A Two-fer presentation:

1. iPhone Folders
2. iPhone HomeKit app

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This presentation is in two parts:

First, I'll describe folders and how they are good for organizing your iPhone apps. I'll demonstrate how to bundle apps into a folder and move them back out again.

Second, I'll show you some of the folders on my own iPhone, in particular the one that holds all the apps that have to do with my household automation. From that I'll segue into my HomeKit app and how I use it to control the smart plugs and wall switches I have around my house.
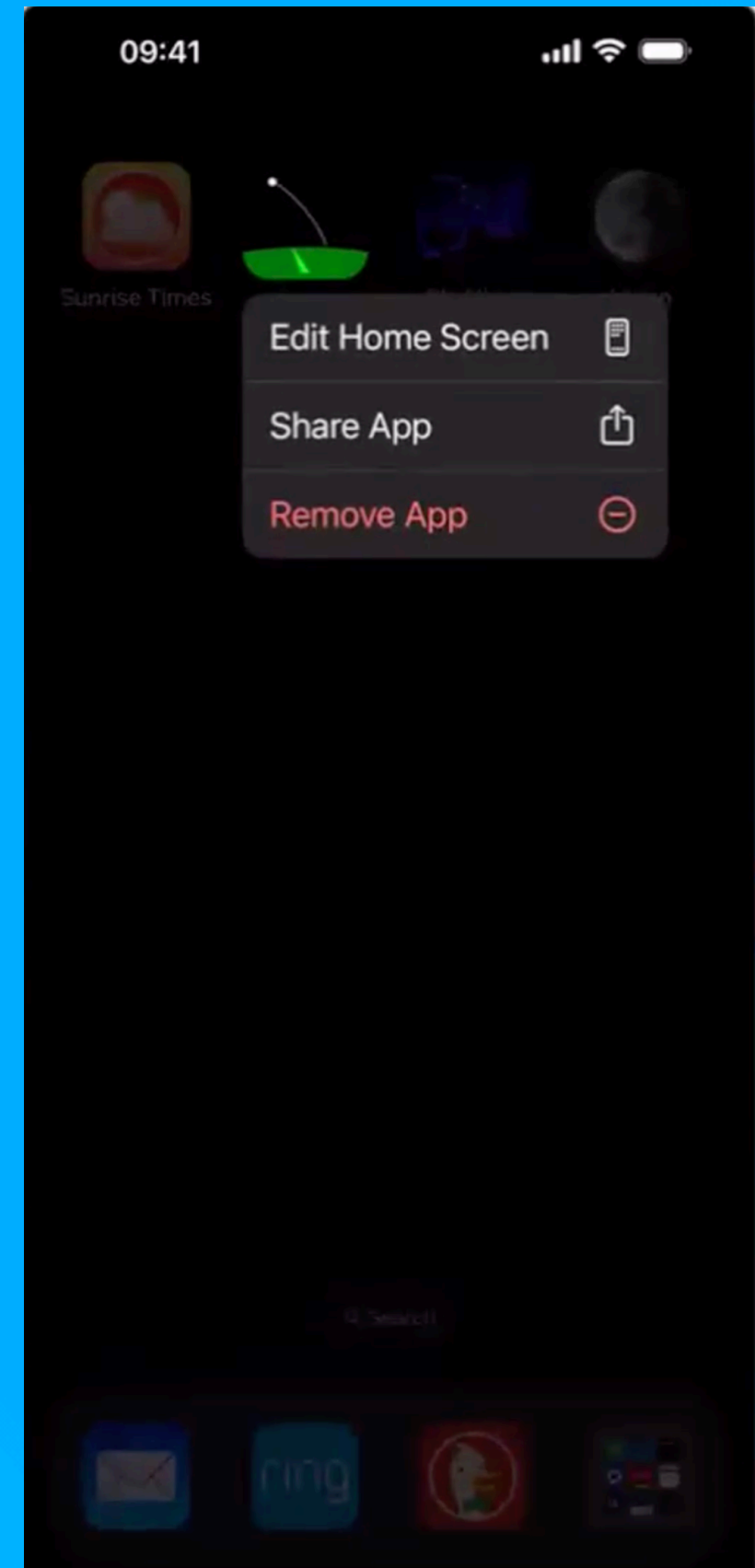
FOLDERS

During our May joint meeting with CapMac we saw a presentation on Widgets. Widgets are great, but they have some limitations. Only certain apps are compatible with Widgets, and even the smallest Widget takes up as much space on your screen as four apps.

Sometimes a folder can serve your needs better than a Widget. Folders can hold any app regardless of the developer, and a folder takes up no more space than one app. On my iPhone I have 28 folders that hold from three to fifteen apps each. The apps in each folder all have something in common, such as all my credit card apps, apps for restaurants, grocery store apps, health-related apps, online shopping, and so on.
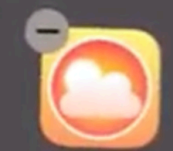
Here are four apps that I normally keep in one folder, but I've removed them for this demonstration. They all have space and astronomy in common: one for sunrise and sunset times, an app that tracks the International Space Station, an astronomy app called SkyView, and an app called Moon.

