



News & Views

Presented to you by

Your Realtors for Life...

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DECLUTTERING YOUR HOME Some Simple Solutions...

Are your closets crowded, drawers jumbled, shelves overflowing? If the car won't fit in the garage - and you've been thinking about adding a shed in the backyard for extra storage space - here's a few tips and ideas to help declutter your home!

Keep in mind, decluttering isn't about perfection - it's about clearing up areas in your home that inhibit proper functioning; areas that make you feel bad when you look at them or areas that simply don't work! Remember to start with whatever irritates you the most, organizing the most annoying clutter zone will be motivating!

Do one job at a time. It's easy to get pulled from one clutter zone to another and the first area you tackle will be the most difficult. Stay focused on the one area until you've completed it.

Set time limits for decluttering - and start small. Initially work in '1 hour' bouts, even if this means you'll need 2, 3 or even more sessions to complete an area (like the kitchen, garage or entranceway closet).

Sort as you go. Use 4 plastic laundry hampers - (they're easy to carry and see into, best of all, they're reuseable) label them; **Keep in this room, Store elsewhere, Garage Sale, Not sure.**

Organize what you plan to keep in this area/room and distribute the rest into the area or rooms where they should be. Choose an area in the basement or garage to store your 'Garage Sale' items. Let no

box go unmarked. Use masking tape, a label maker, or a permanent-ink marker to label any box of items 'to-be-stored' - 'garage sale' - 'donation' etc.

Get everyone in your household on the decluttering bandwagon! Make a 10 minute 'pickup' on the way to bed part of everyone's daily routine.

- ▶ Assign each person in your family a room, or area, that they are responsible for keeping clutter-free and organized.
- ▶ Establish a specific place for the things you use every day - hooks for keys & backpacks, a basket for mail etc.
- ▶ Concentrate on creating vertical storage - shelving, stackable bins wherever possible.
- ▶ Choose furniture that 'doubles' as storage, ie: benches with flip-up lid type storage or a shelf underneath for boots & shoes, small dressers, a coffee table with storage underneath or use a trunk or blanket box- ditto for side-tables, bookcases, armoire-style cupboards.
- ▶ Shallow plastic containers for under beds are ideal for storing seasonal items and sports gear.
- ▶ Put hooks on the backs of doors; closet, cupboard and cabinet doors.
- ▶ Assign a box or bowl for each member of your household to store the things that come out of their pockets!



- ▶ Regularly deal with the garbage gremlins; grocery bags, soap shards, rubber bands, dried-up pens etc.

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▶ Use a pretty wicker basket for 'misplaced' belongings...a 'pickup place' for storing items *left behind*. Locate it in an easily accessible - read, *visible*, area of the house!

Decluttering is about establishing new habits - and attitudes - remember...a little time continually spent decluttering will keep your home clutter-free!

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Mosquitoes!

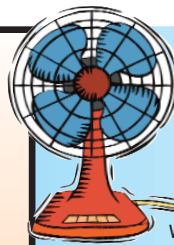
We can often be our own worst enemy when it comes to fending off mosquitoes! Here's some of the most common mistakes... as well as a few tips for living with mosquitoes.

- Poor water management. Dripping outdoor faucets, obstructed eavestroughs, poor drainage around a pool, depressions in lawns or driveways can all lead to an abundance of standing water - creating the perfect breeding grounds for mosquitoes. Mosquitoes lay eggs in stagnant water, where they grow into adults in just 7 to 10 days! A scant 2.5 cm (1 inch) of stagnant water can produce over 1,000 mosquitoes a week!
- Artificial ponds can introduce thousands of mosquitoes to your property.
- If you like bird baths, be sure to change the water every 2nd or 3rd day or they too become mosquito breeding grounds.
- Don't plant cedar trees around decks and patios. Cedars are favourite resting areas for mosquitoes.
- Don't allow overhead foliage to get too thick. Mosquitoes avoid direct sunlight. The more sunshine, the fewer mosquitoes.
- Scented toiletries attract mosquitoes; fragrance shampoos, deodorants, perfumes and sunscreens.
- Peak biting time for mosquitoes; dawn, and again at dusk...plan accordingly!
- Use yellow bug lights to illuminate your porch, patio, deck and backyard - they're less likely to attract mosquitoes - and other insects.
- Use nature...creating habitat for fish, birds, bats and other insects that eat mosquitoes, particularly those that feed on mosquito larvae, will reduce the number of mosquitoes in your yard.



