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## Survey sheds light on homeowners' outdoor DIY projects

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It's another summer weekend. For many homeowners that means the opportunity to work on an outdoor Do-It-Yourself project. Depending upon the scope, kind and workmanship, these projects can increase homeowners' enjoyment and convenience, as well as add value to a property.

With autumn around the corner, dry, pleasant days also extend the DIY outdoor project time in northeast Ohio.

A recent online survey from the new, national Home Projects Council (HPC), offers a glimpse into what DIY homeowners are doing and want to do. One of the goals of the HPC is to inspire and encourage homeowners to tackle outdoor DIY projects which they might have previously thought were too difficult.

According to the survey, respondents felt the functional value (57 percent) of an outdoor DIY project was more important than aesthetic value (28.3 percent) and financial value (14.7 percent).

Participants were asked to choose three projects from a list. The top 10 most desirable outdoor projects included: plant a garden – 49.1 percent; use decorative pebbles, stones or rocks for landscaping – 28.3 percent; build a deck – 22.8 percent; create a fire pit or barbecue pit – 20.5 percent; and build a patio or walkway using concrete pavers or bricks – 19.2 percent.

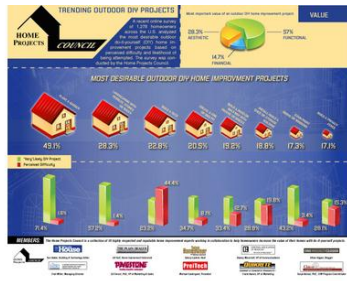
Also, install or build a shed or storage building—18.8 percent; stain or paint siding or windows – 17.3 percent; build a privacy fence – 17.1 percent; stain or paint exterior concrete surfaces (patio, pool deck, sidewalk, etc. ) – 16.6 percent; and repair or seal concrete cracks in patios, steps or driveways – 14 percent.

Participants were also asked how likely they were to try various outdoor projects themselves. As expected "plant a garden" and "use decorative pebbles, stones or rocks" received the top scores in the "very likely" category. About 70 percent said they would not attempt to build an outdoor kitchen and 59 percent would not attempt to resurface a concrete drive, sidewalk or patio.

The three projects considered to be the most difficult or intimidating included: build an outdoor kitchen; pour concrete slabs for patios, steps or sidewalks; and build a deck. The survey reflects answers from 1,278 homeowners who planned a home improvement project in 2013. Respondents represented approximately an equal amount of males and females, ages 25 to 54. About 37 percent identified themselves as having a beginner DIY skill level, 54 percent indicated an intermediate skill level and 9 percent said they had an expert level skill.

A number of the projects named in the survey are probably too difficult for an average do-it-yourselfer. But others, including, "build a garden trellis" and "install retaining wall or garden wall," may be easier than many people perceive. The volunteer HPC members hope to encourage homeowners to attempt a variety of projects, some of which might not have initially been considered a DIY job.

The Council suggests do-it-yourselfers should start with simple projects, learn which



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materials and tools are best for a project and rehearse the project several times before actually beginning. It is also suggested homeowners review the procedure with others who have accomplished a similar task and/or with reputable material suppliers. Homeowners are encouraged to view HPC members' websites and blogs for inspiration and ideas.


The HPC consists of 10 representatives from manufacturers, media, industry associations and higher education. Members included representatives from This Old House, Today's Homeowner, National Association of Realtors, Home Improvement Research Council, QUIKRETE Companies (which facilitated the survey) and PAVESTONE, as well as others.

The best advice from the Council? "Remember that no one is perfect and mistakes will happen."

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