If I press and hold any one of those apps, three options will pop up: Edit Home Screen, Share App, and Remove App. I'll select Edit Home Screen, and all of the apps begin to quiver indicating they are in Edit mode. I'll drag any one of the icons on top of any of the others, and both are placed inside a newly created folder. To remove them from the folder, just do the same steps in reverse.

My phone thinks up a name for the folder. For some reason it thinks "Education" is a good name. I can rename the folder by tapping on the name, deleting the text, and entering my choice. I'm going to call this folder "Astro."
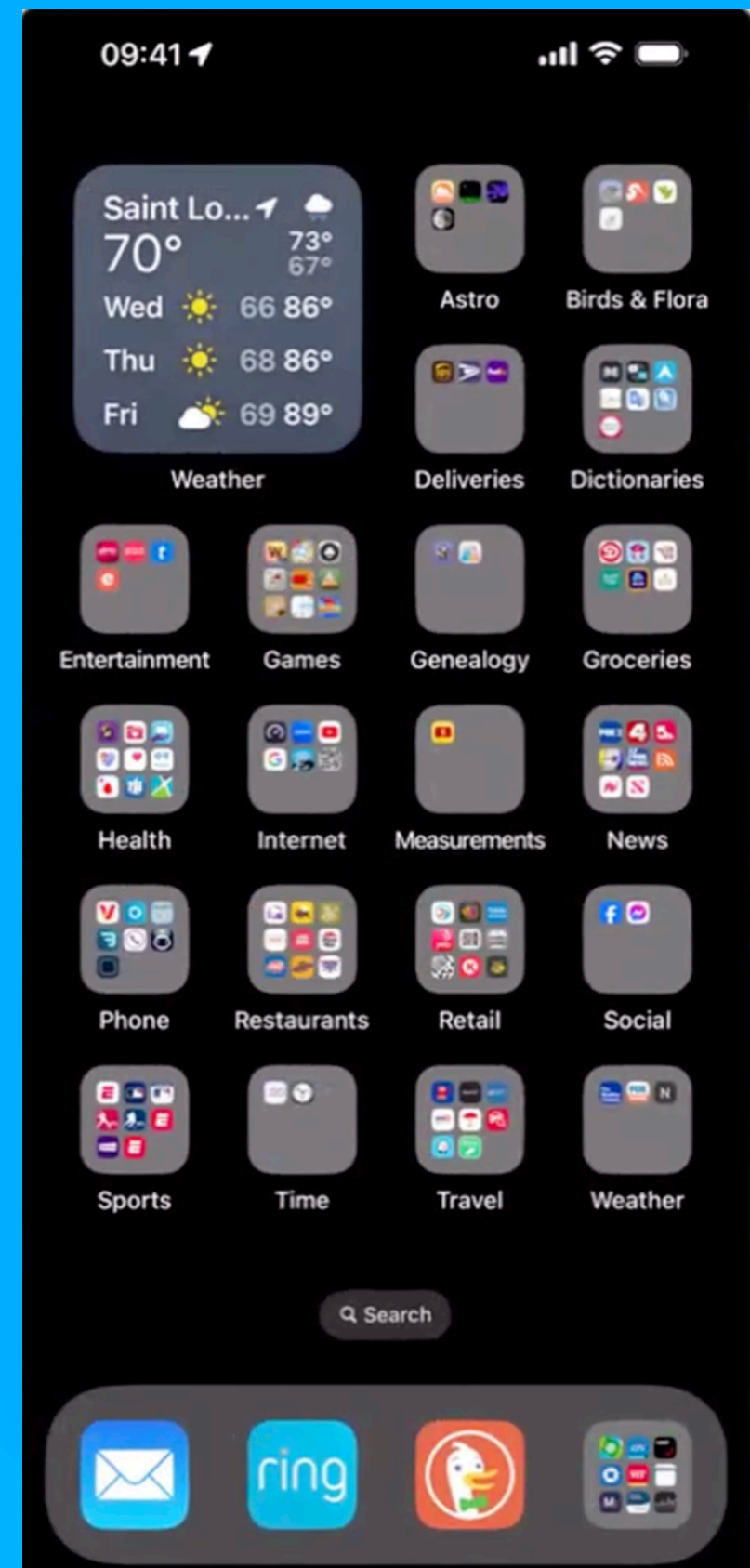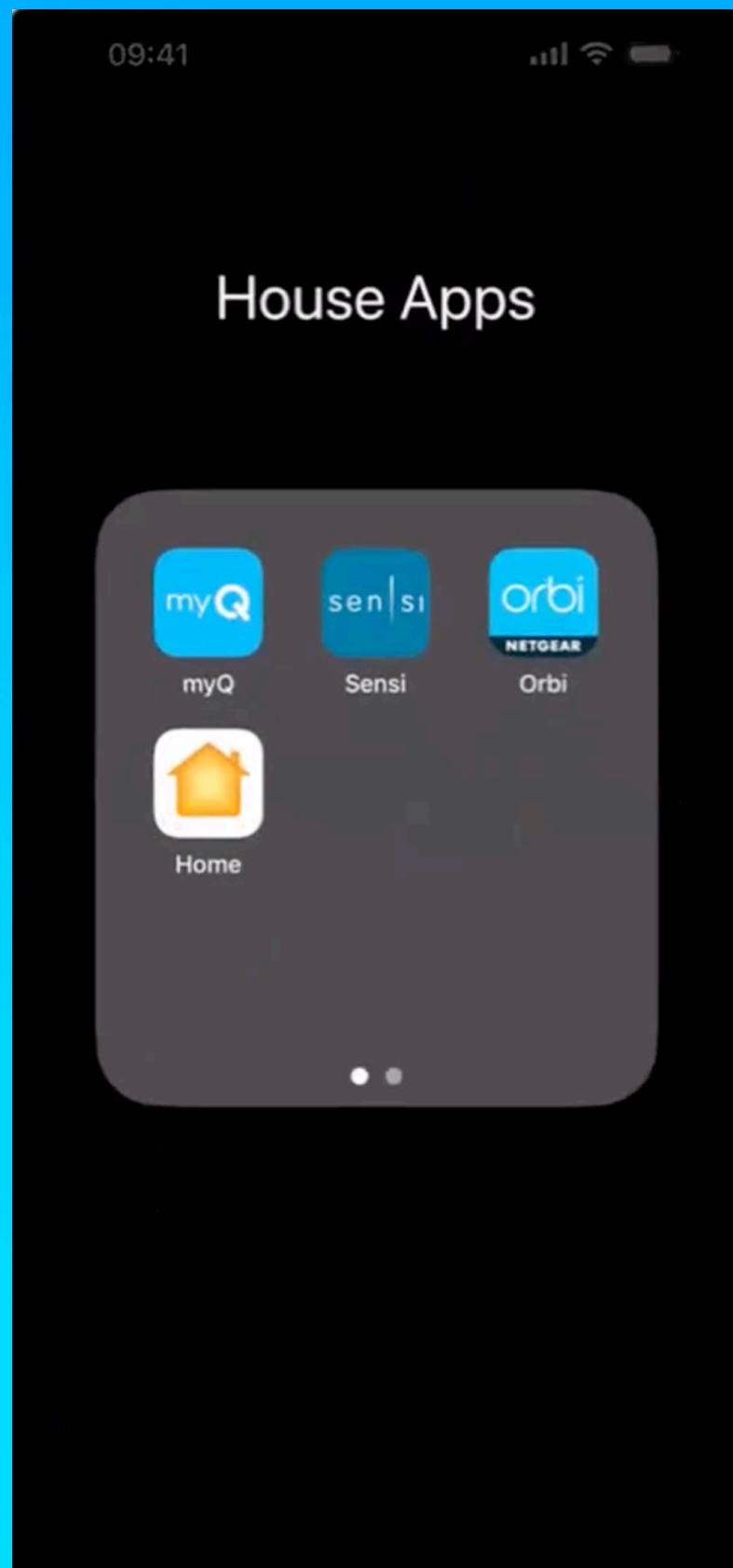
When I tap anyplace outside the folder it shrinks down to normal size. Since the app icons are still in Edit mode, I can drag the other two apps into the folder. When I'm done I can end Edit mode by tapping outside the folder. If I want to relocate the folder, I can treat it like an app—press and hold, go into Edit mode, then move the folder to where I want it.

