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Spring Home Improvement Month

Latest do-it-yourself Ideas for Home Decorating and Remodelling both Indoors and Out.



Decorating

Effective Lighting

Wallpapering

Floor covering

Landscaping

Flower Gardens

Patios

Painting

Beautiful lush green healthy lawns-why they matter

Lawns, turf and large open green spaces, such as, parks, golf courses and sports fields are critical to our environment – especially in urban areas. They contribute to our quality of life in many important ways:

• Cleaning the air by neutralizing pollutants and trapping dirt, dust and other airborne particles

• Keeping us cool – the front lawns of eight average homes have the cooling effect of 70 tons of air conditioning – the equivalent of central air for 23 average-sized homes!

• Reducing noise levels by 20 to 30 per cent – in cities

• Diminishing soil erosion and flooding by absorbing rainwater

• Recharging our groundwater supply by reducing run-off to impermeable surfaces, such as roads, sidewalks, parking lots and patios.

Remember the healthier the lawn, the bigger the pay-off! The lawn care experts at Scotts Canada offer homeowners a number of tips to help keep their lawns healthy this season:

Seeding – A Good Start is Half the Battle

• Prepare the soil properly and keep seed moist after planting

• Buy quality seed, such as Scotts® Pure Premium® for a quick germinating, thicker, weed-free lawn. Cheaper brands and no-name products often contain weeds.

Fertilizing – Fertile Ground Will Produce

• Select a quality fertilizer and read package labels noting type,

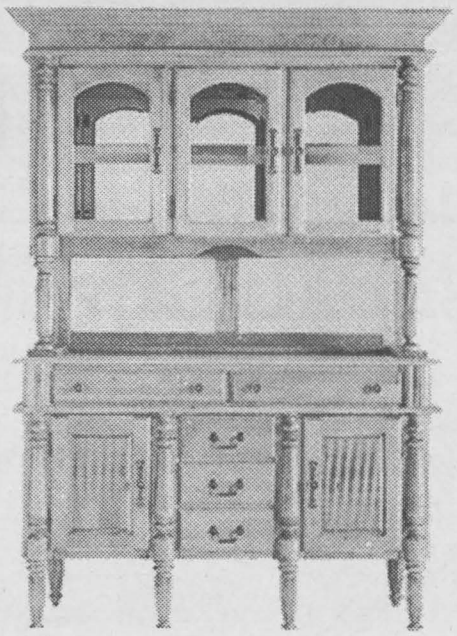
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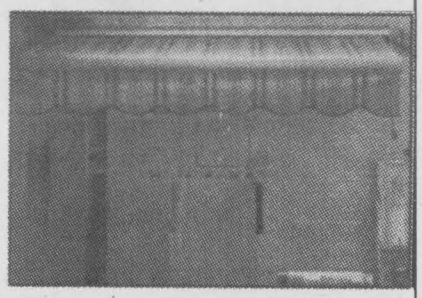
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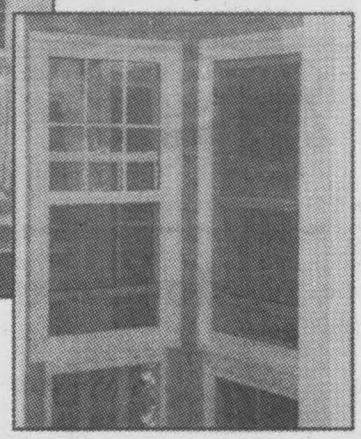


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Your Next move-choosing a neighbourhood

When it comes to choosing your next home, perhaps the Biggest question is deciding where you want to live Whether it's old or new, urban or suburban, In a big city or a small town, the neighbourhood you live in will affect your quality of life, affordability and the environment for years to come.

To help you select your next neighbourhood, start by looking for some of the following features

• A village atmosphere - Does it have safe, pleasant streets for walking, meeting the neighbours, or where your children can play safely?

