



CLUB NEWS

THE VOICE OF HOMESERVICE CLUB

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SPRING CHECKLIST

Now is the time to get a head start on your spring chores by giving your home's exterior a thorough inspection. Take care of minor repairs before they lead to major expense.

- ✓ **Chimney** — have the flue cleaned and inspected.
- ✓ **Attic** —Check the attic for signs of moisture damage and animal nests.
- ✓ **Siding and trim** —Wash siding, touch up damaged paint and repair loose siding.
- ✓ **Eavestroughs** — Clean eavestroughs, repair cracks and splits and broken hangers. Make sure they are in good shape to handle the heavy rains of spring.
- ✓ **Roofing** —Look for damaged shingles and loose flashing.
- ✓ **Windows** —Have windows cleaned to let in spring sun and inspect for loose putty and cracked caulking.

KITCHEN TRENDS

Kitchens remain heart of the home

Kitchens are no longer just places to prepare and cook meals. They have become the heart of the home.

“Family life has become more focused around the kitchen, and the entertaining of friends has also become more focused on the kitchen,” according to kitchen designer, Riener Hoyer.

“Cooks are no longer in the kitchen by themselves. They’re now part of the overall conversation when they have guests,” he added.

This new trend over the past two to three years has resulted in a number of design changes to the kitchen. These changes are affecting the size of the kitchen, the choice of cabinetry and appliances, and the finishing touches on things such as counter tops and ceilings.

“People are opening up their kitchens to the rest



Homeowners are opening their kitchens to the rest of the living space, making them the heart of the home.

of the house and they’re choosing design features that blend in more with the rest of their living space,” says Hoyer.

The most popular trend is to redesign the kitchen

into a larger, more open-concept space which connects, and even becomes part of, the living room and dining room. About 80 per cent of all kitchen renovations now involve adding space by knocking out walls that separate the kitchen from the living and dining rooms. This is especially popular in smaller houses in which knocking out kitchen walls can create a feeling of

space without having to add another room, or move.

Homeowners are also showcasing their kitchens

(Continued on Page 3)

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Great kitchens sell homes, says real estate survey

Canadian home buyers overwhelmingly consider the kitchen to be the most important room when deciding on a home purchase, according to a recent survey of Canadian real estate agents by Delta Faucet Canada.

The survey discovered that 88 per cent of real estate agents identify the kitchen as the room primarily looked at by home buyers, followed by living rooms, master bedrooms and bathrooms.

"As well as looking for ways to help sell their homes, more and more Canadians are looking for the best way to increase their home equity, and they want to know where to put their renovation dollars to do that," says Bob Linney, strategic communications manager for the Canadian Real Estate Association (CREA). "The research shows that the renovations that pay back are kitchens and bathrooms."

There are many reasons Canadian homeowners decide to renovate. Primarily, it is to create comfort and function, but renovations should also add value to the home. The survey showed that 77 per cent of residential real estate agents believe renovating the kitchen and/or bathroom provides the best dollar-for-dollar return on investment to a home.

"With the increase in the number of people using home inspectors, it's clear that buyers want to know if the inner workings, such as plumbing, are in good shape," says Karen Marshall, director of marketing, Delta Faucet Canada. "They will turn on the taps and flush the toilets to ensure functionality, so it's important to make sure everything is working properly."

Interior designers agree with real estate agents that kitchens and bathrooms are the place to get the most value for a dollar. They also suggest these types of renovations and upgrades in newly purchased homes, to make the space more functional for the family and add a complementary look throughout.

- News Canada

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Elegant curved counter tops from materials such as granite, are some of the high-end touches common in the kitchen of 2003.

Finishing touches define kitchen renos in 2003

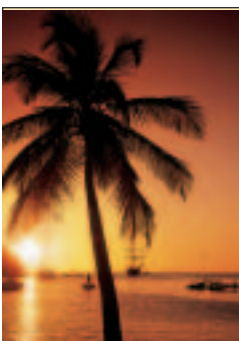
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by opting for higher-end finishes on cabinets, including antique, French vanilla and mocha glazes. These glazes give kitchen cabinetry a more furniture-like appearance and the finishes may be specifically chosen to match the furnishings in the rest of the house. Also increasingly popular are glass-panelled doors on cabinets, which create the effect of china cabinets. By contrast, appliances are being more frequently built into cabinetry to make them appear less conspicuous, while giving the kitchen a cleaner, more polished look.

"All of these changes are making the kitchen appear less like a utility area and more like another furnished room in the house," says Hoyer.

Other popular design features include crown moldings on ceilings and higher-end, solid-surface, granite counter tops with elegant, curved edging. For even greater prestige, some homeowners are having heating elements installed under the stone floors in their kitchens to add warmth and comfort.

"Making the kitchen a centre point of the house is enhancing the quality of life for people and bringing the family together," he added. "It's also making the kitchen a more practical, efficient and attractively designed space that not only makes food preparation easier and more pleasant, but adds value to the home as well."



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CLUB NEWS

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Growing Trends A garden full of surprises

by Nathalie Houde, Botanix

If you're planning to redo your garden this year, you may be interested to know that the trend in 2003 is colour. There are all sorts of original ways to use colour — in flowerbeds, hedges, shrubbery, ground covers... and even flowering trees.

The "stars" in your garden - Colours can produce all sorts of different effects. It all depends on how you use them. If you limit annuals and perennials to one or two favourite shades and harmonize these with the greens of your shrubs and ground cover plants, so that your garden plants highlight one another, you can create a truly dazzling effect. Warm colours (yellow, orange, red) produce a joyful effect. Their stimulating appearance makes them a good choice for use near (among other places) your entrance, for an effect that says, "Welcome!" Cool colours (blue, mauve, pink) on the other hand are peaceful, reassuring, romantic and softly inviting. They fit perfectly into quiet corners, around the edges of pools and next to benches, where they deepen the overall effect.



Colours and seasons...living together in harmony - You can also try playing with colours to match the seasons. If lilacs have a big place in your garden, with their lavender and mauve spring blooms, choose rose bushes in summer with their rich blooms that draw on pink and red, and open the fall with yellows and oranges of grasses.

Plants with tricolour leaves...a garden kaleidoscope - The majority of plants have green leaves. A few species have yellowish or purple leaves. Others' leaves are variegated in two-colour patterns. There's no doubt that the main trend in 2003 is to combine a great variety of shrubs, perennial plants and annuals with tricolour leaves into your garden plan.

Move your home décor outdoors - A garden is like another room of your house, a special space that puts you back in touch with all those small things that make life really worth living. Don't hesitate to use your ceramic flower pots, outdoor utility tables and earthworks to re-create an outdoor corner of your house of which you're especially fond of. Living in your garden is the ideal way to enjoy summer to the fullest.

For garden and landscape ideas, visit www.botanix.ca. (NC)

You'll be glad you called HOMESERVICE CLUB - we GUARANTEE it!