HOUSE APPS AND HOMEKIT APP
I have a folder that I call House Apps. In that folder I keep the apps for my garage door (MyQ), the thermostat (Sensi), and our WiFi router (Orbi). One particular app is made by Apple and is included in all iPhones. The app is called "Home," and it controls the software framework for some of my home automation devices.
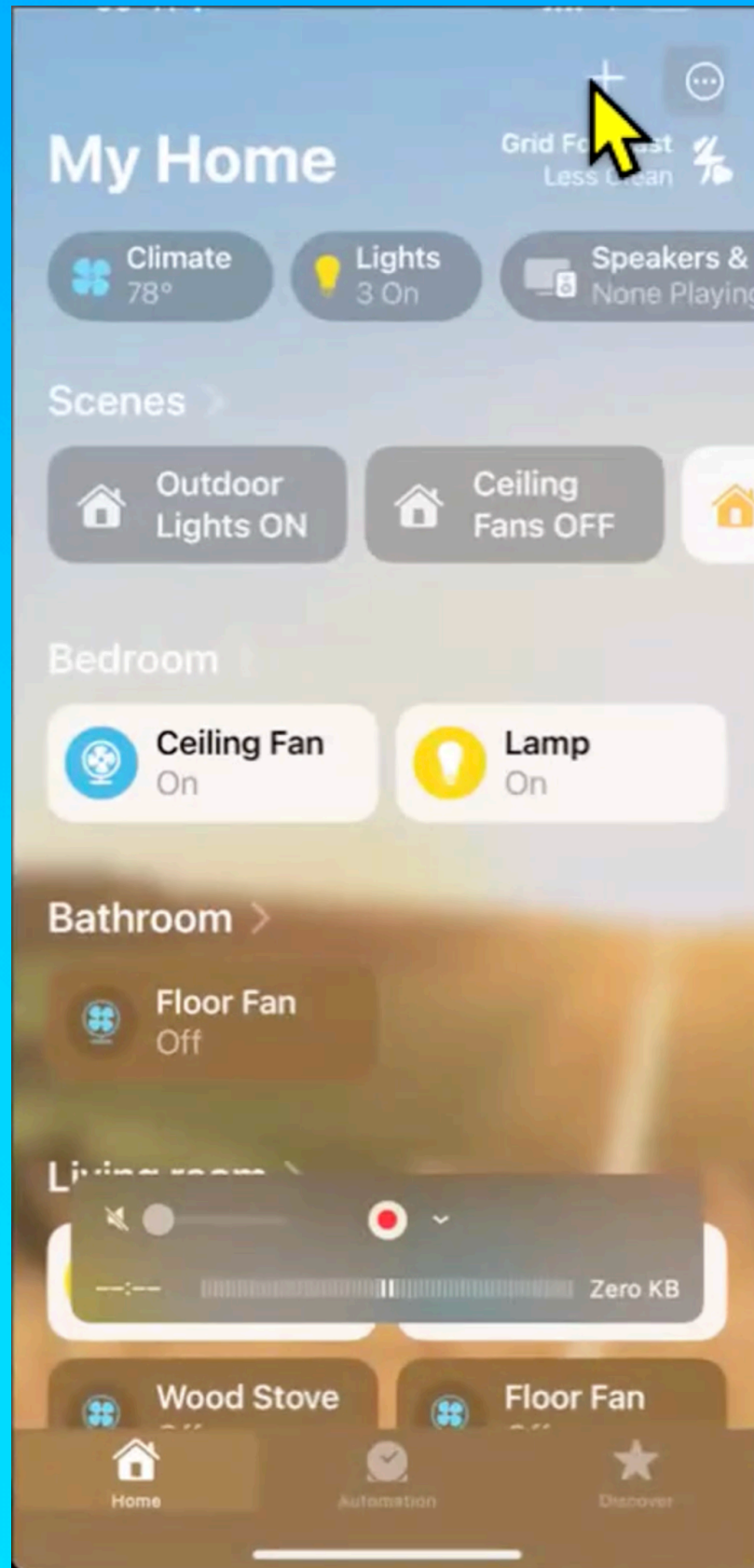
Belkin smart plugs and wall switches

