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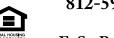
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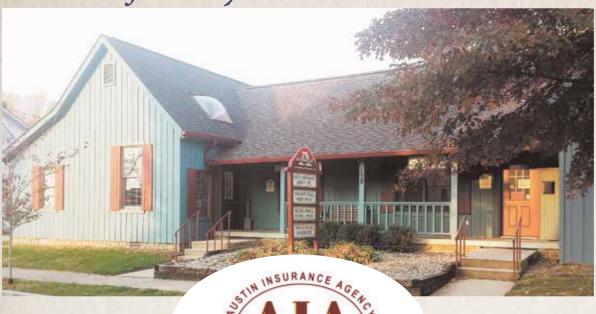


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DITCHING THE TANK

BY LYNDSEY WOLFE | PHOTO BY ADOBE STOCK



Tankless water heaters more efficient, growing in popularity

Gone are the days of waiting for the water to heat back up after someone else's shower so you can have a turn. With the advances of modern technology, many people are making the switch to tankless water heaters that continuously heat water as you

Dave Mills, plumbing service manager at Johnson Heating, Cooling and Plumbing, explained, a tankless water heater has a heat exchanger inside that flash heats the water to get it up to 120 degrees. This makes them extremely efficient and capable of providing you with endless hot water.

They also take up significantly less space than a traditional water heater while minimizing the risks associated with a hot water storage tank.

With a tankless water heater, Mills said, "You don't have to worry about a tank leaking on you. If you have a 50-gallon water heater you've automatically got 50 gallons of water plus whatever's in the water line. That tank may burst and flood your whole house." While there are water heater alarm systems available to limit that risk, switching to a tankless water heater means it's no longer a concern.

For those wondering if making the change to tankless is worth it, the upfront cost might be daunting. However, the longevity, efficiency and low maintenance of tankless water heaters make it a pretty fair trade-off, he said.

A tankless gas water heater costs

about \$2,000 more than a traditional one, Mills said. The life expectancy of a tank water heater is 8-10 years, with a warranty covering only six years. On the other hand, a Navien tankless water heater has a 15-year warranty on the heat exchanger alone.

Mills said, "It's not unheard of to see about 15-20 years out of them as long as they're well maintained."

Maintenance on tankless water heaters consists of a yearly visit from a technician to flush the system and make sure everything is in working

Mark Mathews, plumbing advisor at Ben Franklin Plumbing, noted the importance of having a water softener installed for the water to run through before the tankless water heater in order to prevent sediment buildup. Otherwise, Mathews said, "you need to install an inline filter made specifically for a tankless."

Another way tankless water heaters make up for the higher initial cost is through saving money in the long run. Mathews said you could save up to 25% or 35% on your gas bill due to the high efficiency of tankless water heaters.

"Efficiency is on everybody's minds," Mills said.

Both companies install Navien brand tankless water heaters. Mills has been installing them since 1998 and said Navien is the most reliable he's seen.

During the installation process, the

technicians will remove the old unit - which is about 30-by-18 inches wide — and replace it with the tankless unit, which hangs on the wall and only takes up about two square feet. Mills said they then repipe everything through the bottom and run a make-up air line and exhaust to the outside of the home.

"Tankless water heaters require 2-inch PVC venting compared to the standard galvanized venting on a tank water heater," Mathews added.

Mills said the size and installation process is pretty standard for all tankless water heaters, "unless you go to electric, which I don't recommend for Indiana.

"There are three or four different models of Navien. The biggest difference is the top model actually has a buffer tank and a built-in recirculation line or a recirculating pump so that we can recirculate it throughout the house to get hot water to your fixtures faster. That way any time you turn on a faucet you have almost instant hot water."

Whichever model you choose, tankless water heaters seem to be the way to go, say the experts.

"Each year tankless water heaters are definitely becoming more popular. More people are hearing about them and seeing them in homes. I would highly recommend a tankless water heater over a tank water heater. But it's not in everyone's budget to afford one," Mathews said.

