

## Guest rooms

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tapestry pattern cushions. "This is a beautiful, traditional, classic home with a lot of warm, deep rich colors and dark wood, and we wanted something that would be appropriate for their whole range of guests, which include mothers, sisters, sons, spouses," explained Pettyjohn. "It was designed with a generic look overall, and then took into mind the details — lighting, floor lamps, chairs that can be moved to watch the sunset, and triple window treatments that can be adjusted for people who like different levels of sunlight. We wanted the people who come here to feel like they didn't want to leave because they were so comfortable."

When public relations consultant T. Michael Jackson and his wife, Joan, were remodeling their Victorian home on Sixth Street in Traverse City with period accuracy, they made sure their guest room also maintained that flavor.

"The furnishings were important, so we combed some of the local antique stores and finally found a wonderful walnut bedroom set and marble-topped chest of drawers at Wilson's in downtown, and that set the tone for the whole room," said Jackson.

However, designers say that once you determine who your primary guests will be, you can then make choices for colors, furnishings and other logistics. Remodeling the guest room doesn't have to be expensive. It is more about attending to basic needs, such as making sure a room is clean and uncluttered, and that there is ample closet space.

One suggestion is to mentally divide the room into areas — the bed, the closet, the bath, the sitting area — and think about what someone staying there might need in those spaces.

Often, the guest room serves double duty. Traverse City Mayor Margaret Dodd sought out a Murphy bed to use in her office so that she could maximize space in her home, yet be able to have an extra place for guests to stay. Thirteen years ago, she found a company in Wisconsin that made the beds, and says that many guests have commented on how well they sleep on it.

Once you have a room readied, there are many things you can do to insure extra comfort for visitors:

- Invest in some good bed linens, pillows, blankets and towels for use just in the guest room, and be sure to have extras on hand.

- Go one step further and supply a robe and slippers, items that come in handy but that are

often cumbersome to pack, and perhaps an iron and a small ironing board to press wrinkled travel clothes.

- Make sure there is a good bedside lamp, and stock a nightstand with an alarm clock, a few books or magazines, a TV schedule if there is one in the room, a local phone book, and bottled water (in case your guests become thirsty in the night).

- Investigate whether a night light in the room, bathroom or hallway might be helpful, or if a flashlight by the bed might be needed.

- Put together a small basket of toiletries like the ones supplied in hotels.

- Place additional hangers in the closet and a luggage stand or rack in the room.

- Little touches like a small coffee pot with the necessary items for its use are always appreciated.

- Decorate with fanciful antiques, found objects, and whimsical art, which all make a room come alive and create an environment for your guests that reminds them they're taking a break from their daily life in your home.

In the end, you want a room that gives your guests shelter, comfort and a chance to relax. Being a good host, after all, is really in the details.

Nancy Sundstrom is a local freelance writer.



Record-Eagle/Elizabeth Conley

Lynn Pettyjohn is a designer and owner of Lynnteriors in Traverse City. Her advice for redecorating a guest room is making it a space that you would want to stay in yourself.

## Flooring stylish and functional

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ular. We're seeing all the sages." Another new carpet product is made of nylon manufactured to produce a soft, cotton-like, silky feel, according to Bebeau. Under the names of Shaw Evertouch and DuPont Stainmaster Tactesse, the product has "stain resistance and is resistant to matting and crushing," said Bebeau.

He offers about 1,000 color options in his store.

A new hardwood product recommended by Bodamer is the Warren Strip (by Robbins), a three-quarter inch pre-finished wood with a square edge. According to Bodamer, this product prevents dirt from falling into grooves and is one of his best sellers.

"Pre-finished is the way to go. It's harder than a sand and coating (post-installation). Pre-finished is seven coats of hardened polyurethane."

Porcelain tile is nothing new; how-

ever, Butler said that what is new about porcelain is the production of larger format products, tiles that are 18- by -18 or 24- by -24 inches.

"The advantage that porcelain has over ceramic is durability. It has become more frost-resistant and stain-resistant. It's good for outside, countertops, walls and floors," he said. "Porcelain has taken over the ceramic tile industry."

Glass is being used to produce high-end priced tiles that are used in floors and walls, mostly for decorative purposes, according to Butler. Voyce & Bean is now making light green tiles that have the appearance of beach glass. Voyce & Bean along with Oceanside both carry iridescent glass tiles. Tiles made of smooth glass and tumbled glass (a soft, frosted look) in a range of colors are also produced by Oceanside. Tumbled slate is now

being carried by a number of companies. The smooth, gray stone is arranged in patterns and applied to the wall, countertop or floor, according to Butler.

Mosaic listellos in natural stone (by Westminster Ceramics), with designs ranging from onions to Greek geometric, are another new decorative option with various tile installations. Butler also described metal-wrapped tiles that are yet another decorative option for the home. Dal-Tile makes one that looks like raku ceramics, a flat, dark, iridescent look. Crossville Ceramics is making a metal tile that is shiny.