In January I gave a presentation on Belkin smart plugs and smart wall switches. I have 14 Belkin devices in our house, and I use them to control and schedule interior and exterior lights, ceiling fans, and floor fans. Each device has its own QR code which your phone uses to add it to the Home app. I like to peal off the QR code and stick it to its corresponding device in case I ever need to reload the device.

https://www.belkin.com/products/wemo-smart-home/

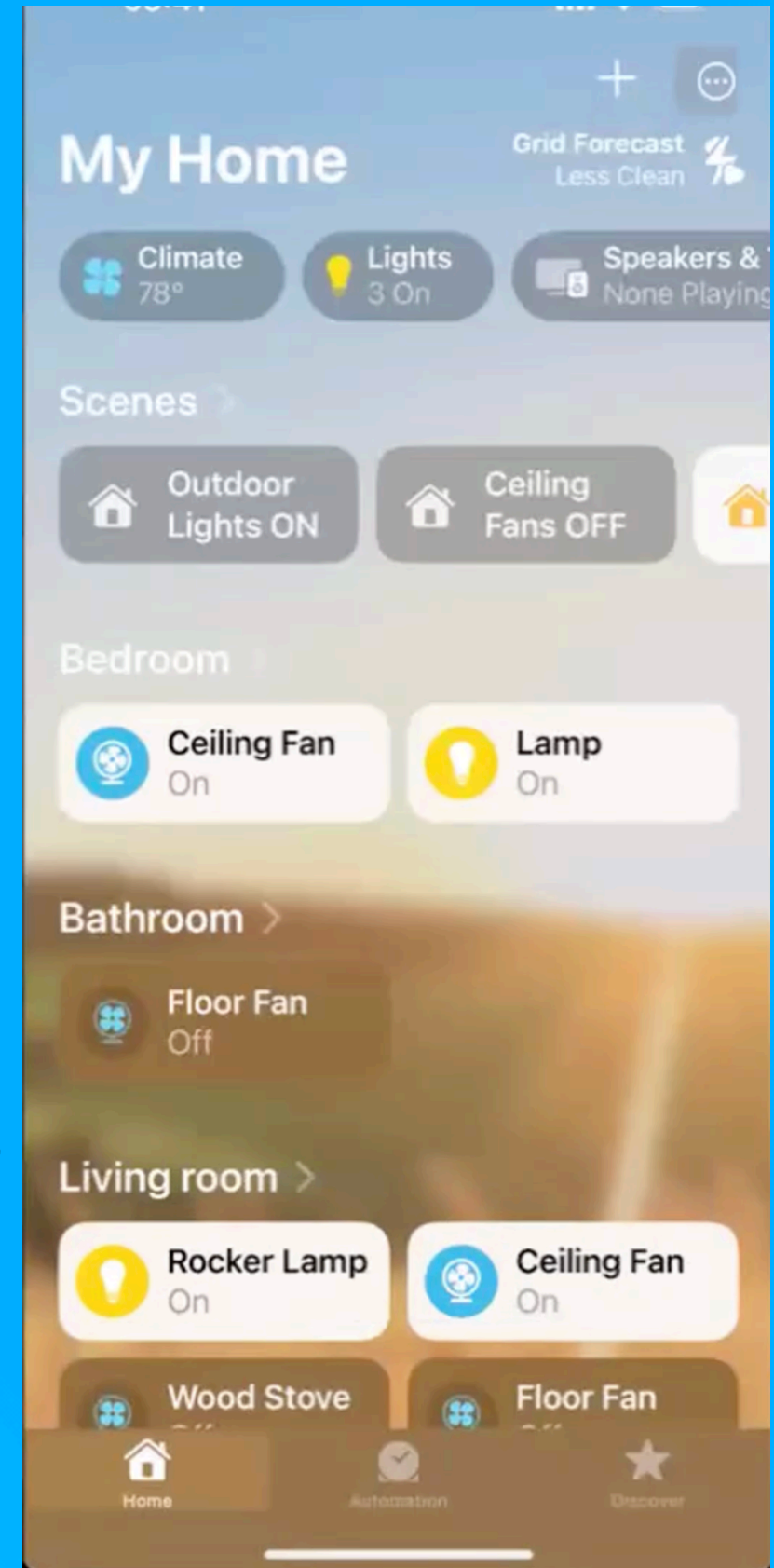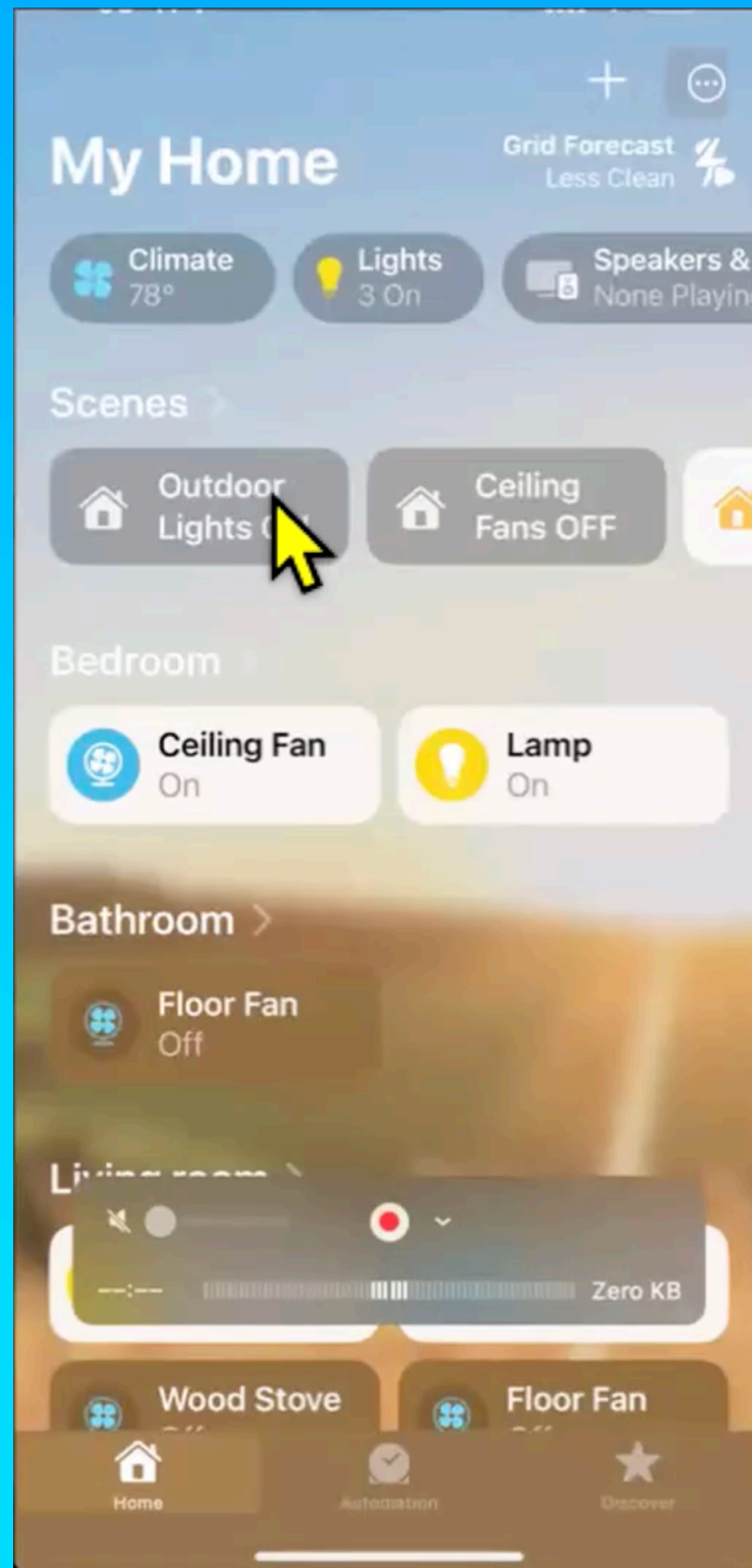https://www.tomsguide.com/us/apple-homekit-faq,review-4195.html