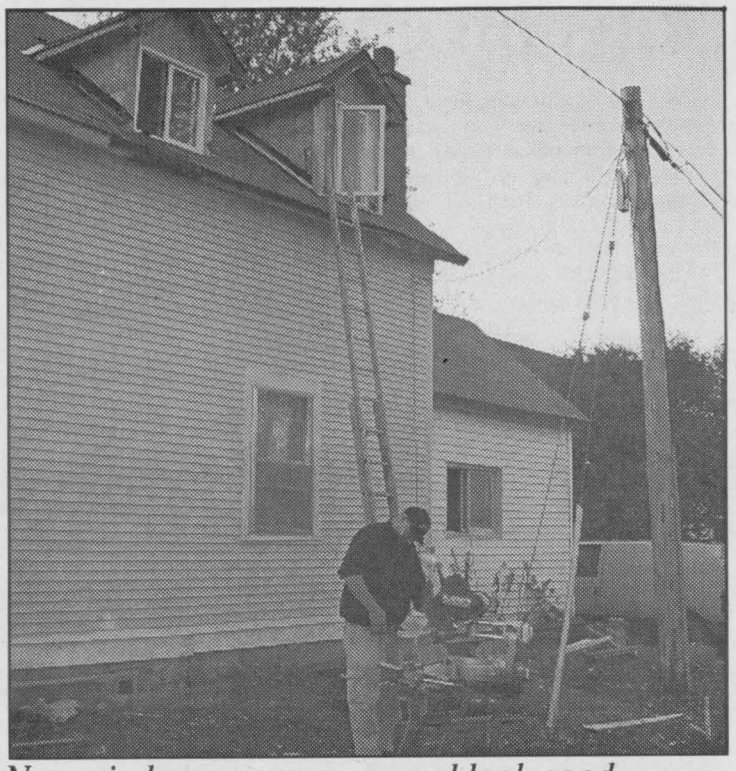
• Value for the money - Consider long-term expenses, such as the energy savings that a smaller house with shared walls, like a townhouse, can bring, or living where you only need one car, or none at all.

• A safe neighbourhood - Homes close to the sidewalk with porches and windows out front allow people to look out for each other. This is also a neighbourhood where cars move slowly.

• A place where daily trips can be made on foot, bike or bus - Living where work, schools, shopping and recreation are close enough to walk, ride your bike or take the bus can mean spending less time in traffic not to mentioning good for your head health and pocketbook. Less car use is also better for air quality and reduces greenhouse gas emissions.

• A neighbourhood that preserves the countryside - When land in the neighbourhood is used

Please turn to page 6

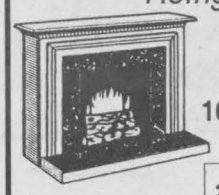


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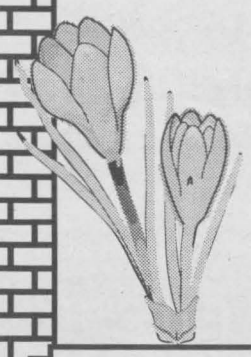
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Tips on choosing the right paint

(NC) - With emerging paint products and finishes on the market, the selection of a quality paint product is turning into a time-consuming process. Here's a helpful list of key features you will need to know before you begin your search for the product that will best suit your needs:

• **Spatter free paint:** How does spattering occur and how it can be prevented?

"Spattering is generally caused by poor quality paint," explained Dominique Pépin, Senior Brand Manager at Sico, the largest Canadian paint manufacturer. "Usually the paint has insufficient pigment and is too thin to adhere properly." When the paint brush bristles spring back, they literally project paint in all directions. This is an experience we've all had at one time or another. With a spatter free paint, there's less preparation, less cleaning and less paint loss, all of which makes your job much easier.

• **Easy application:** The difference between a chore and decorating pleasure.

There's nothing mysterious about the ease of application. When a paint is easy to apply, it transfers easily from the roller onto the painting surface. The less resistance there is the more freely the roller glides. One way to measure the effectiveness of a paint product and its ease of application is to look at its "rate of spreading". For example, one of the most effective spreading paints on the market today is Sico Cashmere. One gallon of Sico Cashmere's 100 per cent acrylic formula covers 480 to 560 square feet thanks to its unique technology using thermoplastic beads.

• **High hiding:** Are you really getting a good deal when you buy an inexpensive paint? If you have to apply more paint, you are wasting time, money and effort. That's because cheap paint is not high hiding. "High hiding refers to a paint's property to mask the colour of the surface to which it is applied," said Pépin. "Obviously, the higher the hiding power, the less paint needed to cover a surface."

• **Washable:** How will the upkeep be on your inexpensive paint? Most paints are not really washable. The problem is when you have a mark on your surface you inevitably remove the paint on your wall by trying to wash off the stain. "When choosing paint, try to look for a product that will provide you with all the features that are so important when you paint (easy application, spatter free, high hiding and washable)," added Pépin.

