

# SPRINGTIME HOME IMPROVEMENT

SECTION B  
GULF ISLANDS  
DRIFTWOOD  
WEDNESDAY, APRIL 23, 2008

## Kitchen move sure to improve home's flow

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### Major reno serves up range of possibilities

BY ELIZABETH NOLAN  
DRIFTWOOD STAFF

**F**rom the moment they decided to buy their house on Shepherd Hills Road, Bridget and George Sipos knew there would be renovations in their future.

Although the modest bungalow had many fine attributes, and came with a pygmy goat, a kitchen situated immediately through the main door left the stove in the entry way and nowhere for coats.

Directly on the other side of the adjoining living room/dining room area, previous owners had enclosed the porch that once

ran the length of the house's north side. The enclosure provided an office, a work space and a tool shed, but it also took away the best view of the valley and didn't leave any windows. Requiring neither an office nor a tool shed, Bridget and George felt the natural plan would be to renovate the former porch to become the new kitchen.

"It's a perfectly nice kitchen, but right from when we bought the house we knew it was in the wrong place," Bridget explained over coffee recently. She went on to jest, "We think the Feng Shui in the house is pretty good, and it's going to be a whole lot better when you don't have to climb over the stove."

MAJOR RENO continued on B2



# SPRINGTIME HOME IMPROVEMENT

## Couple ready to work

### KITCHEN RENO

continued from B1

The couple started the process immediately after moving in near the end of April 2007, hiring Wilf Taylor and Ben Greenough. Taylor and Greenough advised the Siposes they would need about a year before they were free of other work. Now, almost exactly one year later, they are ready to go ahead.

Although the size difference is not large — the kitchen leaves an 11- X 15-foot space for one that is 15 X 15 — the functionality of the house will be greatly improved.

“Essentially we’re moving it from one end of the living room to the other,” Bridget said.

“The advantage is it will be a kitchen in itself, not an open passageway, and it will be a nice bright open space with a view.”

The move will relieve Bridget from waking up smelling food in the adjacent bedroom, thinking she’d left something on the stove, and will also provide a place for a huge, antique armoire — perfect for storing the coats there’s currently no room for.

Being able to use the appliances and cabinets from their existing kitchen is cutting down on the costs for this project, and also reducing the arguments about the finer details.

Both Bridget and George have had their own ideas of what the kitchen will be like,

which each finds completely natural and obvious. However, these ideas have also been at odds, resulting in a lot of discussion.

“In some ways, we’ll end up with a kitchen one way or another, and what we both want is a nice kitchen that we’re both happy with. But it’s the getting there that’s interesting,” Bridget observed.

Friends have been joking with the couple about the ill effects of renovations on a marriage; one even asked to take a last photo of them together before they started.

But in fact, the Siposes have been married more than 30 years and appear remarkably happy together. As well, this is not their first renovation or even their first kitchen project. Their first home in Prince George started as a rustic log cabin, into which George built all the amenities himself.

Despite George’s joke that they’ve added 10 per cent to the budget for marriage counselling, the Sipos kitchen reno is proceeding in a very civilized manner. Constant negotiations are in process over the fun bits, liking picking out a floor (they’re going with cork) and counter tops (they’re still debating over dark or light coloured tiles).

But with all the important decisions close to being made and their permits in place, now’s not the time to ask about an end date.

Laughed Bridget: “What we’re really hoping to do is start!”



Bridget Sipos in her Shepherd Hills kitchen.

PHOTO BY DERRICK LUNDY

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GARDENING

# Plant them and they will come, says writer

How to enlist an army of beneficial insects to control pests the natural way

BY AMY GEDDES  
DRIFTWOOD STAFF

Forget insecticides. One of the easiest ways to defend your garden from insect pests is to recruit an army of natural predators.

"It begins with choosing the right plants," said Linda Gilkeson, who was volunteering at the Salt Spring Garden Club plant sale on Saturday.

As an entomologist, master gardener, author of gardening books and the current executive director of the Salt Spring Island Conservancy, she is a renowned authority on natural pest management.

Holding up a pot of bright orange calendula flowers — a favourite of lady beetles, hover flies and other aphid predators — she explains how attracting beneficial insects with the right plants is a smart alternative to spraying insecticides. Insects attracted to the calendula plant, for example, will lay eggs. When the immature insects hatch, they devour troublesome aphids, caterpillars and other notorious Gulf Islands pests.

"The most attractive plants," she writes in her book *Natural Insect, Weed and Disease Control* "are those with exposed nectar and pollen sources that tiny insects can reach."

These are plants in the carrot, cabbage, aster and mint families, as well as many weeds like wild carrot, yarrow, dandelion, chickweed, wild mustard



PHOTO BY AMY GEDDES

At the Salt Spring Garden Club plant sale on Saturday, Linda Gilkeson recommends planting calendula to attract beneficial insects to the garden.

and hawkweed.

"Not all flowers provide pollen and nectar or make it available to tiny insects," she writes. "In fact, many of the showiest ornamentals we enjoy are useless to beneficial insects because they lack accessible nectar or pollen."

To ensure a garden is a hot spot for beneficial insects like orchard mason bees, lacewings and syrphid flies, she

suggests Gulf Islands gardeners plant a combination of kale, dill, parsley, coriander, candytuft, thyme, lovage, yarrow, daisies and goldenrod.

"These flowers supply pollen," she said, "which is a great source of protein and fat. And the better the food supply is for the adult insects, the more eggs they will be able to lay."

An avid gardener, much of Gilkeson's

know-how comes from her own experience. She has learned to rely on beneficial insects to keep pests at bay in her Mount Belcher garden on Salt Spring. She said insecticides are a waste of time and money. They kill pests, but they kill the beneficial insects as well, leaving a garden defenseless when the pests try to move back in again.

As an alternative, she suggests devot-

ing five to 15 per cent of garden space to flowers that attract and feed beneficial insects and to grow a variety of them so flowers are available from early spring to late summer.

**"The most attractive plants are those with exposed nectar and pollen sources that tiny insects can reach."**

LINDA GILKESON  
Salt Spring Island Conservancy

Mingling them throughout the yard and garden is another strategy she employs.