GIVING OLD FURNITURE NEW LIFE

BY MENARDS | PHOTO BY ADOBE STOCK

Refinishing old or antique wood furniture is a popular hobby that has been growing over the past several years. It's a creative hobby that can provide you with highquality, unique pieces for your home or office.

WIPE-ON FINISH

Sometimes a wood dresser, table or chair doesn't need its existing finish stripped away. Instead, all it needs is a clear coat of wipe-on finish to revitalize it.

TIME TO REFINISH YOUR **FURNITURE**

There are several different signs that it's time to refinish your wood furniture. Noticeable rings, water marks, a sticky surface, cracking, flaking, chipping, worn out patches or blemishes indicate it's time to refinish the piece.

STEPS FOR REFINISHING

STEP ONE — Clean the piece with a mixture of dish soap and warm water, especially if it's been in storage or kept outside for an extended time. Scrub down the surface with a soaped up sponge.

STEP TWO — Assess the piece and determine necessary repairs. You will likely need a scraper, epoxy putty and wax filling compound.

STEP THREE - Remove the old finish by sanding with coarse sandpaper, a sanding block or power



sander. Once most of the finish is off, further remove any shine with a medium grit sandpaper and finish with a fine grit sandpaper. As an alternative, choose a liquid or semipaste product, spreading over the surface of the wood evenly using a bristle brush and follow instructions on the product.

STEP FOUR — After the piece is fully dry, apply a coat of sealant that protects the wood and creates a base for the stain to spread more evenly. Once the sealant dries, sand down the surfaces again with fine grit sandpaper.

STEP FIVE - Stain or paint the wood with a coloring of your choice. You might want to test this process on a similar piece of wood prior to applying to your furniture because

once you start, you're committed.

STEP SIX - Finally spray, wipe or brush on an oil finish, varnish or polyurethane coat, depending on your preference and if the piece will suffer a lot of wear and tear.

When staining, painting or finishing your wood piece, be sure that you're working in a fully lit space. Keep your workspace as clean as possible so dust particles do not get trapped on the wood's surface. Never shake a container of stain or finish, instead gently stir the mixture to ensure all ingredients are properly dispersed and don't settle on the bottom of the can. And, don't always rely on samples when deciding how the stain will look, instead test the stain first on a discrete area of your furniture before applying all over.

