

naturalLiving

Fall/Winter

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Making it Better

Tips for renovating and improving your existing home.

Plus

REDUCING ENERGY COSTS WHILE SAVING MOTHER EARTH

CREATING AN OUTDOOR ROOM ON A BUDGET



FEATURE

10 Creating An Outdoor Room on a Budget

Want to expand your living space? An outdoor room may be just what you need! Here's how to transform your backyard space without breaking your budget.

IN EVERY ISSUE

naturalChoices

04 Heating Things Up

An energy efficient water heater can add more hot water and reduce energy use.

08 Renovating on a Budget

Discover inexpensive ways to spruce up your home.

09 Pipe Dream

With CSST, you can get gas in any room in your home.

naturallyBetter

14 Reducing Energy Costs While Saving Mother Earth

Learn how small changes can make a big difference.

16 Warmth and Ambiance

Want to heat your space? Take a look at alternatives to wood-burning fireplaces.

naturallyGood

18 Now You're Cooking!

Want a faster, more convenient way to cook? Try natural gas!

19 Recipes

Whether you want a juicy burger grilled outside, or a quick and easy indoor meal, we have it for you.



16

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THIS CHANGES EVERYTHING



A POWERFUL NEW FORCE
IN TANKLESS WATER HEATING



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www.hotwater.com

Heating Things Up

An energy efficient water heater can add more hot water and reduce energy use.

By Kristy Alpert

Most of us only think about our water heater when the hot water runs out or when it breaks down. Then we're desperate to find something and get it installed fast. Many times consumers settle for the quick fix instead of finding the right water heater that meets their budget, space requirements, hot water needs and uses the least amount of energy possible.

There is usually time to review your hot water needs and available models of water heaters if you are remodeling your home's bathroom or laundry room or adding new water-intensive appliances. But if that's not the case, you should start thinking about upgrading your water heater if it is more than 10 years old – before your unit fails and you're left without hot water and in a bind.



efficient appliances, consumers will save money on energy bills without breaking the bank trying to “go green.”

Parker added that the second reason consumers should consider installing a new water heater is performance.

“When adding a new bathroom, a high performance shower, a garden tub or any appliance that uses hot water, it is always a good idea to re-assess the home’s hot water needs. More often than not, a larger capacity water heater is recommended.”

REPLACEMENT CONSIDERATIONS

The type of fuel to operate a water heater should be one of the first items to investigate. If you have natural gas in your home, you have easy access to the most common fuel type for water heaters. This is because natural gas water heaters use less energy, provide hot water faster and are environmentally friendly. If your gas water heater fails

unexpectedly, you can replace it with a new, similar style gas unit and count on using less energy and producing less greenhouse gases.

Many existing water heaters are vented through the roof to the outside — this is called atmospheric or conventional venting. Replacing an older atmospheric unit with a newer, more efficient unit is typically an easier installation. And now there are reasonably priced, highly-efficient atmospheric water heaters that are ENERGY STAR® rated and have a plug and play feature — like A. O. Smith’s Effex® gas water heater.

The A. O. Smith Effex Energy Star gas water heater.



TANK OR NO TANK

While the standard storage-type (or tank) water heater keeps water hot all-day-every-day, a tankless water heater does just the opposite by only providing heated water as you use it. This “on-demand” heating is one of the most efficient options available. The heater is triggered by

the flow of water, so when you turn on a faucet the water is heated as it passes through the unit, giving you on-demand hot water with very little consumed energy.

“Tankless water heaters are about the size of a medicine cabinet, so they provide space savings as well as energy savings, and can be installed in a number of locations inside or outside the home,” says Mike Siuda, director of tankless sales and marketing at Rheem. “Tankless technology is relatively new in North America, but tankless water heaters have been used in Europe and Asia for 50 plus years.”

IMPORTANCE OF UPDATING

In the last few years, technology improvements have dramatically increased energy savings and improved performance. Mike Parker, vice president for marketing and strategic planning for A.O. Smith, claims there are several reasons why it’s in the consumer’s best interest to plan ahead for a new water heater purchase.

“The first reason is energy savings, which saves money on monthly utility bills,” says Parker. “There is a wide range of high efficiency water heating options. For gas water heaters, there are both tankless and storage water heaters that meet Energy Star® qualifications.”