"Plant them among vegetables, use them as edging plants or in rock walls."

Planting a sweet alyssum border around rose beds is one way to attract aphid predators.

And a tip she offers that particularly applies to this time of year: "I always allow kale and other hardy greens that have spent the winter in my garden to flower in the spring because these early mustard family flowers are particularly attractive to beneficial insects."

The Saturday plant sale where Gilkeson was stationed gave Salt Springers get a head-start on planning their gardens this year. Her advice to gardeners is to "make allies out of beneficial insects."

All it takes is a little planning before planting.

"Prevention is the key to successfully managing pests," she writes.

## Gilkeson's insectary plants and a reminder about water

Linda Gilkeson's top 12 insectary plants (roughly in order of blooming) are:

- Kale
- Parsley
- Dill
- Coriander/cilantro
- Sweet alyssum
- Calendula
- Candytuft
- Thyme
- Lovage
- Yarrow
- Daisies
- Goldenrod

**Don't forget the water!**

"Many beneficial insects,

particularly the tiny parasitic wasps, aphid midges and other very small insects benefit from a water supply during the driest part of the summer," writes Linda Gilkeson in her *Natural Insect, Weed & Disease Control* book.

"While leaf-eating insects have the moisture from plants to keep them going, the predators and parasitic insects must find other water supplies.

"They normally sip dew for liquid, but, in mid-summer, many areas on the coast are so dry there is

no dew in the morning . . .

"Any type of container will do as long as insects won't drown in it.

"Parasitic wasps, for example, are terrible at coming in for a landing; they often flip over when they alight, so they can drown in a pan of water if there is nothing to climb onto.

"A shallow bird bath with a rough surface, or a large clay plant saucer, is ideal. Put rocks or gravel in the water to provide safe islands for insects to perch on while drinking."



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# SPRINGTIME HOME IMPROVEMENT

## ALTERNATIVE BUILDING

# Rammed earth re-vamped for cold climates

SSI is hub of an earth-friendly building technology

**AMY GEDDES**  
DRIFTWOOD STAFF

The garage floor was a veritable sea of shoes during a Terra Firma Builders Ltd. open house that showcased one of their SIREWALL homes in Village Terrace in Ganges.

Fourteen hundred people from around the world toured the home in three days.

The turnout was not surprising considering Salt Spring Island is the global centre for SIREWALL (stabilized, insulated, rammed earth) technology. Thanks to its inventor Meror Krayenhoff, owner of Terra Firma

Builders Ltd., people now flock here for his workshops to learn about SIREWALL homes, landscape walls and privacy walls. So it stands to reason that local home owners thinking about spring home improvement projects may want to put this renowned, earth-friendly building technology on their list of options to explore.

For thousands of years, civilizations have been building with rammed earth — secured wooden forms filled with damp earth and compacted into stable walls. But because rammed earth on its own is a poor insulator, the ancient design was only suitable for warm climates. Krayenhoff, wanting to bring the rammed earth design to cooler climates, began working on an insulated design 15 years ago.

Today, after much experimentation — that included his own home on Cusheon Lake and 30 other homes on the Gulf Islands — he has perfected the design and achieved a new global standard for durable, healthy, energy-efficient buildings and structures.

Built with locally sourced soils, Krayenhoff said home owners thinking of building an addition this year will benefit from the design when the warm weather rolls around.

“When we get hot spells, ants will start flying,” he said. “Sometimes ants fly outside and sometimes they fly inside. But if you have a rammed earth home you don’t have to worry about ants inside because ants eat wood, not earth.”

Rammed earth is resistant to mould as well, which he notes as being a key concern for Gulf Islands home owners.

SIREWALLs are also energy efficient, stable, virtually fire and earthquake proof and are made with ecologically sound building materials. Krayenhoff said if all housing in North America was built with SIREWALLs it would have saved a million acres of trees from being clear cut.

Rammed earth homes are also non-toxic.



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

A SIREWALL home by Terra Firma Builders Ltd., an earth-friendly building technology invented on Salt Spring.

“There are few building materials I can think of in use today that are not toxic,” he said, noting the 20 different components used in most buildings are toxic in some way. Those include fungicides in drywall paper, carcinogens in drywall mud, and endocrine disruptors used in vapour barriers.

If an add-on to the home is not an option, landscape and privacy walls can also be

built with rammed earth and there are several driveway entries on Salt Spring that boast these walls fitted with house numbers. Krayenhoff said his walls are now strong enough that they are almost sandstone-like, will withstand power washing and can last up until 15 years before they begin to erode.

For more information, visit [www.sirewall.com](http://www.sirewall.com).

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# SPRINGTIME HOME IMPROVEMENT

## GREEN BUILDING

# Province adopts green building code

Energy efficiency a top priority in new regulations

BY SEAN MCINTYRE  
DRIFTWOOD STAFF

New building code requirements passed by the provincial government on April 15 mean buildings constructed in B.C. after Sept. 5 will have to meet updated standards set up to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

The announcement follows the provincial government's goal, set out in this year's throne speech, to ensure the province leads the way in reducing the level of greenhouse gas emissions associated with the construction of new buildings.

"This is the first time in B.C. that every building constructed in the province will meet energy and water efficiency targets," said the province's minister responsible for housing Rich Coleman in a release issued following the announcement.

"These new standards were developed after consultation with those who work with the building code every day — builders, designers, and local governments — as well as the general public," he added.

In addition to higher energy efficiency requirements for larger residential developments, industrial and commercial buildings, the new rules include changes intended to improve the insulation and water efficiency standards of B.C. homes.

The changes are a long time in the making and likely to succeed in lowering the province's greenhouse gas emissions, according to Salt Spring Energy Strategy technical coordinator Elizabeth White.

"We need to start looking at anything that improves efficiency," she said. "Water efficiency is one of the areas where there is now the most waste."

White said she is particularly pleased to see new water-efficiency standards that will



Elizabeth White: changes "a long time in the making."

**"We need to start looking at anything that improves efficiency."**

ELIZABETH WHITE  
Salt Spring Energy Strategy

require the installation of ultra low-flow toilets and other water-saving plumbing fixtures and fittings in all new homes.

