

8 EASY SPRING FIXUPS

- Create a new look for your front entrance. Paint the door a bold new colour, add a brass kickplate and new door hardware for eye-catching appeal. Or, replace a dated door with an energy-efficient steel door for elegance and durability. Ditch the old mailbox and add some new light fixtures for an entrance that says "welcome".
- 2. Dress up your exterior with shutters. Add warmth to your home's exterior with maintenance-free plastic shutters in a rainbow of modern colours. Paint the garage door to match for a whole new look. If the door is looking shabby, start shopping for a new one (see page 3).
- 3. **Perk up your porch.** Cover that boring concrete with clay tiles. Mask plain posts with carved column covers available at building centres. Top off the transformation with a new stair rail to complete the look.
- 4. Update your home's interior with fast fixes. Replace dated light switches and plugs with modern "rocker" style switches and matching cover plates. Replace worn or tarnished floor and cold air vents with stylish new models available in finishes like brushed nickel and a variety of colours.
- 5. Brighten your decor. New light fixtures can transform a dreary hallway, brighten a kitchen and create a new look in the bathroom. Make sure the fixtures you choose are energy-efficient and CSA-approved for safety.
- 6. What a difference a faucet can make! Rusty, leaky faucets do nothing to enhance the style of your kitchen or bath. Replace your bathroom taps with matching sink and tub faucets for a brand new look. Add shiny new kitchen faucets or upgrade to one of the stylish new pullout or pulldown faucets and marvel at the difference a small change can make.



- Replace interior doors and woodwork. Replace boring slab interior doors with colonial-style doors and new knobs and hinges for an instant update. Team the doors with matching colonial molding and baseboards to give your home a new, warmer look.
- 8. Add a garden. This spring, plant a tree, add a perennial garden, install a rock garden, spruce up a deck, or put in a pond. You'll be rewarded with increased enjoyment—and property value!

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IT'S THE LAW: Carbon monoxide detectors now mandatory in your home

s of April 15, 2015, homeowners in Ontario are required to have a working carbon monoxide detector installed near the sleeping area of the home, or risk fines. The new law, Bill 77 - The Hawkins-Gignac Act, came into effect April 15, 2015 and applies to all all homes that contain at least one fuel-burning appliance (e.g., gas water heater or gas furnace), fireplace or have an attached garage.

The law is named in honour of OPP Constable Laurie Hawkins, her husband and two children, who died from CO poisoning in 2008 due to a clogged gas fireplace vent. They didn't know they were in danger because carbon monoxide is colourless, odourless and tasteless.

The Hawkins-Gignac Foundation for CO Education encourages homeowners to follow these CO safety tips:

- Ensure your family is protected, by installing a carbon monoxide alarm outside sleeping areas. For optimal protection, install a CO alarm on every storey.
- CO alarms are required by law to be replaced within the time frame indicat-

ed in the manufacturer's instructions and/or on the label on the unit. Some new CO alarms offer sealed lithium batteries that last 10 years from activation.

CARBON

MONOXIDE

- Have a licenced technician inspect your fuel burning appliances (i.e. furnace, range, fireplace, water heater) annually, to ensure they are in proper working order and vented correctly.
- For families with older parents or relatives, help them inspect their CO alarms.
- Replace batteries in your CO alarm annually, or opt for models with 10-year sealed lithium batteries that never need to be changed.

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Raise your room to new heights with eye-catching ceiling designs

ant to infuse your home with architectural interest? Start at the top.

"The ceiling is the most overlooked design element in a space, hands down," said Brian Patrick Flynn, whose interiors are regularly featured on HGTV. com and often showcased by his own company, Flynnside Out Productions.

Instead of leaving the ceiling bright white or builder beige, convert this large, blank canvas into a decorative canopy of colour and texture.

Flynn and other influential designers are forecasting a ceiling "revival" in 2015. This will include fresh interpretations of vintage styles, such as gleaming metal tiles and textural wood beams.

Here are some hot ceiling trends to take your rooms to new heights:

Layer on the luster. Besides beauty, stamped metal ceilings offer practicality. They resist mold and mildew, offer sag resistance and last longer than plaster or drywall. Metallaire metal ceiling tiles from Armstrong are available in 12 patterns, and a variety of finishes, including chrome, copper, brass, white and lacquered steel.

Mix and match ceiling styles, such as inlaying the recesses of coffered ceilings with gold or copper tiles. Flynn said he's also a fan of tongue-and-groove ceilings accented with beams. "This adds a ton of visual interest to the room, and can make it feel much larger," he said.

Create character with wood. From



rustic timber to sleek teak, wood hues help set the tone in a room.

Add architectural depth. The cost of coffered ceilings, a feature of grand buildings since the Romans, have been reduced by lightweight materials and easy-to-install prefabricated systems that boast features like mold, mildew and sag resistance.

Flynn recommends homeowners start thinking about their ceiling by exploring websites for ideas. A good place to start is www.armstrong.com/residential-ceilings, which offers hundreds of interesting examples. (BPT)

GARAGE DOOR CHECKLIST

Buying a new garage door is no longer an open and shut case. Today you can choose doors made from aluminum, fiberglass, wood and steel in a wide variety of styles and finishes.

A garage door is about 40 per cent of the average home's exterior, so it pays to do some research before shopping:

- Start by inspecting the existing door. If it sags when opened, if the rollers catch or drag, if the door is rusted, dented or cracked, or if it does not close and lock, it may be time for a new door.
- When choosing a material, consider maintenance requirements and durability, as well as style. Steel is the most durable, and also the most expensive. Wood looks good but requires maintenance. Aluminum is cheaper but is also lighter in weight and prone to dents.
- Finally, choose a door that will complement your home's style. Also compare safety features and check the warranties.

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