



News & Views

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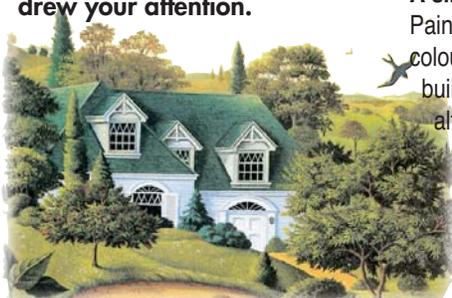
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Talking about CURB APPEAL

Curb appeal, like personal taste, is difficult to define - it's a *pleasing* blend of architecture, colour, design elements, landscaping and other touches that make a house attractive and appealing at first glance. A home with curb appeal makes a favourable first impression, one that generates interest...making passers-by want to linger and take a closer look.

If you want to attract prospective buyers, the curb appeal of your property warrants attention. Many home buyers decide whether or not to look inside a house based on its curb appeal. Whether they see your house as they drive by, photos on the internet, or as they arrive for an open house or showing - that first impression of your home is crucial. Even if you are not planning to sell any time in the near future, improving and maintaining, the curb appeal of your biggest asset is a wise choice.

Take a stroll around your neighbourhood - take note of those homes that have 'curb appeal'. Ask yourself exactly what aspects of these homes drew your attention.



Take a look at the big picture - and do the obvious.

Everything should be clean and in good repair. Sounds simple but the truth often is that after you've lived with fading trim, shutters hanging at an angle, and scratches on the front door - for a year or so - you probably don't even see them anymore, you've become accustomed to the way things looks. Ask a family member, friend - or your realtor, to look at your home. A new set of eyes offers a new perspective and will see all the minor fixups that are needed, and may provide you with some ideas! Identifying and focusing on your home's faults, as well as its positive features, is a good place to start. Ask a few questions... *What are the flaws? - how can I improve them? What are my home's best features - how can I enhance them?*

Here's an example...

A garage door at the front of the house presents a not-so-attractive dominant feature.

A simple solution:

Paint the garage door and trim in a colour to 'blend' with the surrounding building materials. Then choose an alternative focal point, say the front door/entranceway. Enhance this element by painting the door a strong contrasting colour, polishing or sprucing up the hardware, add homey touches

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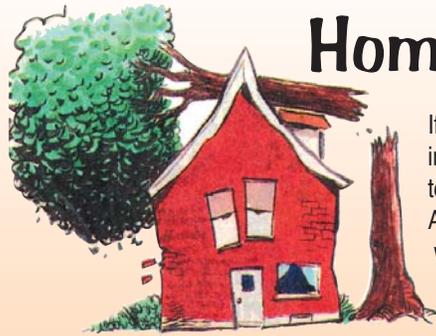


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like a flower pot - or two, brimming with seasonal flowers or foliage, a welcoming wreath on the door, and an interesting door mat...*presto!* - improved curb appeal.

Whether you are buying or selling real estate, embarking on a home renovation, or refinancing, talk with a professional who can provide you with expert advice.





Home Inventory

If you don't already have a home inventory list now is a good time to consider making one. A home inventory list will provide you with a record of what you own, as well as the value of your possessions,

should a break in, fire, flood or other hazard strike your home. Be sure to store a copy of your inventory list away from your home, in a safe-deposit box, at the home of an out-of-town relative or friend, or at your lawyer's office. Once you have an inventory list make a point to review and update it once a year.

Check Your Home Owner Insurance Policy

How is your insurance policy today? Is it up-to-date? Many homeowners don't review their coverage until it's too late. It's a good idea to make sure that your home insurance policy accurately reflects the current value of your assets.

If it does not, it should be adjusted accordingly. If you have questions about any aspect of your coverage, take the time to review it with your insurance agent.



Around the HOUSE

Roofing Checkup

It's a good idea to examine your roof every spring (again in the fall is a good idea too) for damage. You needn't haul out the ladders - and, **don't climb onto the roof for a closer**

look - just scan the roof, on all sides, using a pair of binoculars. If you recognize the warning signs you can troubleshoot and make minor roofing repairs before small problems turn into major ones.

❑ Shingles...cracked, curled, loose or missing shingles are a message that repairs are needed. If the shingles along the bottom of the roof appear raised, it might be a sign of damage from ice-damming. Ice-damming happens when snow at the top of the roof melts when warmed by heat escaping from the attic - the water flows down the roof under the snow and freezes again at the unheated edge of the eaves - this ice acts as a dam, pushing more melted water back up the roof and under the shingles - where it can leak through, causing major damage.