Here are some of the features of the Home app:

ADD A DEVICE—In the upper right corner is a + sign. Tap on that to add a device to the Home app. The app will activate your phone's camera to scan the device's QR code. Your phone will coordinate the connection between your router and the device, which usually about a minute.
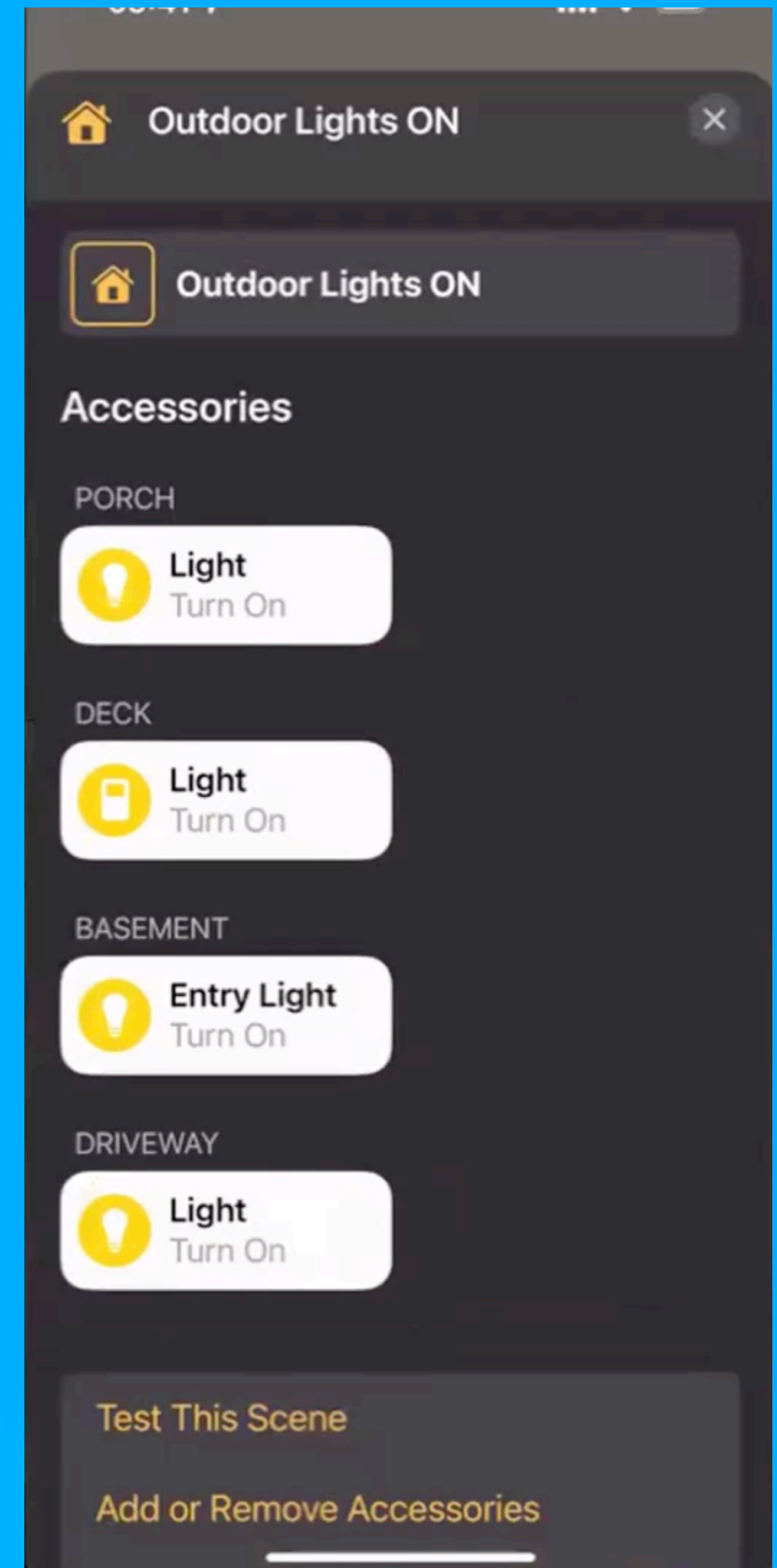
NAME A DEVICE—Once the device is in the Home app you can name it, such as Table Lamp or Floor Fan or Ceiling Fan. You can organize the devices according to where they are located, such as bedroom or living room or patio.