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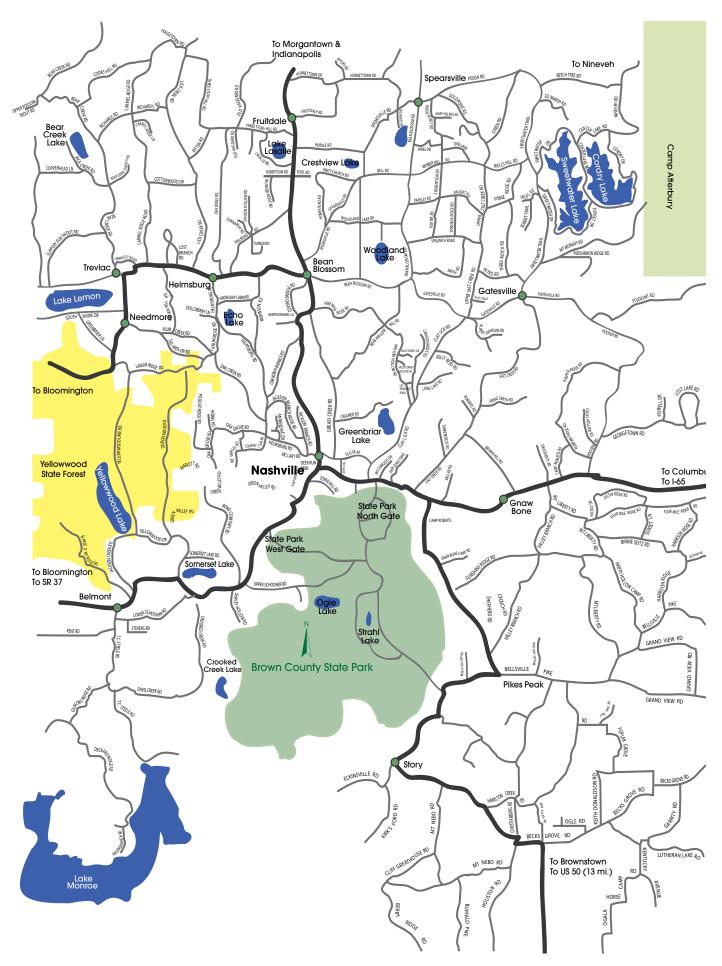
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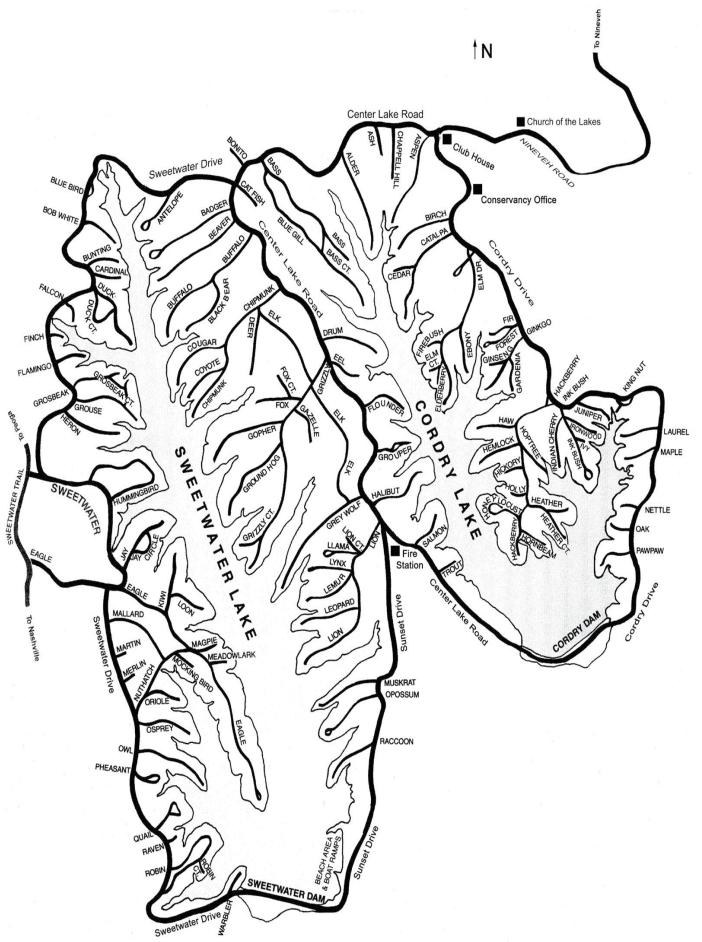


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MAILBOX MAKEOVER

BY MENARDS | PHOTO BY ADOBE STOCK

Sometimes the smallest things make the biggest difference. Adding curb appeal to your home doesn't have to break the bank, but can save you money. Here are some ideas to help spruce up your mailbox and add instant curb appeal on a budget.

Clean

Even the simplest things like cleaning the dirt and grime off your mailbox can instantly make it more appealing. Simply taking a sponge and some soapy water can quickly make your mailbox look brand new.

Following up with diluted vinegar can kill any potential mold or fungus growing on your mailbox and preserve its finish for years to come.

Repair

First impressions matter, making sure your mailbox is upright, accessible and up to postal standards is important to both your mail carrier and your reputation. Sturdy, well-put together mailboxes can make a significant contribution to the appearance of the countryside or area you live.

Upkeep is essential to the longevity of your mailbox.

Whether you're looking for a soft, cohesive mailbox design or something to catch an eye, a simple coat of paint can dramatically change the look of your mailbox and even your yard.

Adding a splash of color can give the impression of a fun, welcoming home while a darker paint gives a modern feel with a combination of sophistication and class.

Landscape

Spruce up your mailbox area by adding flowers, plants or pavers at the base of your mailbox to match the house landscaping or add an extra pop of color.

Sometimes less is more, making hostas an excellent plant choice because they cover a lot of ground space and come back every year.



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