Both the U.S. and Canada have made strides to increase the level of energy efficiency of water heaters. In the U.S., higher efficiency ratings will go into effect in 2015. Although the new standards will raise the cost of a water heater by about \$120, consumers will save over \$143 throughout the lifetime of the appliance according to the Energy Department, who estimates that carbon dioxide emissions will decrease by 164 million metric tons over 30 years. Canada’s first set of energy efficiency requirements for water heaters goes into effect in January 2012. With both countries encouraging these



Although tankless may seem like the way to go, it's best for consumers to do a little research to find the best option for their situation. Siuda warns consumers that although tankless may fit well in a room, "retrofit installation is generally more expensive versus a traditional tank-type water heater and special venting may be required."

When problems like installation complications arise, tank heaters could be the best bet. "There are a lot of new improvements to tanks," says Jason Fifer, product manager for Bradford White. "The industry is moving toward higher efficiency. Ninety percent of water heaters in the market are tank-type units. They are easy to install, low maintenance and they are readily available."

WHY GAS?

If consumers decide to purchase a water heater with a tank or a tankless unit, Parker recommends a natural gas water heater when possible for these reasons:

Faster recovery: "Gas heats water more quickly than electricity which means the storage tank can be smaller and the hot water 'recovers' more quickly."

Lower operating cost: "In most markets in the United States and Canada, heating your water with natural gas is considerably less expensive than doing so with electricity," he adds.

"There is no question that natural gas has always been an effective way to heat water for the home. And now, with so many new gas products with improved energy efficiency, natural gas makes more sense than ever as a water heating choice." ■

	TYPE WATER HEATER	EFFICIENCY FACTOR	AVERAGE INSTALLED COST	ANNUAL OPERATING COST	CO2 (POUNDS/YEAR)
NATURAL GAS	Standard Gas Tank	0.60	\$850	\$280	3,145
	Medium Efficiency Gas Tank	0.67	\$1,025	\$256	2,917
	High Efficiency Gas Tank (Condensing)	0.86	\$2,000	\$207	2,331
	Standard Gas Tankless	0.80	\$1,800	\$221	2,495
	High Efficiency Gas Tankless (Condensing)	0.93	\$2,500	\$192	2,222
SOLAR	Solar with Gas back up	1.20	\$8,000	\$146	1,671
	Solar with Electric back up	2.50	\$6,500	\$202	3,459
ELECTRIC	Standard Electric Tank	0.90	\$750	\$561	6,940
	High Efficiency Electric Tank	0.95	\$820	\$532	6,574
	Electric Heat Pump Water Heater	2.00	\$1,660	\$252	3,122

The table above is for comparison purposes only and uses average pricing information from multiple sources to provide a current comparison between various residential water heating options. Regional energy pricing and hot usage patterns may impact results for your specific home. Some Energy Factors and Average Installed Costs are from ACEEE and others come directly from manufacturers of these products. Energy usage is derived from DOE test procedures that use the following formulas: (Gas Therms/Yr = 41,045 BTU/EF X

365/100,000, and Electric KWH/Yr = 12.03/EF X 365.) Note that parasitic electric usage was calculated and added in for all natural gas models above except the atmospheric model that does not require electric. Operating costs use the current U.S. EIA Short-Term Energy Outlook rates for 2010 of \$11.59/MCF Residential Natural Gas and \$.1126/KWH Residential Electric. Natural Gas heating value is 1,035 BTU/CF. Pounds of CO2 are calculated using E-Grid 2005 data for all U.S. sources.

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Renovating on a Budget

Discover inexpensive ways to spruce up your home.

By Kristy Alpert

Living on a budget doesn't need to mean dwelling with the design doldrums. Simple touches can drastically change the look of your home without the price tag of a complete renovation. Check out these five inexpensive tips that will take your home from "bored" to "restored."

1. PAINT

Not only does a fresh coat of paint freshen up a room, it's one of the most valuable things you can do for the biggest impact. For less than \$50, you can change the entire look of a room. Try experimenting with designs and two-color schemes to add a modern touch, or go out on a limb and add some artistic stenciling to your walls—like a tree branch winding its way down a wall. For an even greater budget-conscious choice, coat your walls with a ceramic paint that insulates your room to save money on energy bills.

2. MODIFY

Renovating a room on a budget doesn't necessarily mean repurposing old items or buying new ones; it could simply be a change in atmosphere. Dimmers applied to your light fixtures and scented candles can set the scene for any situation.

