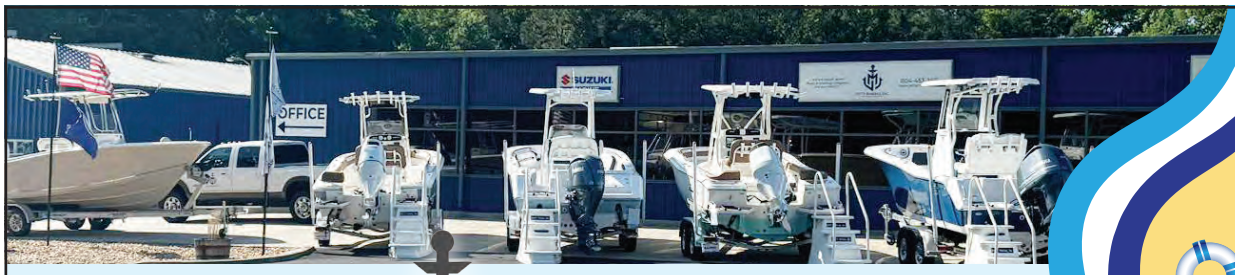
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# Four signs of potential electrical hazards in a home

Homeowners know that the work of maintaining a home is never done. Cleaning is a daily task associated with homeownership, and such sessions can reveal more than dust buildup or dirty walls and surfaces.

When cleaning a home, homeowners can pull double duty and look for potentially hazardous situations. For example, vacuuming and dusting sessions can present a great opportunity to spot electrical hazards that might otherwise go unseen. With that in mind, homeowners can keep an eye out for these four signs of potential electrical hazards when working around the house.

1. Tingling when touching an electrical appliance: The National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) advises homeowners to call a qualified electrician immediately if they experience a tingling feeling when touching an electrical appliance. The Electrical Safety Office notes experiencing a tingle or the feeling of being shocked is not normal. Homeowners who experience such a feeling should avoid the location and warn others in the home to do the same.

2. Wall outlets that look or feel unusual: Wall outlets do not garner much attention, as many are low enough to be out of sight or even behind furniture. So a cleaning session might be the only time homeowners will notice issues with wall outlets. The NFPA notes discolored outlets or outlets that feel warm to the touch is a sign of an electrical problem. Various issues can cause outlets to look or feel unusual. An outlet could be short-circuiting or wires could be damaged, and each issue merits the attention of a qualified electrician.

3. Foul odors: An odor that calls to mind burning rubber is another indicator of an electrical problem. Various electrical experts indicate such odors can be indicative of damaged wiring, an overloaded circuit or loose connections, each of which poses a significant safety hazard. The NFPA urges homeowners to contact a qualified electrician immediately if they sense a smell of burning rubber in their homes.

4. Flickering lights: Homeowners won't need to wait until cleaning sessions to notice flickering lights. Such flickering is hard to miss regardless of what residents are doing inside a home. Sometimes lights flicker because of a loose bulb, so homeowners who notice flickering should first turn off the light, let the bulb cool down if need be and then check to make sure it isn't loose. If the bulb isn't loose, then lights could be flickering for a multitude of reasons. A loose connection can cause flickering, as can an overloaded circuit. Homeowners also may not realize that not all bulbs and dimmer switches are designed to work together. For example, modern LED light bulbs often require the installation of specific dimmer switches or the lights won't operate properly. Flickering can result if these products are not compatible. If a home is old, then flickering lights could be due to old wiring that needs to be replaced.

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# How to keep indoor air clean during allergy season

Seasonal allergies can turn a warm and welcoming spring or summer day into something else entirely. Congestion, runny nose, sneezing, and itchy eyes are just some of the unpleasant symptoms of seasonal allergies, which are most often triggered by high pollen counts during spring and summer.

The Mayo Clinic advises seasonal allergy sufferers to stay indoors when pollen counts are high. But what about indoor air quality? The Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America reports that eight out of 10 people are exposed to dust mites and six out of 10 are exposed to cat or dog dander. Dust mites and pet dander can each trigger allergic reactions. Pair those two triggers with higher pollen counts common in spring and summer and it's no wonder that many seasonal allergy sufferers are ambivalent about the warm weather seasons. Fortunately, steps can be taken to keep indoor air clean during allergy season.

• Close windows and doors. Many people embrace opportunities to open their windows and doors on warm days, but doing so allows outdoor allergens like pollen to get inside. Pollen can attach to furniture and clothing, and that can make time indoors unpleasant for allergy sufferers. Maintain indoor air quality by closing windows and doors on windy days and/or days when pollen counts are high.

• Employ air cleaning devices. The AAFA notes that air cleaners with Certified Asthma & Allergy Friendly® filters can filter nearly 98 percent of allergen particles in the air. The AAFA maintains a list of certified air cleaners at asthmaandallergyfriendly.com.

• Keep a clean home. The Mayo Clinic notes that, in most homes, items such as bedding, upholstered furniture and carpeting provide an ideal environment for dust mites, which are microscopic bugs that trigger allergic reactions in many people. The AAFA recommends keeping surfaces in a home clean and uncluttered to control dust mites. Washing bedding and uncovered pillows in hot water each week also can help to corral dust mites and improve indoor air quality.

• Vacuum frequently. Frequent vacuuming is another way to improve indoor air quality. The AAFA maintains a list of Certified Asthma & Allergy Friendly® vacuums that have been tested and found to prevent allergens from reentering the air.

• Prevent mold and treat areas where infestations have occurred. Mold also contributes to poor indoor air quality. Dehumidifiers can be used to reduce mold and dust mites, making these beneficial additions to allergy sufferers' homes. Minimizing house plants around the house and addressing leaky fixtures immediately are some additional measures to prevent mold infestations.

It may not be enough to simply stay indoors to avoid allergic reactions on spring and summer days. Embracing measures to improve indoor air quality can be vital for allergy sufferers as well.





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# BRICKS & MORTAR

On these pages we have a sampling of the dozens of commercial and public works projects in Lancaster, Northumberland and Middlesex counties. Most are new constructions in progress, some are recently completed and others are major renovations of existing buildings which have occurred over the last year.