❑ Check metal flashings around the chimney or in the valleys at roof joints. If flashings are corroded, cracked or have lifted, this may indicate that water has seeped in and damaged the roof deck.

❑ Check the attic for signs of water leakage. Special trouble spots are the joints where rafters or beams pass under a roof junction, the rafters along the eaves and around plumbing vents and the chimney. Look for water stained or rotting wood.

❑ Be alert and watch for damp spots or stains on a ceiling or wall, around the edges of a skylight, or in the basement.

❑ Check exterior siding, roof edges and fascia for water stains, crumbling, and spongy wood. The cause could be water coming through the roof or malfunctioning gutters and downspouts. Don't wait for heavy rains to find out if gutters and downspouts are clean and free-flowing!

❑ Watch for mineral deposits in your gutters. These tiny particles indicate that roofing is getting old and worn.

Decks

A wooden deck should last 15 to 20 years - if you take good care of it. If not, you could be looking at expensive repairs or replacement within 10 years or less.

🔧 **Wash** it thoroughly using plain water, a power washer (you can rent one) and a stiff-bristled broom. Debris, such as dirt and leaves, absorb moisture and hasten rot, so be diligent about cleaning cracks and between the deck and the house.

🔧 **Inspect** carefully for any sign of deterioration (discolouration, mildew, popping nails or screws etc.) particularly at butted joints or other points where wood touches wood.

🔧 **Replace** damaged or rotting boards and drive in or replace protruding nails or screws.

🔧 **Check** the concrete footings, which should rise 15 cm (6 inches) above the ground to protect the supporting posts from moisture. If the footings are sinking or lifting, your deck is improperly supported - you may need the services of a professional to correct this problem.

🔧 **Ensure** that stairs or steps do not rest directly on the ground; they should be set in concrete or rest on concrete or crushed stone.

🔧 **Seal** or stain your deck with a water-repellent product (do choose an environmentally friendly one).



Parenting

The quickest way for a parent to get a child's attention is to sit down and look comfortable.

Lane Olinkhouse

Home is where you are loved the most and act the worst.

Marjorie Fay Hinckley

If the family were a fruit, it would be an orange, a circle of sections, held together but separate - each segment distinct.

Letty Cottin Pogrebin

The way we talk to our children becomes their inner voice.

Peggy O'Mara

Behind every young child who believes in himself is a parent who believed first.

Matthew Jacobson

Human beings are the only creatures on earth that allow their children to come back home.

Bill Cosby

We do not develop habits of genuine love automatically.

We learn by watching effective role models - most specifically by observing how our parents express love for each other day in and day out.

Josh McDowell

There are two lasting bequests we can give our children.

One is roots.

The other is wings.

Hodding Carter Jr.

Around the HOUSE



Do-it-yourself projects can be enjoyable and very rewarding, but, you must take proper precautions to prevent injuries. **Safety comes first!**

Protect your back

- ✓ When you need to move heavy items, use the tools the pros rely on; a wheelbarrow, dolly, or an extra set of helping hands.
- ✓ When you do lift - lift properly. Keep your back straight and your legs bent whenever lifting anything; whether it's lightweight or heavy.
- ✓ When carrying materials or supplies, do so in a way that's least harmful to your back. Usually this means keeping materials waist high and centered between your legs.

Dress properly

- ✓ Wear long sleeves and pants. Use safety gear; gloves, safety glasses, ear plugs, for certain projects a hard hat is warranted.
- ✓ Proper footwear is important - choose footwear suited to the task at hand; running shoes are well suited when you're painting - if you're handling lumber or drywall, steel-toed work boots are the better - and safer - choice.



Ladders

- ✓ Set the ladder close to your work. If your hips go outside the ladder's side rails, you are overreaching and risking a fall.
- ✓ When setting up a stepladder, make sure all four legs are supported and the spreaders are fully opened.
- ✓ Lean a straight or extension ladder against the house so that the distance from the foundation of the ladder's base is about one-quarter of the ladder's height. Check to see that the tops and bottoms of both ladder rails are making firm contact.
- ✓ Always face the ladder when ascending or descending. Grip the ladder firmly with both hands and place your feet squarely on each rung. Do not turn around on the ladder or proceed as if you were on a conventional stairway.
- ✓ Don't stand on the top of a stepladder. On a straight or extension ladder, stop when your shoulders are even with the top of the rails.
- ✓ Wear slip-resistant footwear when working on any ladder.
- ✓ Don't carry tools loosely in your pocket; they could fall on someone below. Before carrying any materials up a ladder, make sure you have a secure place to put them when you get to the top.