Specific insulation requirements outlined in the regulations vary depending on how you heat your home, where it is located and what materials are used in its construction. Specific details are available at the prov-

ince's website (listed below) or from the Capital Regional District building inspector's office in Ganges.

White recommends people undertaking new construction projects to consider the new regulations in the early planning stages.

"We wish everyone applying for a building permit will consider these regulations and get a head start," she said.

The green building code is the latest in a series of measures the province has taken to update the way buildings are built in B.C.

"It's a move in the right direction," White said.

The Energy Efficiency Act, which came into effect in January, lists new requirements for energy-efficient windows while Bill 10, passed in March, amends the Local Government Act to empower local governments to create bylaws aimed at conserving energy and water, and reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

"Construction is booming in B.C., and the way we build is changing," Coleman said when the bill was announced in March. "Bill 10 ensures we can construct greener buildings and respond to rapidly changing building technology. It is an important first step in improving the way we regulate buildings and construction."

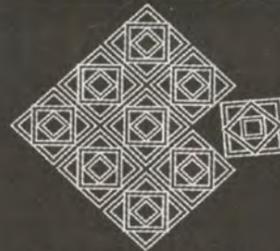
The government maintains building costs associated with implementing the more cutting-edge technologies will pay for themselves as residents and business owners recoup savings over years to come.

As greener technologies become more widely available to the public, prices are expected to drop. Consumers can also expect to consume less energy to heat their homes, thereby lowering energy costs.

The new green requirements come into effect on all building permits issued on and after Sept. 5, 2008.

More details are available online at [www.housing.gov.bc.ca/building/](http://www.housing.gov.bc.ca/building/).

## floor art



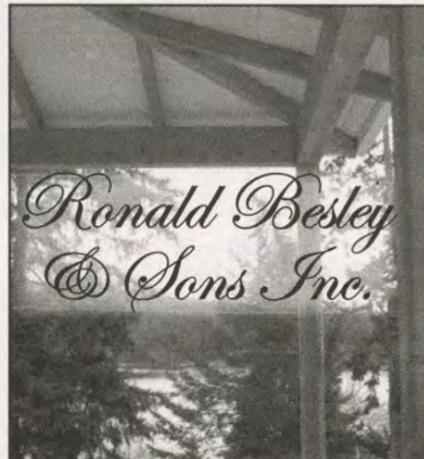
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# SPRINGTIME HOME IMPROVEMENT

## HOME INTERIORS

# Simple fixture changes can transform a kitchen

See your kitchen in a new light

Studies have shown that when it comes to spending time at home, no room gets more visitors than the kitchen.

Even with media rooms and family rooms offering more than ever before, the kitchen remains a gathering spot.

In spite of their universal popularity, many kitchens are in need of a few adjustments. Homeowners often mistake the need for tinkering with the need for a complete remodelling, a job that typically costs thousands of dollars.

But seeing your kitchen in a new light doesn't need to break the bank. In fact, a few relatively inexpensive lighting changes can be all a kitchen needs.

### Track Lighting

The primary benefit of track lighting is the ability to direct light anywhere you need it. Rather than a single fixture, track lighting has multiple fixtures, helping to serve a multitude of purposes.

Specialized fixtures can be used for mood lighting or task lighting.

When combined with a typical kitchen fixture, track lighting can allow homeowners to light their kitchens in a variety of ways.

For instance, during the busiest hours, the traditional fixture can help keep the room well lit.

Overnight, however, dim track lighting can be used to provide lighting for midnight snacks or if you need to keep a light on for someone arriving home late.

Another benefit of track lighting is the role it plays in cleaning.

Hard to reach spots in cabinets are often hard to see as well, making it difficult to know if you've done a thorough job cleaning.

With track lighting, direct the light into the cabinets and your cleaning will prove a lot easier.

### Recessed Lighting

Recessed lighting is usually an inexpensive option and one that sheds light on places that otherwise might not be well lit, such as cabinets and walls.

However, many people decorate the walls of their kitchens or replace their old cabinets, and would like to have some light aimed at these spots.

If your kitchen features artwork on the walls or new cabinets, consider recessed lighting to highlight these additions.

Also, just like track lighting, if directed toward cabinets recessed lighting can pay dividends when it comes time to clean, shedding light on cabinets that would otherwise be dark.



Something as simple as new lighting for your kitchen can create a bright new look.

### Under Cabinet Lighting

Under cabinet lighting can be a great addition to any kitchen with lots of countertop space.

In many kitchens, cabinets block light from countertops, making it difficult to prepare meals or, if you have an eat-in kitchen, sit and read a newspaper or book while enjoying a meal.

Installing lights under the cabinets will solve this problem.

Fluorescent lights, though they burn cooler than halogen lights, can create an uncomfortable reflection off of countertops. Halogen lights, though they won't last as long as fluorescent lights, create a white light that's easier to work by.

Regardless which under cabinet light-

ing you install, try and put it at the front of the cabinet. This will ensure more light makes it onto the countertop than the wall. Also, install undercabinet lighting uniformly under all cabinets.

That way, when it comes time to make big meals such as Thanksgiving dinner when you'll be using all countertops at once, they will be lit evenly.

### Make Lighting Flexible

Because many people spend so much time in the kitchen for different reasons, make your lighting as flexible as possible. The best way to do this is with a dimmer switch.

A dimmer will enable you to set the mood for whatever you're doing in the kitchen.

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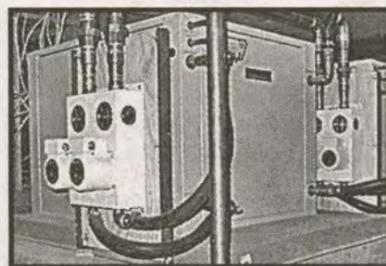
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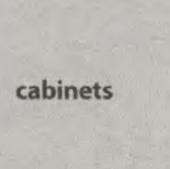
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**INSULATION WORK:** Cassie Vicery, who works for Mike the Insulator, shows off an insulation blower at a new home site at Channel Ridge.

PHOTO BY DERRICK LUNDY

## HOME FLOORING

# Flooring choices: vinyl, laminate, hardwood or tile

Choice depends on use of room

This spring, why not give your room a whole new look... from the bottom up? With so many beautiful and durable hard-surface flooring options to choose from, you can transform any room in your home from drab to delightful just by changing the floor.