**For a number of years the Grace Hill subdivision off of Harris Road in Kilmarnock sat nearly empty with just a couple of homes occupying the land. In the last two years, Ryan Homes has built dozens of single-family houses and the subdivision is nearly fully occupied.** Photo by AnnGardner Eubank



**Over 20 acres of land off of Harris Road in Kilmarnock has been developed into a solar farm by Borrego Solar. It's one of several solar farms approved for Lancaster County.** Photo by AnnGardner Eubank



**Construction work began in August by Tyler Fryman and Bennett Facilities and Fleet on a "pocket park" behind Northumberland Public Library. More plantings are expected with the warming weather, with completion of the park this summer.** Photo by Jackie Nunnery




**A new 1500-square-foot doggie daycare facility with indoor/outdoor play areas will open this month at Bayside Pet Emporium, 78 Whisk Drive, White Stone. The building, which took almost two years to complete, includes 40 runs for medium to large breeds along with cages for smaller dogs.** Photo courtesy of Bayside Pet Emporium




**MJ Anderson and crew completely transformed a corner office space at 13 West Church Street, Kilmarnock, into a brewery and taproom, which offers musical entertainment most weekends. That Damn Mary Brewing Company, founded in its first location in Gloucester in 2018, opened in Kilmarnock in November 2024.** Photo by Robert Mason Jr.




**A new Tractor Supply opened in July of 2024 in Saluda at 183 General Puller Highway.**




**Small Town Burger came to Urbanna in 2024.**




**The future Lancaster High School continues to take shape. Following a February 2024 groundbreaking, work by Branch Builds began the following month and the steel structure started going up in November. The school will welcome students in grades 7-12 for the 2026-27 school year.** Photo courtesy of Lancaster County Public Schools



**The Hills Quarter subdivision has seen an increase in residents over the last few years when Stateson Homes began its development campaign. From 2022 to 2024, the company sold 44 homes there and dozens more have recently been completed or are under construction.** Photo by AnnGardner Eubank

**Supervisors awarded a $424,314.86 contract to J.C. Franklin Inc. to expand and improve the Kilmarnock Convenience Center Refuse Site. When completed mid-year, the site will have doubled in size and have a new traffic pattern. A third compactor will be installed after site work is completed along with adding buildings to store recyclables.** Photo by Robert Mason Jr.





**Single-family home construction resumed recently in the Springwood of Kilmarnock neighborhood by D.R. Horton. Several homes are completed, under contract, sold, or under construction. There is a model home/office at 28 Byway Drive.** Photo by Robert Mason Jr.



**Dunkin' is coming to Kilmarnock. The coffee, donuts, sandwiches and snacks chain is slated to open in late April at 437 North Main Street, Kilmarnock. Compo Construction Company of Norfolk is the general contractor on the project, transforming the former Primis Bank building into a 6,000-square foot drive-thru and restaurant.** Photo by Lisa Hinton-Valdrighi



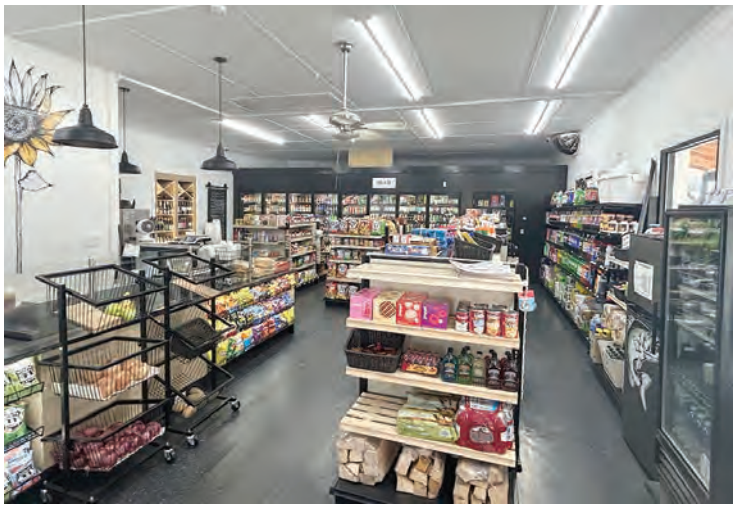
**Nacho Average Brewpub on West Church Street in Kilmarnock celebrated its one-year anniversary March 17. The building underwent major renovations with the addition of a full-service bar, kitchen, and the addition of a stage for weekly entertainment, open mic, comedy and karaoke nights.** Photo by Lisa Hinton-Valdrighi



**Work is wrapping up on the Cancer Clinic and Outpatient Infusion Center at Bon Secours Rappahannock General Hospital. When construction, done by Connemara Corporation, is complete, the new space will feature private treatment and exam rooms as well as separate spacious waiting areas for both the outpatient infusion center and the cancer clinic.** Photo by Jackie Nunnery




**Ellen's Country Store, a staple on River Road in Lancaster, has been remodeled to include expansive front and side covered patios with picnic tables and rocking chairs for outside dining. The convenience store also has received an interior remodel but still serves the same delicious homemade salads and hot and cold deli items it has for years.** Photo by Lisa Hinton-Valdrighi





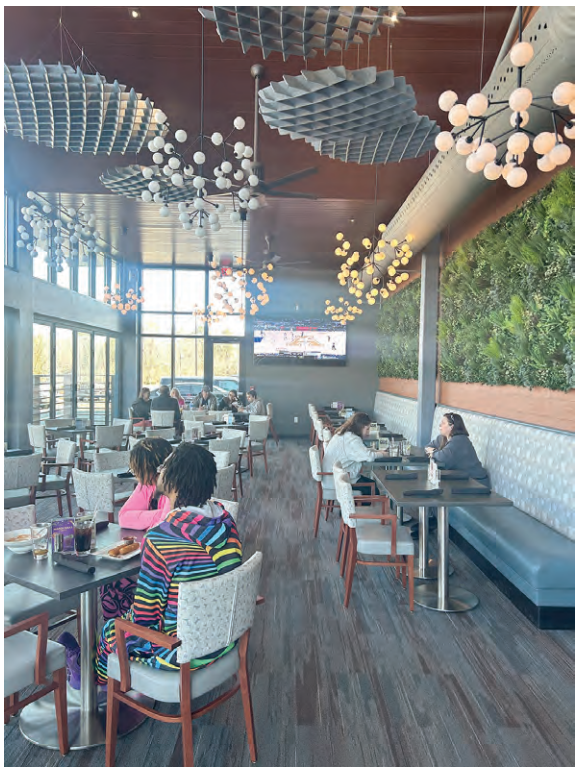
**IsaBell K. Horsely Real Estate has served the Northern Neck and Middle Peninsula since 1975. Their White Stone office previously occupied one of the oldest homes in the town, but due to its aging structure and complications, a replacement was in order. A new office building, designed by Randall Kipp and built by Connemara Corporation, is under construction in the same location.** Photo by AnnGardner Eubank



**Horn Harbor Restaurant owner Dan Hester says a new and improved section of seating will welcome boaters and diners sometime around April, just as the weather warms. The new bar and indoor seating along with the outdoor covered deck will accommodate approximately 30 additional people.** Photo by Jackie Nunnery



