



Real Estate Matters

December 2014

December Events

- First Day of Hanukkah – December 17
- Christmas Eve – December 24
- Christmas – December 25
- Kwanzaa begins – December 26
- New Year's Eve – December 31

Perfect pumpkin pie

- 1 (9-inch) unbaked deep dish pie crust
 - $\frac{3}{4}$ cup white sugar
 - 1 tsp ground cinnamon
 - $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp salt
 - $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp ground ginger
 - $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp ground cloves
 - 2 eggs
 - 1 (15 oz) can of pure pumpkin puree
 - 1 (12 fl oz) can of evaporated milk
1. Preheat oven to 425 degrees F.
 2. Combine sugar, salt, cinnamon, ginger and cloves in small bowl. Beat eggs lightly in large bowl. Stir in pumpkin and sugar-spice mixture. Gradually stir in evaporated milk. Pour into pie shell.
 3. Bake for 15 minutes. Reduce temperature to 350 degrees F and bake for 40 to 50 minutes. Cool on wire rack for 2 hours. Serve fresh or refrigerate for later.



Tips for hanging holiday lights

Bring the holiday warmth to your home this season with a safe and festive light display.

The prep work

1. Consider hanging your lights early in the season to avoid cold, wet weather that may pose a safety hazard.
2. Measure and map out a general plan to determine how many strings of lights your home requires.
3. Choose a size and wattage that fits your needs. Mini-lights are less expensive and use less energy. Larger C7 or C9 lights are more durable and remain lit even if one bulb dies. You may also want to select shorter strings of light to avoid losing a large portion of your display if one string malfunctions.
4. Test for any dead bulbs to ensure your lights work properly.
5. Plug your extension cords into a ground-fault circuit interrupter (GFCI). Be sure the total wattage of your lights doesn't exceed the capacity of your outlet.
6. Install hooks and clips along surfaces on which you'll thread your lights.

Creating your display

1. Mix up your light display to highlight multiple architectural features on your home. Complement your focal points by hanging additional lights along paths, doors, windows and around trees, planters and bushes.
2. Space your lights a few inches apart so they don't blend into each other. This also saves you money as you'll use a smaller number of lights.
3. Hook your lights up to an automatic timer so they turn on when the sun dips and switch off at dawn.



Your holiday travel guide

Whether you're visiting family or taking a holiday vacation, you'll need to travel smart to brave the holiday frenzy.

- ✓ If you're heading for the road, leave early and map out alternative routes to dodge heavy traffic.
- ✓ Book flights and hotels in advance to snatch the best travel deals.
- ✓ Check the weather of your destination, and pack appropriately.
- ✓ Opt for flights that depart early in the morning or late at night to avoid the holiday crowds. An early morning departure also provides you with alternative flights during the day if yours is cancelled.
- ✓ Don't miss your flight by getting caught up in holiday traffic or security lines. Leave early to give yourself plenty of time to get to and through the airport.
- ✓ Travel light and avoid checking luggage if you can. This expedites your airport time and ensures your luggage doesn't get lost.
- ✓ Don't carry wrapped gifts in your carry-on luggage as they may be inspected. Leave them unwrapped, or else you may have to check them in.
- ✓ Affix address tags on your luggage – just in case!
- ✓ Make sure all of your electronics, especially your phones, are fully charged before you leave. You may run into delays and want to fill in your family members.
- ✓ Bring snacks to ease waiting times.

Have a safe trip!

Your December Maintenance Tip

Use these tips to improve your curb appeal:

1. Use a power washer to clean the siding, clear out the cobwebs on the ceiling of your porch, wash fences and push the dirt off the driveway. Avoid power washing your roof, as it may cause damage to shingles or tiles.
2. Thoroughly clean water-related features by removing leaves, debris and algae from ponds, water fountains or birdbaths. Make sure to clean any water filters.
3. Ensure your lawn sprinklers and any misters are in working order. If sprinklers and emitter heads are malfunctioning or you notice a dying patch of grass, have the system professionally repaired.
4. Bring color to your yard with flowerbeds and mulch. Use contrasting colors to make the flowerbeds pop: light mulch, dark plants or dark mulch, light plants.
5. When trees and shrubs get out of control, trim them into squares or spheres. A landscaper's tip for easier trimming: lay a sheet or tarp around the bush before you begin trimming so leaves can be easily picked up and thrown away.
6. A new welcome mat will personalize your front porch and make it more inviting.
7. Don't forget the backyard, especially if it can be viewed from the street.