For information with regards to choosing the right paint for your paint projects visit the tips and advice section at sico.ca.

CONTINUED

Lawns

Continued from Page 2

usage – usually one application in Spring and another in Fall is sufficient

application timing and proper

• Choose slow nitrogen release fertilizers for consistent, controlled feeding that promotes strong root development.

Mowing – A Cut That Never Goes Out of Style

• Keep mower blades sharp and don't cut too short – never cut more than 1/3 the length of the grass blades in a single mowing

• Allow grass cuttings, if not too heavy, to remain on the lawn and decompose, providing valuable nutrients for your lawn.

Green Tip

Install a low-flow aerator shower head. These shower heads are inexpensive and easily installed. They flow at just 2.5 gallons per minute. You'll find the spray just as pleasing. You will cut your shower water usage in half and reduce your water heating expenses. Also, shut off the water while lathering up.

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This Spring beware of kids' stuff at garage sales

(NC) - Garage sales today are as popular as ever, and with good reason. You can't beat the prices and the quality is often as good as new products bought from the store. There's also the thrill of stumbling across an old treasure. With this said, however, you should also be aware that things bought at garage sales are not all perfect. Some, for example, can be hazardous to your health, particularly when it comes to kids stuff. Here is a list of second hand items that you should be particularly careful about when buying:

Baby gates that have large diamond-shaped or " V " openings at the top are not allowed to be sold in Canada. A child's head can get caught in these openings and the child could strangle.

Car seats must meet the Canadian Motor Vehicle Safety Standard and carry the compliance label stating the height and weight of the child for which the seat is designed. Detailed instructions, plus all straps and parts, (including the tether strap for forward-facing seats), must also accompany the seat. Do not buy a seat that is older than the manufacturer's recommended age. Avoid seats that are cracked or broken, and ask about the history of a second-hand seat. It should not be re-used if it has ever been involved in a crash.

Children's sleepwear — Loose garments made of cotton or cotton blends, including pajamas, nightgowns and bathrobes, cannot be sold because they burn more easily than those made of polyester, nylon or polyester/nylon blends.

Cribs made before the fall of 1986 do not meet current safety standards. In fact it is illegal to sell them. Cribs that meet the regulations must have information printed on or affixed to them that identifies the manufacturer, model number, date of manufacture and assembly instructions. Make sure the crib is in good repair with all of the parts.

Some older playpens may have bolts sticking out that can catch on a child's clothing. Watch for these and for worn or faulty mechanisms on the folding sides. Playpen mesh must be made of small mosquito-type netting. Large open holes do not meet current standards and could be an entanglement hazard for fingers or buttons. Ensure that all locking mechanisms work and that set-up instructions are included.

Carriages and strollers made before 1985 may not meet current safety standards. Strollers must come with a lap belt, or some safety restraint that is solidly attached to the seat or frame. Ensure the brakes, as well as locking mechanisms on folding models, are in working order. Make sure that the wheels are solidly attached.





Siding creates a definite new look

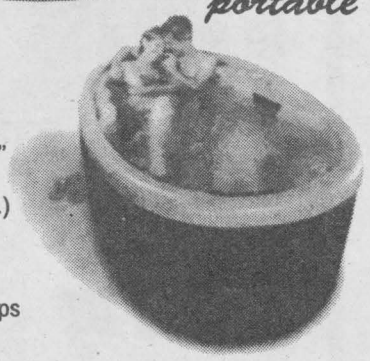
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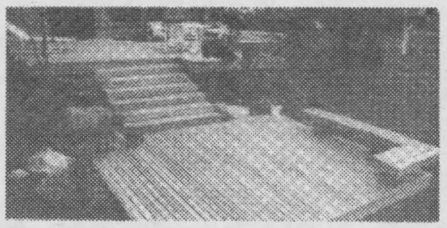
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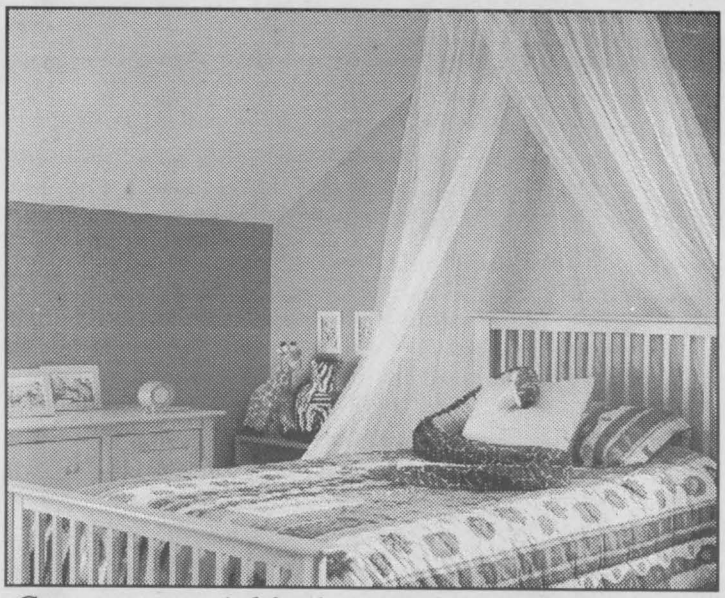
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Choosing