3. ACCENTUATE

When it comes to budgeting, it's not always about the coin, sometimes it's a matter of budgeting time. There's no better way to make a big statement in a short amount of time than adding an accent wall. Pick a wall with a natural point of focus—like the wall behind a headboard, the fireplace wall, or simply the wall that most needs a makeover. While paint can do the trick, hanging a contrasting wallpaper will give the room a new style all its own. For a really quick fix, hang picture frames of different sizes and styles—some with pictures, some empty—or line the wall with straight-lined shelves.

4. DE-CLUTTER

"You'll feel better when your room's clean." Remember those motherly words? Well, there may be some truth to them after all. Many psychologists believe the environment in which a person lives reflects his or her inner environment. So getting rid of clutter or rearranging the furniture could give you more than a renewed room; it could give you a fresh outlook on life.

5. ACCESSORIZE

Quite possibly the simplest way to add new life to a room is to add accessories like colorful window treatments and chic lighting. Most design experts recommend at least three lamps to provide enough light in a room. Already have the lamps? Buy some bargain books to put below the lamps to give them lift and add a scholarly feel to the room.

Throw pillows, arrangements of candles and rugs all add a little color to a room, but for a real breath of fresh air, try bringing a little nature indoors. Live trees or herb gardens not only add a splash of natural color, but they also provide oxygen, clean the air. ■

Pipe Dream

Get gas anywhere in your home with CSST.

By Kristy Alpert

Homeowners who are thinking of building a new home — or remodeling their existing one — should educate themselves about CSST (corrugated stainless steel tubing). Although it has been around for more than 20 years and has already been installed in countless homes and office buildings, it has often been overlooked by contractors and homeowners.

CSST is a flexible tubing with a PVC coating that is used to pipe natural gas. Because it is produced in coils, it installs with the same ease as electrical wiring, and significantly reduces the installation time by removing the need to cut and piece together black iron pipes.

This simplified installation process streamlines the ability to install and relocate gas appliances easily. This could be in a new home addition or remodeled room that did not previously have a gas appliance. CSST is also a great choice for outdoor rooms that need gas for lighting, a patio heater or firepit.

A CUT ABOVE

If building expert Tim Carter would have heard someone 20 years ago say one day contractors could install gas pipes like electrical wires, he would have thought they were crazy. But now the master carpenter

and master plumber stands on his platform at AsktheBuilder.com, proclaiming the benefits of CSST.

“The CSST tubing can be installed faster and in tighter places,” says Carter, former custom builder and remodeler for 20 years and founder of AsktheBuilder.com.

“The alternatives to CSST are traditional black iron pipe and soft copper tubing, but CSST can be installed much faster than either of the two alternatives. CSST is easy to cut, bends readily and requires no threading. Different systems require different fittings, but most are simple to work with.”

Although CSST has been around for more than two decades, some contractors and installers continue to use older piping methods simply because they are unaware of the benefits CSST offers compared to the products they have used for years. Some of the advantages for homeowners include:

- Flexibility to get gas anywhere in the home at a relatively inexpensive price.
- Reduced installation time and labor means lower installation costs.
- The work can be done quickly, which reduces interruptions in their daily lives.
- It can be installed even in tight spaces.

“As installers become more aware of CSST, they’ll see how easy it is to use,” adds Carter. “They’ll begin to specify it on jobs. CSST is a revolutionary product and will be widely recognized as such within a matter of years.” ■



Photo courtesy of Omega Flex



Take it OUTSIDE

Creating the perfect outdoor room
doesn't have to cost a fortune.

By Cindy Baldhoff

For at least the past decade, Americans and Canadians have become masters at utilizing their outdoor space. The backyard has become an oasis, paving the way for outdoor living, cooking and dining areas. Regardless of how your family spends its time, there are ways to create an outdoor room that reflects those interests and provides an enjoyable extension to your home.

One of the best things about today's outdoor rooms is that they don't have to break the bank. In fact, it's possible to create an outdoor room on a budget of \$1,000 or less. By choosing features that suit both your needs and your budget, it's fairly easy to make a room that works for you.

GIMME A 'D'

Planning your outdoor room is the first step in ensuring that you get an end result that makes you happy and fits your lifestyle. The best way to launch this process is through the three Ds: Define, Design and Decorate.

First, define the end result. Make sure you're specific – is this space going to be used for entertaining, or is it going to be a quiet oasis? Will it be used more during warmer months or do you want

something designed for the cooler months? Write down what you want your space to become, because this will help keep you focused once you start shopping.