"The metal is protected so that it won't change color over time," said Butler. "Relief pattern deco pieces are available in designs from cherries to dragonflies."

Kristen Counts is a local freelance writer.

## Care that goes into your lawn comes back beautiful

By JAMES AND MORRIS CAREY

The Associated Press

Every neighborhood has one. That one standout home with a beautiful carpet of rolling green lawn that draws oohs and ahhs from passers-by.

Envious? Here are a few things you can do to put your turf back on track.

A beautiful lawn doesn't just happen. A decision has to be made. Which is better — seed or sod? Seed is the most economical way to start a lawn. But it requires a great deal of attention and nurturing to get it successfully under way. With seed, there are four important things to remember:

- Buy only top-quality seed. Bargain purchases often contain weeds and odd grass blends that grow in weird "mystery" clumps. Both spell trouble that you'll have to deal with down the line.

- Prepare soil properly. Till to create small clumps, from pea to marble-size. If soil is too fine, the surface will crust over after watering and dry out too quickly. Also, level the area to keep seeds in place.

- Seed and fertilize the same day to get seedlings off to a strong and healthy start. Use a drop or rotary spreader. It doesn't matter which you apply first.

- Water often, rather than deeply. It is critical to successful germination. Only the top 1 inch needs to be kept moist until seedlings are well under way.

If you're in a hurry, or have a difficult area to seed (such as a slope), sod is the answer. But, it is also more expensive. Some species, such as warm-season grasses, should be started only with stems or sod. If in doubt as to which is best for you, consult an expert at a local nursery or garden-supply dealer.

The next area of concern is

watering — when, how much and how often. If you leave footprints in the grass, it is a good indicator your lawn needs watering. Moist grass springs right back; dry blades do not. Also, a lawn that appears silvery blue indicates severe lack-of-water stress, and — if not promptly watered — will soon turn brown.

Wondering if you are over- or under-watering? One-half inch twice a week (1-inch total) from rain or watering is sufficient. To measure it, use a plastic rain gauge from the hardware store. The best time to water is from 6 a.m. to 10 a.m. Contrary to popular belief, daytime watering will not burn or cook grass — rather it cools it down. Avoid windy days though as it speeds surface evaporation.

If you tire of hand-watering and dragging hoses and sprinklers around your yard, look into an automatic sprinkler system. Most dealers offer free planning services with layouts showing where each sprinkler head goes and what type is needed for that specific area. They'll also tell you to what depth to install your pipes, what water pressure is needed and what permits are required. The biggest cost is labor. Plastic PVC pipe is easy to install and doing it yourself saves big bucks. Then add an automatic timer. Set it and forget it.

Once grass is well under way, mowing is the next area of concern — and it will make the difference between a ho-hum lawn and the neighborhood superstar mentioned earlier. One trick to remember is to not cut off too much at one time. Never trim more than a third the length of the blade in a single mowing. When too much is cut — especially in hot summer weather — the sun beats down, cooking the tender base and drying out the top soil. If mowing is way overdue, and blades are exceedingly tall, mow

### Clearing slow drains

The old cliché, "an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure," is right on the money when it comes to drains. Cooking grease, coffee grounds, hair and soap scum are a few of the biggest enemies of a drain. Cooking grease should be saved in an old coffee can or cardboard milk container. Coffee grounds are a welcome addition to a mulch pile. And a majority of hair and soap scum can be caught with a screen or grate. A safe and effective way of clearing a clogged drain is to pour a half-cup of salt, a half-cup of baking soda and a half-cup of vinegar down the drain. Follow this concoction with at least 2 quarts of boiling water.

high at first. Then lower the blade setting and make a second pass.

On average, mowing once a week is sufficient. In heavy growth periods, like spring, twice a week might sometimes be needed. As for clippings, they should be removed after mowing as they can smother the grass. If you want to leave clippings, only do so when using a mulching mower, so that its finer residue settles down at ground level.

The final word to remember is "maintenance." Beyond watering, fertilizing four to five times a year helps produce a thick, green carpet of grass. Twice a year (in spring and fall) should be the minimum. Mower maintenance is important, too, especially at the start of each summer season.

### Hauling long lumber

Here's an old carpenter's trick for carrying long lumber in a pickup truck: Cut a 2x6 brace about 1/8th inch longer than the inside width of the truck bed. Wedge it crosswise under the upper lip of the bed about 1 foot behind the cab. Then leave the tailgate up and slide the long boards into the bed and under the 2x6 brace. The brace will hold them down while they rest on the tailgate. Be sure to tack a bright-red or bright-orange flag onto the trailing end of the lumber to alert other drivers.

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