Fast Facts

- ▶ There are over 2,500 species of mosquitoes. 175 species are found in North America.
- ▶ A mature mosquito lives for about two weeks.
- ▶ Only female mosquitoes bite. Male mosquitoes survive by feeding on nectar and other plant juices.
- ▶ Mosquitoes rarely travel farther than 90 metres (300 feet) from their birthplace.
- ▶ Mosquitoes prefer cool, moist, dark places, like trees, grass, shrubs.
- ▶ Mosquitoes find hosts by; **scent** - they are attracted to carbon monoxide and lactic acid amongst a long, long list of other scents they can detect. **sight/movement** - they can see at a distances of up to 30 metres (100 feet)! and **heat signature** - they can detect infra-red radiation emitted by warm bodies.
- ▶ Women are usually more attractive because of the hormones produced in the female body.
- ▶ And, YES! wearing dark clothing and swatting (movement) does increase your attractiveness to mosquitoes.



This 'n That

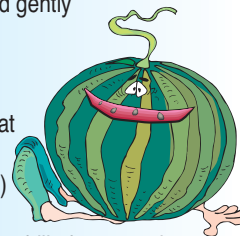
Simply COOLER Ideas

- **Shut out the sun.** Windows with southern or western exposures allow the most sun and heat into your home. Keeping these windows closed and covered during the day will help keep your home closer to its cool, early-morning, temperature. Window awnings installed on the south and west facing windows of your house will also cut down on solar heat.
- **Use a dehumidifier.** It's not the heat, it's the humidity! A dehumidifier really does make the air a lot less sticky, and a heat wave a lot more bearable.
- **Use Fans** as your first line of defense. Installing or running ceiling fans will move air around, producing a cooling effect (set fan direction to push air *down* during the heat of summer). Use table-top or floor model personal fans in other areas of your home where you spend time, ie: in your home office, bedroom, beside the TV.
- **Landscaping.** If you're thinking about doing some landscaping, consider planting shade trees on the south and west sides of your house. A shade tree (or two) will keep the building cooler, saving energy, - and you dollars, in air conditioning.



Easier Devilled Eggs

Here's a fast, easy, and really neat method for making a batch of devilled eggs. After slicing the cooked eggs in half, put the yolks into a plastic sandwich or freezer bag, gently crumble them, add mayonnaise and other ingredients, and mix. Then, cut the corner of the bag and gently squeeze the mixture into the egg cavities.



Watermelon

Don't chill that melon! Watermelons stored at room temperature have much higher levels of antioxidants (beta-carotene and lycopene) than those kept in the fridge. They even outscore freshly picked melons. If you prefer chilled watermelon, cool in the fridge for a few hours before eating - once cut, watermelon must be refrigerated.

Smile

A smile is an inexpensive way to change your looks.
Charles Gordy

A smile is a curve that sets everything straight.
Phyllis Diller

Idleness is not doing nothing. Idleness is being free to do anything.
Lloyd Dell



"And this is the anti-gravitational room."

The wonderful thing about family travel: it provides you with experiences that will remain locked forever in the scar tissue of your mind. *Dave Barry*



The Dog Days of Summer

The 'dog days of summer' occur during the hottest and muggiest part of the summer; July 3rd to August 11th.

Ever wonder why we call the hot, sultry days of summer 'dog days'?

In ancient times, people drew images in the sky by 'connecting the dots' of stars. These star pictures are now called constellations. The brightest of the stars in the constellation, Canis Major (the big dog) is Sirius, which also happens to be the brightest star in the night sky. Look for it in the southern sky (viewed from northern latitudes) during January.

In the summer, however, Sirius, the "dog star," rises and sets with the sun. During late July Sirius is in conjunction with the sun, and the ancients believed that its heat added to the heat of the sun, creating a stretch of hot and sultry weather. They named this period of time, from 20 days before the conjunction to 20 days after, "dog days".

Around the House Great Ideas



In the hardware aisle

A digital photo - helps you get the right thingamajig at the hardware store. Snap a few pictures and take the camera - or phone - shopping with you! It's faster than making a list or drawing yourself a diagram - and, photos are more reliable than your memory.

Bargain paint

For your home's exterior and most of the interior, it makes sense to purchase high quality paint. Save money - and help the environment...consider visiting your community recycling center when you need paint for; closets, storage & utility rooms, shelving in the garage/basement, garden sheds...



Secret code

If you have trouble remembering your lock combination, try this...pick a secret number and add it to each of the combination numbers. Mark the numbers on the lock itself with a label or etching tool. When you need to open the lock, simply 'add' - your secret number to each of the numbers listed on the lock!

Example: Label the lock with the numbers: 10 - 20 - 30

The 'secret number': 6

Add the secret number...combination is: 16 - 26 - 36

Sticking doors

Wood often swells in the heat. Rub the edge of the door evenly with a bar of soap to make it easier to open and close.

Brick fix

Mildew on brick and patio stone? Mix 1 part chlorine bleach with 10 parts water. Apply the mixture and using a long-handled brush, scrub the stained area. Rinse well. Before applying any cleaning solution - test a small area first!