My Home

Climate 78°
Lights 3 On
Speakers & None Playing

Scenes

Outdoor Lights ON
Ceiling Fans OFF

Bedroom

Ceiling Fan On
Lamp On

Bathroom

Floor Fan Off

Living room

Rocker Lamp On
Ceiling Fan On

Wood Stove
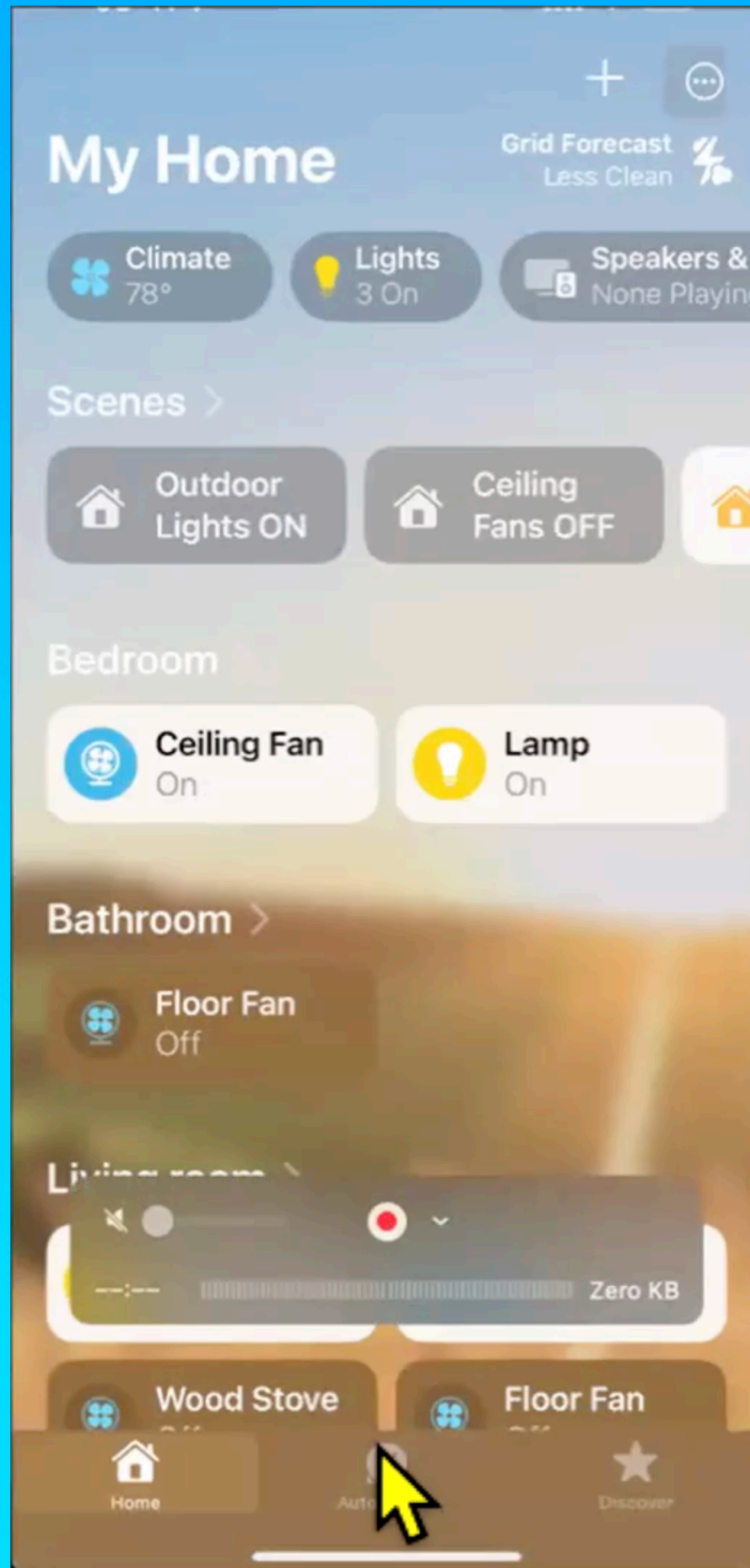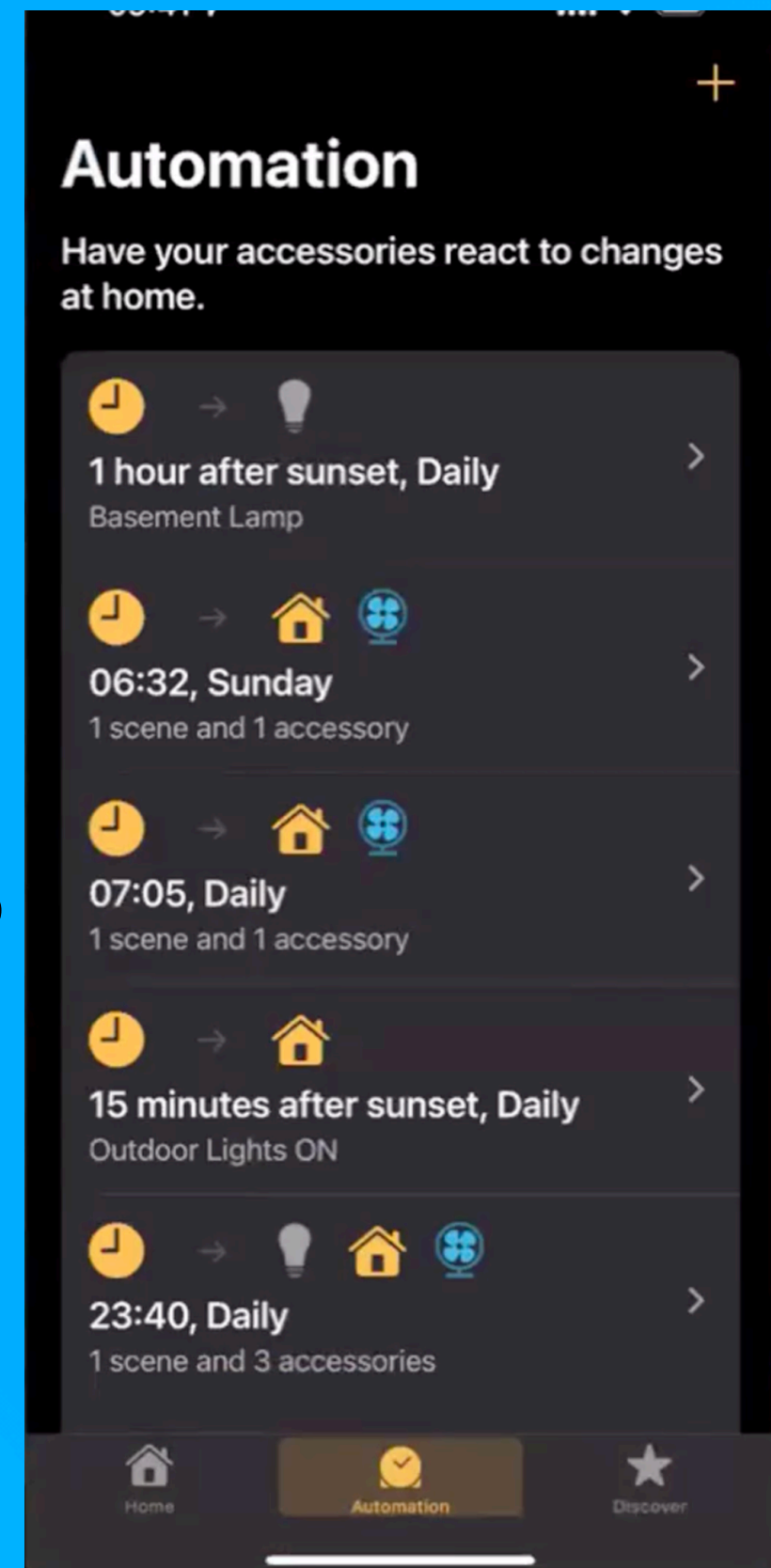Floor Fan