**The Urbanna Town Council built a $1.2 million swimming pool on town property.**



**Meridian Restaurant, inside Compass Entertainment Complex, 100 Entertainment Drive, Irvington, underwent a major renovation last year, converting its seasonal dining space into a new dining room to seat an additional 75 patrons.** Photo by Lisa Hinton-Valdrighi



**Virginia Department of Transportation has contracted Graham Concrete to complete a turn lane project in Kilmarnock. Work began March 11 to improve the intersection of North Main Street and James B. Jones Memorial Highway in Kilmarnock by creating a dedicated right turn lane onto James B. Jones Memorial Highway to accommodate truck traffic using the road as a bypass. When completed in June, re-striping will create dedicated left and right turn lanes onto North Main Street.** Photo by Jackie Nunnery




**Kilmarnock will soon have a Taco Bell. The restaurant is nearing completion at 466 North Main Street. Summit Properties, which does nationwide commercial construction and remodels, is the general contractor.** Photo by Lisa Hinton-Valdrighi



**The Office Bistro, 4346 Irvington Road, should be ready to open its new dining area by Memorial Day weekend, according to general manager Marc Richmond. The addition will include two restrooms and additional seating for 34. John Brabrand with ICN Enterprises LLC is the project manager.** Photo by Lisa Hinton-Valdrighi



**After a February groundbreaking, work began in March for the DynaDome at the Northumberland YMCA in Heathsville. Connemara Corp. is the general contractor on the work in preparation for the retractable pool enclosure that will be installed by the manufacturer, DynaDome. The pool is expected to reopen in May.** Photo by Jackie Nunnery




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# PRESERVING PORCH OFFERS CHALLENGES

Story and photos by Tom Chillemi



Paint masks the decay under it as fungus eats the old wood.

"Does granddaddy like doing that?" my granddaughter Mallory asked, having seen me working on the porch floors

"It probably gives him time to think," she concluded.

I'm trying to extend the life of 120-year-old porch floor boards

Patched parts are hooked together like a jigsaw puzzle. The worst damage is where the sun hits, and causes wet wood to swell, and then shrink. The thin layer of paint that protects the boards can only stretch so far. A crack opens. The defense has been breached.

## Hungry fungi

Cracks and joints are entry points for water that feeds the dormant fungi and they wake up hungry.

Water feeds micro life that literally eats wood.

"Wood rot" needs a more powerful name. It's not really "rot" it's recycling. Fungus is a basic form that can alter more complex life. Some draw sustenance from the organic wood fibers releasing the stored nutrients that were created by the sun's energy and earth's nutrients. It's part of the cycle of life.



Lovely yellow fungus is nature's recycler.

## "Humongous Fungus"

Science tells us that fungus is neither animal nor plant. Some fungus are nature's recycler, breaking down organic matter to provide nutrients for plants and other life forms. Fungus is everywhere in forests, converting dead organic material into nutrients that feed trees. In turn, the trees release sugars back into the soil that feed the fungus. Fungus spreads with mushrooms that release spores. One of the world's largest living organism is a "Humongous Fungus" in Oregon that covers 3.7 square miles and weighs 35,000 tons.

Porch repairs have been educational.

## One too many

It's estimated there are more than two million species of fungi. Just one species is enough to upset the serenity of a porch.

Repairs usually begin with preparation of painting. A bubble of paint indicates a soft spot underneath. A hairline crack lets in water. Probing will tell how much wood the fungus has eaten.

Oh, I've tried to take the easy way out. Mixing epoxy with sawdust and patching the hole. But you really need blocks of wood to fill bigger gaps.

## Relics

Sometimes you need a new section of board. Not just any wood will do. These boards are 1.25 inches thick, called "five-quarter." (Four quarters would be one inch.)

Through the years I've harvested porch boards from scrap piles.

These "radial cut" boards were cut so that the grain is vertical, making them stronger. The wood is so hard it's hard to drill. Plus, the dark growth rings are very tight, meaning the tree grew slowly probably in a virgin forest. These boards cut about 1900 may have come from a tree 100 years old.

## Complex

Few would do what I have done to keep this porch together. Making forms and injecting epoxy into cavities where the wood had been turned to dust.

Into the cavity is placed a coating of boron, the powder Borax soap and some insect repellents are made of.

It may stop the spores from growing . . . for a while.

I've even drilled one-eighth inch holes on the border of good wood and put boron in those holes, in case the fungus tries to spread. The best defense is keeping out moisture.



Porch patches on patches tells of the continuing search for answers.



Loose paint sometimes leads to foundation problems.

## Defense

Sometimes I fill the cavity with “Bondo,” an epoxy-like paste the car industry uses to fill small dents. It hardens like cement.

With boron in the joint, the fungus won’t have anything to eat. However, I wonder if the first spores will be sacrificed and eat all the boron, allowing the reserves to chomp-chomp the wood.

## Preservation

All this has led me to ask, will this repair outlast me.

But it’s not about me. The goal is to preserve something that cannot be replaced.

We bought the house “as is” 38 years ago, and I feel good knowing the pain has been worth it.

The last major repair I did was 28 years ago. But, this will not be the last minor repair. Wood is organic . . . so is fungus.

I once thought that if I did the repair correctly one time, it would be the only time I would have to do it. That turned out to be wrong, when it comes to wood.

Forever is impossible with wood. Even though it’s fir, and naturally decay resistant with a tight hard grain from growing slowly in a virgin forest, it’s no match for basic life forms like fungus.

Neither animal nor plant, fungi, which includes yeast and mold and mushrooms, were here first. We are the visitors.

## Eclipse

Yes, my granddaughter is right; working on the porch gives me time to think.

I ponder the past. These boards have been walked on, left outside and endured more than 43,000 days, 120 years. They were here decades before this old house had electricity.

And I think of the future. As long as there is moisture and something to eat — fungus will be around.

Maybe someday another person will crawl under the porch. And find what I wrote on a beam: “Everything under the sun is in tune. But sun is eclipsed by the moon.”

