

HOME IMPROVEMENT

From open fires

Kitchens have come a long way in 500 years

In the beginning, say the 15th century, before there were video games, home entertainment centres, media rooms, computerized information retrieval systems and electric shoe polishers, there was the kitchen.

All things considered, it was pretty good. Never mind that the water was kept in the courtyard, that the fuel had to be hauled, the fires tended constantly, the spits turned by hand— after all what were serfs and women for?

At least the fire was contained within a fireplace rather than, as it had been a couple centuries earlier, blazing midroom with smoke freely wafting among the rafters until it drifted out through a ceiling hole.

By the 15th century, relative delicacy prevailed — fragrant herbs strewn among the floor rushes helped combat the all-pervasive odour of grease, and table linen, a recent introduction, was having a positive effect on manners. Indeed, a late medieval householder who could boast a modern kitchen in which to feast and make merry must have considered himself a very lucky man.

Times change, expectations rise, and kitchen technology gradually improved. But it was not until the 19th century that the modern kitchen began to take form.

At that time, the cast-iron stove supplanted the fireplace as the primary instrument for cooking. It became, in North America, the first of the flashy, must-have appliances— an absolute necessity for anyone who did not wish to be considered a technological laggard. This new stove was fuelled at first by wood, later by more compact coal.

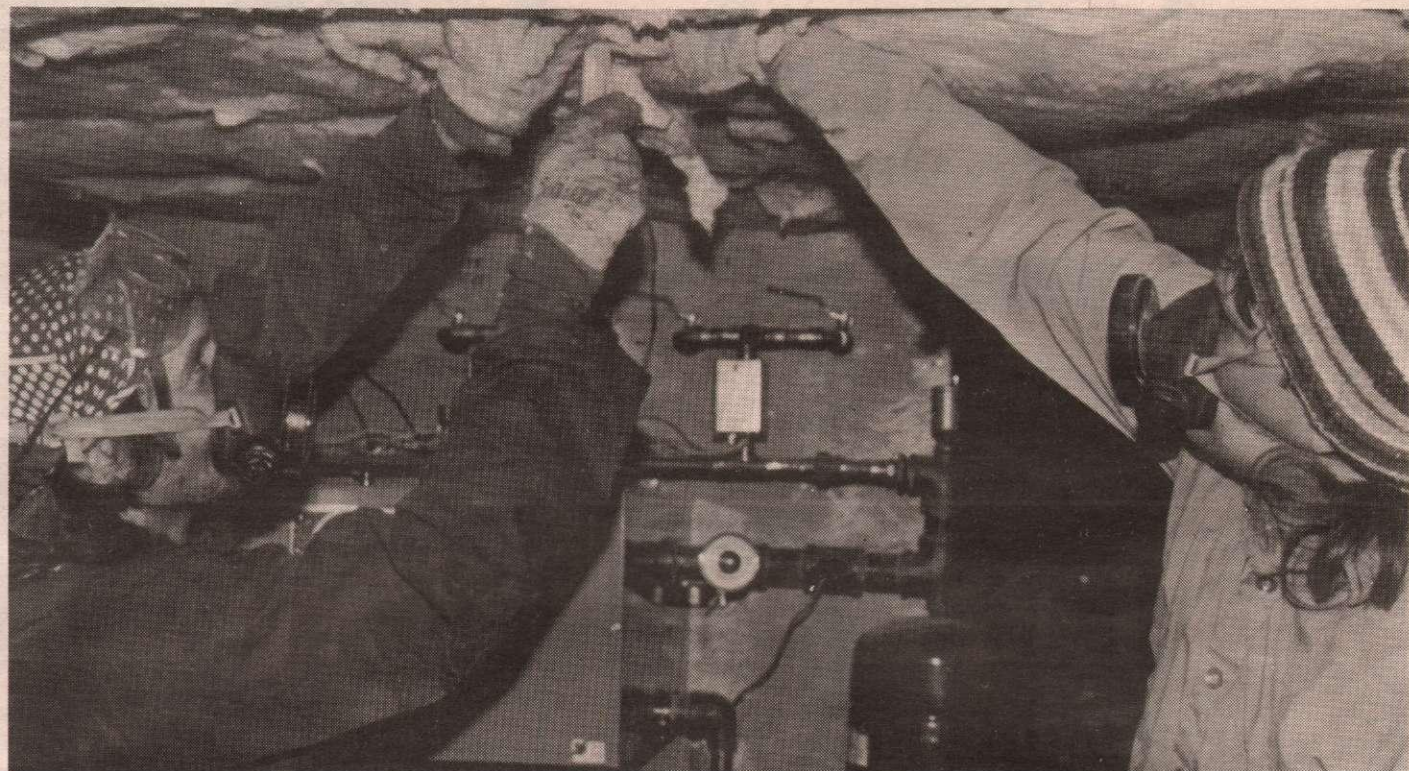
Major elements — the stove, work

table and storage unit — were clumsily unrelated, both in their design and their placement within the room. But, finally, the trend toward streamlining work processes, which had been transforming industry for some time, was introduced into the home.

In 1841, a domestic reformer, Catherine Beecher, whose younger sister, Harriet, would later write "Uncle Tom's Cabin", published a "Treatise on Domestic Economy" in which she railed that "women are not trained for their profession." She then proceeded to detail tech-

niques for cooking, laundering, cleaning, furnishing a home and planting a garden.

In an 1869 update of the tome, Beecher set forth in detailed diagrams her proposal for a modern kitchen.



Installing insulation in a crawl space are Harry Tiffin, left, and James Wilkinson, right. Both workers are wearing a breathing apparatus for safety as they fit the fibreglass insulation between the floor joists.

Insulating tips for homeowners wanting to do the job themselves

Over the past several years, homeowners have learned how easy it is to insulate their attics and help save on home cooling and heating costs. Many of these individuals, not wanting to stop there, are interested in leaning where else in their homes they can insulate by themselves.

One suggestion is crawl spaces. There are two general methods for insulating crawl spaces and picking the correct one depends largely on the type of crawl space you have in your home. Both can be insulated in several easy steps. And fall, with its cool and comfortable temperatures, is the perfect time for this home improvement project.

If the crawl space contains heating and cooling equipment, ducts or water pipes and is well enclosed, the crawl space walls should be insulated. This helps create a comfortable area under the living quarters and helps protect equipment and pipes from damage caused by cold and heat.

If the crawl space is open to the weather, or if there is no reason to heat the crawl space, the experts recommend insulating the sub floor overhead. This keeps the floor in the living quarters above warm in the winter and cool in the summer and makes them more comfortable.

To insulate crawl space walls, you will

need work gloves, a hammer and nails, several pre-cut pieces of 1 x 2's and 2 x 4's, a heavy duty staple gun, a utility or serrated knife and rolls of fibre glass insulation. Start by cutting pieces of insulation long enough to cover the wall and overlap the floor by two feet. Fasten to the subfloor with 1 x 2's. Cover the entire wall, laying each piece of insulation firmly next to the one before it. Then place 2 x 4's along the insulation at the base of the floor to hold it in place.

To insulate crawl space subfloors overhead, you will need work gloves, protective glasses and dust mask, fibre glass batts or rolls, chicken wire and a heavy duty staple gun, or light gauge wire and a hammer and nails.

Start by placing insulation tightly against the subflooring from below. Hold the insulation in place with chicken wire and staple the chicken wire to the bottom of the floor joists. Another method for holding the insulation in place is to criss-cross wire back and fourth around nails in the bottom of the joists.

By installing the recommended amounts of insulation in your home's crawl spaces, you will be helping to cut back on your home's heating and cooling costs, saving valuable energy dollars and making your home more comfortable year round.

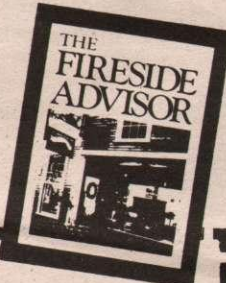


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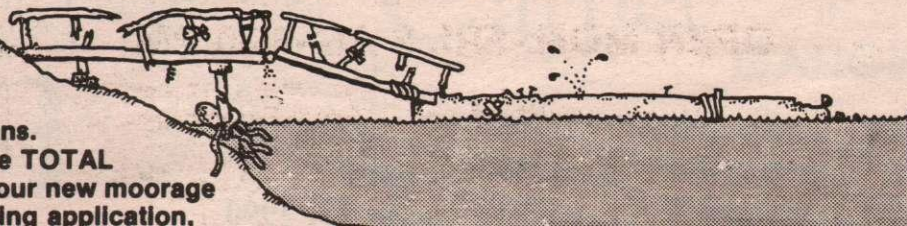
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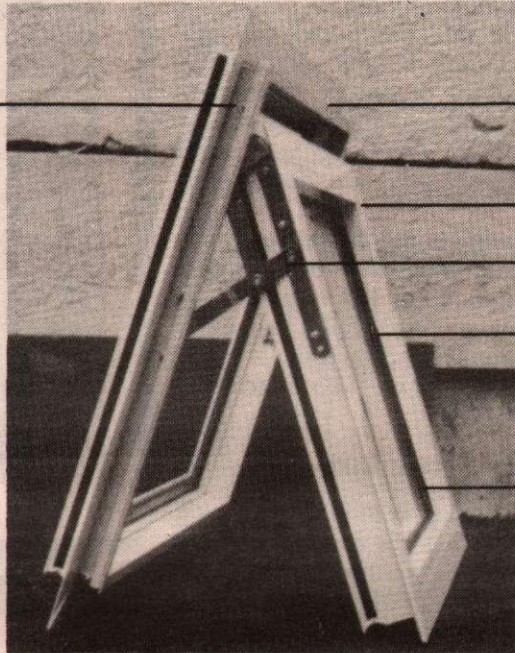
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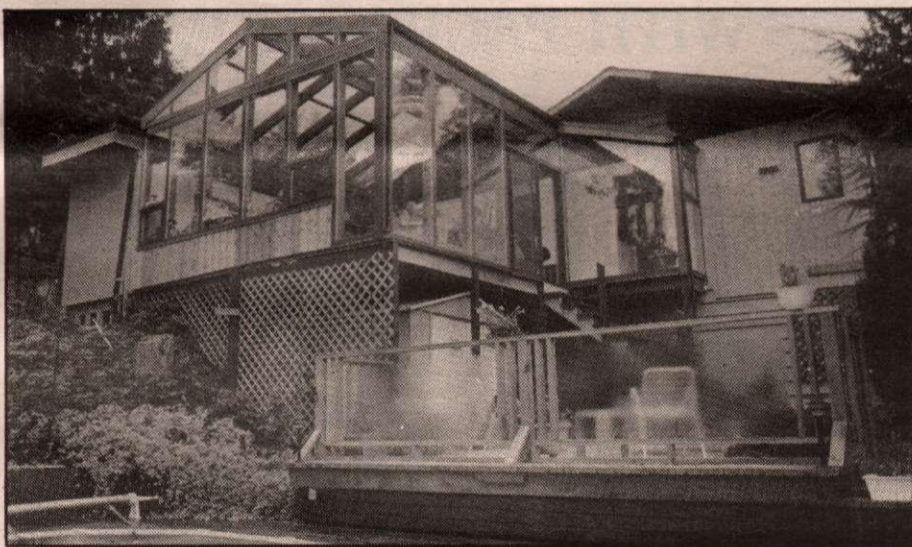
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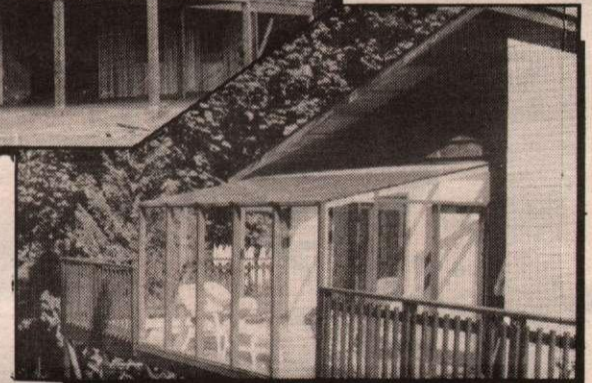


