



MASTER GARDENER

Stopping the silent killer — radon

By Susan Howe

A silent killer may be lurking in your home. The killer is radon, a radioactive gas that is colorless, odorless and tasteless, that comes from the ground and accumulates in homes and buildings.

We know statistics can be boring, but these statistics are too deadly to ignore. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) estimates 21,000 Americans die each year from radon-induced lung cancer. When compared with other common causes of death, EPA statistics indicate that radon kills more people each year than secondhand smoke, drunken driving, falls in the home, drowning or house fires.

Radon may be in your home, as it is a prevalent problem in Nevada. Statewide test results show that one in four homes has a radon level at or above the EPA Action Level of 4 picocuries per liter of air (pCi/l). Homes that test below 4 pCi/l aren't 100 percent safe from the health risk either, because according to experts, living in a home with an average radon level of 4 pCi/l poses a risk of developing lung cancer similar to smoking half a pack of cigarettes a day.

In Washoe County, 21 percent of the homes tested have radon levels at or above 4 pCi/l; Carson City has 38.6 percent, Douglas County, 39.7 percent and Lyon County, 28.8 percent.

This gas gets into homes because the lower internal pressure, especially in the winter heating months, causes houses to suck radon out of the ground. Radon can then accumulate to dangerous levels.

The only way to know if your home has elevated levels of radon is to test. Testing is easy, and once radon is detected, there are fairly easy, inexpensive ways to reduce exposure to safer levels, thereby reducing the risk of lung cancer caused by radon.

January is National Radon Action Month, and to better help communities comprehend the dangers of radon, the Nevada Radon Education Program will offer presentations. Free test kits will be available.

Presentations in Washoe, Carson City and Douglas counties are:

» Jan. 7: Spanish Springs Library, 7100A Pyramid Lake Highway, Reno, at 6 p.m.

» Jan. 8: Northwest Reno Library, 2325 Robb Drive, Reno, at 5 p.m.

» Jan. 9: Sierra View Library, 4001 S. Virginia St., Reno, at 3:30 p.m.

» Jan. 11: North Valleys Library, 1075 N. Hills Blvd. #340, Reno, at 11 a.m.

» Jan. 22: South Valleys Library, 15650A Wedge Parkway, Reno, at 6 p.m.

» Jan. 27: Tahoe Regional Planning Agency, 128 Market St., Stateline, at 6 p.m.

» Jan. 28: UC Davis/Tahoe Environmental Research Center, 291 Country Club Drive, Incline Village, at 6 p.m. (reception at 5:30 p.m.)

» Jan. 29: CVIC Hall, 1604 Esmeralda Ave., Minden, at 6 p.m.

» Jan. 30: Carson City Sheriff's Office, 911 E. Musser St., Carson City, at 6 p.m.

Complete presentation list: www.RadonNV.com.

Free radon test kits are available now through Feb. 28 at University of Nevada Cooperative Extension and partner offices statewide. You can't beat free, so Nevadans are encouraged to take advantage of this offer to test their homes for this dangerous gas. In Reno, visit Cooperative Extension at 4955 Energy Way; in Carson City, 2621 Northgate Lane, Suite 15, and in Gardnerville, 1329 Waterloo Lane, or go to www.RadonNV.com, or call 888-RADON10 (888-723-6610).

— Susan Howe is Radon Education Program Director for the University of Nevada Cooperative Extension

NURSERY 101

How to convert a guest bedroom into the nursery of your dreams — without breaking the bank



AFTER: A mobile hangs above Aurelia's bed, 2013. MARILYN NEWTON/RGJ

By Laura Longero
llongero@rgj.com

When baby makes three, thoughts eventually turn to baby's abode — where will baby sleep? What will the room look like? What theme will we choose? For couples who are living in urban dwellings and are short on space, the coveted guest bedroom will disappear and be rechristened baby's nursery. Here's my story on how my husband, David, and I went from guest room to baby bliss.

First, pick a theme or color scheme.

I started getting ideas for possible nursery color schemes and themes by looking around online. I stumbled upon a beautiful Peter Rabbit nursery with bespoke wallpaper and an expensive-looking crib. I remember loving Beatrix Potter's tale of the hungry rabbit from my childhood, and thought I would base my décor around his character, regardless of the gender of my child. And so, the work began.

I found a bedding set from Pottery Barn Kids that featured our favorite bunny. The bedding set is mostly sage green and white, with other splashes of color: Blue, red and pink. So, I themed the nursery Peter Rabbit and



BEFORE: The nursery before. PHOTO BY LAURA LONGERO/RGJ

decided its main colors would be green and white.

We found our crib at Babies R Us. My husband and I picked out a white Carter's crib and a Sealy crib mattress. Next, I set up registries at Pottery Barn Kids, Babies R Us and Amazon for nursery décor items — bedding, a Peter Rabbit mobile, two Peter Rabbit mounted art prints, a tree decal for the wall, lamp and lampshade. My mother threw a "decorate the nursery" shower for me, and most of the nursery décor was purchased as shower gifts, including big-ticket items like the crib, mattress and bedding.