In the kitchen, active families with little kids might consider vinyl flooring. Vinyl has long been a popular choice because of its soft, resilient nature and easy maintenance. Not at all like your grandmother's vinyl, today's patterns are warm and stylish, with a wide range of looks, from wood to slate, leather, and even handpainted floor cloths. Not only that, but vinyl floors are more durable than ever.

Family rooms are made for living, and anyone with teenagers will tell you that they can put a lot of wear and tear on a floor. For superior durability, a laminate floor will stand up to whatever your family brings in: kids, pets, and the dirt that follows them. And the wood looks just like real wood.

In the foyer, dining room or living room, nothing says elegance like a real hardwood floor. And today's pre-finished hard-

**"Family rooms are made for living, and anyone with teenagers will tell you that they can put a lot of wear and tear on a floor."**

wood floors will never need to be sanded and refinished, which really is the ultimate luxury. From exotic woods like bamboo and teak, to traditional oak and maple, there's something for everyone. It's a dramatic way to change the look of any room.

For upscale custom layouts and a designer feel, look to porcelain tile. Porcelain is harder and stronger than regular ceramic, and can be used both indoors and out. Porcelain is also easier to maintain than real marble or travertine. It won't chip or stain, and only requires sweeping and occasional mopping to keep clean.

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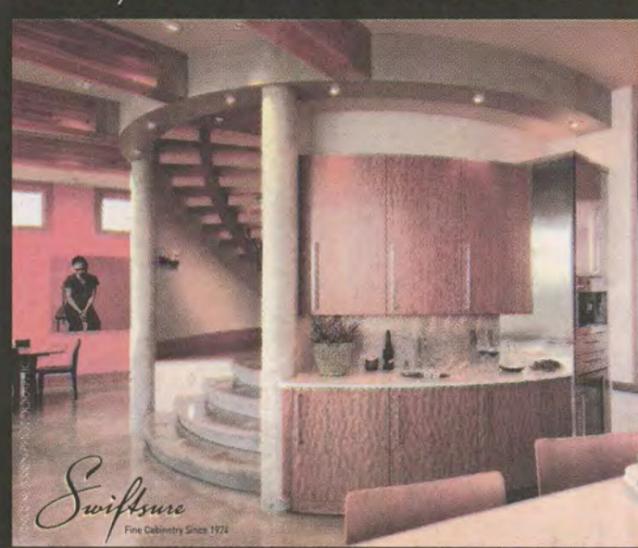


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# SPRINGTIME HOME IMPROVEMENT

## GARDENING

### Reasons to compost

Soil fertilizer and reducing waste top the list

To compost or not to compost? From May 4 to 10 this year, the answer is "yes."

In 1995, National Composting Week was created in Canada to promote composting and the use of compost. This event aims to increase the awareness of the public and businesses on the importance of recuperating vegetable matter, with compost as the end result. Every year, communities, environmental groups and members of composting facilities participate in different events organized within the framework of National Composting Week.

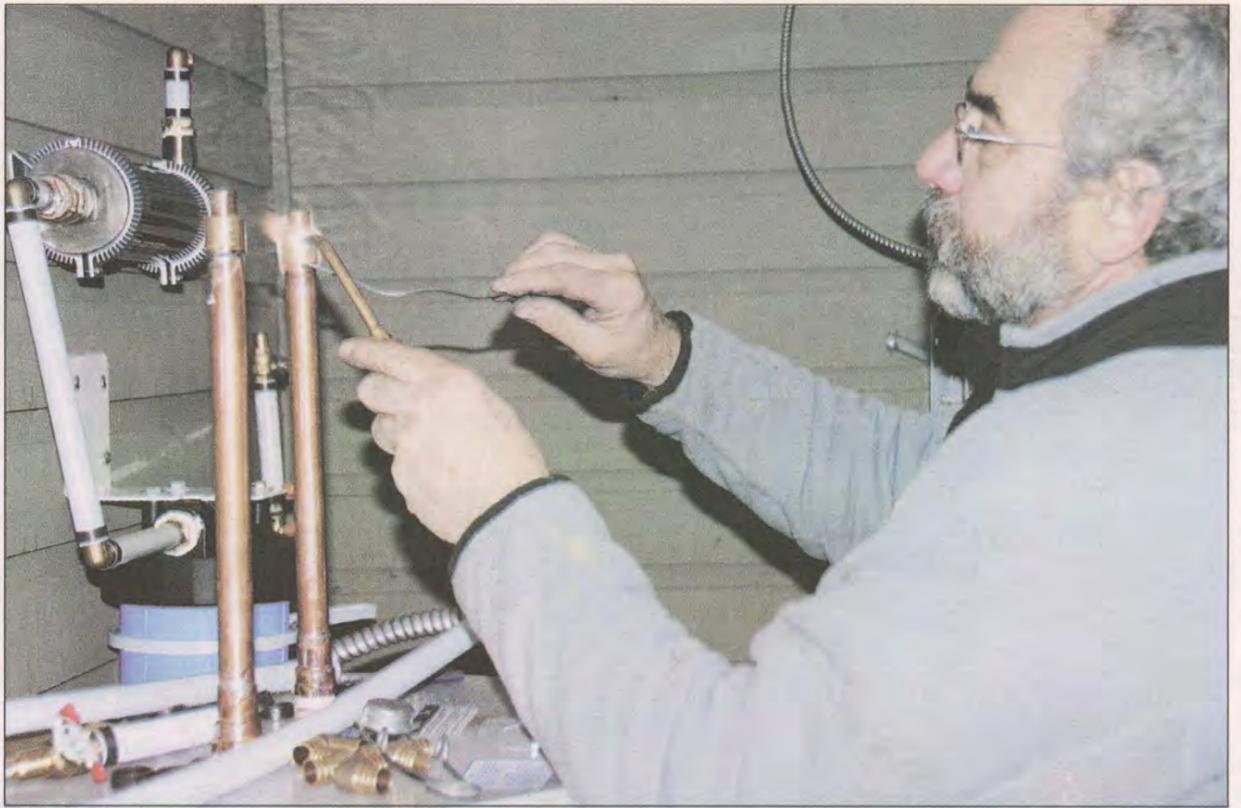
And you, why do you compost? Because you have a vegetable garden where you can use your compost? Because

in doing so you reduce the amount of garbage produced each week by your family by 30 per cent? Because you have taken to heart the future of your country and your planet?