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Electricity demands respect

Each year, too many Canadians are victims of fires caused by unwise use of electricity. And fires spare no one; children may perish as well as older people. Ironically, many such disasters could be avoided through common sense. When dealing with electricity, negligence can be very costly and safety measures cannot be stressed enough.

Extension cords

One of the main sources of danger are extension cords. Electrical outlets are not always located where we need them and so it is quite common that we use extension cords. The actual danger lies in forgetting about them and leaving them tucked under a rug or trapped under a piece of furniture. An extension cord is made up of a bundle of tiny wires so that it can be flexible. If those wires are crushed or damaged, they break and can cause a short circuit that quickly becomes a fire hazard. Frequent inspection of extension cords can uncover cracks, splits or discoloration. In such cases, replace your extension cord immediately. Don't forget to check the calliper of the extension cords you use. Some of today's appliances consume a lot of electricity and we sometimes, out of ignorance or out of negligence, use an inadequate extension cord.

Fuses

Causes of fires of electrical origin can sometimes be traced to fuses. Most people neglect to regularly inspect the fuse box and shouldn't. It's a sure sign that something is wrong when the same circuit breaker keeps jumping. When a fuse burns out, replace it by a new one of the appropriate calliper, never higher — eg: replacing a 15 amp fuse by a 30 amp. Heat coming from an overloaded circuit is also a fire hazard. It only takes a few minutes to detect these telltale signs of

problems.

Faulty outlets and plugs

If an electrical outlet feels hot or even just warm, immediately cut the supply of electricity for that outlet and call an electrician. He will be able to tell you where the problem originates. As for the electrical plugs on your appliances, make sure you inspect them regularly and replace them if they are frayed or damaged.

It is also wise to use the proper light bulbs. If a lamp requires a 40 watt light bulb, don't use a 60 or 100 watt, or you may risk starting a fire. If bulbs in one of your ceiling lights keeps burning it may mean that the socket needs to be replaced.

The fuse box

Homeowners decide to renovate their home, to add appliances that consume a lot of electricity, without giving a thought to the fuse box's capacity. It is unfortunate to have half completed a renovation project only to realize that the capacity of your fuse box is now insufficient and will have to be replaced. And of course, the new panel may not fit where the old one used to and that may mean that you will have to make unwanted compromises and changes to your project. Evaluate the additional electricity needs you are creating before you start renovating. The actual location of the fuse box must be thought out carefully. An electrician should be consulted to inform you of the location that will be safest and that will conform to regulations.

For reasons of safety and easy maintenance, the fuse box must be placed where you can easily reach it. Don't store anything around it, much less on top of it, should you have to reach the fuse box in case of emergency.



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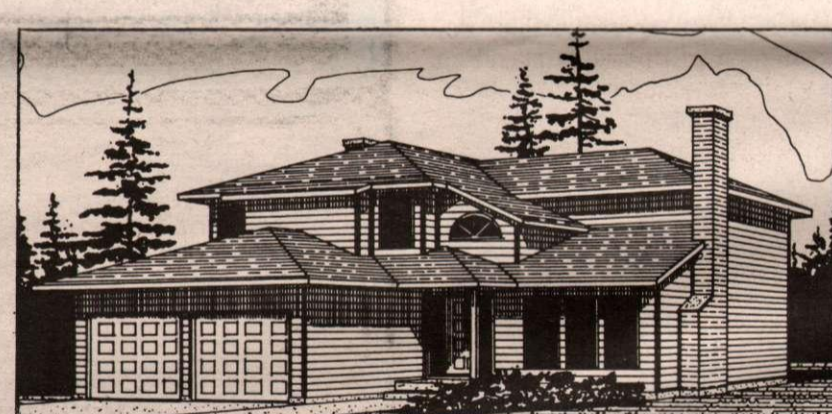
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HOME IMPROVEMENT

Electrician supports apprentice program

Island Electric's Dave Abley believes local talent makes the best connection in his electrical contracting business.

Abley has hired two Salt Spring men as apprentices to aid his journeymen electricians Todd McIntyre and Steve Stevenson.

Andrew Archer grew up on the island and began his apprenticeship in February of 1988. Born-and-raised Salt Spring Islander Bobby Akerman joined the crew after graduating from Gulf Islands Secondary School in June of this year.

Akerman was introduced to Abley's business through the high school's work experience program in 1990. "I thought I would try it out and I liked it right away," he says.

Abley says the work experience program is "good for everybody. It introduces you to new prospective young employees." Akerman easily fit in with the existing crew, he says.

Todd McIntyre underwent training through a TRAC program and a two-month pre-apprenticeship course before Abley sponsored him five years ago. McIntyre is now Island Electric's job foreman.

Steve Stevenson apprenticed with another electrical firm, but he and McIntyre roomed together while working through the classroom portion of their training.

The electrician's apprenticeship program requires participants to attend an academic institution for two months every year for four years. Andrew Archer is currently studying at Camosun College.

Abley is strongly in favour of hiring and training "willing and able" apprentices, even if it means a reduction in productivity for the first little while. "It's a real investment in a person," he says.

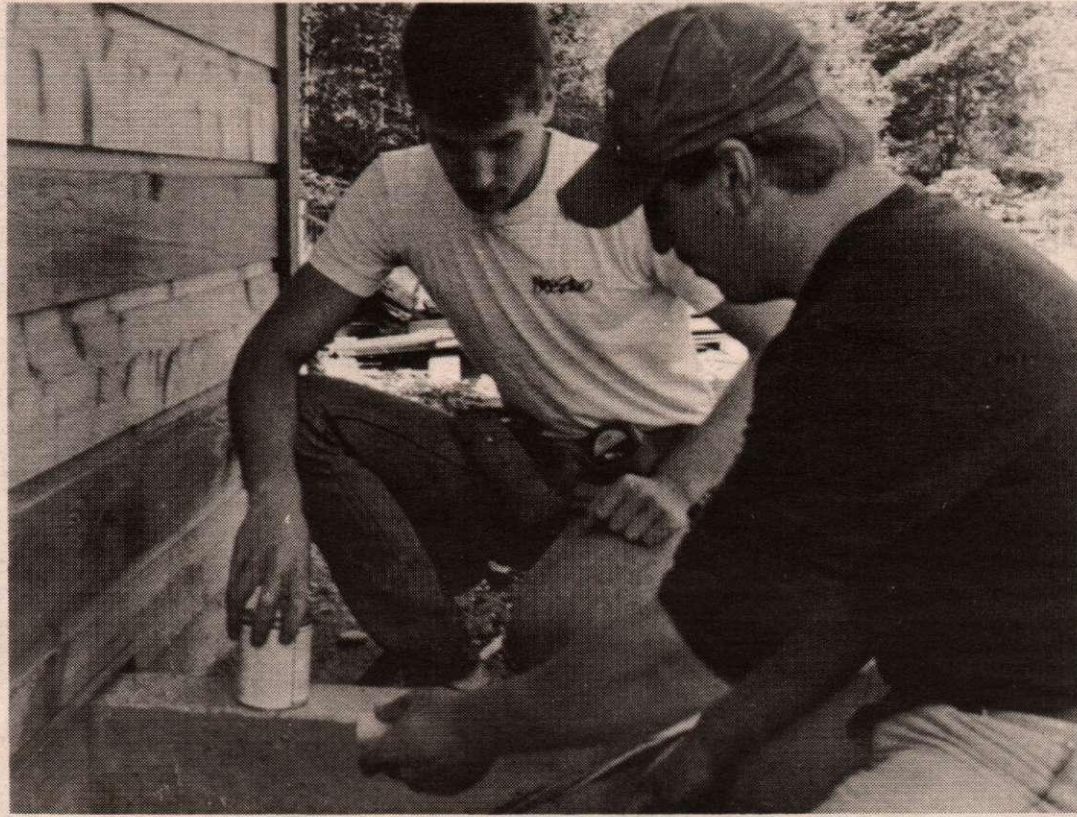
Abley and his expanding crew have been busy this year, wiring between 40 and 50 new homes in addition to handling smaller jobs. "We've been going full tilt all year," he says.

Besides doing the electrical work on new houses, Island Electric does wiring for renovations, jacuzzis, hot tubs and pumphouses. It does not repair appliances.

Abley points out that "we're not intimidated by new technology." He has been working on a system of controlling the lights in his own house by computer.

He is also monitoring the development of what is known as a SMART house, in which a series of conductors are hooked into SMART outlets so that appliances can "communicate" with each other.

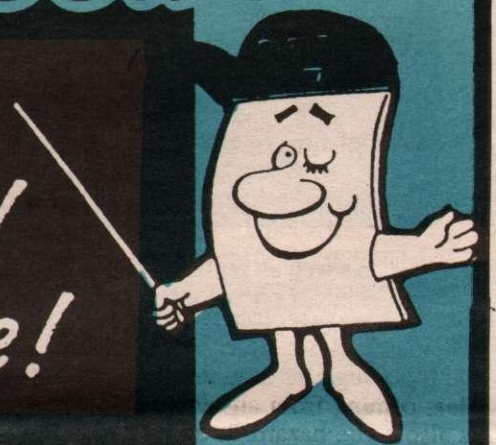
Since starting business in 1985, Island Electric has kept pace with a growing island using local hands and knowledge.