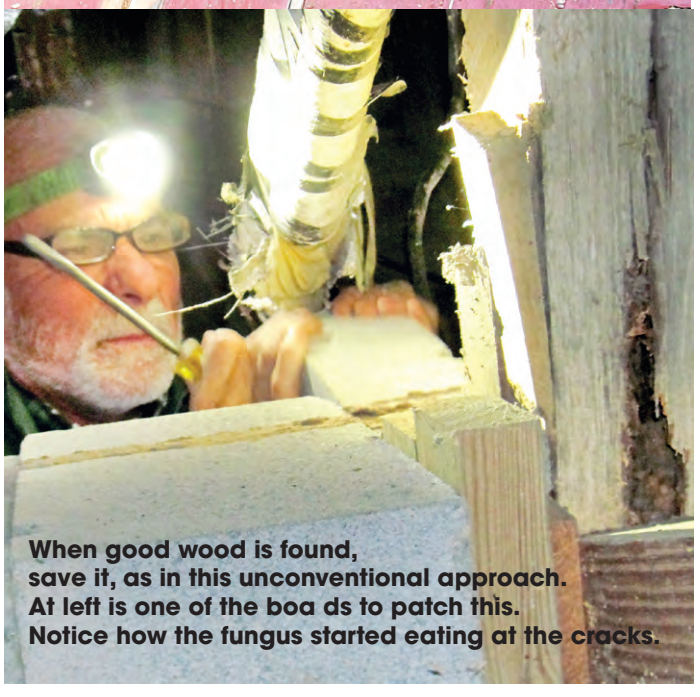
It’s the last line from the album “Dark Side of The Moon,” by Pink Floyd.*

All this “thinking” has made me realize our place in the universe is very small.

*If you’ve read this far, you owe it to yourself to listen to Pink Floyd’s 1973 concept album that delves into the deeper side of life. “Money” is one of the songs that got radio play.



Battling wood rot (fungus) leads to deep thought.



When good wood is found, save it, as in this unconventional approach. At left is one of the boa ds to patch this. Notice how the fungus started eating at the cracks.

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## Did you know?

Inflation has garnered countless headlines in recent years, and much of that news has focused on the notably higher cost of food. In an effort to overcome rising food costs, some consumers have thought about gardening. According to Washington State University, the average household with a food garden spends around $70 per year on seeds and garden supplies. The reward for that small investment is roughly $600 worth of food. Though the financial investment associated with a food garden might be minimal, it's important for prospective gardeners to recognize that the commitment of time required to establish and sustain a food garden can be significant.


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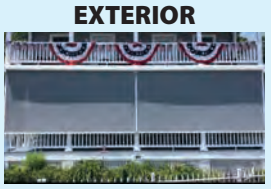
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# Home interior trends on the rise

Trends that seem ubiquitous one day can seemingly vanish before the sun rises again just 24 hours later. That's especially true in the digital age, when overnight celebrities and viral videos can be on the tips of everyone's tongue before being forgotten entirely when the next online sensation emerges in an increasingly rapid news cycle.

Home trends typically benefit from a longer shelf life than viral videos and other fads that originate on the internet, and that's something renovation-minded homeowners should consider when improving their homes. Homeowners preparing to do just that can consider these notable trends, which the online renovation experts at Houzz suggest will be particularly popular in the year ahead.

• Rounded furnishings: Houzz noted that gentle curves and rounded edges embody the organic modern styles that many current homeowners love. Rounded dining tables and similarly circular coffee tables may merit consideration among homeowners who want to embrace popular trends.

• Arches: Houzz cites arches among the more popular modern trends, and the experts at Better Homes & Gardens note this unique, eye-catching style has been gaining popularity for several years. Better Homes & Gardens suggests that part of the appeal of arched doorways could be their deviation from a more traditional door shape. That uniqueness draws the attention of residents and visitors alike, and Houzz notes that arched windows, cabinets and even millwork details are part of the pivot toward arches.

• Stove alcoves: If it's a touch of history homeowners want, kitchen range alcoves might be just the project for them. Range alcoves call an earlier time to mind when wood burning stoves were commonplace. The report from Houzz notes range alcoves immediately draw attention, which undoubtedly adds to their appeal.

• Wood for warmth: Homeowners who hear "wood and warmth" might think fireplaces, but Houzz reports that wood elements are being incorporated into interior designs as a means to giving homes a more cozy vibe. Ceiling beams, trim, wall paneling, and cabinetry are utilizing wood to add warmth to a home.

Trends come and go, but home trends typically have more staying power than styles that emerge in other arenas. Homeowners who want to upgrade their home interiors can consider the latest trends and choose those that align with their own personal tastes.


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# Extending your living space
## and your enjoyment of your backyard



Fire pits create a wonderful gathering space. S'mores anyone?

*Story and photos by Jackie Nunnery*

**From Fourth of July barbecues to October nights around a warm fire, backyard patios and decks have long been a staple of outdoor living. But what was once a simple and separate space — a grill, a picnic table and maybe a place to build a fire — has evolved into room-like extensions of the home. While some of this may have to do with changing tastes, advances in materials and technologies have created a whole new segment of outdoor products that operate like their indoor counterparts while withstanding the challenges of weather.**

### Gather 'round the fire...

Fire naturally becomes the centerpiece of any gathering. While wood burning fires are what most people are familiar with, gas fires have made the enjoyment more convenient and smoke-free. From realistic to modern design options, fire pits are a popular addition to any outdoor entertainment space. Like their indoor counterparts, outdoor fireplaces bring warmth and ambience to a space. The



Outdoor fireplaces can go a long way in creating the feel of an outdoor room.

## How long will my gas appliance last?

**A standard 5 gallon/20 pound propane tank contains approximately 430,000 BTUs (British Thermal Units). So if your heater or fire table burns 60,000 BTUs per hour, you will get about seven to eight hours of enjoyment.**

**With advances in grilling technology and the development of appliances, outdoor cooking is now about grilling, smoking, sauteing, boiling and baking.**

glow of the fire plus the sheer size of the fixtures help define the space and make it feel more like a room.

For smaller decks or patios, fire tables can create a similar mood and take the chill off, while taking up less of a footprint. They also offer the convenience of being able to be powered by small propane tanks—typically 5 gallons/20 pounds—hidden in the table base. This can give you seven to eight hours of flame depending on how high the flame is adjusted.

If it's strictly ambience you are after, smaller fire bowls, lanterns and urns give you the relaxing glow of a fire, without producing much heat. They too, have bases to accommodate a propane tank for an evening's worth of magic. On the opposite side of that spectrum, gas powered heaters can extend the seasons, providing near year-round enjoyment in your backyard. Some portable options, with tank storage in the base, allow you to move the heat to exactly where it is needed.

### ...or the grill

Perhaps nowhere else has seen more changes than in the evolution from a charcoal grill to an outdoor kitchen. Grills themselves have advanced to commercial grade quality and digital technology that offers more precise temperature controls and monitoring. Outdoor cooking is now no longer limited to just grilling and smoking. There are griddles for stir-frying, ovens for pizza and burners for pans to create any dish or cuisine. Add a refrigerator and sink along with storage that can include utensils, spice racks, even warming drawers, and you have eliminated the endless back and forth between inside and outside as you entertain.