Composting is so simple. You can make compost with eggshells, fruits and vegetables, grass, garden waste, dry leaves. It's a natural process but nature gets a helping hand through use of a domestic compost container.

Whether it's a homemade compost pile or a purchased container, composting also has the advantage of reducing the costs of garbage collecting and burying.

When the composting process is completed, you will have a soil fertilizer rich in nutrients and organic matter. Use it in your vegetable garden, for the upkeep of your garden and in potting soil for your outdoor and indoor plants.



**PIPER:** Plumber Max Miller works on a water system at a north Salt Spring home.

PHOTO BY DERRICK LUNDY

## PAINTING

### Primer is supreme when it comes to painting projects

Trying to save money by skipping primer use is folly

Springtime is the perfect time to update your home with a fresh coat of paint. And, you can get professional results without the expense of hiring a professional. It's easy when you know their secrets.

They know that if you prime first, then paint, your paint job will look better and last longer. Here's why:

- Primers hide previous colours — even the darkest blues and deepest reds — far better than paint alone and prevent them from showing through or changing the colour of the topcoat. They'll make your new paint colour look more vibrant and even.

- Primers work hard to block stains. If you try to cover a stain with a fresh coat of paint, the stain will probably bleed through — no matter how many coats of paint you apply. Quality primers seal in stains and prevent them from ruining your paint colour.

- Primers prevent common paint problems. Because primers are formulated to prevent problems like cracking, peeling and blistering, they'll make any painted surface more durable, washable — and last much longer!

- Primers provide a sound base for paint. Paint is formulated to provide rich, beautiful colour — but don't expect it to do a primer's job.

High quality primers are rich in resin and provide a firm base for paint

to adhere. Some primers even stick to glossy, hard-to-paint surfaces without sanding, so you can paint panelling, cabinets, glossy paints, vinyl siding and more.

Here's a little secret from the pros: By tinting your primer towards your paint colour, you'll use less paint, plus get all the benefits of priming.

Just ask your paint store or home centre associate to add the same colourant they use to mix your paint.

# Windsor's Spring Home

## RHINO DECK CHARGES AHEAD!

### DISCOVER LOW MAINTENANCE COMPOSITE DECKING

By Comfy Underfoote

When designing your new deck or renovating an existing structure, Windsor spokesperson comfy Underfoote recommends finishing your deck project with Rhino Deck. No painting or staining, no splinters and it looks like wood, but is made from recycled materials. In fact, Rhino Deck is the proud recipient of the United Nations Programme Award for recycling over one billion bottles each year. Rhino Deck features a textured wood grained, non-skid finish on both sides. It can be used in a variety of places like decks, walkways, gazebos, pool areas, docks, children's play areas and other places that you may want a maintenance free splinter free deck!

Original Rhino Deck is great for new or renovating existing decks. Use standard wood posts and joist runners when constructing the frame, then finish the project with Rhino Deck boards. Remember, Rhino Deck is only designed for use as a deck board.

Compared to the solid deck board, the new Rhino Vision is a grooved board that can be attached to the joist by deck clips instead of pre-drilling, drilling then attaching through the top of the board. This gives the deck a cleaner

look with no visible screws and reduced labour and installation time. The black deck clips come with a matching stainless steel screw for less visibility. Rhino Vision is available in all Rhino Deck colours.

Easy to clean and maintain. Dirt and grime can simply be sprayed down with a high pressure water hose. The manufacturer warranty offers coverage against checking, insect/termite damage and splintering for a full 20 years after the date of purchase. Drop by Windsor Plywood with your measurements, they'd be happy to give you a no obligation quote.

- \* No painting or staining required
- \* Wood grain finish \* Slip resistant wet or dry
- \* Made of recycled wood and plastic.

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 Acorn Brown or Barn Wood colours.  
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# Windsor



**SPRING YARD WORK:** Dorothy Kyle gathers grass clippings to feed to the yaks at a Beddis Road farm.

PHOTO BY DERRICK LUNDY

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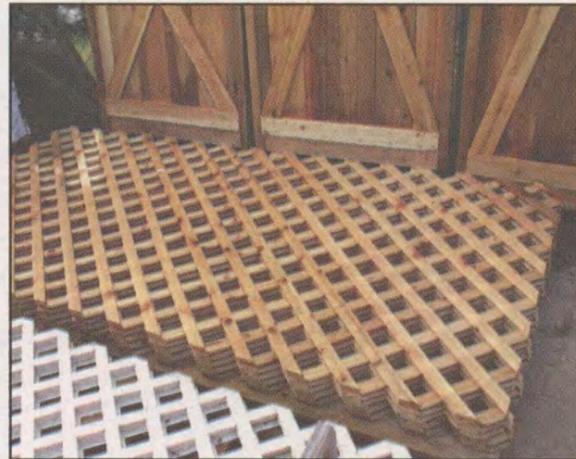
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# SPRINGTIME HOME IMPROVEMENT

## WELL MAINTENANCE

# Drinking-water wells deserve spring tune-up

Eliminating bacteria sources an important annual task

**BY MARY JANE CONBOY**  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, WELL WISE

Spring is a great time to test your well water and inspect your well.

**Step 1: Test your well water for bacteria.** Bacteria is the most common impurity found in well water and it is often most obvious during the spring when the ground is saturated. Melting snow or running water transports a lot of material from the surface deep into the soil. This can cause material from the soil surface to move into your drinking water source. Another good time to test your well water is the day after a heavy rainfall.

**Step 2: Do a visual inspection of your well and the area around your well.** You should check the condition of your well at least once a year. Use a strong flashlight and take a good look at every part of the lining, water surface, pipes and well head. Your well needs to be watertight to be secure. The water comes in from the bottom not the top or sides. The water at the base

of the well is cleaner. This is the water you want to have in your house and this is the water you need to protect through proper well maintenance. When you inspect your well you are looking for:

Any rodents or debris that may have fallen into the well over the year. If you have anything in your well, you may have a structural problem that needs to be repaired by a licensed well contractor.