Electrician apprenticeships allowed islanders Bobby Akerman, left, and Todd McIntyre, right, to acquire a trade on Salt Spring. The pair were wiring a pump house on Wright Road recently for their employer, Island Electric.

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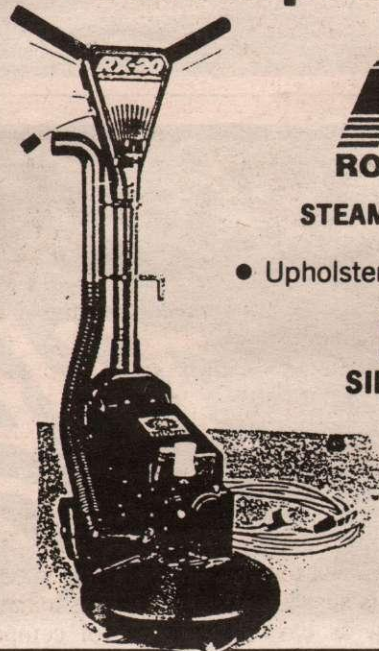
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Simple improvements can increase sales value

Homeowners looking to sell their homes should be prepared to spend time and money "sprucing up" the building.

As local realtor Santy Fuoco notes, something as simple as a fresh coat of paint can, in some cases, add a few thousand dollars to the selling price of a home.

A home must appear neat and tidy to a buyer, he adds. First impressions are as important as cleanliness, order and scent.

Fuoco offers the following tips on how best to prepare a house for a sale:

- The yard is the first area the potential buyer observes. It should be neat and tidy. The lawn should be cut, leaves and garden refuse contained out of sight, shrubs and hedges trimmed, fences repaired, and decks and patios clean. Any clutter or garbage should be removed or placed out of sight.

- A fresh coat of exterior paint, or possibly just new trim, will give the house "a lift" in appearance. On the inside, any paint cracks or holes should be filled and the rooms which need it should be repainted, preferably with neutral colour. Water stains should be repaired and painted; most importantly water problems should be repaired.

- Have the heating system checked to assure all is functioning well; have the chimneys cleaned and any faults corrected.

Fireplaces are a great selling point, Fuoco says. Make sure they are in good working order, with a clean chimney and working damper.

Most potential buyers are energy-conscious and look for features like double windows, weather-stripped doors and good insulation. They look for airtight stoves which are properly installed and CSA-approved because insurance companies are strict about these points.

- All plumbing should be in good

Those first impressions can be lasting ones

order and functioning perfectly. Fix up any leaking taps and check that grout around the bathtub and shower is in good shape. If it is not, redo it and, after a week, spray it with a special silicone formula. This will cut down or eliminate black spots (mould) in the grout.

- If necessary, carpets and drapes should be cleaned professionally. Hardwood and linoleum floors should be surface-treated as recommended.

- Windows, sills and doors should be cleaned. Assure that door knobs function and that door open and close smoothly. Fuoco suggests spraying door hinges with a silicone formula to assure squeak-free movement.

- If appliances are to be included in the house sale, they should be in good working condition. Fridges should be defrosted; ovens cleaned.

- Any clutter should be removed. Fuoco recommends having a garage sale prior to placing the house on the market. This in itself will give the home a better reception, he advises.

Laundry should be washed, folded and put away.

- Although the homeowner normally does not include the furniture in a sale, all items should be nicely arranged and polished or dusted.

The home should say: "Welcome, we are proud to show you our home."

- While pets are great for pet owners, the prospective purchaser may not be a pet-lover. Litter boxes should be sprayed and kept clean and fresh. A non-pet owner is highly sensitive to pet odours.

- Check for any pests. If such a condition is suspected, do something immediately or have a pest control company check out the situation.

- Regarding septic tanks and disposal fields, tanks should be pumped every two

or three years, or when septate reaches a depth of 1.5 feet.

Finally, Fuoco suggests having a reliable tradesman undertake an inspection of the home to determine the existence of any defects which need attention.

As a general note, Fuoco says kitchens

and bathrooms should have priority if any improvements are to be made. He notes, however, that any major expenditure just prior to resale may not be justified.

"Concentrate on cleaning, painting, decorating and keeping up the garden and general tidy appearance of the home", he advises.

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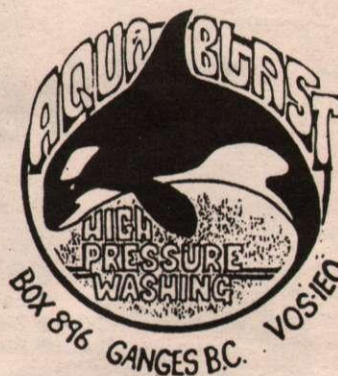
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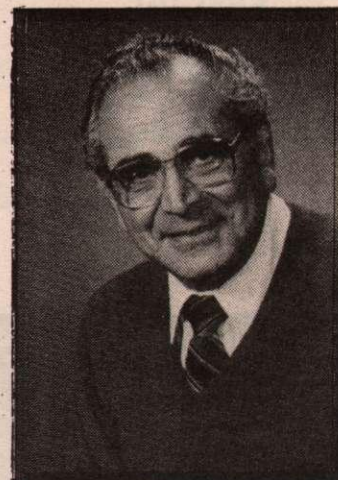
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Flooring options offer variety to homeowner

Are you building a new room or renovating an already existing one? Nowadays floor coverings are made from a wide variety of materials in addition to the popular wall-to-wall carpet. They include traditional flagstone, brick, marble, terrazzo and ceramic tiles. And more products such as polished steel or frosted glass, which were never considered proper materials for floor coverings are now being used.

Today's hectic lifestyles are forcing designers as well as homeowners to take into account such factors as maintenance, durability and quality, when choosing floor coverings. And the choice is staggering.

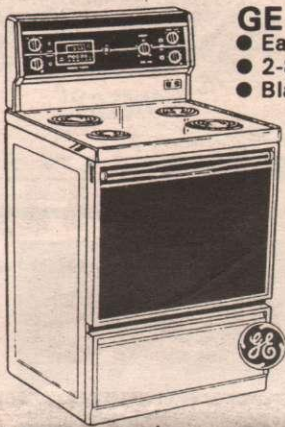
Living spaces, usually defined by carpets or area rugs, are bordered by marble, wood (and there are many types) or coloured ceramic. As for kitchens and bathrooms, vinyl is always a wise choice and there is an infinite array of colours to choose from.

Wall-to-wall carpeting has many advantages such as making a room look much larger and avoiding having two different surfaces to clean. Replacing wall-to-wall carpeting can be quite expensive should you have to do so. Seventy-five per cent of the carpeting is still in very good condition and could be used again if only the signs of wear and tear were not so inconveniently located. Often times a large wall-to-wall is used to replace carpeting in a smaller area such as a bedroom or for basements and additions.

Some modern carpeting is often reversible which can actually keep it looking very good for twice as long.

As for marble, brick, ceramic and wood, they are practically indestructible. A major component of every home, flooring is a detail that takes much consideration whether for a new house or one being renovated.

"Sheep" Prices on Appliances



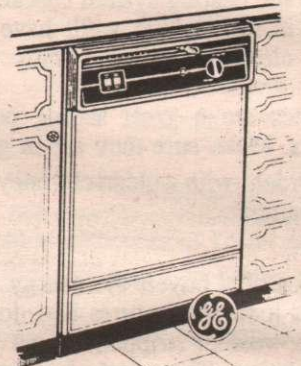
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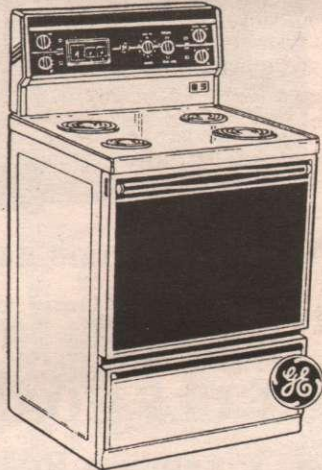


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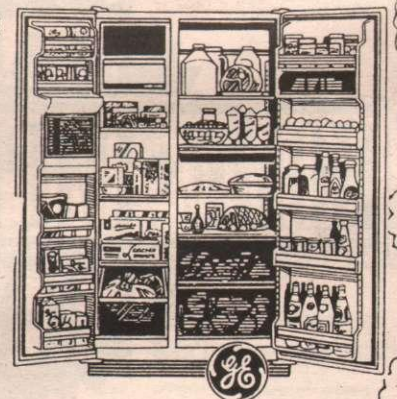
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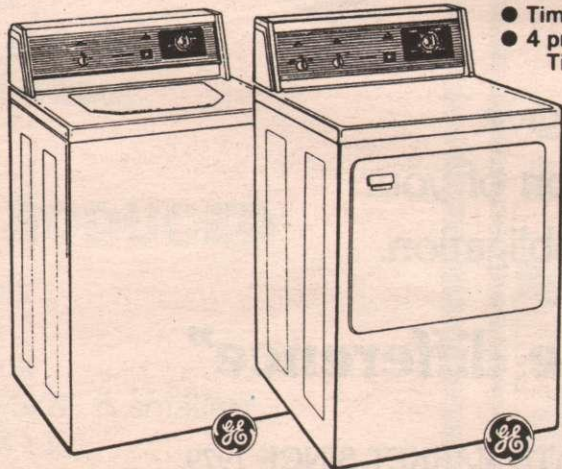
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HOME IMPROVEMENT

Woodburning regaining good reputation

Tens of thousands of North American homeowners turned to woodburning stoves in the late seventies as shelter from rising energy costs. Woodburning seemed right for the times and suggested a simpler, more independent way of living. But the burning of wood in stoves, fireplaces and furnaces has come under fire in recent years because the resulting smoke is an air pollutant. Now, as scientists learn more about the full impact of energy production, wood is emerging as one of the most environmentally friendly energy sources available.

Global warming

It is suggested that the burning of fossil fuels, such as gasoline, diesel fuel, fuel oil and natural gas, is changing the climate by increasing the concentration of carbon dioxide (CO₂) in the upper atmosphere. These rising levels of CO₂ are producing a greenhouse effect by trapping the sun's heat and raising the average global temperature. Scientists now agree that global warming could well be the greatest environmental threat we face.

A renewable resource

Fossilized hydrocarbon fuels, such as oil and gas, are the foundation of industry and transportation throughout the world and to reduce their consumption, or even slow the growth in their use, will be a monumental task. Conservation can help, but alternative energy sources will also be needed to slow the global warming trend. Although the wood that is burned for home heating is also classed as a hydrocarbon fuel, it is a renewable fuel not a fossil fuel. It is the status of wood as a renewable fuel that makes it one of the leading contenders as an alternative to fossil fuels.