**With today's outdoor kitchens, everything is conveniently located and anything is possible.**




**NWP uses a CAD system to design an outdoor kitchen to a client's exact specifications.**

Cabinetry with adjustable self-leveling legs allow the kitchen units to be configured and installed on patio pavers or decking material. Stainless steel appliances, aluminum, composites, stone, all these materials that go into today's outdoor kitchen can withstand weather, including salt water, in covered spaces or open air. So aside from placing a cover on your grill and cooktops, there is little to no extra maintenance during or after the season, other than turning off the water supply, for years of enjoyment.

So many options can be "overwhelming," said Wayne Gallaher with NWP Energy in Irvington. "With the internet, most people come in with an idea of what they want," but the new showroom, built last year, gives people an opportunity to kick the tires, so to speak, and begin to visualize the space.

"It all starts with how much space they have," Gallaher said, adding that location, specifically proximity to salt water needs to be taken into consideration when selecting materials. He has multiple conversations with clients about how the future space—what type of construction, what activities, what type of cooking—before using a CAD system to further refine the space and allow them to envision the exact placement of appliances and storage. It is a process that can take months to complete. "I started this last project in September and construction is planned to be completed in June," he said. Once the design is finalized, he can calculate propane usage and arrange to have gas lines and storage tanks installed if necessary.

## ...or the screen

Outdoor electronics are the latest addition and the ultimate luxury in outdoor entertaining. Large screen televisions that are not only viewable outdoors but can stand up to the heat of the sun and the wettest of storms can make a summer family movie night without the hassle of crowding around a small screen or setting up a projector and screen. The addition of weatherproof speakers, some cleverly designed to look like rocks or lanterns, can add another layer of sound for more of a movie theater experience, without the theater. Add the whole package of a fireplace, kitchen and TV, and you could have an ultimate Sunday tailgating party, minus the travel and tailgate.

As the weather warms, we naturally gravitate to our backyards, lingering in the sights and sounds of nature after a long winter. Conversely, we often mourn the return of colder weather and the end of backyard fun. These outdoor rooms help extend "backyard season" and create a place where you can comfortably enjoy friends and family nearly all year long.

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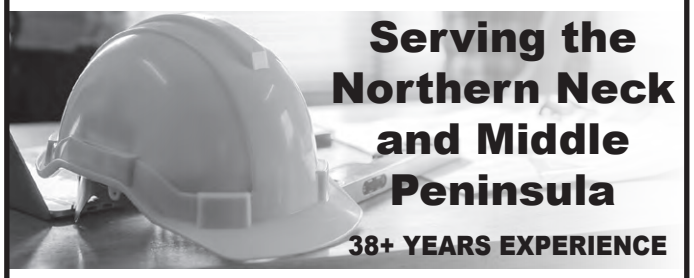
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# The benefits of lighting up your landscape

Homeowners know there's no shortage of ways to tweak a property. Some homeowners may lament that the work associated with home ownership is never done, but owning a house also provides endless opportunities to upgrade the spaces people call home.

Landscape lighting popularity is undoubtedly due to a number of variables, and each highlights a benefit of installing landscape lighting around a property.

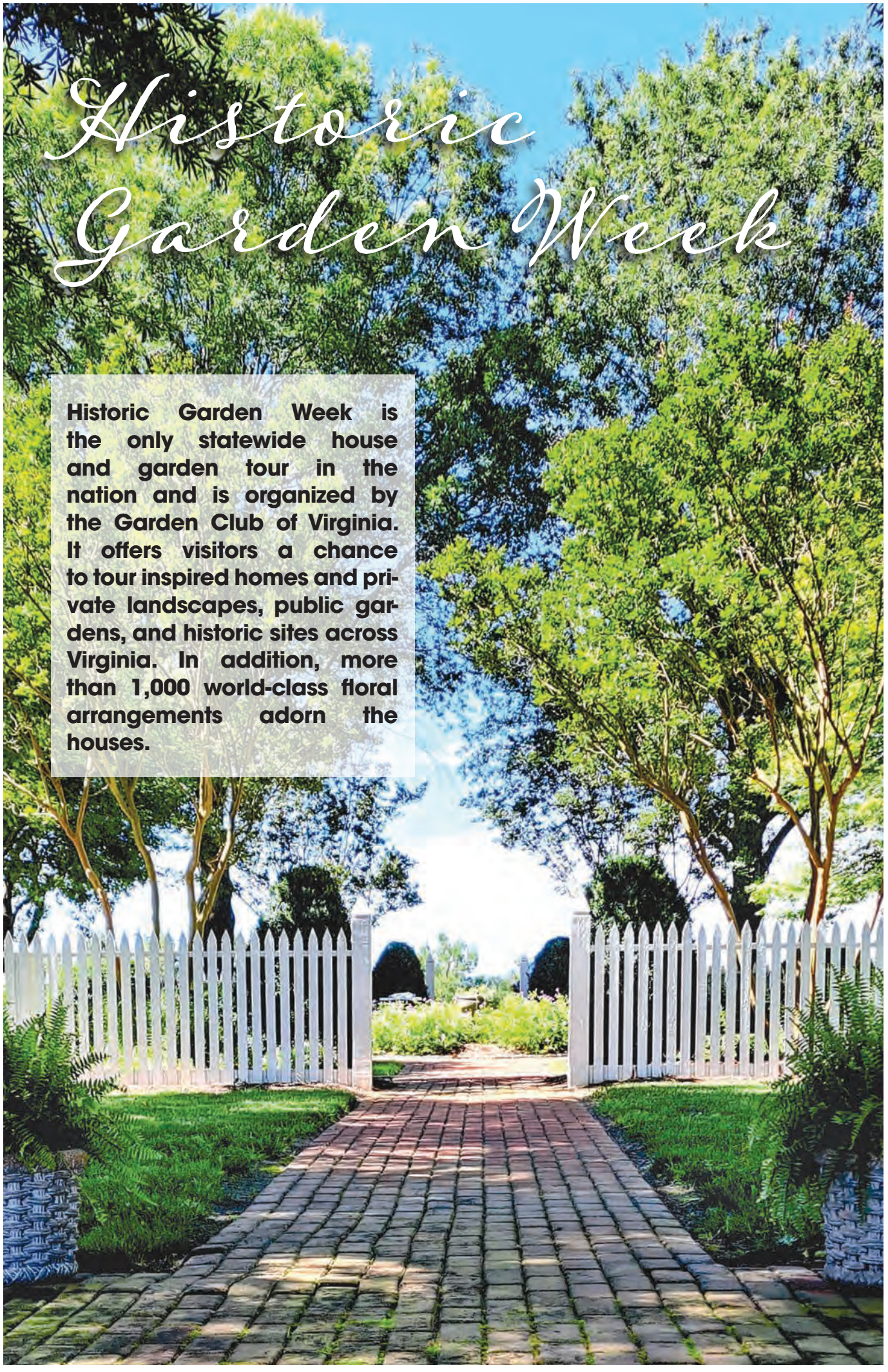
• Affordability: Some may think of big budget projects like kitchen remodels or room additions when pondering home renovations. Such projects can have a dramatic impact on a home, but landscape lighting can be equally transformative at a fraction of the cost. The home renovation experts at Angi.com estimate the average landscape lighting project costs around $4,000, making affordability a notable benefit.