Protect your skin

- ✓ Pros always exercise extreme caution when working with chemicals - so should you. Even if a chemical appears harmless, the chances it could rub off someplace else, such as in your eyes or on the kids or a pet, is great enough that extreme caution should be practiced at all times.
- ✓ Avoid touching your eyes and even your clothes, as you might forget you rubbed off some chemicals on your clothes and then use your shirt to wipe sweat off your face.
- ✓ Sand and aggregate can be abrasive to your skin. Wear long sleeved shirts and pants, and water-proof gloves.

Protect your eyes

Whether you're welding, laying cement, working with a compressor, sanding drywall or working on a rooftop, be very aware of the dangers and **always, always**, wear safety goggles or glasses.

House Plants

Last minute reminder

If you have house plants needing to be transplanted - now is the time to do it. The best time to repot indoor plants is from February through May. Your plants should be transplanted into a 'slightly' larger, and deeper, container if roots are; stretching out of the drain holes, or, taking up more than 3/4 of the container.

Here's how to Repot.

Cover the drainage hole(s) on the 'outside' of the new planter with a piece of tape. Fill the pot with enough potting soil so that the top of the root ball of your plant will sit approx 2.5cm (one inch) below the rim of the planter.

Remove the plant from its original pot and centre it in the new container. Fill in around it with more potting soil - but be sure not to cover the top of the root ball with the new soil. Gently work the soil in

around the sides of the plant in order to loosen any clumps of soil and remove air pockets, but don't compact or try to pack down the soil.

Remove the tape and water the plant thoroughly - until excess begins seeping out of the drainage hole(s).

Before putting away your potting soil, check the soil level in your new container, watering will likely have caused the soil to settle, if so, top it up with a bit more soil.



To encourage birds to nest in your yard this spring, be sure to make nest building materials like string, yarn, and fluff from your dryer screen available. Since birds will defend their nesting territories, put the materials out in more than one location. Keep nesting materials available all summer, since some birds build more than one nest during breeding season.



Fast Facts Radishes

- ▶ Radishes are a member of the mustard family (Cruciferae) - explains their sharp taste!
- ▶ Radishes are related to broccoli and watercress.
- ▶ Radishes can be red, white, black, purple, rose and even lavender.
- ▶ Nutritionally; although more than 90% water, radishes contain as much potassium as bananas, are an excellent source of vitamin C and folate, and a good source of magnesium.
- ▶ Storage; remove and discard leaves, place radishes in a plastic bag and store in the refrigerator for up to a week.
- ▶ In the garden; radishes are a cool-season crop and do not do well during hot summers. They will tolerate partial shade, require very little room and mature quickly. They are well suited to small vegetable gardens, mixed into flower beds and containers.



Garden Fresh! Radish Pickles

A quick, easy, and crunchy side dish....Makes 6 portions.

INGREDIENTS

6 cups	1.5 Litres	thinly sliced radishes
3/4 tsp	4mL	salt
3 Tbsp	45mL	rice vinegar
1 1/2 tsp	7mL	sugar
1 1/2 tsp	7mL	sesame oil
1 1/2	1 1/2	green onion sliced, green part of the onion only

PREPARATION

- Into a bowl, toss radishes and salt.
- Let stand for 15 minutes.
- Drain and gently squeeze out liquid.
- Add vinegar, sugar, sesame oil and green onion.
- Toss to combine.
- Refrigerate covered until ready to serve.

Nutritional Info per serving Calories: 30

Sodium: 171mg Calcium: 2mg Iron: 3mg Vitamin A: 1mg Vitamin C: 45mg Folate: 15mg

This 'n That

Calling all Volunteers!

Don't worry if you feel you don't have the time to volunteer on a regular basis. Many organizations and groups will welcome your assistance whether you have time to help for one season, a special event, a single day, or even a single afternoon. Maybe it's to help out at an annual fundraiser or special event, an afternoon spent sorting donations for the local library's table sale, a day spent helping to groom a walking or hiking trail, or an afternoon spent selling tickets at an area mall.

Need a reason to volunteer?

...here are just a few

- ❖ Give back
- ❖ Learn new skills
- ❖ Build friendships and have fun
- ❖ Believe in/support a cause
- ❖ Make a difference in your community
- ❖ Be a good role model for your children
- ❖ Satisfaction from accomplishment
- ❖ If not you then WHO?