**Cracks, leaks or evidence that the well is not watertight.**

You should have a watertight seal on your well that extends at least 10 feet deep in a dug well and 20 feet in a drilled well. This helps ensure that surface water filters through layers of soil and rock before it can enter the well.

**Preventing bacteria from entering your well water**

Treating contaminated well water is one way of ensuring your water is safe to drink, but it is addressing the symptom, not the problem. For a more long-term solution, the source of bacteria should be identified, and where possible, eliminated.

Locating the contamination source can be quite simple or may involve detailed testing using tracers to map

the flow of water on your property.

Consider these factors when determining the most likely source of bacteria entering your well water:

1. How many times has your well tested positive for bacteria? If your well has had many tests that exceeded drinking water standards for bacteria, there is likely a constant source of bacteria entering the well.

2. Assess the slope of your property or local area. Water tends to flow downhill and groundwater tables tend to follow the slope of the land. On some properties where the house is built on a local elevation, small hills immediately surrounding a house or barn may reflect disturbances from the construction of the house and may not reflect the slope of your groundwater table.

3. Where is your septic system, garden or pet waste area in relation to your well? All contaminants should be located downhill from your well water. This is true even if tile drains are present to direct most of the water in a different direction.

*Well Wise is an Ontario-based non-profit organization for private well owners.*

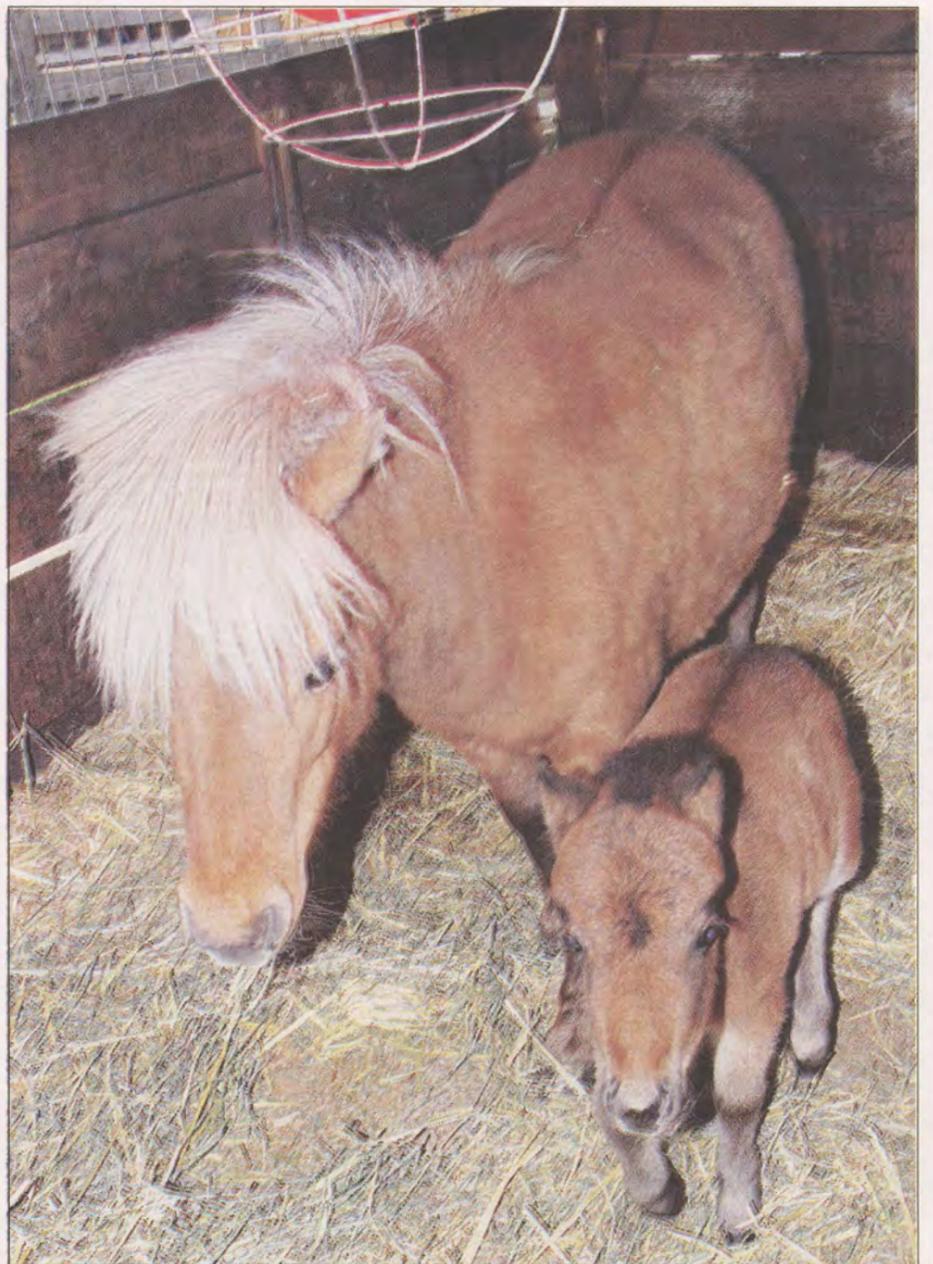


PHOTO BY DERRICK LUNDY

**MINI FOAL:** Mini horse mom and new baby pose for a photo at Salt Spring Cheese.

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# SPRINGTIME HOME IMPROVEMENT

## HOME INTERIORS

# Mouldings give 'star quality' to otherwise ordinary rooms

Best bet for impact is to 'go wide'

Looking for a way to add sparkle and impact to a modest home? Some experts suggest a fresh coat of paint, while others recommend a new floor. Unfortunately, even a change of colour or flooring won't make a yawn-inducing interior come to life. To create character and distinction in an ordinary room, consider adding some structural detail with solid hardwood mouldings and trim.

Hardwood mouldings lend star quality to any room. By creating contours and contrast, bold lines and fine detailing, moulding and millwork lend substance and distinction to an otherwise ordinary room, adding the architectural punch that many modern homes are lacking.