• Appearance: There's no denying the aesthetic appeal of a well-lit landscape at night. Landscape lighting can be utilized to draw attention to awe-inspiring components of a landscape, whether it's natural features like gardens and foliage or architectural features. Improved appearance can increase curb appeal. But photographs of a well-lit nighttime landscape can impress buyers as well.

• Cost savings: Researchers at PolicyGenius.com found that insurance companies typically offer a discount of 2 to 5 percent to homeowners who install a home security system. Insurance providers may offer additional savings to homeowners who pair such systems with landscape lighting, which can be a deterrent to burglars who prefer to operate under a cloak of darkness.

• Safety: Landscape lighting also makes moving around a property at night safer for residents and guests. Lighting can be used to illuminate walkways, outdoor living rooms, patios around pools, and other areas where residents and guests will be walking at night, which can reduce the risk of falls and injuries.

• ROI: Consider a renovation's return on investment before deciding to go forward with a project. Studies vary, but the National Association of Realtors indicates landscape lighting can recoup as much as 70 percent of homeowners' investment in the project at resale.




**Historic Garden Week is the only statewide house and garden tour in the nation and is organized by the Garden Club of Virginia. It offers visitors a chance to tour inspired homes and private landscapes, public gardens, and historic sites across Virginia. In addition, more than 1,000 world-class floral arrangements adorn the houses.**

# Garden tour is returning to Middlesex after bein paused for four years

This year's house and garden tour on Friday, May 2, hosted by the Garden Club of the Middle Peninsula, will return to Middlesex County. The tour promises to be of interest to avid gardeners and history buffs alike, while providing a glimpse of waterfront living. Visitors will enjoy visiting six properties located along the Rappahannock and Piankatank rivers that represent the history, river culture, and beautiful gardens of Middlesex.

The properties collectively span four centuries. They offer formal and informal gardens, antiques, fine art and magnificent river views. This will be the only Friday tour in the area during the Garden Club of Virginia's Historic Garden Week, April 26 through May 3.

"Our club members are excited to have the tour back in our county after being cancelled four years ago because of COVID-19," remarked tour co-chairman Karen Bowman. The last tour in Middlesex was in 2016. The Garden Club of the Middle Peninsula tour rotates annually between the four member counties of Essex, Middlesex, King and Queen, and King William.

Four of the properties on the tour are in Deltaville. **Cupalow**, 1273 North End Road, Deltaville, is an 1867 farmhouse surrounded by well-loved gardens on four acres that occupies a high vantage point over the river. This century-and-a-half old house, featuring two large porches, is constructed of rough sawed lumber lapped with large

**Providence walkway**

timbers. Ceilings are tongue and groove beadboard with center ornamentation. The owner's love of gardening is apparent by the beautiful perennial beds that surround the house and offer views from every window. Chickens and beehives share the vast yard that has a lovely pool for hot summer days.

**Sans Souci,** 630 Bland Point Road, Deltaville, is a two-story farmhouse built in 1840 with original pine plank flooring. Updated for modern living in 2000, two wings and a loggia were added connecting the original structure with the outside. The house showcases antiques revered and handed down for generations. It is the perfect setting for sailing and capturing beautiful views of both Moore's Creek and the Piankatank River. Native plants and fruit trees provide an alluring entrance to the property while gracious magnolias hold court near the river.

**Providence**, Gardens and Dock Only, Two Bland Point Drive, Deltaville. Willow Oaks line the walkway and driveway to Providence, a house built in 1760 that has been lovingly restored and expanded by the current owners. Located on the Piankatank River, Providence sits on 15 acres of groomed woodlands and open fields. Visitors will be able to stroll through the extensive gardens and may visit a replica of an 18th century Chesapeake Bay cargo sloop, the Luna, which will be docked there with its crew.

**Falling Tide,** 119 Falling Tide Road, Deltaville, is a two-story coastal home built in 2020 on a three-acre point that represents the essence of river living. Light, openness, graceful spaces, and river views greet the visitor at every turn. The house is filled with art and antiques with a chef's kitchen and ample space for entertaining. The beautiful gardens on the river and around the house add a sense of tranquility to this unique property.

Two other properties included on the tour architecturally blend land and sea. **Regent Cottage,** 3200 Regent Road, Topping, is a nautical craftsman-style house, lovingly planned and executed. The house sits on a hill overlooking Locklies Creek and the Rappahannock River graced with several mature deodar cedars.

**The Corner,** 42 Mill Creek Road, Wake, is a lovely Dutch Colonial house, built by the owner's family in 1978, which is surrounded by extensive gardens with an array of both sun and shade plants that can be seen from each vantage point in the house. An oysterman's watch house that overlooks the dramatic outdoor space once presided over local oyster beds at Stingray Point. Beautiful water features provide a tranquil sound to the gardens and swimming pool.

**Tour headquarters**, located at Lower United



**Beach chairs at Falling Tide**



**Cupalow House with arbor**

Methodist Church, 120 Lower Church Road, Hartfield, is a colonial-era church that is also worth a visit. The original church dates back to 1650, with the current brick sanctuary dating to 1717. Tour co-chairman Karen Bowman notes that the church survived the Revolutionary War and is one of the few colonial churches available to tour.

For information about the Middle Peninsula tour and to purchase tickets, please visit middlepeninsula@vagardenweek.org. Tickets and information may also be found at www.vagardenweek.org.

Tickets are $40 in advance or $50 on the day of the tour. Box lunches, catered by Delta Pie, are available for $20. Orders must be placed by April 15 at www.lowerumc.org or by sending payment to Lower United Methodist Church, P.O. Box 98, Hartfield, VA 23071. Prepaid lunches may be picked up at Lower United Methodist Church from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. This is a self-driving tour with parking available at each property.

The Garden Club of the Middle Peninsula is one of 48 clubs and 3,400 volunteers operating as part of the Garden Club of Virginia, a nonprofit organization. Proceeds from Historic Garden Week fund the restoration and preservation of Virginia's historic public gardens and provide graduate level research fellowships. For those interested in visiting multiple tours and regions, a statewide pass is available that provides access to all of the properties by visiting www.vagardenweek.org.



Garden view on Sans Souci

# Riverside heritage, architecture and gardens along Crab Point

The Garden Club of the Northern Neck will host an Historic Garden Week tour from 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Wednesday, April 30.