Chemical component

All wood, regardless of species, is made up primarily of three chemicals: oxygen, hydrogen and carbon, hence the

Pellet stoves alternative to wood burning

A new stove that burns the wood fuel alternative — pellets — is being introduced to Canada.

Gulfstream Pro Hardware is the local dealer for Salt Spring.

The new stove has no chimney, a savings of \$700 to \$1,200 plus the cost of installation. Airtight, the stove draws air from outside the house and forces burned gases back outside, so no oxygen is removed from the house.

The pellets, looking much like pet kibble, are made from waste materials such as peanut shells, corn husks, bullrushes, sawdust, cardboard, tree bark and so on.

With a combustion efficiency of about 99 per cent, a tone of pellets produces only one to one-and-a-half cups of ash. That same ton takes up half the space of a cord of firewood but has the heating capacity of about one and half cords of wood.

The pellets are convenient to use, with a bag weighing 40 pounds and burning 20 - 40 hours.

Unlike firewood moisture content, which always varies, the pellets are of a consistent balance.

Pellet stoves produce no visible smoke after start up. Properly installed, the stoves do not produce enough emissions to make creosote and tar that can create dangerous fires.

Pellets are made from renewable resources and contain little sulphur or other potentially harmful elements that

term hydrocarbon. The heat of combustion breaks down the wood and the rapid oxidation of the resulting compounds releases the energy used for home heating. When wood or any hydrocarbon fuel is burned, one of the main byproducts is CO₂, the "greenhouse gas" that contributes to global warming. The important difference between wood and the fossil fuels is in the way they are formed.

Carbon storage

As trees grow, they absorb CO₂ from the air to build their structure. In fact, carbon accounts for about half the weight of wood fibre, so trees act as one of the earth's carbon storehouses. Put simply,

the more trees there are, the less CO₂ there is in the atmosphere. This is why environmentalists are so alarmed by the destruction of forests in South America — trees can be the engine of our salvation from global warming, if we don't cut them all down first. The role of trees in absorbing CO₂ from the atmosphere would seem a good argument for not using wood for fuel. However, as with all energy sources, it is important to look at the entire fuel supply and consumption cycle before reaching conclusions.

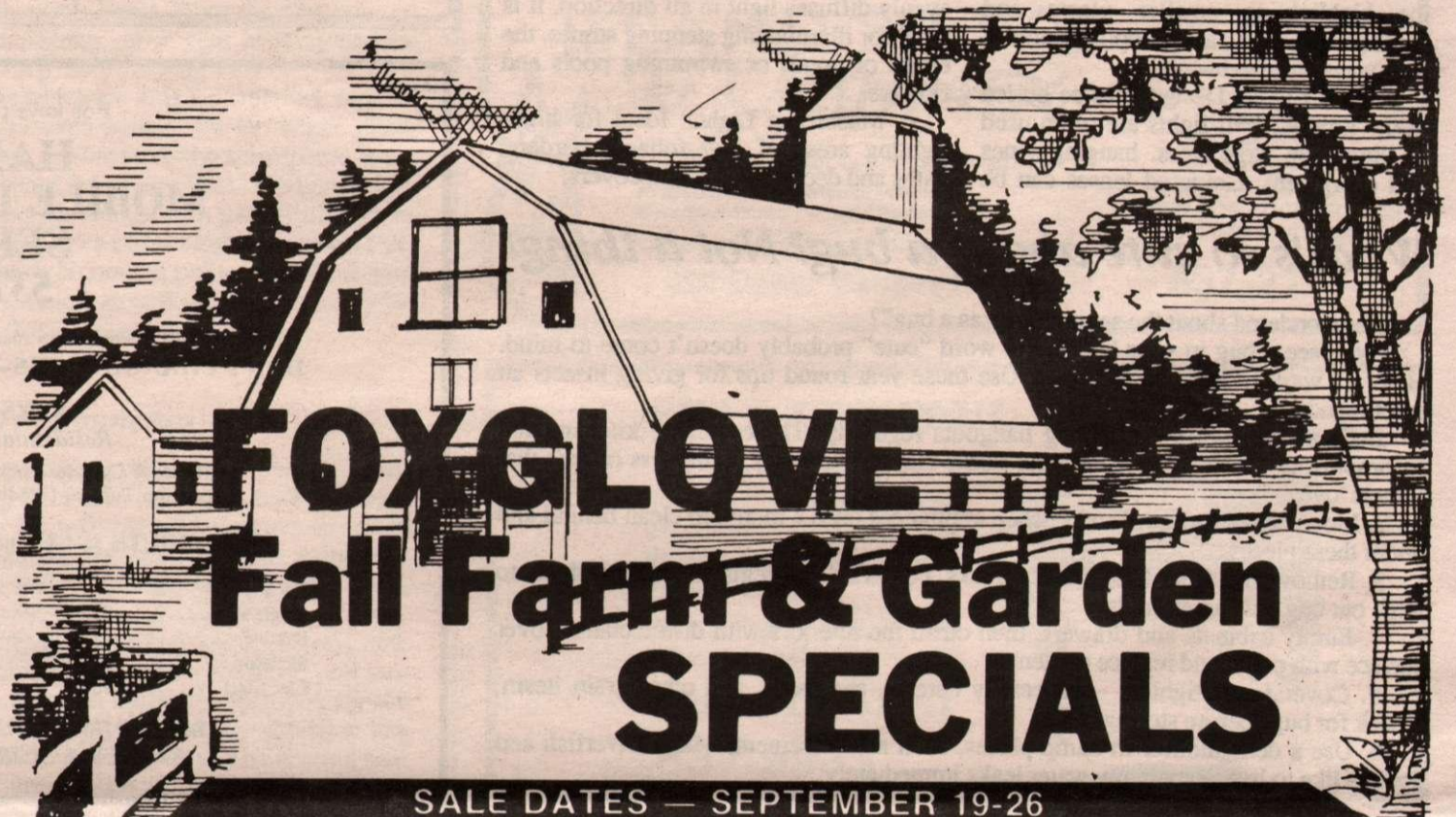
Carbon balance

When a tree dies and falls to the forest

floor, it decays until what is left becomes part of the soil. The decaying process is oxidation — a much slower form than occurs during burning. The main byproduct of this slow oxidation is CO₂. In fact, whether wood is burned for heating or is left to rot in the forest, the same amount of CO₂ is released to the atmosphere.

According to a report on the greenhouse effect prepared by the Energy Research Laboratory of Energy Mines and Resources (EMR), "The combustion of wood produces CO₂, but this is offset by

Turn to Page 12



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HOME IMPROVEMENT

Outdoor lighting extends living space

One of the easiest, most economical ways to extend your living space is by using low voltage outdoor lights to illuminate patios, decks, gardens and pools.

Low voltage lights can transform a dark garden into a multitude of eye-pleasing shapes, angles and shadows at night.

Low voltage lights are easy to install, safe to use around pets and children, and economical to operate. Best of all, they are available in a wide range of styles for almost unlimited uses. Below are some ideas on how they can be used to enhance any garden, deck or patio:

- **Tier Lights:** This style of light focuses light downward so it is perfect for highlighting smaller plants and shrubs, as well as stepping stones, walkways and driveways.

- **Well Lights:** Designed to be buried in the ground, well lights are often used to illuminate large trees, hanging vines and evergreens. Coloured lenses can be

used to create interesting decorative touches.

- **Deck Lights:** Ideal for mounting on or beneath deck rails, under steps or on walls, several styles of deck lights are available including a compact wood deck light featuring a prismatic lenses and a large deck light with a unique diamond-shaped fixture.

- **Floodlights:** Floodlights can be used to highlight trees, foliage, shrubs, deck surfaces, or to play the light against the varied textures of masonry and ground cover. The lights can be mounted at grown level or attached to walls, eaves or trees. Coloured lenses also are available.

- **Globe Lights:** This unique style of light uses a translucent frosted globe that evenly diffuses light in all direction. It is ideal for illuminating stepping stones, the edges of ponds or swimming pools and flowers.

- **Mushroom Lights:** Ideal for high-lighting areas of low foliage, borders, paths and decorative ground covers.

What's so cute about a bug? Not a thing!

Ever wondered about the saying "cute as a bug"?

If you see a bug in your house, the word "cute" probably doesn't come to mind. Here are ways to keep pests at bay. Use these year-round tips for giving insects an eviction notice:

1. Clean out the favourite bug hangouts regularly. These include kitchens and bathrooms, or any other areas in your home that provide dark, dampness or dust that insects love.

2. Move heavy furniture and kitchen appliances once a month to clean behind and under these pieces.

3. Remove dirt from baseboards, cracks, corners, floor registers, and air ducts to wipe out bug nesting grounds.

4. Empty cabinets and drawers, then clean the interiors with disinfectant. Cover surface with paper and replace contents.

5. Cover foods tightly — especially cereals, pet foods, and other grain items. Check for bugs before storing foods.

6. Use a dehumidifier in damp places, such as a basement, where silverfish and spiders like to live. Repair any water leaks immediately.

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HOME IMPROVEMENT

Burning wood products cleaner compared to other heat sources

From Page 9

CO2 fixation in young growth. Since CO2 is released as mature forests decay, combustion only increases the rate of CO2 release, but not the overall amount."

Sustainable yield

This means that as long as the forest is not depleted by over use, it can produce a sustainable yield of fuel, the burning of which does not affect the total amount of CO2 in the atmosphere and so does not contribute to global warming. The EMR report concludes, "Consequently, coupled to suitable harvesting and to clean and efficient combustion systems, wood fuels can actually reduce the total CO2 emissions."

Fossil fuels

The fossil fuels, such as oil and gas, contain carbon that was absorbed from the atmosphere thousands of years ago. Resting thousands of feet below the earth's surface, these deposits would never oxidize unless brought to the surface and burned. When fossil fuels are burned, the result is a net increase in atmospheric CO2. And since their formation took thousands of years, once burned, they are gone and cannot be replaced. Furthermore, a large amount of energy is consumed in getting oil and gas out of the ground, refined into useful products and transported to market. In contrast, wood is usually harvested close to the point of use and needs no processing other than cutting and splitting.

Wood: the environmental choice

The key to using wood as an environmentally friendly fuel is to ensure that

the forest it is taken from remains friendly. Ideally we should be taking only those trees that are dead and will soon be dead, and those trees that should be removed to improve the growth of the stand. Homeowners can also be less fussy about the species they choose for burning. Softwoods, such as pine and spruce, and so-called junk species like poplar and aspen make excellent fuel for spring and fall heating if they are split and stacked to dry.