Paint it ...

With a theme in mind, it was time to turn to converting the bedroom. The bed was moved to the basement, wall decorations removed and I sent a dresser with my father to be refinished for the nursery. The next thing to do was to paint.

I had seen photographs of the possible nursery of the future king of England, Prince George, leading up to his birth in July. One rendering featured a Peter Rabbit theme with white furniture and a super pale blue wall, almost gray. So, I went to Lowe's and picked out three different paints I thought might work, got samples of them and painted test strips on the wall to see how the paint looked during the day and at night. My husband liked Olympic's Cityscape paint the best, and that's what we chose. We also picked out a basic white for the trim and ceiling — both in a semi-gloss, which is shiny and is supposed to be easier to clean.

And like so many suburbanites before us, we trekked to Lowe's one Sunday morning and purchased paint,

See NURSERY, Page 3D

3 HOME & GARDEN THINGS TO DO THIS WINTER

LAHONTAN AUDUBON SOCIETY

Ted Beedy and Ed Pandolfino will discuss their new book, "Birds of the Sierra Nevada: Their Natural History, Status, and Distribution," at this month's Lahontan Audubon Society.

The book is illustrated by Keith Hansen.

Learn about which bird populations are in decline and which are expanding and increasing.

The authors will also address some mysteries surrounding some of our local species and discuss how birders can help solve them.

Copies of their book will be available for purchase.

The meeting will be held on Jan. 28 at the Moana Nursery Landscape and Design Center at 1100 West Moana Lane in Reno.

A social starts at 6:30 p.m. and the Audubon Society meeting will begin at 7 p.m.

HOME LANDSCAPE SEMINAR

David Ruf, owner of Greenhouse Garden Center, will host a landscape design workshop for homeowners on Jan. 25 and 26 from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Lunch and classroom materials are included in the \$125 cost for the class (or \$175 per couple). Reservations are required.

The class is at the Greenhouse Garden Center at 2450 S. Curry St. in Carson City.

The 10-hour workshop will teach participants how to redo an existing landscape or how to design and implement a new one. Details: Call 882-8600 for further information and to make reservations.

PESTICIDE WORKSHOP IN RENO

University of Nevada Cooperative Extension, in partnership with the Nevada Department of Agriculture, is offering a free workshop Jan. 29 to train on how to properly handle and use pesticides.

The workshop is meant for certified applicators, those who regularly handle pesticides as part of their jobs, such as farmers, ranchers, park employees and groundskeepers.

"Pesticides are poisons, chemicals

that kill something else," Cooperative Extension Pesticide Safety Program Assistant Melody Hefner said. "So it is important for applicators to know how to apply them safely. The workshop teaches applicators how to keep themselves, other people, pets, livestock and wildlife safe and protect the environment."

The workshop is at the Washoe County Cooperative Extension office, 4955 Energy Way in Reno. It will be available via videoconference to 13 Cooperative Extension locations, including Battle Mountain, Caliente, Carson City, Elko, Ely, Eureka, Fallon, Hawthorne, Lovelock, Pahrump, Tonopah, Winnemucca and Yerington. Training is from 7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

The workshop will help those who have not yet been certified to prepare for the next Certified Pesticide Applicator exam. The exam costs \$25 and will be offered Feb. 4 in Yerington and Feb. 5 in Sparks. Hard copies of the study manual for the exam are available for purchase from Cooperative Extension for \$15 or can be downloaded for free at www.nevadapesticideeducation.com.

Limited seating is available for the Jan. 29 workshop.

Preregister by Jan. 24 at 775-336-0247 or hefnerm@unce.unr.edu.

Nursery

Continued from Page 1D

brushes, drop cloths, blue tape, rollers and spackle. We started our project by spackling the holes in the wall — of which there were many in our rental. And then down went the drop cloths, and the painting began. We started edging along the baseboards, in the corners and along the ceiling and window. Next, my husband painted the walls. We took a break to let the paint dry and came back and taped the freshly painted walls around the baseboards and started painting those white. Finally, David painted the ceiling. The room went from a dingy white with beige baseboards to a sky blue with white baseboards. It was quite the dramatic change.

Nickel-and-diming

Instead of purchasing brand-new nursery furniture, we opted to use an antique dresser that's been in the family for years, refinish it and paint it the same shade of white as the crib. I got a bunch of paint swatch cards from Lowe's and brought them home to test against the crib during the daylight. I bought the paint and my father refinished the dresser and repainted it. The changing pad came with screws and tabs to drill it into the dresser in the back so it won't fall off. At Babies R Us, nursery furniture sets run from \$370 to \$1,386. Since we upcycled the dresser and purchased a new crib, the dresser was free (plus the cost of paint and supplies) and the crib ran about \$290 with the mattress.