Next, design the mood you want to convey. Is it going to be fun and festive, or are you looking for a more Zen-like environment? The mood will help you decide how you furnish and decorate the space.

The final step, of course, is decorating. Your outdoor room is really just an extension of your inside space, and you can carry a theme from within the home to the outdoors, or you can use this as a light-hearted departure from a more traditional decorating plan. There's no "right" or "wrong" way to decorate it – whatever captures the mood and design you want is what is right for you.

Give yourself time to complete the project – this isn't something you have to do in a single day. Once you know what you want to do with the space, create a plan for finishing it in stages so that you aren't rushed. Also, as you plan, keep the size of the backyard in mind. Trying to cram too many features into a small space will make it seem crowded – which is counterintuitive to what you want from your outdoor room!

Now that you're ready to tackle this project, here are a few items that can make your outdoor room come to life.





HAVE A SEAT

Outdoor furniture is a major consideration of the outdoor room, and the fun part is, you can choose something that creates the exact mood you're looking for! Today's outdoor furniture has come a long way from folding aluminum chairs. Your choices include everything from recycled plastic furniture to wicker, wood, cast aluminum and more.

Technology has produced materials that allow for greater outdoor durability while at the same time maintaining indoor style. Outdoor fabrics are now soft and come in a wide variety of colors, patterns and textures with the durability to repel the destructive forces of nature. Resin wicker gives the timeless look of natural wicker while resisting rot and UV damage. Detailed powder-coating processes give the look of wood with the durability of aluminum. With all of these materials available, there is something for every taste and budget.

Experts advise that you get the most comfortable furniture you can afford. Get something you'll be happy with – but don't break your budget. There are plenty of options out there, so shop around!

NOW YOU'RE COOKING

One of the essential elements of an outdoor room is the grill. In many cases, the outdoor room has become an "open kitchen," where guests can gather while the food is being prepared. You can easily adjust the temperature, and there's no stacking of coals or struggling to light a charcoal grill and you never have to worry about running out of propane or replacing the tank of a propane grill. And most chefs love the fact that clean-up is easy – just turn off the grill and clean the grate with a brush.

Today there are a wide range of natural gas grills and grill islands available to suit just about every budget, décor and size. They can be as simple or as complex as you need them to be.



MAKE A SPLASH

A water feature is a great way to create a certain mood in your outdoor space. Want something quiet and Zen-like? Try a quiet fountain. Or maybe you want something that takes you back to nature – like a simple birdbath with running water.

Like most components of today's outdoor rooms, water features come in a tremendous range of prices and offerings. You can build a koi pond in a weekend, or install a fountain in a day. Running water is a great way to drown out noises from neighbors or traffic, and it also has a soothing, relaxing effect.

If you already have a pool or spa, a great way to extend the use of it is with a natural gas pool or spa heater. (A natural gas heater is typically less expensive than an electric heater, and it heats the water much faster than an electric heater.) They can be installed easily and ensure that you can keep your pool or spa at a pleasant temperature – regardless of what the thermometer outside says!



SOME LIKE IT HOT

In cooler climates, some sort of heater is essential to extending the use of your outdoor room. A natural gas fire pit or patio heater is often the most inexpensive route. Fire pits, and patio heaters can be portable or permanently installed. And they typically provide a 12- to 20-foot circle of heat. Today's fire pits are very stylish and can become the focal point of the room. They come in various sizes, styles and shapes - some are even built into tables.

Modern natural gas firepits provide all the advantages of a traditional fire pit – but without the messy cleanup after each use. They're also safer, because there's no danger of embers falling onto your patio or deck. And, since some jurisdictions have restrictions on wood-burning appliances, natural gas is the perfect answer.

The same goes for natural gas-fueled outdoor fireplaces, which are a slightly higher priced option for heating up the great outdoors. The fireplace can help warm your outdoor space while at the same time providing an attractive focal point for your backyard gatherings.

SHOWCASE YOUR OUTDOOR ROOM



Once you've built your outdoor room, you might find yourself looking for ways to add to its appeal. Here are some suggestions

Remember to incorporate a shaded area - like a patio umbrella or pergola. Umbrellas come in a wide variety of designs and colors. It's easy to find a relatively inexpensive umbrella that adds great color and shade to a space. Pergolas are a more permanent source of shade. Pergolas are wooden structures that provide shade, but still allow the open-air feeling of an outdoor room. Best of all, unlike a canopy or umbrella, you can grill underneath a pergola without trapping heat and smoke.