Forestry management

When combined with good forest management practices, woodburning is not a factor in global warming. But the smoke resulting from inefficient combustion is an air pollutant that should be reduced for the sake of a clean environment. Fortunately, the new generation of woodstoves does just that. With a strong push from environmental regulators the stove manufacturers have found ways to cut emissions from their products to less than half of what they were only five years ago. These new stoves use sophisticated combustion systems and in some cases, catalytic combustors, similar to the devices added to car exhausts to burn off hydrocarbons. Still, homeowners who are concerned about the environment and who are using older wood stoves need not run out tomorrow to buy a new generation stove or furnace. By using properly seasoned wood and avoiding smoky fires, a conscientious woodburner can reduce emissions to some extent, even with an old stove. What they cannot do is reduce the total amount of fuel burned because the efficiency of the older units can't match that of the new technology appliances.

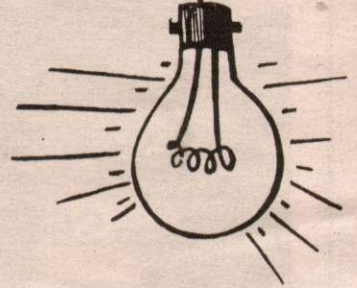


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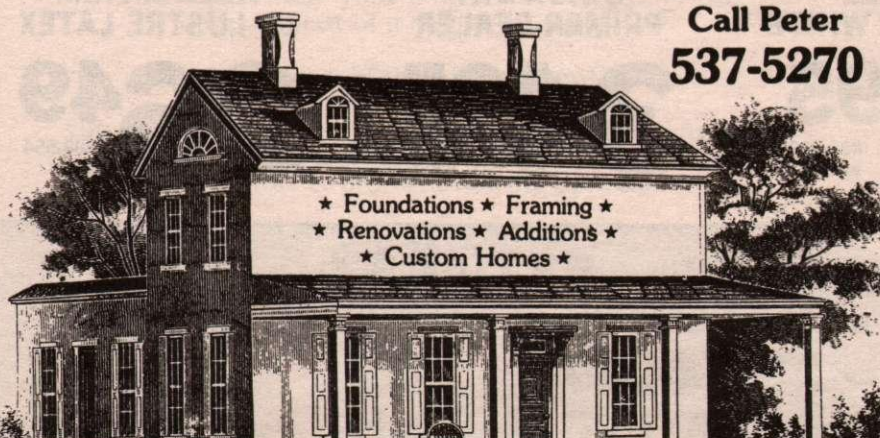
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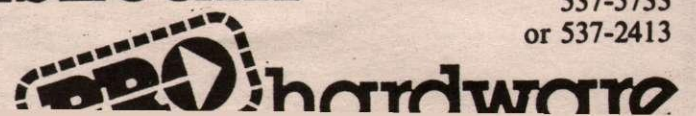
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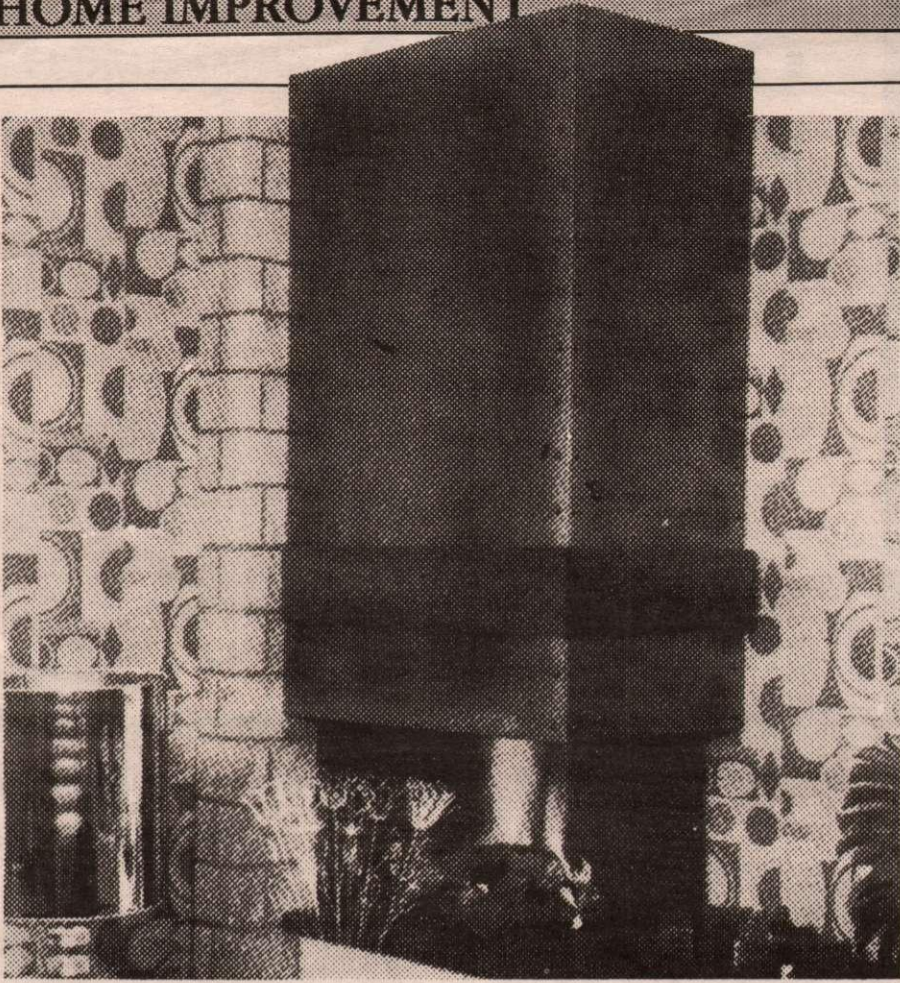
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HOME IMPROVEMENT



Efficient burning fireplaces and stoves require oxygen and today's homes are often so airtight that sufficient quantities are not available. Now you know why you yawn and want to fall asleep in front of the fire.

Fireplaces and wood stoves need oxygen to be efficient

Burning wood consumes a lot of oxygen from the air. This is not a problem if you own an older house that is not very well insulated and even drafty. But if yours is a recently built house, well insulated and draft proofed, the wood fire in your fireplace may be robbing you of some oxygen.

As a matter of fact, some houses are so airtight that if a powerful fan or a central vacuum cleaner is used, the smoke from the fireplace will be pulled inside rather than outside. If you breathe in a lot of smoke when you open your fireplace door, it is probably because of insufficient ventilation.

One solution to this problem is to make sure your fireplace stoves receives air from an outside pipe. Not surprisingly, new stoves are equipped for such purpose. If smoke is not being pulled outside, check the space separating the pipe from the stove. Sometimes the problem lies in the installation itself and that could mean mediocre combustion or a fire that keeps going out.

Safety standards established throughout the Canada along with mandatory inspections have greatly increased safety and minimized faulty installations. Wood stoves, chimneys and pipes now have to be manufactured in accordance to certain specifications and inspectors are

strict. Inspections in the Gulf Islands are handled by the Capital Regional District building inspector.

Most fires in homes are caused by faulty installation or insufficient maintenance of wood stoves and fireplaces.

It may not be safe to use a stove already installed in a house you have just purchased. During the early 1970s, many homeowners faced with substantial increases in price of oil rushed out to buy a wood stove. At that time, stoves that had not been tested for safety were selling like the proverbial hot cakes. Safety norms were practically non-existent and installation was mostly guess work.

The current unstable situation in the Persian Gulf may lead to increased sales for wood stoves. At this time, safety standards are very strict.

The risks of fire increase with the use of an improperly installed stove. With use, the wood in the walls surrounding the stove are constantly heated: gradually, the action of heat brings about a chemical change in the wood. This process is called pyrolysis. It destroys heat resistance and wood will then catch on fire at much lower temperatures than it normally requires.

Another important cause of fire is
Turn to Page 16



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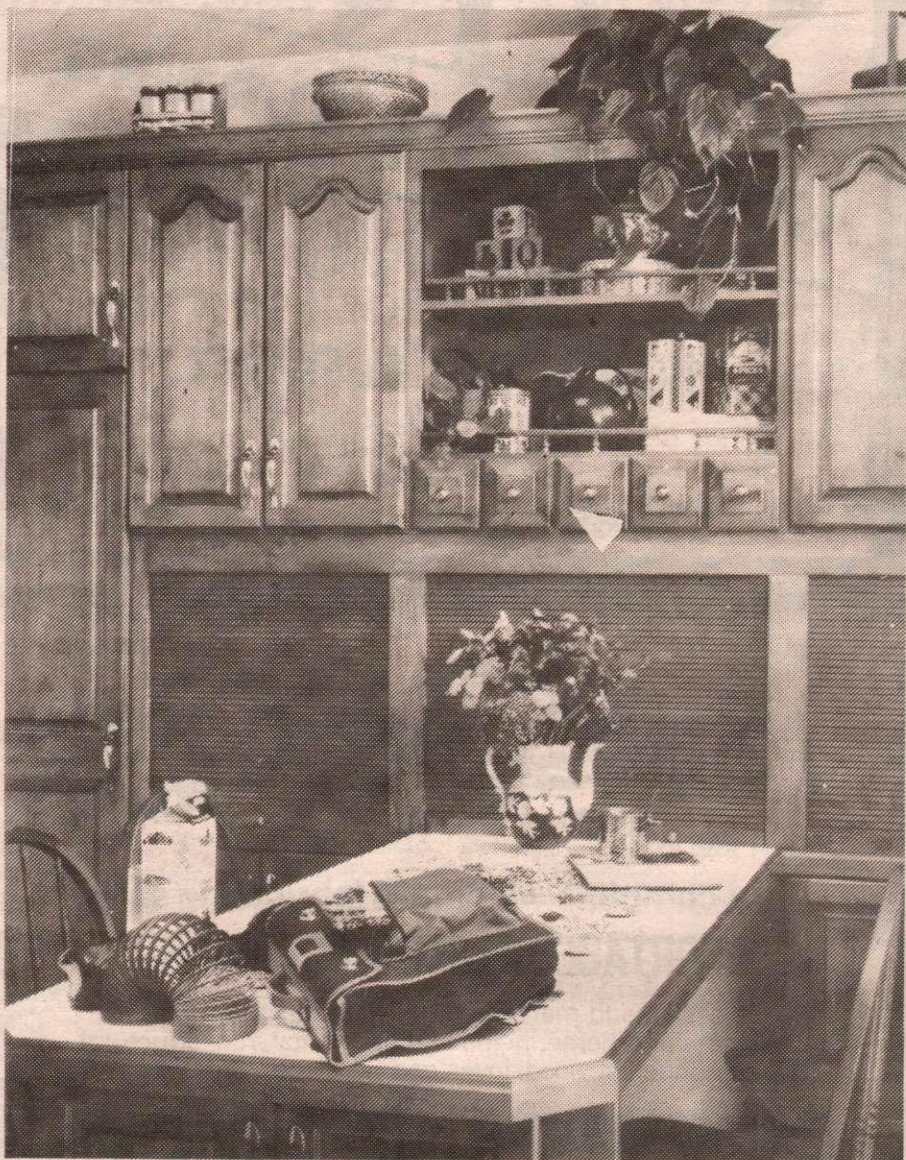
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HOME IMPROVEMENT



Warmth of wood adds charm to kitchen areas which continue to be gathering places for families and friends. The appeal is irresistible.