Preventive Measures Lumber tags save time

Sometimes we all need a reminder that an organized workshop is an efficient workshop. Take a bit of time when you're putting lumber scraps away to save time later!

Before you put a cut piece away in your workshop, measure it and mark the length on a scrap of paper -staple the label to the end of the board. When you need a certain length of wood, just pull out the right piece. No more guesswork, no more time wasted restacking wood, and, far less wasted wood. Another timesaver is a lumber-yard style measuring stick mounted on the wall. Measuring wood before putting it away is a simple habit to develop.

House Book Keep important information about your home; appliances, major purchases, repairs and other services (including roof work, plumbing etc.) in plastic sheet protectors stored in a 3-ring binder. Your 'House Book' can hold receipts, instructions, warranties, and other paperwork. You'll know exactly where to look should you need to order a part, get service, or check a warranty.



WATER

Increasingly hot, dry summers are straining our water resources.

Every homeowner can help (as well as improve the quality of our lakes, rivers and streams) by simply making use of rainwater where it falls.

First, disconnect your downspout from the sewer system. Then, extend the downspout to redirect rainwater, away from the foundation of your house, to your garden, lawn or collection barrel. To increase water absorption, aerate your lawn; use gravel, mulch, well-spaced stones or porous pavers for walkways.

You may even consider limiting driveway paving to the tire tracks only, then plant grass or a ground cover (like woolly thyme) in between.

Trees and Water...

Leaves make food for a tree from the water absorbed by its roots. But, only a small amount of water goes for producing food. The rest is returned to the atmosphere through a process called 'transpiration'. According to the National Arbor Day Foundation, a mature white birch tree with approximately 200,000 leaves can give off as much as 3,400 litres (900 gallons) of water throughout a summer day!

Did you know that a well-landscaped yard with mature trees can increase the value of your home by up to 20%.



In the Garden

Pinching

is the act of removing top or lateral growth points on a plant with your forefinger and thumb. Pinching back growth induces branching. Plants like basil, coleus, mums, and many annual flowering plants respond well to pinching.

Deadheading

is simply the practice of removing the flowers of annuals and perennials as they die or fade. This keeps gardens looking tidy, extends a plant's blooming period and prevents unruly growth by stopping excessive self-seeding. When old blossoms are deadheaded (cut or snapped off) the energy that would have been spent producing seeds is redirected to new growth. *Of note:* some annuals like cleome, cosmos and alyssum, benefit from self-sowing, so let those flowers wither and set seed.

Don't Waste Water

- Litres and litres of water come off your roof, consider diverting it for use in your yard and garden! Use a rain barrel to collect water from downspouts.
- Mulching gardens, shrub beds, and trees will help retain moisture (and suppress weed growth).
- Water your lawn and garden early in the morning. Watering during the day loses water to evaporation, while watering at night can lead to fungus or mildew problems.

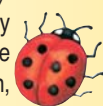


Toad Abode

Invite a friend, or 2, to your garden! You won't need bug spray if you create an inviting habitat for toads. A toad eats hundreds of slugs, grubs, flies, cutworms, mosquitoes, and grasshoppers every night. Toads are easy to attract if you supply shelter, moisture and food.

- Find a terra-cotta pot with a chip on its rim. Use a hammer to chip away more of the rim. The opening should be at least 2 inches wide and 1 1/2 inches high.
- Place the pot upside down on the ground in a shady spot near the edge of a flower or shrub bed.
- If there is no water nearby, set a shallow saucer of water close to your 'toad house'. Sink it level with the ground to provide an inviting swimming and watering hole. It may take a few weeks for a toad to discover your 'home'. And, don't worry about attracting too many. Most gardens can support several toads.

Remember; adult toads feed mainly on insects, avoid using poisonous chemicals to kill bugs in your yard; many pesticides poison toads as well.



Ladybugs are also one of nature's workhorses. They are voracious hunters of aphids, whiteflies and other plant-eating pests that cause damage to foliage.

Eggs

Don't know what kind of eggs to choose?...Here's some interesting info you may not know about eggs!

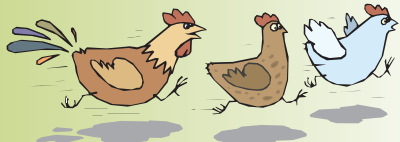
- **White eggs** are laid by hens from a white-feathered breed, while brown eggs are laid by hens from a larger, red-feathered breed.
- **Free-range** refers to eggs from hens raised cage-free, either outside or with daily access to the outdoors.
- **Organic eggs** are laid by hens restricted to feed free of commercial fertilizers, fungicides, herbicides & pesticides and are labelled 'organic'.
- **Omega-3 eggs** are laid by hens consuming feed that is 10 to 20% flaxseed. These contain higher levels of both polyunsaturate fat and omega-3 fatty acids than regular eggs.