Look at your lighting. In the great outdoors, lighting serves a dual purpose – it's not just functional, but it also creates the ambiance for outdoor gatherings. Look at such options as natural gas tiki torches and natural gas lights as ways to not only brighten up your nights, but set the mood as well. Natural gas lights can be mounted on walls, hung from a ceiling or mounted on a post in your yard. (Remember to put lighting along pathways to ensure safety.)



Purchase multi-functional furniture. Make the most of your space by selecting items that can pull "double duty," such as nesting side tables or storage benches that double as seating.

FOUR TRENDS IN OUTDOOR ROOMS

▪ **Use of authentic/natural furnishing and accessories.** Patio sets now have the "look" of real wood, but without the maintenance. This trend is also seen in light weight planters that look like aged metal, terracotta or river rock.

▪ **Increase in patio container gardens.** This is a great way to grow fresh and safe (organic) herbs and vegetables in a limited space. Instead of committing to an entire garden, a few planters or pots can be coordinated with patio furnishings.

▪ **Move to more color.** Bright accents such as planters, patio rugs and outdoor pillows provide a colorful splash year-round – and don't forget the flowering plants!

▪ **Year-round use.** By using natural gas to heat an outdoor space, the life of an outdoor room has been extended. Natural gas heat can help take the chill off when temperatures drop, giving you more time to enjoy your outdoor space!



The Home Front

Reducing energy while saving Mother Earth begins at home.

By Molly Petrilla

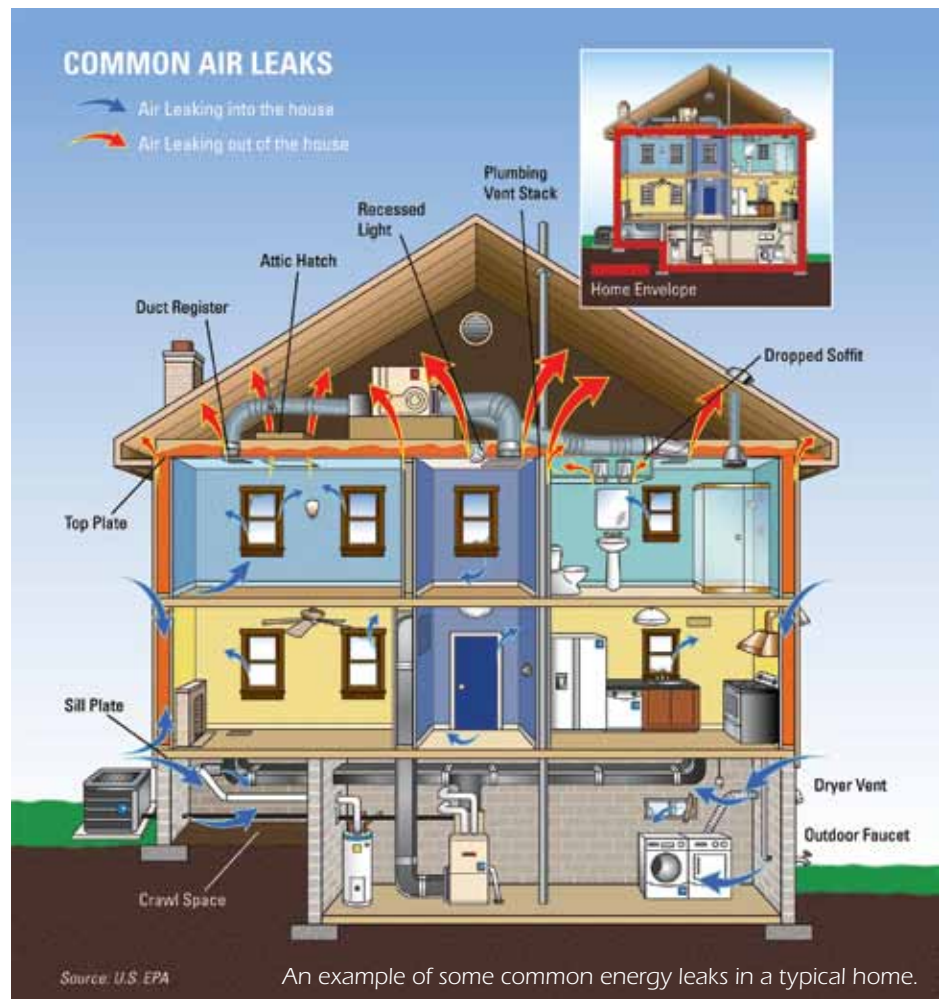
The average North American household spends about \$2,200 on energy bills every year. Maybe you've already tried to cut down on those costs, but with limited success. Maybe you've been meaning to, but aren't sure where to start. Maybe you just don't feel like putting in the time and effort. Sound familiar?