Making it difficult for a burglar will keep your household safer

If you make it difficult and time-consuming for a burglar to break into your home and if you do not advertise the fact you are not there, burglars are likely to pass up your house and go to one that is an easier mark.

Here's a checklist of basic common sense security measures you can take to protect your home when you are away:

1. Check that all doors and windows are securely locked.
2. Never hide spare keys outside the house.
3. On entry doors, use locks with dead bolts that slide at least 2.5 cm (one inch) into the strike plate.
4. Install lights over every entrance door and turn them on when you go out at night. Use spotlights to illuminate rear and side yards.
5. Don't grow shrubbery around break-in points such as main floor and basement windows.

6. Guard basement windows with thick steel bars welded to the frames. Bars can be fixed or have a swing open feature. Or use non-breakable material such as laminated glass or acrylic plastic instead of regular glass for windows.

7. Block easy-to-open sliding glass doors by fitting a bar on the inside track, so the doors can not be forced open. Use an old hockey stick handle cut the right length. To prevent outside track doors being lifted up and out, insert screw vertically into the track or install a keyed bolt lock.

8. Keep garage doors locked. Burglars often take tools and ladders from garages to help them break in.

9. When you are away for the evening, attach indoor lights and a radio to an automatic timer.

10. Join or form a local Neighbourhood Watch group. Local police can give you more information.

WHAT IS THE PROBLEM?

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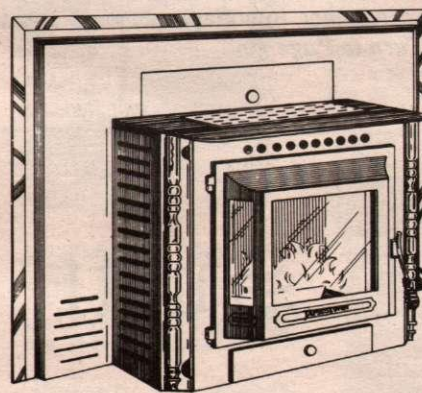
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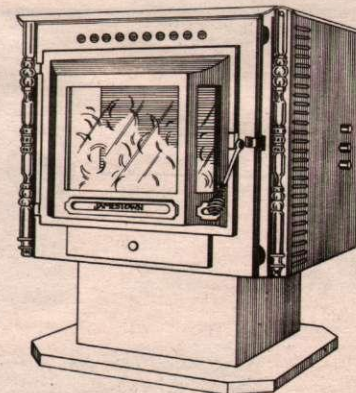
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HOME IMPROVEMENT

Your Garden

CHRIS SCHMAH



Of all seasonal changes, the arrival, or should I say gradual transition to autumn is a profound swing where we often find ourselves reflecting on the past glory days of summer. It's a time for fall fairs, harvest dances, and the rituals of closing down the cottage for the year. You almost feel like there is finally time for that extra cup of coffee and a few moments for reflection, and then you look out into the garden and see the work.

Clean up your annuals and perennials to improve the appearance of the garden. It also helps to reduce disease and insect problems, and allow the plants to redirect their energies. Pick off the spent blooms and seed heads, then fertilize with 20-20-20 or Mor-Bloom to give them a little boost. Since the days are getting shorter and the sun's intensity is diminishing, move your hanging baskets and planter boxes to a sunnier location to keep them growing well.

If you have hollyhocks and snapdragons which are infected with rust, remove the infected foliage by picking, pruning or even pulling out the whole plant. Then bury it or burn it so that no spores are released into the atmosphere to re-infect any other plants. There is no real risk of infecting plants of other species as each rust is very specific to its host. Spray the foliage with garden sulphur, or if you must, Zineb as per recommended label rates and timings (please read the instructions carefully). After the plants finish blooming, prune them back hard to about six inches in height and apply a mulch around the crowns to ensure their survival through the winter and for a floral show next year.

Hang glads to dry in bunches

Once your glads finish blooming and the foliage starts to turn brown, label them as to variety. Then lift them and hang them in bunches in a dry, well-ventilated place to allow them to cure and dry for a few weeks. Remove the dried foliage, soil and roots later in the fall. If you've had problems with thrips over the past season use mothballs, naphthalene flakes or a bulb dust to control them, as they try to overwinter on your stored corms.

September is a good time for doing a tidying, cleanup pruning of stray, rank growth on evergreens, lavender, summer-blooming heathers, boxwood, and santolina. But do it with care as there won't be much corrective regrowth for the next six to eight months. Refrain from pruning spring-blooming shrubs at this time of year, as you will only be cutting off the wood which will be bearing next year's floral show. You can still prune your climbing roses this month by removing the short lateral shoots which bore blooms this year. Then tie the new 1990-grown canes over into a horizontal position to stimulate blooming laterals to form for next year.

Take care to continue watering

Refrain from giving any nitrogen-containing fertilizer to your shrubs, trees or vines at this time, but do continue to give them water. For your more tender broad-leaved evergreens and deciduous shrubs slow down the waterings, but for the needled evergreens, keep up with the deep soakings. They will continue to be active through the fall and early winter, and will experience die-back and drought stress if left short of water. This is a good time of year for planting shrubs and trees that have been grown in containers, as well as perennials and biennials which will overwinter in your garden. Seasonal choices for planting now include clematis, winter heathers, broadleaved evergreens, and other deciduous shrubs.

Your overcrowded bearded irises and dwarf rockery irises should be lifted and separated with a sharp knife or pruners. The divisions should then be planted out, set one inch deep, into a rich soil with four ounces of bonemeal mixed into each square yard of soil surface. Trim the leaves back to six inches and water them in well to settle the soil around the roots. September is a good month for dividing any overcrowded peonies, and for planting new ones. Plant the eyes (divisions of root crowns) in a sunny location, one inch below the soil surface, in a well-drained soil which is rich in organic matter. Add in several shovelfuls of rotted manure, working it in to a depth of 18 inches, but take care to keep the manure from directly contacting the sensitive roots and crowns. Mix in a handful of bonemeal at planting time to encourage future blooming success.

The latter part of September and all of October are said to be ideal times for establishing new lawns or renovating old ones, as the soil temperature is still high enough to promote rapid germination, rooting and growth, and the sustaining fall rains aren't too far off.

Follow harvest with cleanup

As the harvesting of fruits and vegetables is in full swing, we sometimes abandon the rows and beds without giving them a proper cleanup. Turn under or compost all spent plant materials. As spaces fall vacant in your vegetable gardens or annual plantings, you should sow down a fall cover crop to improve the soil's organic matter content, reduce winter erosion from runoff, and to also help in suppressing weed growth. For cold weather cover crops try fall rye, vetch, winter wheat, winter peas, or any combination thereof, sowing at a rate of one pound per 125 sq. ft. These may all be turned under next spring, when the soil is workable. If your garden is in a location which gets sun in the fall and winter, you might consider putting in a few brassicas such as sprouting broccoli, cauliflowers, cabbage, and brussel sprouts, along with some lettuces such as buttercrunch, endive, and romaine. You can also sow out some corn salad, radishes, cress, spinach, and Swiss chard.

Well, once again, space has run out before we've covered all of the timely jobs, so until next time, Happy Gardening.

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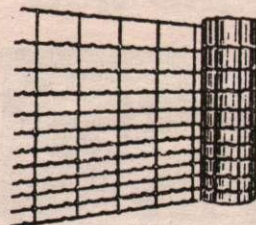
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HOME IMPROVEMENT

Consider more than the price when purchasing can of paint

To most of us, a can of paint is simply that — a can of paint. We might never read the label, nor do we care about the chemistry that goes into the product. As a result, too many of us take the most convenient route in making our purchase decision — price — because paint is oftentimes viewed as a mere commodity to be bought on sale.

Beware the pitfalls of this buying strategy! Although ordinary latex house paints offer lower initial costs per gallon, the tradeoff is poorer performance. With top-quality latex coatings, you can rely on the paint to look better longer and provide superior protection to your home.

In terms of appearance, quality acrylic latex paints chalk less and retain their colour longer.

Since quality paints contain more special additives to fight problems like mildew, the outside of your house will maintain its freshly-painted look. And, if you use a gloss paint for trim and border areas, a quality latex will hold its shiny appearance longer.

Arguably more important than the good appearance a quality paint provides is its protective properties. Paint serves as a barrier against rain, snow, ice and changing humidity and temperature. If that protection breaks down, the paint will crack, blister and peel. These paint failures will often manifest themselves

under eaves, at board edges and on downspouts.

But due to the toughness of quality paints, you will not have to worry about these irksome problem areas. Quality paints adhere to a variety of exterior surfaces, including wood, masonry and cement block.

The final reason to chose quality paint is its long term value, in terms of cost savings and years of service. Because a quality coating lasts longer, you will not have to repaint as frequently. And, although these paints cost more, the few dollars are more than offset by the longer satisfaction you get from the completed job.

The investment benefit with quality paints also pays an extra dividend to the less experienced do-it-yourselfer. If you mistakenly fail to prepare the exterior surface properly, quality paints will be more "forgiving" and do a better job of covering surface imperfections.

In today's quality-conscious society, many consumers recognize that value does not come cheaply. Your largest investment — your home — deserves the best paint to maintain and preserve its value.

For more information about the advantages of using quality paints, discuss your specific job with a paint dealer and follow his recommendations.

WINTERIZE YOUR HOME

Intense heat eliminates creosote accumulation

From Page 13

accumulation of creosote. When wood is not completely burned, a clear or yellowish oily substance sticks to the pipes in the chimney. If you allow it to accumulate, sufficient heat can ignite creosote and send flames up to the roof of your house.

Specialists recommend intense and short-lived fires. A lot of people prefer to control the fire by not feeding it a lot of air and thus keeping the flames very low. This practice should be avoided as low combustion causes a lot of creosote to accumulate. It is of the utmost importance

to have your chimney cleaned regularly during the cold season.

If you are thinking about acquiring a wood burning stove, consider buying one that has a double combustion system. This system features a second chamber that burns all residue that might be trapped in the smoke. As a result, your wood will produce more heat and substances that might form creosote in your chimney or pipes are eliminated.