A small table with a

stool was purchased during a friend's garage sale, and that also went to Dad's garage to be painted to match the crib and dresser.

I scoured Craigslist for a glider with ottoman because they run anywhere from \$180 to \$750 for new ones at Babies R Us. We ended up purchasing a sage gliding armchair because it was the most comfortable, for \$150 from an Army veteran in Gardnerville.

I moved another dresser into the closet for extra storage space. Baby's small dresses are the perfect size to hang just above the top of the dresser.

My mother is a whiz with the sewing machine, so I enlisted her to make curtains. We purchased pink fabric and a heavy white backing from Jo-Ann Fabric and Craft Stores, pink lace edging and curtain rods. The white fabric is blackout fabric to help baby sleep as much as possible.

Finishing touches

The walls are adorned with shower gifts — two Peter Rabbit framed art prints, a tree wall decal that looks like a painted mural, a handmade quilt, a framed baby photograph and a small shelf I picked up from Michael's and had my sister paint blue. On it went items — some new and some old — like a handmade Raggedy Ann doll, princess candle, Peter Rabbit figurine and book, piggy bank, Mrs. Rabbit plush toy and a silver bell and picture frame.

My husband and I spent a total of \$373 on the nursery. Including gifts, the grand total comes to \$1,080 spent on babyland. But considering one could spend \$2,000 on just nursery furniture, it still seems

like a bargain to do it yourself — in addition to being a lot of fun.

So, I think we're ready. Bring on the screaming baby.

Tips

» Purchase your bedding and crib first and match everything to them. Bring a crib sheet or crib skirt with you when registering for blankets and other nursery décor. Get paint swatch sheets from the paint store and take them home to match against the crib before painting other furniture and walls.

» Prioritize. Decide what's most important to spend money on, and spend it on that. If you don't mind registering for nursery décor, that's a great way to go.

» Paint works wonders. Paint the bedroom, refinish an old piece of furniture for relatively inexpensive upgrades.

» Don't feel beholden to one color. Instead of doing everything in green and white, I added other splashes of color: Pink for the curtains and lampshade, and blue for the walls.

» Don't leave the blue painting tape on the walls too long after your done painting. Leave it long enough for the paint to dry, but take it off when it's dry so it doesn't take the wall paint off with it.

How much money?

- » Bedding: \$164
- » Curtain with blackout lining: \$62

- » Curtain rods: \$9
- » Crib and mattress: \$290
- » Chair and ottoman: \$150
- » Small table and

- stool: \$20
- » Paint and supplies: \$173
- » Decorations: Art prints, \$44; tree decal, \$18; musical mobile, \$60;

- lamp and shade, \$69; wall shelf and paint, \$21.
- Total amount we spent: \$373**
- Total amount spent including gifts: \$1,080**



IT'S WHAT everyone's talking about.

Knowledge is powder.

Stay current on everything from the ridgeline to the resort — now for just \$2.76 per week*

- The latest in Tahoe resorts and slope conditions
- Exploring the great outdoors
- Recreational activities for the whole family
- Our unique western heritage
- Economic recovery and the local housing market

Subscribe today!

RGJ.com/Sub • 1-800-970-7366



RENO GAZETTE-JOURNAL

*Offer expires 1/30/14. Price per week based on a Full Access subscription including home delivery of the Wednesday and Sunday print editions at \$12 per month for the first three months on EZ Pay. Certain restrictions apply. For complete details, visit RGJ.com/Sub or call 1-800-970-7366.

P-HH

SELLER'S MARKET!
Call me now to help you sell your home.
Steve Blane
830-6613
www.steveblanehomes.com
steve@steveblanehomes.com

Ferrari-Lundg
Real Estate

RJ-0000467484

RUBY VON SCHWERIN
Excellence.
775 232 3884

CHASE
INTERNATIONAL
The leader in luxury real estate

rvonschwerin@chaseinternational.com
chaseinternational.com

RJ-0000467165

50% off Mexican cuisine at Abel's

\$20 value for \$10!



Visit DealChicken.com today to view the Deal details and to purchase this featured Deal.

NEW! Download the app.



DealChicken.com

brought to you by



FOOD BANK OF NORTHERN NEVADA

Every day, one of eight children in Nevada go hungry.

www.fbnn.org • (775) 331-3765

This space provided by the Reno Gazette-Journal and sponsored by your Reno/Sparks New Car Dealers Association: Acura of Reno • Audi Reno Tahoe • Champion Chevrolet • Fiat of Reno • Infiniti of Reno • Jones-West Ford • Land Rover of Reno • Lexus of Reno • Lithia Chrysler-Jeep • Lithia Hyundai • Lithia Subaru • Lithia Volkswagen • Nissan of Reno • Bill Pearce Motors-BMW-Volvo-Porsche-Mini • Bill Pearce Courtesy Honda • Reno Dodge Sales, Inc. • Reno Buick-GMC-Cadillac • Reno Mazda-Kia • Reno Toyota