Home   Automation   Discover

SCENES—You can also group devices into "Scenes." For example, I have a scene called Outdoor Lights. My porch light, deck light, driveway light, and basement entry light are all part of the same scene.

AUTOMATION—At the bottom of the screen the middle tab is Automation. Use the + sign in the upper right to create an automation. You can a set device or a scene or even a room to turn ON or OFF at specified times.

AUTOMATION—An option I really like lets you schedule devices according to sunrise and sunset or even a specified number of minutes or hours before sunrise or sunset. I have my exterior lights set to turn on at 30 minutes after sunset and turn off 30 minutes before sunrise. Before I started using the smart devices I used timers to control my outdoor light. I had to repeated adjust the ON and OFF times as the nights got shorter or longer. The Home app eliminates the need to make those repeated adjustments. And, of course, every device and scene can be controlled manually without affecting their schedules. During a recent storm the afternoon sky was as dark as night, but sunset wasn't for another hour. With one tap I was able to turn on all of the exterior lights.

REMOTE— Since the devices work with your home WiFi, you can control them from anyplace your phone can get on the Internet.

DESKTOP—Apple also has a Home app for Mac that does everything the iPhone app does.

POWER OUTAGES—A few times since I've installed these smart devices we've had power outages. At first I thought I had to go to every device and repeat the setup process. But on one occasion we were away when the power went out, and when we go home I discovered the power was back on and all of the devices had reconnected to WiFi by themselves. And they retained their schedules. It takes several minutes because our router had to restart first, but after several minutes everything returned to normal on its own.