You should also find out about installing an outside air inlet to feed your fire. The advantage to this is that you will not use warm air from within your home to

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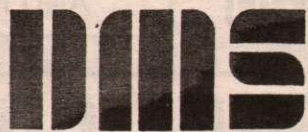
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HOME IMPROVEMENT

Contemporary look follows clean lines

Contemporary means a modern look. You can use all kinds of material. The key is the clean lines, the uncluttered look.

The news in contemporary cabinets is the plastic laminate of Eurostyle. It has been around awhile but has caught on in this country during the past 15 years. Wood trim is an option.

All-wood cabinets (no trim, no exposed hinges or frames) are at home in contemporary kitchens, too. Choose among beech, oak, ash, even cherry and walnut. (One manufacturer makes a walnut cabinet trimmed with stainless steel). Unobtrusive graining won't break up the clean, contemporary lines. Bleached woods are popular, as are woods washed lightly with colours. Stick with timeless neutrals — whites, greys, blacks.

Other options include moulded plastic, stainless steel, and synthetic granite-look material.

Architectural lines

The floor plan of the contemporary kitchen is uncomplicated.

Similarly, cabinets are unadorned. Their doors are often consistent in size, and the lines between them may travel unbroken from floor to ceiling and wall to wall. One large cabinet door covers where another design style might call for two.

Influenced by the Eurostyle look, curves have found a place alongside the angles of contemporary kitchen design. Convex and concave cabinets and countertops soften the hard-edged tenets of classical contemporary style. A round table or curved island will help warm up the angles of a contemporary kitchen, too.

What colour?

Contemporary colours change with the times. Among today's popular colours are seafoam-green, teal, slate-blue, and mauve.

If you have the budget for new materials down the road, a designer can help you choose cabinets and countertops in the colours everyone is clamouring for. The prudent approach: Stick with neutral taupe, brown, white, grey, or black on floors and countertops. Use trend-setting colours in wallpaper, paint, door pulls, and small accessories. Changing cabinet doors is an option that some budgets can bear now and then.

Appliances

Refrigerators and dishwashers can be sheathed in laminate or wood; ranges get too hot for that. Not to worry if you love gadgets: Look for appliances in black glass and chrome. They will stand out against almost any materials. White appliances with white glass are worth investigating, too.

The laboratory look of high tech emphasizes hard lines and the mechanical matters of your kitchen. Stainless steel lends itself well to this approach.

Lighting

Artistic lighting is a hallmark of contemporary kitchens. Fluorescent lights wash ceiling and walls from hiding places atop or underneath cabinets. Little lights add a sculptural look under the toe kick. Shop around for some of the fun



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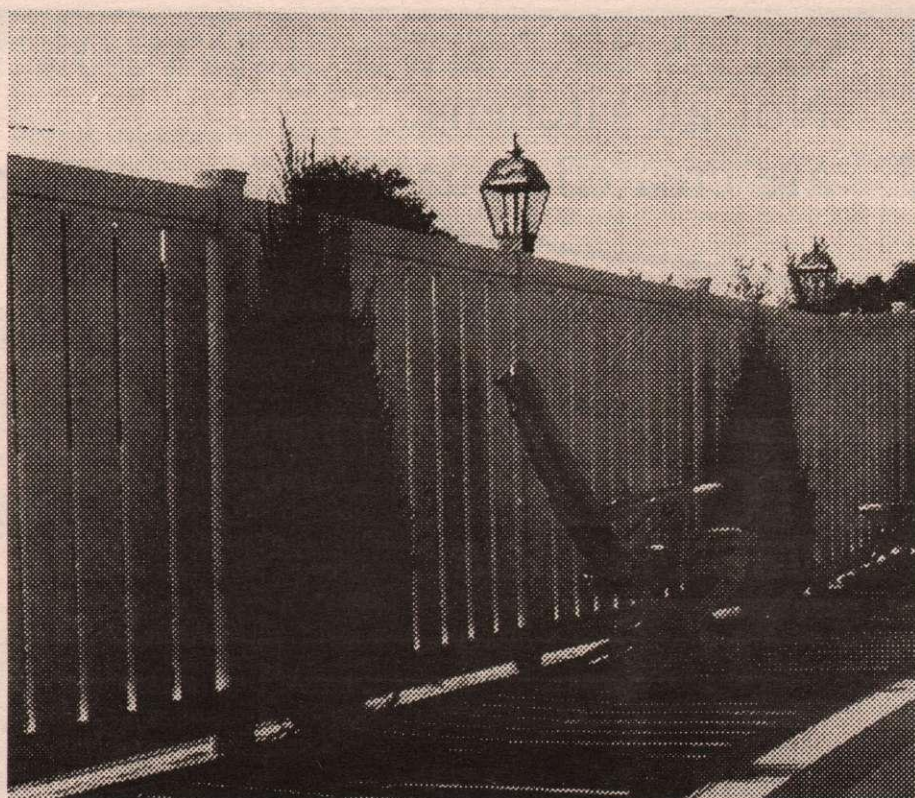
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HOME IMPROVEMENT



Good fences make good neighbours and they also made a good resale feature for your home. If you want to keep deer out or children in, building a fence is the way to achieve both.

Careful planning required when tackling fence project

Like any other major project, building a fence calls for a large investment of money, time and work. Therefore, it goes without saying that you must carefully plan each stage of this project and neglect nothing so that your fence will stand for many years to come without requiring constant repairs.

Obviously, wood that has the highest degree of rotproofness is strongly recom-

mended. In the soft wood category, cedar, cypress or sequoia are excellent choices. If you prefer, rotproofing timber will do nicely.

Remember to use only galvanized nails or else traces of rust will run along the wood's surface.

Turn to Page 20

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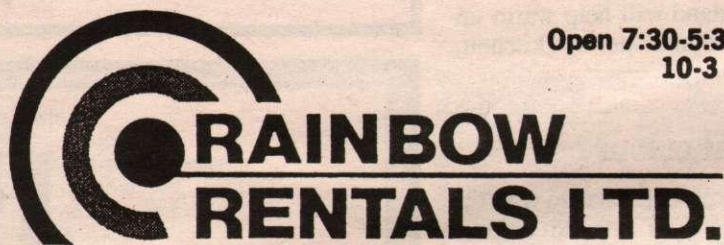
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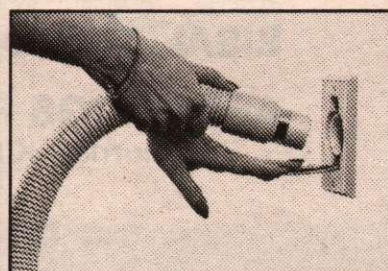
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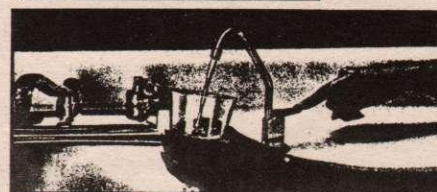
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HOME IMPROVEMENT



Patios need to fit the landscape of your property and require proper consideration. That extra space increases family living areas during the good weather months.

Patio increases property value of your home

Today, a patio is an integral part of your outdoor layout. It increases the value of your property and brings you greater enjoyment of your little corner of the world. It serves as a link between your home and your backyard. Therefore, it must blend in with the outdoor layout, respect the dimensions of your house and the atmosphere that already exists inside your home.

Of course, you want privacy; but there is more to it than that. How much time do you estimate you will spend on your patio? At what time of the day will you use it? What garden furniture will you require? Will you install a barbecue?

If the area is large enough to allow it, your patio may be separated into several parts. The resting area can be separate from the eating area and the play area. However, don't overdo it. Remember that each area must offer enough space to get around and the last thing you want is to feel crowded in your own backyard.

Next, take a good, long look at the natural characteristics of your lot. Does it get morning or afternoon sun? Before deciding on where to install your barbecue, pay attention to what direction the wind usually comes from. If your lot is very small, your patio could cover the whole surface and therefore, eliminate having to care for your lawn. Flower boxes and large potted plants could replace a flower garden. If your backyard is very sunny, you will certainly want an awning, canopy or pergola. Or planting a couple of good trees in the right place can also bring a little shade to your patio.

A very large patio could have several levels, each serving its own purpose. Size and position of each level can fool the eye into believing the patio is longer or wider than it actually is.

Concrete paving is also quite popular. the shapes and colours you choose should blend in with your house's exterior covering. These are generally a better choice than poured concrete which is much too heavy.

Concrete paving stones are often used when building a patio that will be level with the ground. Traditional stones are grey, but now the market offers a new, textured stone that comes in several colours.

Lastly, you may want to opt for a patio built with flagstone. If cemented, they keep weeds from sprouting up between

stones and the result is a more even surface. On the other hand, if you do not

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HOME IMPROVEMENT

Careful preparation prevents fencing posts from rotting

From Page 18

A good protection against rot is necessary in certain places such as the part of the post that will sit underground; these can be treated with creosote. It's a good idea to wet proof with a caulking gun each and every point where the posts meet with struts. Make sure that the laths, as well as the bottom struts are at least 10 centimetres above the ground. Rot always occurs close to the ground.

Other facts to consider

— The rotproofed base of the posts should be at least 4 feet or 115 cm into the ground so that it sits lower than the freezing line. You may rest it on gravel or if you prefer, pour concrete in the holes. If you opt for concrete, make sure you smooth it out, so that draining will be adequate.

— The door will take a lot of beating so you want to design it carefully. Assembling should be precise to ensure sturdiness. The posts will be driven deeper into the ground to give it plenty of

resistance. Use only stainless steel hinges and screws.

— Ideally, the distance between your fence posts should be 6 feet or 185 cm. As for between laths, measuring the distance using one of the laths is usually the best way.

— Cut the top of the posts in a slant and cover with a small board to ensure draining.

— Laths are usually cut in advance, but to protect them against rot, be sure to cut the top in a point or slant.

— Any cracked or damaged laths must be repaired to avoid water infiltration.

— Keep in mind that creosote takes two to three months to dry. You must wait that long before painting or staining the base of the posts.

If you carefully follow all these tips, your fence should be a fine, sturdy one that will stand the test of time without requiring any repairs or maintenance, other than painting or staining now and then.