Years ago, architects and homebuilders used substantial architectural ornamentation to make a home unique and to reflect the wealth and taste of its owners. Crown mouldings, wainscoting, chair rails, and wall and window framing made from hardwoods lent substance, character and beauty to a home's interior.

But mouldings are making a comeback.

If you want impressive results with your moulding,



PHOTO COURTESY OF WHITE RIVER HARDWOODS

Conventional office space is transformed into a classic meeting room with custom hardwood mouldings.

here's a suggestion: Go wide. Once you decide to add baseboard or crown moulding to a room, make sure it's not so narrow that it disappears into a corner.

"Three- to four-inch tall baseboards might not catch anyone's eye, but moving up to a six- or eight-inch size will bring on a 'Wow!'" says remodelling expert and syndicated columnist Bill LaHay.

It's not just the mouldings and trim, but how you design and use it that can bring costs down to size.

Layering small crown and decorative mouldings onto a flat board can be an impressive alternative to a single, wide crown moulding.

"If the goal is more texture, depth and accents for your walls, using multiple smaller mouldings can be the better route — if they're combined well," suggests LaHay. Or think beyond crown and baseboard mouldings to door and window casings, chair rails, picture rails, and wainscoting to add instant stature and definition.

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**SPRINGTIME HOME IMPROVEMENT**

**GARDENING**

**Ted Baker soil talk on tonight**

Gardening activities warm up to spring

Recent weather might not have encouraged gardening islanders to put their hands too deep in the soil, but that should change any day now.

For a boost to get in the swing of things, the Salt Spring Garden Club is holding its monthly meeting tonight, April 23, with guest speaker Ted Baker.

While Baker is best known for his passion for iris and rhododendron flowers and the open house he and wife Sonja hold on their Furness Road property each year, he will speak about soil at the garden club event.

With a Ph.D. in soil science, Becoming

Best Friends with your Dirt is a natural topic for Baker.

Garden club meetings with guest speakers are on the fourth Wednesday of most months at Meaden Hall beginning at 7 p.m. Non-club members pay a \$5 fee.

For other easily accessible gardening resources, check out the Salt Spring Energy Strategy website ([www.saltspring-energystrategy.org](http://www.saltspring-energystrategy.org)). Under the lead topic of Food you'll find a series of monthly garden columns written by Patti Bauer of Blue Raven Farm and published in the Driftwood and Weekender last year.

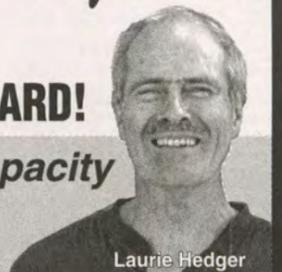
As well, the site contains a handy Winter Gardening Planning Table so people know when to plant what for year-round harvesting, and an article on growing leeks by Linda Gilkeson.

*Spring Clean-Up*

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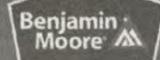
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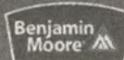
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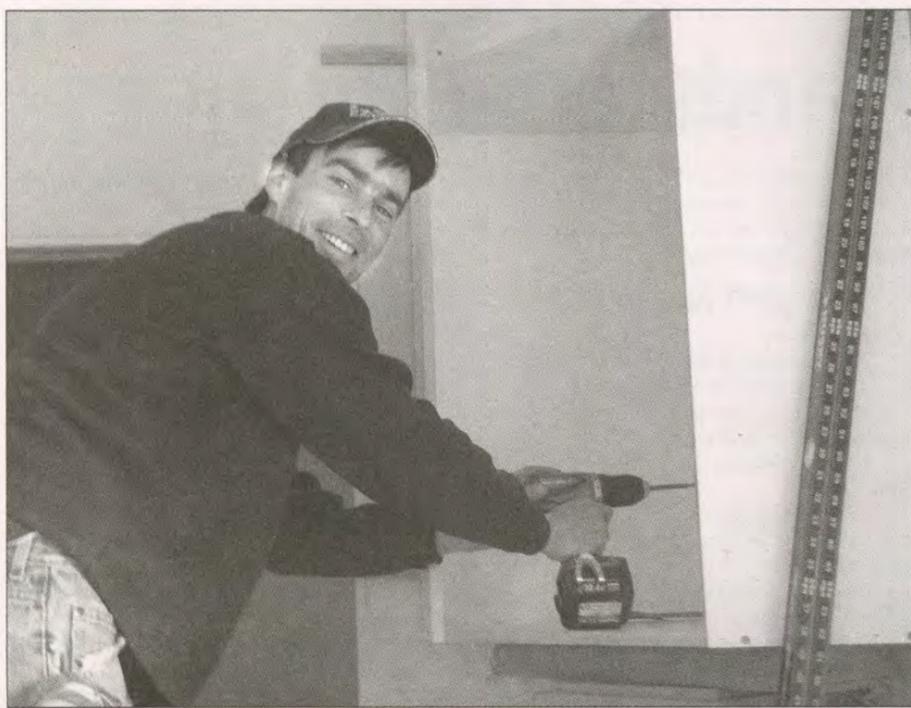


PHOTO BY DERRICK LUNDY

**CUSTOM CRAFT:** Cabinet maker Darren Billwiller installs custom cabinets at a Salt Spring home.

**HOME MAINTENANCE**

**Spring signals time for routine checks**

From windows to walls to driveway ditches

A list of spring home maintenance tasks should include the following:

- Have the fireplace, woodstove and chimney cleaned and serviced as needed.
- Shut down and clean furnace humidifier, and close the furnace humidifier damper on units with central air conditioning.
- Check air conditioning systems and have them serviced every two or three years.
- Have well water tested for quality. It is recommended that you test for bacteria every six months.

- Check smoke, carbon monoxide and security alarms and replace batteries.
- Clean windows, screens and hardware, and replace storm windows, if applicable, with screens. Check screens first and repair or replace if needed.
- Open valves to outside hose connections.
- Examine the foundation walls for cracks, leaks or signs of moisture, and repair as required.
- Repair and paint fences as necessary.
- Check eavestroughs and downspouts for loose joints and secure attachment to your home and clear any obstructions.
- Clear all drainage ditches and culverts of debris.

