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NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2015

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FABULOUS FALL FIXUPS

just in time for the holidays

Summer is behind us and the hustle and bustle of the holiday season is just around the corner. If you are expecting holiday guests or plan on entertaining during the holidays, now is the time to get your house in order.

Declutter first

Before starting on any home improvements or holiday decorating, take some time to declutter. Clean out the hall closet to make room for winter gear and guests' coats. Go through the main living areas and clear table tops, bookshelves and counters of unnecessary clutter. Update the family photos on walls and table tops.

Make it sparkle

A professional cleaning can give your interior a fresh new look for the holidays. Hire the pros to come in and clean your home from top to bottom, including walls, blinds and windows. Have the rugs shampooed and hardwood flooring cleaned. Give the surface of tired vinyl and ceramic flooring a go with a commercial restorer for gleaming results.

Redecorate

A simple coat of paint is the most cost-effective upgrade you can make to your home. But the clock is ticking, so book your painting contractor now.

Updating the crown moulding and baseboard or repainting it, is another easy fix that will add flair to your decorating project.

Create more space

Turn an unused bedroom into a den, office or crafts room. Increase the liveability and value of your home by renovating the basement to add a guest room, a family room, an additional washroom, a home office or a study area. A professional renovator can advise you on how to create the space you need while working within your budget.

Layered décor

Now that your home is fresh and clean, add the finishing touches. Simple updates like adding throw rugs, pillows in rich jewel tones and slip covers in warm colours will add warmth to your home décor. Update or accent your window coverings; add a valance or accent your windows with another layer of fabric.



Drape bare surfaces with tablecloths and runners to add more warmth.

Exterior considerations

Plan to take advantage of a fine fall day to have the eaves cleaned before hanging the holiday lights. Dig out the snow shovel and tune up the snowblower so they are handy and ready to go when the snow flies. Order firewood and have ice melter on hand to make walkways safe for holiday visitors.

Start now and your home will be snug and cosy and ready for the holidays.



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Winter is coming for your home!

It's coming - the white, windy weather of winter. Now is the time to protect your home and wallet with a quick window and door checkup to make needed repairs and reduce costs.

Clear sills and moving parts of dirt and debris. Debris like sand, dirt or leaves can get caught in window sills and moving parts of windows or doors. Clean these areas with a dry paintbrush to create a tighter seal and enhance window and door performance.

Check weather stripping. Re-attach or replace loose or worn weather stripping around windows and doors. Loose weather stripping can let cold air in, reducing energy efficiency.

Reapply caulk or sealant around windows and doors. To help reduce potential drafts and leaks, reseal areas around windows and doors that may have been exposed to heavy weather or extreme sunlight, creating breaks in caulk or sealant.

Install snap-in blinds or shades. Snap-in between-the-glass blinds or shades help insulate your home from cold outdoor temperatures. Pella Designer Series windows and patio doors



feature convenient between-the-glass options to add energy efficiency and privacy.

Repair or replace damaged exterior surfaces. Cracked or deteriorated wood on the roof or near the foundation is typically associated with water penetration and may allow moisture or cold air to leak into your home. Consult a professional to help correct any roof or drainage problems around your home.

Replace old windows and doors with energy-efficient ones. Replace single-pane glass or older windows with energy-efficient, double- or triple-pane glass versions, such as those offered by Pella, and made with insulating argon. (BPT)



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What's NEW in GARAGE DOOR OPENERS

Your automatic garage door opener works just fine, you say. It's opened and closed your door reliably for years. All you've needed to do is change the light bulb or the battery in the remote control once in a while. Replace it? What could be new in garage door openers? Plenty.

Safety First - If your opener was installed prior to 1993, you may be missing out on a great safety feature that is now required on all U.S. and Canadian openers manufactured since that time - photoelectric eyes or some other device that provides equivalent protection against entrapment.

Photoelectric eyes - mounted about six inches above the floor - cast an invisible beam across the door opening. If a door is closing and, for example, a child or pet were running underneath the door, they would "break" the beam, causing the door to automatically reverse.

Because your garage door is the heaviest and largest moving part of your home, a new opener with entrapment protection makes a great deal of sense, particularly if you have small children. (Note - It's important, too, to teach children that

the garage door system is not a plaything.)

Your garage door professional can help you choose the system that makes sense for your needs - and he or she is also fully trained to install and test the system for optimum performance and safe operation.

Key to the castle - Remote control or external keypads have become the new "house keys" for many homeowners.

"Keypad use has more than doubled in the past 10 years," said Tom Wadsworth, editor of Door & Access Systems, a magazine for the garage door

industry. "Convenience is the driving factor behind this trend - no more worries about lost or stolen keys." You've always got the power.

And speaking of power, today's openers won't keep you waiting outside in the rain, or force you to manually disengage the opener and lift the door by hand when there is a power outage. A popular accessory sold with new openers is a battery back-up system that allows you to use your garage door opener, regardless of any loss of power to your home.

For more information on garage door openers, visit GarageWowNow.com.

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UPGRADE YOUR FURNACE AND SAVE

Upgrading your old furnace to a reliable, energy-efficient model can save up to 25 per cent on your annual heating bill. Here are some buying tips that will pay off in energy savings:

- Equipment size matters. An oversized system will use more energy while an undersized system will work harder and less efficiently.

- Look for the Energy Star® - it can save up to 15 per cent a year on heating costs.
- Consider the system's Annual Fuel Utilization Efficiency (AFUE) rating, which measures consumption efficiency. The minimum in Canada is 90 per cent and high-efficiency natural gas furnaces have 92 to 97 per cent efficiency.

- Check the manufacturer's warranty.
- Opt for a programmable thermostat to maximize your savings.
- Invest in a heating/cooling maintenance plan. Whether you opt for a new system or intend to stay with your current system, a heating and/or air conditioning maintenance plan, like the Club's Worry-Free Home Warranty Plan, can give you peace of mind with annual maintenance and inspection and coverage against costly repairs.



FALL REMINDERS: Before the snow flies

- Arrange to have your furnace professionally cleaned and inspected.
- Drain all exterior water lines.
- Have eavestroughs cleaned of all debris after the leaves have dropped to prevent winter roof damage.
- Have carpets cleaned to improve indoor air quality this winter.
- Book an appointment to have your chimney cleaned and safety-checked.
- Recirculate warm air by reversing the direction of ceiling fans.

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