This tour on the Crab Point Peninsula, along the Rappahannock River in Lancaster County, will offer a glimpse into the region's rich historical heritage and distinctive architecture.

Four breathtaking waterfront homes and one garden will be open for this walking/shuttle tour along Crab Point, just outside the White Stone.

Historic Garden Week is an annual fundraising event of the Garden Club of Virginia in association with affiliated clubs statewide.

**Pop Castle**

Pop Castle will offer visitors an evocative journey with glimpses into early Virginia and the present in a setting of timeless elegance. Listed on the National Register of Historic Places and as a Virginia Historic Landmark, the home sits on 12 acres along the river. Built in 1855, the Greek Revival and Italianate residence reflects the architecture of prosperous farmers of the era. The property's roots go back to a 1702 ferry stop, and its history includes a British raid during the War of 1812 and damage from Civil War cannon fire.

Today the home interior showcases an international collection of antiques and folk art. The surrounding gardens feature majestic magnolias, camellias and ancient southern red oaks. Paths winding through the property invite views of the water and numerous historic outbuildings original to the site. Vir-



Camp

ginia and Walid Ramadan, owners

**Camp**

This property offers a combination of privacy, luxury and natural splendor all within a short distance of the river. Initially built in 1985 and fully renovated in 2022, the property boasts a seamless fusion of modern design and a tranquil setting with breathtaking river views.

Approaching the residence, visitors will pass through 13 acres of pines, maples and magnolias with splashes of color provided by azaleas and viburnums. The home, cantilevered over a serene pond which runs the length of the property, makes a a true architectural statement. Surrounding the home is a stunning combination of plantings, cannas, elephant ears, daylilies, Becky daisies, roses, yucca, rosemary, allium, daffodils and tulips. Adrianne and Tripp Bugg, owners



**Crab Point**

**Le Chateau**

This French Country-style home was constructed in 1994 by the homebuilder for his French bride. The five-bedroom house also features the Rappahannock Room with a soaring mahogany cathedral ceiling. The ornate plaster moldings and four distinctive hand carved fireplaces were created by artisans brought from Europe by the original owner.

The current owners recently embarked on a renovation to bring the house interiors up to date while retaining many of its original artisanal details. The six-acre property includes 252 feet of riverfront accessed by a sycamore-lined driveway. The front yard's sweetgum, pine, holly and dogwood trees create a shady park-like setting. The waterfront side of the property features a wide lawn sloping gently to the water. Amy and John Harris, owners

**Foxwoods** (garden only)

Approaching this stunning 10-acre property, visitors will be welcomed by rows of trees, a manicured game lawn and a gatehouse surrounded by embankments of astilbe, butterfly bushes and peonies. The grounds are organized into four sections, starting with a shaded area featuring magnolias, ogon grass and daffodils. The woods to the left feature a scenic woodland trail that extends to the river.

The main house, inspired by the Georgian architecture of Williamsburg, sits among boxwoods, butterfly bushes, fig trees, climbing hydrangeas, antique Italian urns and a bronze fountain. To the right of the house, beds of camellias and daisies, boxwoods, gardenias and irises guide the way to a riverfront patio where stone steps lead to a dock. Kian Kaz and Don Brown, owners



**Foxwoods**

**Crab Point**

With stunning sunrises over Carter Creek and sunsets over the river, Crab Point perfectly captures riverfront living. Originally called Francis Point, this seven-acre property was first developed in the 1800s by a Baltimore hat maker who built a Dutch Colonial-style house as a summer retreat. The original structure, featured in the 1968 Historic Garden Tour, eventually fell into disrepair and was replaced in 2018 by a Virginia coastal-style residence that captivates boats entering the creek.

Crab Point's gardens are vibrant year-round, reaching peak beauty in spring. Towering cedars, magnolias and pecan trees provide a lush framework, while viburnum, spirea, azaleas, forsythia, camellias and roses add color to the landscape. The



**Pop Castle**



Le Chateau

pool sits amidst a backdrop of pink phlox, Olivia roses, butterfly bushes and grasses. Susan and Michael Tempest, owners

**Tour information**

Tour headquarters and check-in: Mount Vernon Baptist Church, 269 James Wharf Road, White Stone. Wristbands will be issued to all ticket holders.

Tickets: $50 each in advance at vagardenweek.org for timed entry: 10 a.m.-1 p.m. and 1 p.m.-4 p.m. $60 on tour day at headquarters and online for timed entry.

Restrooms: tour headquarters, Le Chateau and Crab Point.

Parking and shuttle information: Parking available only at headquarters. Shuttles run continuously. Tour properties require walking and have uneven ground. Walking shoes are highly recommended. Curbside drop-off and wheelchair accessibility are not available.

Lunch: restaurants in White Stone, Irvington and Kilmarnock

Refreshments: tour headquarters from 10 a.m.-3 p.m.

Special activities: Bartlett Tree Experts will answer questions and give away tree saplings at headquarters.

Places of interest: Historic Christ Church & Museum, 420 Christ Church Road, Weems. The Garden Club of Virginia participated in the renovation of the church grounds. Entrance is free with wristbands.

The Tides Inn Shoreline Restoration Project. A $3.6 million shoreline restoration project features a Shoreline Trail along Carter Creek with an oyster reef and wetland grasses which provide habitat for aquatic life.


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# Garden Club of Gloucester and Mathews to showcase exquisite shoreline homes

The beauty and history of Gloucester County abound in its rivers and exquisite shoreline homes. Historic Garden Week in Gloucester, presented by the Garden Club of Gloucester and Mathews, includes access to three amazing waterfront properties and the Fine Arts Museum of Gloucester.

Visitors will enjoy the warmth and tradition of two homes along the North River, Exchange (early 1700s) and Blythelea, as they walk between the grounds, taking in the views and gardens. A third home, Holly Knoll, was built in grand Georgian style on the York River for the second president of the Tuskegee Institute, Dr. Robert Moton. It was designed as a place to gather, mentor, and support national civil rights leaders.

**Holly Knoll**

3201 Leadership Drive, Gloucester

Steeped in history, Holly Knoll was built in 1935 as the retirement home of Dr. Robert Russa Moton, the second president of the Tuskegee Institute, as a place where Dr. Moton could meet with, mentor, and support leaders as they worked toward racial equality. Following Dr. Moton's death in 1940, his son-in-law, Dr. Frederick Douglass Patterson, also a former Tuskegee Institute president, inherited the property. He created the Moton Conference Center at Holly Knoll to continue the work of Dr. Moton, welcoming leaders including Martin Luther King Jr. and John L. Lewis as they collectively fostered strategies for the burgeoning civil rights movement.