Words



- The study of word origins is called **etymology**.
- **'Second string'** meaning 'replacement or backup' dates back to the Middle Ages when an archer always carried a second string in case the one on his bow broke.
- **'Long in the tooth'**, meaning 'old', was originally used to describe horses. As horses age, their gums recede, giving the impression that their teeth are growing. The longer the teeth look, the older the horse.
- **'Strengths'** is the longest word in the English language with just one vowel.
- The word **'set'** has the largest number of separate definitions in the English language, with over 190 definitions according to the Oxford Dictionary.
- The shortest complete sentence in the English language is **'Go'**.

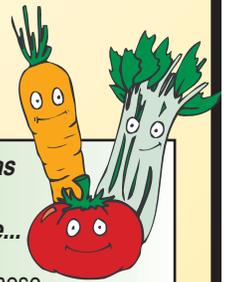
Honeybees



- A bee must visit 2 million flowers to make half a kilo (1 pound) of honey.
- A worker bee will make 1/10 of a teaspoon of honey in her lifetime.
- A honey bee will gather nectar from 50 to 100 flowers during 1 collection trip.
- A bee flies over 55,000 miles to produce half a kilo (1 pound) of honey.
- Bees fly 24 km/hr (15 mph).
- A bee has 4 wings which beat 20 times per second - that's 1200 beats per minute!
- Per capita, Canadians consume 1 kilo (2.2 pounds) per year.
- 'Apiculturist' is the technical term for beekeeping.
- A single bee colony can produce more than 45kg (100 pounds) of extra honey - this is what is harvested by the beekeeper. Some beekeepers in Alberta and Saskatchewan harvest over 136kg (300 lbs) of honey per colony.
- It takes one colony of honey bees (appx 40,000 bees) to pollinate an acre of fruit trees.
- A bee colony contains; one Queen, 30-60,000 Worker bees (undeveloped females) and several hundred Drones (male bees).
- The average life of a honey bee during the working season is 6 weeks.
- Nectar gathered by bees contains about 70% water - honey is about 17% water. Bees remove the excess moisture from nectar by rapidly fanning their wings over the open cells in the hive.

In the Garden

Veggie Patch



TLC for Tools

- ▶ Gather all metal tools; spade, hoe, pruners, shovel, trowel etc. Plop them into a bubble bath of liquid dish detergent and hot water. Use steel wool to scrub off stubborn stains and rust.
- ▶ Let tools air dry, then sharpen blades. Protect them from corrosion with a light coating of lubricant.
- ▶ Inspect tools with wooden handles for nicks and chips. Use sandpaper to lightly smooth - then rub on some linseed oil with a soft cloth.

Dealing with Pests!

Before using a harmful herbicide, insecticide or pesticide in your garden first try an organic solution. Here are just a few simple solutions.

- ① Keep your garden clean. By cleaning up spent plants, weeds and other garden debris, you eliminate hiding, and breeding, places for pests and diseases.
- ① Mint, marigolds, daffodils, hyacinth, garlic and basil serve as nature's repellent for many insects and garden pests - try interplanting amidst your veggies.
- ① Use compost and organic fertilizers to grow healthy plants. Strong, healthy plants are more pest resistant.
- ① A couple of bird baths (bird houses too) located near your garden will encourage insect-eating birds to visit often!
- ① Encourage beneficial insects like Ladybugs (who gobble up aphids and whiteflies - and their alligator-like larvae eat even more) and Nematodes (who eat flea eggs and larvae from lawns & gardens).

*Nothing tastes as good as homegrown veggies!
Here's some sage advice...*

Be Selective. Grow only those vegetables that your family likes to eat. And, 1 or 2 plants of each veggie is ample. In most cases, choose to plant your garden from seedling plants, not seeds.

Start small. Don't grow too much - 1 or 2 plants of each veggie is ample. And, keep things as simple as you can! **Remember...** *it's better to be proud of a small garden than to be frustrated by a large one!*

Choose the right site. Vegetables like sun - to thrive they need at least 6 hours of direct sunlight each day. Try to locate your garden someplace that you'll walk by every day - close to a water source and on a relatively level plot. Avoid locating your garden too close to trees - a tree's root system will rob your garden of both nutrients and water!

Soil basics. The best soil; well-drained, fertile, amended with compost. Consider raised beds which will allow soil to drain faster plus you won't be compacting the soil by walking on it, so plants will grow stronger.

Kids love to grow veggies. Introduce your children to gardening by providing them with their own spot to plant and care for. Carrots, cherry tomatoes, pole or runner beans, green onions, peas and corn are fun and easy-to-grow.