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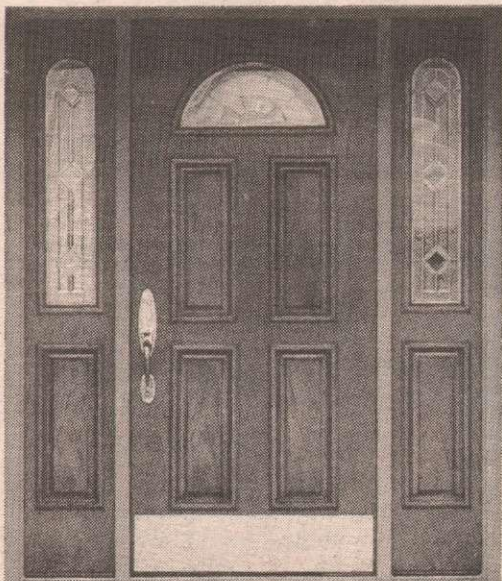
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HOME IMPROVEMENT



An open house is planned soon to familiarize islanders with an alternate insulating and construction system. NASCOR is sold by Brad McArthur and Mary Buijs.

New building materials

A Salt Spring Island couple finds an alternate insulating and construction system to be a pillar of their business.

Brad McArthur and Mary Buijs of McArthur Enterprises are agents for Cano Structures Inc., which manufactures the components of the NASCOR wall system. Cano is a Calgary-based company which supplies builders with the pre-fabricated polystyrene-insulated walls that comprise the Nascor system.

A polystyrene insulating material fits snugly between the wall's wooden studs which are turned parallel to the wall contrary to usual construction methods. Thermal bridging, which most often occurs at the studs in conventional wall structures, is eliminated by this alternate placement.

Because Nascor studs are kiln-dried, the walls are not susceptible to the warping or settling effects that can occur when the moisture in conventional studs is released.

Insulating fibreglass tends to sag, says McArthur, and only eliminates drafts. Polystyrene deflects air, provides a sound-proofing barrier and adds strength to the walls.

Polystyrene is also "an ozone friendly product," says McArthur. It is not produced with chlorofluorocarbons like some other foam plastic materials.

Buijs and McArthur say the Nascor system is great for the do-it-yourselfer. It is manufactured in 14 x 8-foot panels built to the specifications of the house plans sent to them. The panels usually arrive from the manufacturing plant in Langley after 10 to 14 days of ordering.

Nascor-insulate floor and roof designs are also available.

McArthur says it is an attractive product and method for contractors. Because the walls arrive pre-assembled, there is no room for discrepancy in framing. There is also no waste so the construction site remains "virtually mess-free."

Time savings is another benefit. McArthur says it takes only three to four hours to frame a 1600-square-foot rancher with a three-person crew. This can be especially important when faced with inclement weather, he says.

Buijs and McArthur are planning an open house to introduce islanders to the system. While some contractors may be resistant to new ideas, McArthur says "the product really has proven itself over the last little while."

"Customers know they are getting a better product. It is a little more expensive but they easily regain that in energy savings."

Customers have reported up to 60 percent energy savings in a Nascor home.

McArthur Enterprises has been operating on Salt Spring for about three years.

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HOME IMPROVEMENT

Systems available to purify household water supply

Water covers most of the earth's surface and is required to sustain life.

With rising concerns about pollution from a variety of sources, islanders are joining others in looking at ways to improve the quality of water they drink.

Two local businesses offer water treatment systems — Anvil Iron Works is the dealer for the Intec system and Rainbow Rentals sells Beam.

A newcomer to the island, Byron Gerlitz arrived from northern Alberta. It was in the community of Beaver Lodge that he first noticed a change in the taste of his water.

Intec water purification system uses a combination of ionization and filtering which results in an effective and low cost method of water conditioning and cleaning, according to Gerlitz.

Every system installed is set up for the water available on the property, he added. Water tests are conducted for the purchaser. The system is then ordered from the United States and the components are installed.

Gerlitz said the method of purification was used for years in industry and now technology allows it to meet CSA standards for households.

Cost for the system would be approximately \$3,500.

According to company literature, the system will eliminate and kill bacteria, algae, fungus, mildew and many forms of virus. Also it eliminates odours and greatly improves the quality and taste of the water. It does not deplete essential minerals for healthy growth of humans, plants and animals.

Rainbow Rentals' owner Bob Kirkpatrick has a Beam system operating in his home.

He said the systems are recommended for water from a community supply, not wells.

The systems have been available for four years but they have just recently arrived on the west coast. Kirkpatrick said Beam took a long time researching the project before coming out with their system. The company is best known for its vacuum systems.

This summer, Kirkpatrick noticed algae problems with his water. The strainer on the outside hose plugged up after he installed his Beam system. The system also removed a "stale, musty taste" in his water.

Although he has not had a problem with smell, it is his understanding that impurities causing odour can be filtered out by the system.

Three models in various price ranges are available through Rainbow Rentals — a counter top model for \$199, an under-counter system for \$299, and a deluxe double cartridge under-counter system for \$399.

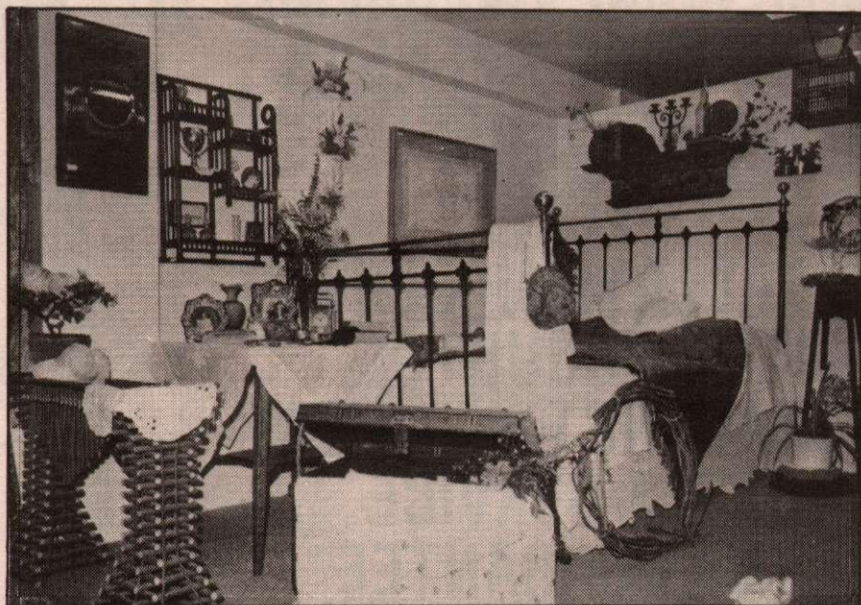
"Like all Beam produces they are quality merchandise with an excellent warranty that the company really stands behind."



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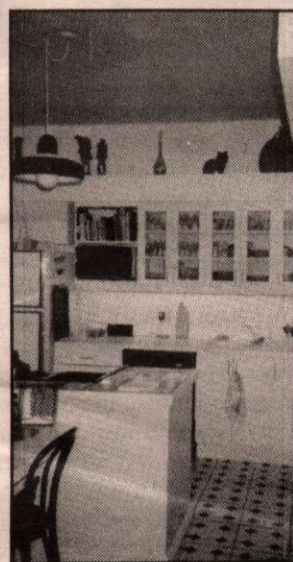
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Shelving storage solution

As families grow in age and number, so grows clutter. Open shelving, however, is a simple and attractive method of solving the problem, particularly in a child's bedroom, where it can be used for storing toys, clothing or books.

One of the most functional yet flexible types of shelving system is that system which uses brackets and wall standards. It comes in a wide selection of pre-cut shelves in a variety of sizes and finishes with complementary brackets and standards. Other shelving materials suitable for use with the system include solid lumber, plywood and particle board. Make sure there are no wall bulges to throw the shelves off balance and when selecting materials, ensure that they are the right size and strength for future use. Also, remember to pick the right fasteners for your wall type or the shelves may collapse.

Information and help on materials selection is available at most home centres, but a brief guideline for fasteners suggests using 1-1/2 inch Robertson wood screws for 3/4 inch plywood and wood panelling. Screws may also be used for wallboard or plaster and 1/4 inch plywood if fastened to wall studs, otherwise, a hollow wall anchor is necessary. Hardware is usually included with the brackets and standards.

The best support for shelving is a solid wood stud. Most studs are situated 16 inches apart, centre to centre, and can usually be located by tapping the wall.

The position of studs will govern placement of both the standards and the shelves. Generally, supports should be placed about 20 to 32 inches apart, depending on the load. The heavier the load, the closer the standards. Shelf ends should not extend more than 8 inches beyond the outside supports.

Book shelving is usually 8 to 10 inches wide. All 11 to 12 inch vertical clearance is suitable for large volumes, but a 9 inch spacing is usually sufficient.

To position the first standard, mark the location of the end standards, then the middle ones on the wall. Place an end standard against the wall and mark one fastener hole, the centre one if there are more than two. Drive in the fastener but do not tighten.

Align the standard vertically with a level and mark the positions of the other fastener holes. Attach the remaining fasteners and tighten all of them.

Put one shelf bracket in the first standard and another one into corresponding holes on the second standard. Position the second standard against the wall and place a shelf with a level on it, onto the brackets. Adjust the shelf until the bubble in the level is centred. Mark the top and bottom of the standard on the wall, remove the shelf and fasten the standard. Follow the same procedure for other

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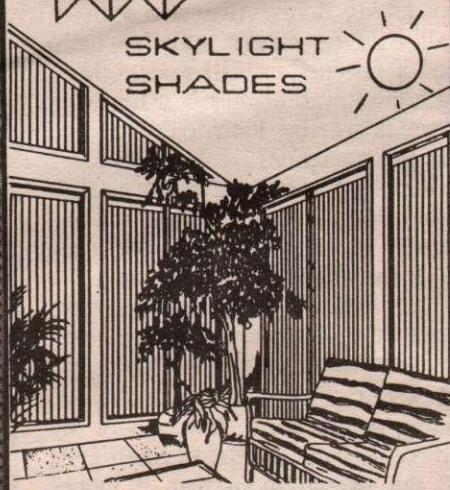
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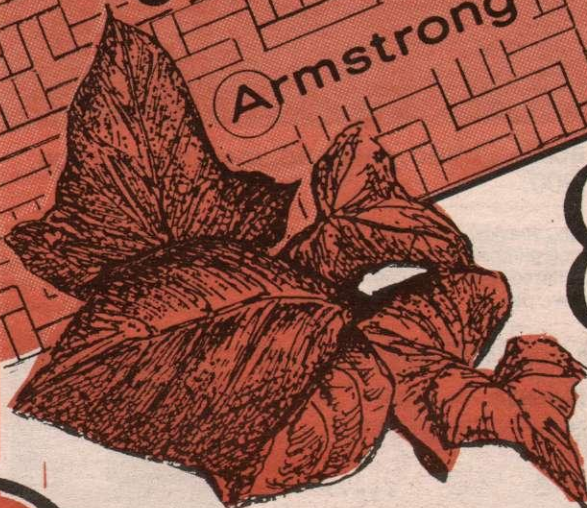
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