Continued from Page 3

efficiently, rural and natural areas outside it are preserved and servicing costs are lower.

• A neighbourhood you can stay in, year after year - A neighbourhood with a wide variety of homes lets you stay close to where you've put down roots, even as your age, income, family and housing needs change.

To determine whether your next neighbourhood meets these and other criteria, try asking yourself a few simple questions, including.

• Is land used efficiently?

• Can I save money by living here?

• Could I stay in the neighbourhood If my housing needs change?

• Is It easy to get to know my neighbours and local shopkeepers?

•Is it a safe, pleasant place to walk?

• Can I use my car less or not at all?

•Have natural areas neighbourhood been preserved?

For more information or a free copy of Your Next Move: Choosing a Neighbourhood with Sustainable Features, ask CMHC at 1-800-668-2642 or visit our Web site at www.cmhc.ca.

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Gardening-a popular activity

It's no surprise that gardening has become such a popular activity among Canadians. Aside from being a relaxing, creative pastime and great exercise, caring for a garden provides us with a welcome reason to get outside and enjoy our short Canadian summers to the fullest. If you're a novice looking to join the growing ranks of gardening aficionados, here are the essential tips to help you get growing.

Start from the ground up. If the soil in your yard has been previously planted, determine if you want to keep what's there. You may need to add additional fertilizer if the soil is depleted (to find out, take a small baggie-full to the garden centre). If you're buying soil, your best bet is "triple mix", which contains manure, bark and peat moss.

Next, remove weeds and debris and prune existing plants. Now you're ready to evaluate your space and decide how you want your garden to look. Things to consider: does the area get a lot of shade or is it mostly sunny? Do you want colourful flowers, or greenery? For a lower-maintenance garden, choose perennials, which, once planted, return year after year. If, however, you think you'll want to change the landscape from year to year, look to annuals, which live for one season.

When buying plants, consider their height when fully grown – don't just judge by their size in the garden centre. Also note that some plants need more upkeep than others, so be sure to check first and choose plants that suit your gardening lifestyle.

Once the plants are in the ground, you'll need to maintain your garden and keep pests and weeds at bay. Here, tools become your most important investment. Buy the best you can afford – you'll be working with them for years to come.

Your basic tool kit should include a watering hose and attachment, shovel, trowel, fork, rake, pruning tools and sturdy gloves.

The most important thing for novice gardeners to remember: your garden is a work in progress.

-News Canada



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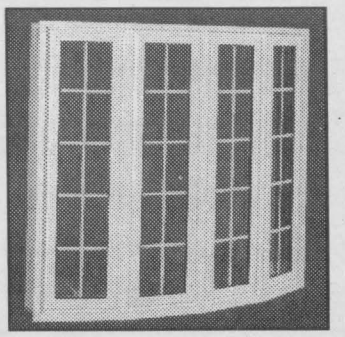
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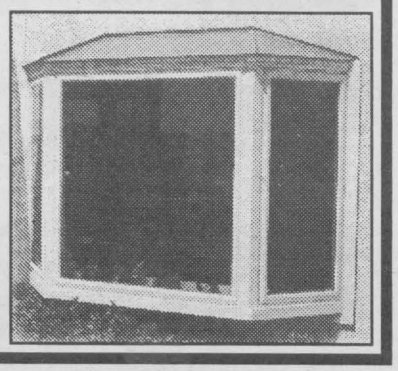
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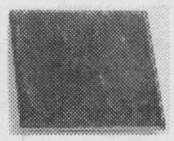
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