Now is the time to make a change—not just for your budget, but also for the planet. According to Maria T. Vargas, brand manager of Energy Star®, the average home emits twice as many greenhouse gases as a car. Carbon emissions comprise nearly three quarters of those gases, and are considered the major cause of climate change. With carbon emissions expected to keep growing for the next 20 years, reducing your energy usage now is a crucial step to help combat further environmental damage.

Through greater energy efficiency—starting with the tips below—you can save about 30 percent on energy costs and also help preserve the earth. How's that for a win-win?

Tighten things up. Slashing your energy bill doesn't have to mean buying pricey, high-tech products. In fact, Vargas says one of the most effective ways to save energy is also the least expensive: sealing up your home. "If you add up all the leaks in the typical home in this country," she adds, "it's the equivalent of leaving a window open all year round." Calk and weather stripping are two simple, cheap fixes for drafty windows or doors; for less obvious leaks, consider calling in a professional energy rater, who will use diagnostic tools to figure out where you're losing hot (or cool) air.

Unplug everything you can. According to Energy Star®, consumer electronics account for about 15 percent of household electricity use. Computers, televisions and even kitchen appliances often leach power even when they're turned off, as do unused (but not unplugged) cell phone or iPod chargers. Unplug chargers or power adapters when you're not using them, and consider investing in a power strip with a central "off" switch for your electronics.



An example of some common energy leaks in a typical home.

Invest in a programmable thermostat. If you're going to spend money on an energy-saving device, this would be the one to buy. Vargas says you can save about \$180 on heating and cooling costs annually with proper use of a programmable thermostat. "It's a great technology that allows you to be as energy efficient as you can. Best of all," she adds, "you can just 'set it and forget it.'"



Be a strategic launderer. Exclusively using hot water to wash your clothes? Take your hand off the washer knob immediately and listen up: heating that wash water accounts for about 90 percent of the energy your washing machine uses, according to Energy Star®. In nearly every case, cold water will work just as well, and there are even special detergents made for it.



Look for the Energy Star® label. EnergyStar® has nothing to do with marketing gimmicks or promoting certain brands over others, Vargas says. Rather, it's a program of the Environmental Protection Agency that describes its purpose as "helping businesses and individuals protect the environment through superior

energy efficiency." Vargas says the EnergyStar label can now be found on more than 60 pieces of equipment for the home, and urges anyone in the market for new heating, cooling or other electronic equipment to look for the EnergyStar label. It can often mean big savings as compared to older, less efficient products. ■



TIPS TO REDUCE YOUR IMPACT ON THE ENVIRONMENT

At home:

- Recycle
- Turn off unused lights and appliances
- Fix dripping taps
- Install two-button double-flush toilets
- Use cold water for washing clothes
- Switch to compact fluorescent lightbulbs

Outside:

- Plant deciduous trees that shade the house in the Summer and allow the sun to hit the home in the winter when the leaves drop.
- Collect rainwater to water your garden
- Use natural products instead of chemical pesticides
- Avoid peat, which comes from ancient bog land; make your own compost instead
- Ditch electrical equipment like leaf blowers and reach for a rake instead

Source: World Wildlife Fund

naturallyBetter



The Ravenna by Lennox Hearth Products is a gas fireplace insert that simulates the look and feel of a real fire – without the messy cleanup.

That's Hot!

Warm up to alternative ways to heat your home.

By Cindy Baldhoff

As temperatures plummet and energy costs rise, most homeowners are looking for ways to heat their home without breaking the bank. Looking for alternatives to turning up the thermostat, consumers are turning to options that can heat a specific space – instead of the entire house.

Fireplaces have long been a popular way to heat a single room, but many people find that wood-burning units are messy, high maintenance and are a source of heat loss, as they literally suck the hot air right out of the room when not in use. However, that doesn't mean that the fireplace is completely obsolete – or useless.