In 2005, Kay Coles James purchased Holly Knoll and undertook a full renovation of the house, furnishing it with period-appropriate pieces while maintaining warmth and comfort. The gracious rooms create a peaceful quality throughout, as intended to allow an environment for people to come together to share their hopes, vision, and plans for working together to resolve differences. It has National Historic Landmark designation and now operates as the Gloucester Institute, carrying on Dr. Moton's lifelong commitment to resolve issues in education and civil rights by training tomorrow's African-American leaders.

The Gloucester Institute, Owner

**Blythelea**

Hickston Lane, Gloucester

Blythelea, meaning pleasant meadow, sits on a peninsula between Toddsbury



Exchange barn and flowers



Blythelea house


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and Elmington creeks, facing the North River. During the 17th and 18th centuries the property was part of Toddsbury and then Exchange. The home was constructed in 1947, but earlier structures on the property included the farrier shop for Exchange and, according to local lore, a small house called "Little Exchange." The spacious entry hall wallpapered in blue Chinoiserie sets the tone for the interior with its mix of traditional and transitional styles. Arched openings lead to either end of the house and straight ahead into the living room with the sunroom beyond.

Mature trees, landscaping and lawns surround the home, with perennials and bulbs bringing color to the gardens including spring blooming azaleas, camellias, and several varieties of peonies. At one time, the property was part of a daffodil farm. Many of those daffodils, some of which are cultivars registered in the 1900s, remain on the property, transplanted into the gardens that surround the home today. Open for the first time.

Katherine and Ronald Haggerty, Owners



Holly Knoll house

**Exchange**

Hickston Lane, Gloucester

Exchange has been lived in and loved by more than 20 families since it was built in the early 18th century. Situated perpendicularly to the river, the house is two and half stories constructed of brick overlaid with cypress beaded boarding, brick ends in Flemish bond, and dormers. On entering, visitors will find themselves in the two-story foyer where the staircase, which is original to the house, leads to the second floor. The ceilings are eleven feet high, and the rooms beautifully proportioned. The woodwork includes crown molding and chair rails. The owners' collection of inherited and collected furniture complements the original style of the home.

Outside, the courtyard area includes a charming garçonnière and a smokehouse, both among the earliest structures on the property and connected by a carport in the 1941. Mature boxwoods and trees are the backdrop for the gardens including a cottage garden containing historic daffodils, daylilies, and a variety of historic perennials. A shade garden under an enormous walnut tree by the kitchen wing includes hellebores and another garden includes over 400 varieties of daffodils. From the gardens to the river bank, there are thousands of daffodils on the property.

Genie and Chris Applegate, Owners



Exchange house

**Fine Arts Museum of Gloucester**

6894 Main Street, Gloucester

The Fine Arts Museum of Gloucester's newest exhibit, "Everyday People: Through Freedom's Lens, An Exhibition of Rare Photographs by Freedom B. Goode," is presented by the Cook Foundation in collaboration with the Fairfield Foundation. It features the photographs of Freedom B. Goode, a local leader and documentarian, and explores the history of civil rights in rural Virginia.

**Tour Information**

Tickets are $50 in advance and $60 day of tour and are available at vagardenweek.org. For information, email gloucester@vagardenweek.org.

**Special Activities**

Master Gardener tours in the gardens at Brent and Becky's, 7900 Daffodil Lane, Gloucester 804-693-3996 or www.brentandbeckysbulbs.com.

Dan Lonergan, arborist from Bartlett Tree Experts, will be at Exchange from 10:30 a.m. to 2 p.m. Free tree seedlings will be distributed.

Refreshments are complimentary and served at Holly Knoll from 2 to 5 p.m.


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# Starting a new dock project?

## Check with officials fir

*by Larry Chowning*

The process of having a dock built on a Virginia state-owned river or creek bottom requires either a permit or a "no permit needed" letter from the Virginia Marine Resources Commission (VMRC).

Also, if a waterfront landowner plans to build a pier, dock, bulkhead, dredge a channel or install a mooring buoy on a state-owned bottom, a completed Joint Permit Application (JPA) must be filled out

The JPA can be obtained from the local wetlands board office in the county of application, VMRC or the Norfolk District Corps of Engineers website.

The application has to be submitted to VMRC and it takes one to three months to get a permit. A non-refundable processing fee of $100 is required for each permit. County wetlands board approval and a county building permit are required for the construction/alteration of any residential dock, pier or gangway.

Lance Shores of Shores & Shores Marine Construction in Urbanna said that 90% of the piers he builds are VMRC "no permit needed", which is a basic dock that has no intrusions on adjoining waterfront property owners. "VMRC likes happy neighbors," he said.

"You have to go through the initial application process and have



**This new dock was recently built on Urbanna Creek by Shores & Shores Marine Construction of Urbanna.** Photo by Larry Chowning



**The Virginia Marine Resources Commission requires that new boathouses be open on the sides to keep wind from beating up against the sides and to create less view obstruction.**



**This dock was recently built near Remlik on Rappahannock River. Most docks only require a "no permit needed" letter from Virginia Marine Resources Commission (VMRC), but some require extensive permitting and it takes up to a month to three months to get a permit to build a dock.**

that letter in hand to get a building permit from the county to start building a dock, boathouse, riprap, etc.," he said. "Technically you need a permit to replace a broken piling on an older dock. I am not talking about replacing a few boards that have come off on an older dock but when a piling is pumped down a permit is required."

Shores said that some counties, particularly Lancaster, require that the "contractor" bring the proof of permit before issuing a building permit to the landowner. The county wants to make sure that the contractor is licensed in that county and has insurance and everything professionally needed to do the work. "This is to protect the landowner and the county wants to know who is doing the work," he said.

Some counties have different requirements on boathouses, said Shores. "Lancaster County will not allow a boathouse to be built anywhere, but Middlesex County does allow new boathouses. VMRC requirements allow boathouses but without closed in sides," said Shores. "This is to protect the structure so storm winds can blow through it rather than beat up against the sides." He also said that closed-sided boathouses can obstruct the view of neighboring properties.

Shores also said that there are county VMRC agents who can help and guide waterfront landowners through the process.

For information on the commission's Habit Management Division visit Habitat Management Permits and Applications Page at https://bit.ly/4kJwn3G.

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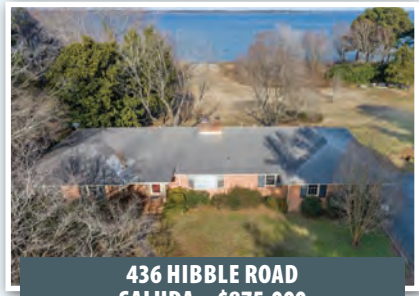
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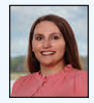
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