The nutrient value of all eggs, except omega-3, is the same.

Storage Tip

Instead of transferring eggs to the cups on the refrigerator door, leave them in the carton (most new fridges don't even have this feature anymore).

Why? Because the temperature on the fridge door fluctuates due to opening and closing; eggs should be kept in the coldest part of the fridge, with enough room for air to circulate around the carton. Stored this way, under typical home conditions, eggs will last up to 4 weeks.



Fast facts

- ▶ The average working hen lays 260 eggs a year.
- ▶ It takes a hen 24-26 hours to lay an egg.
- ▶ A hen starts to lay eggs at 17 or 18 weeks old.
- ▶ A hen can live up to 20 years - laying eggs her entire life - the number of eggs she lays decreases every year.
- ▶ Chickens aren't completely flightless—they can get airborne enough to make it over a fence or into a tree.
- ▶ The chicken was the first bird to have its genome sequenced, in 2004. Not surprising because with 25 billion chickens in the world, there are more of them than any other bird.
- ▶ The chicken is the closest living relative to the Tyrannosaurus-Rex!



Mom's Devilled Eggs

A family favourite for summertime get-togethers, BBQs and picnics.

INGREDIENTS

8	8	hard-boiled eggs
1 Tbsp	15mL	finely chopped onions
2 Tbsp	30mL	finely chopped celery
	<i>to taste</i>	<i>salt & pepper</i>
1/4 tsp	1mL	dry mustard
1/4 tsp	1mL	garlic powder
1/4 cup	50mL	cu-bits relish
1/4 cup	50mL	mayonnaise

garnish with paprika & gherkins

DIRECTIONS

*Cook eggs. Allow to cool.
Peel eggs then cut in half lengthwise.
Scoop out yolks and mash.
Into a mixing bowl...stir together, egg yolks, onion, celery, seasonings, relish & mayo.*

*Refill egg halves with mixture.
Garnish with a sprinkle of paprika and a slice of gherkin.*

Refrigerate. Best served after chilling in the refrigerator for several hours.

Shade TREES

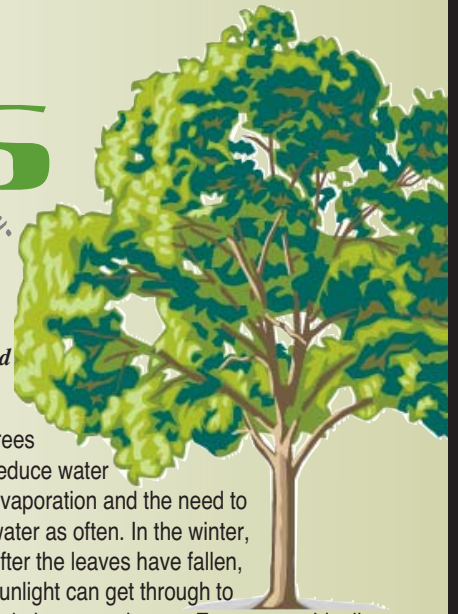
can add property value.

For many homeowners, landscaping is often an afterthought, one that is considered only when the house has been fully renovated or finished. Yet, landscaping should be considered integral to the ambience of your home.

Since trees can grow quite large, they can have a dramatic effect on your property. They provide welcome shade in summer, wind protection, privacy, the beauty of changing colours, and often, fruit. Trees establish boundaries, frame the horizon, and if you wish, they can create a 'natural roof' for your backyard area.

All these benefits help your home appreciate in value. At resale, you can discover that the return on your landscaping investment may be quite substantial. Trees can also work wonders in cutting the expenses of operating your house. By planting shade trees on the south side of your home, you can reduce the workload of your air conditioning system. Trees also absorb a great deal of the sun's energy, lowering temperatures in the surrounding area. By shading the ground,

trees reduce water evaporation and the need to water as often. In the winter, after the leaves have fallen, sunlight can get through to help heat your home. Evergreens, ideally planted on the north or northeast side of your home, can work as a windbreak and help to reduce your heating costs. In addition to adding beauty and value to your home, trees provide something of value to birds - nesting sites, insect food, shelter from weather and predators. If you are thinking about adding a tree to your property, or another tree, consider one that will provide food in the form of fruit, berries or seeds that will grace your yard with more birds. Consult a local nursery or garden centre for more information about which trees are best suited for your area.



Nature's Lungs



Neither people nor animals can live without plants. The trees and plants that cover our planet play a vital role in almost all ecosystems. Plants make their food from sunlight, water and carbon dioxide. The green leaves and stems are a plant's food-making factory. During the food-making process of 'photosynthesis', plants absorb carbon dioxide from the air, use the carbon and release oxygen as a waste product. One mature healthy tree will absorb almost 12kg (26 pounds) of carbon dioxide annually and release enough oxygen for a family of 4 to breathe.