IT'S WHAT'S INSIDE THAT COUNTS

For those who already have a wood-burning fireplace, but want to make it more efficient, a gas fireplace insert could be the perfect fit. As the name implies, a gas fireplace insert is placed inside an existing fireplace, creating a gas-burning fireplace. The inserts come with either a thermostat or a remote control, allowing users to control such things as flame height and blower speed, and there are a growing number of features and options to fit both your budget and your décor. Inserts can cost as little as just a few hundred dollars or, more elaborate models, can cost up to \$2,000.

In addition to looking good and providing heat at the touch of a button, gas fireplace inserts can provide considerable savings on your energy bill. Gas fireplaces are extremely economical, and provide an energy-efficient way to heat a room.

“A modern gas insert can turn a drafty old fireplace into an efficient zone heater,” says Robert Dischner, director of marketing for Lennox Hearth Products. “Why not heat up that family or living room a little extra if the family is gathered to watch TV? You can heat up the space you use most a little higher than the rest of the home.”

Manufactured gas log sets provide another way to eliminate the hassles and mess of a wood-burning fireplace. The sets can be installed into existing fireplaces – all you need is a gas line – and they come in styles that emulate actual wood, such as oak, birch, pine and walnut. When burned, they simulate the look of a real wood-burning fire, including dancing flames and glowing embers.

“And there are no ashes to clean out and haul away,” Dischner says.

Homes that are in need of additional heat – but don't have a fireplace – can install a gas fireplace. Unlike fireplaces that are built into the home, modern fireplaces are relatively inexpensive to install and can be safely and easily installed in virtually any room.

HEAT WHERE YOU NEED IT, WHEN YOU WANT IT

Another way to get the benefits of a fireplace is with a freestanding stove. Freestanding stoves offer flexibility because they can be installed in virtually any room where extra heat is needed.

Vermont Castings, one of North America's largest suppliers of gas products, says that a stove offers more flexibility in venting options; it can be vented either through an existing chimney or through any outside wall; some models can be installed without vents. (It's important to note, however, that installation of these units will be dictated by the codes of that particular area, so always check codes before purchasing a unit.)

These gas stoves burn clean energy and provide an efficient way to heat large spaces. In addition to being practical, the steel or cast iron stoves also come in a variety of styles and colors, which means they can be selected to complement the look and feel of whatever room it is needed in.



Freestanding stoves provide a clean and efficient way to heat spaces, and can be installed in virtually any room in the house.

SMALL-SCALE SOLUTIONS

Smaller spaces that need a heating boost can find a solution with gas space heaters. Both vented and vent-free space heaters are available, and they can warm up to 1,000 square feet. Because they don't require venting, the homeowner doesn't lose any heat – giving it a 99 percent efficiency rating.

Remember, however, to check local codes before installing a vent-free heater as they are not approved in certain jurisdictions and are not allowed in Canada. ■



Now You're Cooking!

Want a faster, more convenient way to cook? Try natural gas!



In today's increasingly busy world, we're all looking for ways to save time but increase our quality of living. Whether you're undertaking a big remodeling project, working long hours or just are busy with life in general, cooking with natural gas is one way to can save time in the kitchen but still provide your family with great tasting, quality meals.

Natural gas offers a number of advantages for cooking. Since gas stoves heat food much more quickly than electric stoves, it's an automatic time-saver when it comes to whipping up a home-cooked meal. Because they can provide extremely low simmer temperatures, they cook food more precisely and they offer a direct, variable flame – which is a major consideration for anyone who takes their cooking seriously! In fact, most professional chefs prefer cooking on gas flame because of the many advantages it offers.

Today's appliances have made it affordable for even novice cooks to get many of the same advantages enjoyed in professional kitchens. Modern ranges have electronic ignition and many models include a self-cleaning feature. The advantages of cooking with natural gas can go beyond saving time – it can save money on energy bills too.

COOLING IT

During summer months, firing up the oven – and heating up the kitchen – is the last thing that most people want to do! Once again, natural gas can help.

An outdoor natural gas grill is one of the most popular additions that most people make to their home. Grilling outdoors is great for entertaining anytime any time of the year. With features like built-in lights, rotisseries and sideburners, today's natural gas grill can do nearly as much as your indoor range. Their instant-on capability lets you cook quickly without charcoal, kindling or firestarters, and their wide range of temperatures and options make them a preferred choice over propane, charcoal, wood or electric.

Believe it or not, you can cook a pizza on a grill. Look for pizza bricks or trays that let you make the perfect pizza on the grill, or invest in a separate natural gas pizza oven as part of your outdoor setup.

