



MIDWEST NEWSLETTER



The deck of your dreams "A comfortable retreat"

Helpful Websies

- Topremodeler.net
-

When the time comes to select a decking contractor and the materials to be used for your deck, today's consumers have many choices, and selecting the right contractor and material for the job is the most important.

Things you should do before getting bids.

Budget-Establish your budgeted amount for the project. This will determine the viability of your project, the final square footage, and the quality of finish materials to be used.

Design- Determine what the space is going to be used for (entertaining, cooking, or sun tanning). Consider the use of multiple deck levels to add character and break up the space. Decide what type of decking material you want to

use, including the type of deck railing you'd like. Optional additions could include post lighting, stair lighting, planter boxes or bench seats. Placement of your deck is essential before beginning your project. Do you want partial shade or full shade? Partial sun or full sun? Additional items to consider would be stair access from the yard or possibly an [outdoor kitchen](#). Find out if you have neighborhood Design Guidelines or covenants.

Deck and Landscape Lighting

Low-voltage accent lighting for fences, decks and more will make your home shine! Decorative vinyl post caps feature removable snap-on lids that allow you to easily replace

bulbs.

Railings

Transform your ordinary deck into something extraordinary! Whether you're building new or simply updating your outdoor living space, we have a great selection of deck railings and accessories to choose from. Add a look of distinction with accent lighting or affordable extruded aluminum balusters and centerpieces. We have the solutions to turn your deck or patio into the envy of the neighborhood!



Advice from a Pro

Your Weekend Project

Step to taking a wholehouse energy efficiency approach

Energy Auditing Tips

- Check the insulation levels in your attic, exterior and basement walls, ceilings, floors, and crawl spaces.
- Check for holes or cracks around your walls, ceilings, windows, doors, light and plumbing fixtures, switches, and electrical outlets that can leak air into or out of your home.
- Check for open fireplace dampers.
- Make sure your appliances and heating and cooling systems are properly maintained.

paying special attention to high-use areas such as the living room, kitchen, and outside lighting. Look for ways to use lighting controls—like occupancy sensors, dimmers, or timers—to reduce lighting energy use, and replace standard (also called incandescent) light bulbs and fixtures with compact or standard

Start with the Basics: Weatherization

First: Stop the Leaks

Air infiltration through small holes and cracks may contribute to as much as 30% of your home's heating and cooling costs. Infiltration not only wastes energy and money, it contributes to moisture, noise and dust problems.

Air sealing should be performed before insulation is added as gaps and cracks in the wall will allow air passage, decreasing the effectiveness of the insulation.

Although you may want to hire a professional to perform a thorough inspection of the house, air sealing is something you can do yourself. There are several materials that may be used for air sealing, depending on the purpose.

- Backer rod - Closed-cell foam or rope caulk. Press into crack or gap with screwdriver or putty knife.
- Caulk - For sealing gaps of less than ½ inch.
- Spray Foam - To fill large cracks and small holes. A few precautions should be heeded when using spray

foam: do not use near flammable applications and do not use expanding foams around windows and doors.

Weatherstripping - To seal areas with moveable components such as doors and windows.

For larger areas:

- Housewrap - To form an airtight seal over the exterior sheathing, housewrap must be sealed with tape or caulk.
 - Polyethylene Plastic - To serve as a vapor and air barrier. This material may be used for sealing complicated leakage areas that may be of irregular shape.
- Second: Keep the Heat In - Insulate

Tips for Finding a Contractor

- Ask neighbors and friends for recommendations
- Look in the Yellow Pages
- Focus on local companies
- Look for licensed, insured contractors
- Get three bids with details in writing
- Ask about previous experience
- Check references
- Check with the Better Business Bureau

PRODUCT OF THE MONTH



\$98.00

12' Telescopic Extension Ladder

Curb Appeal:

Some real estate advice tells you to work on the outside of the house first, but unless there is a major project involved, it is probably best to save it for last. There are two main reasons for this.

First, the first steps in preparing the interior of the house are easier. They also help develop the proper mind set required for selling - be-

ginning to think of your "home" as a marketable commodity.

Second, the exterior is the most important.

A homebuyer's first impression is based on his or her view of the house from the real estate agent's car. They call that first impression "curb appeal."

So take a walk across the street and take a good look at your house. Look at nearby

houses too, and see how yours compares. Then it may be time to go to work.

Things to bring up value

- Concrete boarders
- Pressure wash
- Dress up your driveway, walkways and steps