Regardless of why you need it or when you use it, natural gas remains the perfect choice for time-pressed gourmets – as well as those who just want to whip up a simple meal. ■

Make fast, tasty meals - inside or out!



Bacon Wrapped Burger

Prep Time: 15 minutes Cook Time: 10 minutes
Ready In: 25 minutes Six servings

INGREDIENTS

1/2 cup shredded Cheddar cheese
1 tablespoon grated Parmesan cheese
1 small onion, chopped
1 egg
1 tablespoon ketchup
1 tablespoon Worcestershire sauce
1/2 teaspoon salt
1/8 teaspoon pepper
1 pound ground beef
6 slices bacon
6 hamburger buns, split

PREPARATION

- 1 Preheat grill for high heat.
- 2 In a large bowl, mix together the Cheddar cheese, Parmesan cheese, onion, egg, ketchup, Worcestershire sauce, salt and pepper. Crumble in the ground beef, and mix together by hand. Form into six patties, and wrap a slice of bacon around each one. Secure bacon with toothpicks.
- 3 Place patties on the grill, and cook for five minutes per side, or until well done. Remove toothpicks before serving on hamburger buns.



Baked Chicken

Prep Time: 10 minutes Cook Time: 20 minutes
Ready In: 50 minutes Original recipe yield: four servings

INGREDIENTS

1 cup sour cream
2 tablespoons Dijon mustard
2 cloves garlic, minced
1/2 teaspoon black pepper
4 skinless, boneless chicken breast halves
1 cup crushed cornflakes cereal
1 (1 ounce) package dry onion soup mix
3 tablespoons butter, melted

PREPARATION

- 1 Preheat oven to 400 degrees F (200 degrees C). Butter a baking dish.
- 2 Whisk the sour cream, Dijon mustard, garlic, and pepper together in a large bowl. Add the chicken and turn to assure the breasts are well coated. Refrigerate 20 to 30 minutes.

- 3 Combine the cornflakes and onion soup mix in a bowl. Gently press the chicken breasts into the cornflakes mixture to coat and shake off any excess. Place the coated breasts in the buttered baking dish. Drizzle the melted butter over the chicken.
- 4 Bake in the preheated oven until the chicken is golden brown, 20 to 25 minutes. An instant-read thermometer inserted into the center should read at least 165 degrees F (74 degrees C).

allrecipes.com

Recipe provided by Allrecipes, the world's largest social networking site for food enthusiasts.

BAXI LUNA



Even in the harshest of Alaskan winters

If a high efficiency, gas-fired boiler can heat a home reliably, even in the harshest of Alaskan winters, it can heat a home anywhere.



Over the past decade, a Baxi-certified contractor has redefined the meaning of "home comfort" for Alaskan residents. Up to 98% efficient, Baxi Luna is no bigger than a kitchen cabinet, but it packs a powerful energy efficiency punch. As Baxi homeowners in Alaska will tell you, their Baxi wallhung boiler cuts annual fuel consumption by up to 50% over previous heating systems, while freeing up valuable living space in new or retrofit projects.

- ◆ Ideal for replacing an aging and inefficient boiler, Baxi Luna supplies even and ultra-comfortable hydronic heating to in-floor radiant, towel racks and snow melt systems, as well as forced air with hydronic air handler applications.
- ◆ The Baxi Luna HT 380 model is a fully modulating and high efficiency condensing wallhung boiler that can be used for a combination of heating and domestic hot water. This unit can heat a home up to 4,000 square feet, and it also acts like a tankless water heater for an endless supply of hot water at a rate of 3.9 gallons per minute with a temperature rise of 80 degrees F over the inlet water temperature. You will never again run out of hot water during morning showers.
- ◆ Baxi Luna is Energy Star approved and CSA certified. Sleep well, night after night and year after year, with reliable performance and built-in safety features (from no open flame, automatic self-diagnostics and frost protection) of this whisper quiet and compact all-in-one space heater/water heater from Baxi.
- ◆ Visit www.wallhungboilers.com and see for yourself how good things do come in small packages when it comes to home comfort, wherever you live!

Baxi Luna wallhung boilers are only available through Baxi-Certified Plumbing and Heating Contractors who are supplied by authorized regional Baxi Distributors. The manufacturer is committed to quality and safety and, therefore, does not authorize the sale of Baxi units directly to consumers or over the Internet.

www.wallhungboilers.com