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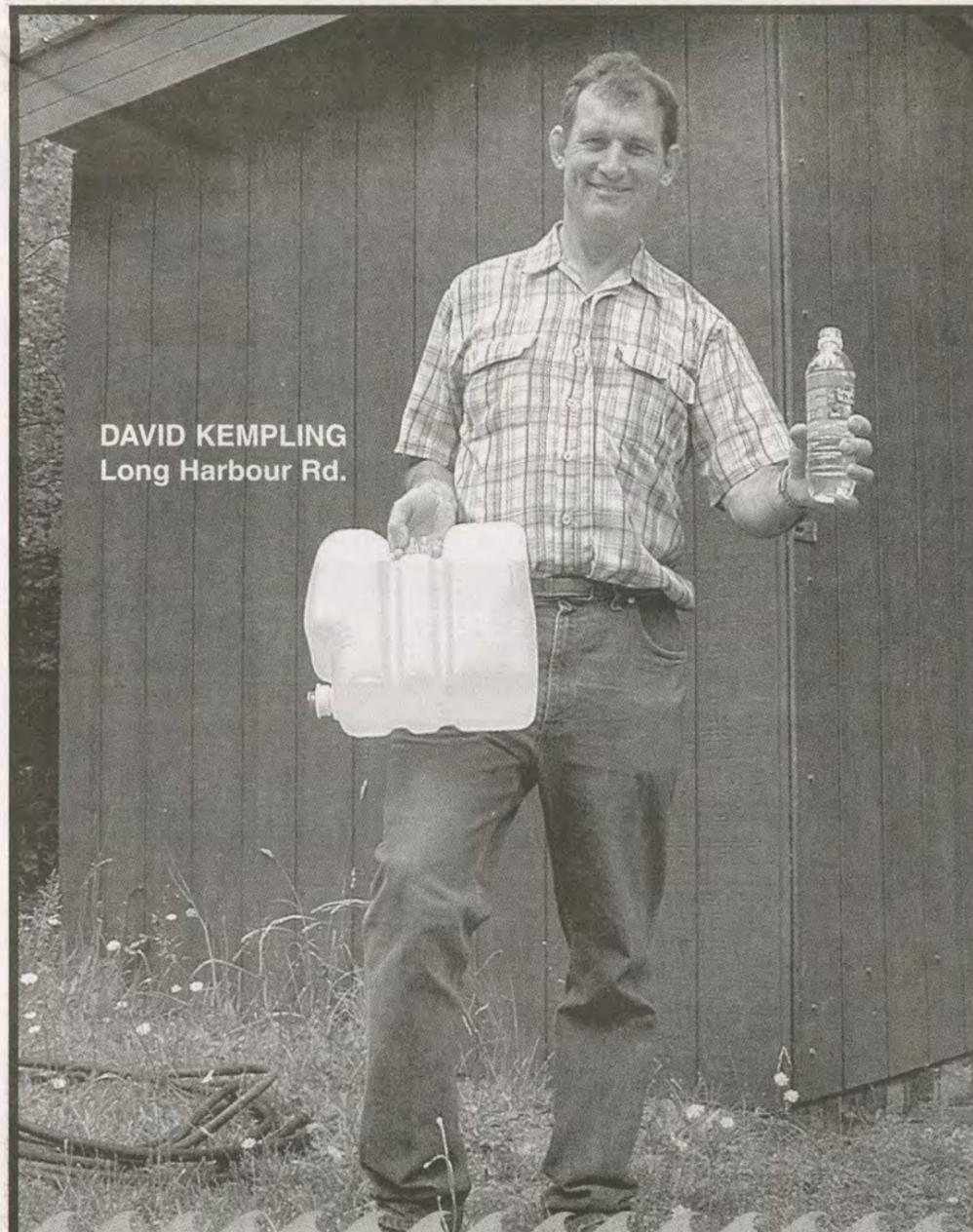
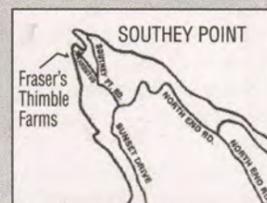
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# SPRINGTIME HOME IMPROVEMENT

## KITCHEN RENOVATIONS

# Changing your kitchen demands recipe for success

Pre-planning, clear direction can avoid troubles later

*The Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) has lots of advice for people planning to embark on a kitchen renovation. The following information comes from the CMHC website.*

### Before you start renovating your kitchen

Your kitchen is probably the most used room in your house. Poor layout, inadequate lighting, cramped spaces, outdated fixtures and old cabinetry are common complaints of homeowners.

Before you decide to go ahead with a kitchen renovation, it is important to clearly identify the features you want in your new kitchen. Just as important is a thorough pre-renovation inspection to identify any existing problems.

Homeowners consider kitchen renovations for many reasons, including:

- Size and design — the existing kitchen may be too small or poorly laid out.
- Fixtures and appliances — the fixtures and appliances may be worn out, inefficient or outdated.
- Cabinets and countertops — cabinet finishes, hardware or countertops may be outdated, need repair or replacement.
- Structural problems — there may be problems that require structural changes or repairs.
- Moisture — the floor, walls or finishes may be unsightly or damaged due to moisture problems.
- Plumbing and electrical — many older kitchens don't have enough electrical outlets and circuits. Older plumbing and plumbing fixtures may include lead or galvanized steel piping.
- Heating and ventilation — older kitchens often have inadequate ventilation or heating systems. The area may be poorly insulated

and have a high degree of air leakage, two factors that lead to high energy consumption.

• Finishes — older finishes may be unattractive or not durable enough to withstand the daily wear and tear.

### Avoid Surprises

Once you start a renovation, there's no turning back. Your life is disrupted and any unexpected problems will lead to higher costs and delays in finishing the project.

Thorough planning will help you to develop a realistic understanding of the work to be done and the costs involved.

Here are some of the likely situations that people encounter. However, every situation is unique and you may need to hire a qualified professional to do a thorough investigation, find the problems and suggest the best solutions.

### Size and Design Issues

Ask yourself:

- How much workspace do you need? Is an eating area in the kitchen important?
- What are the traffic patterns?
- Is there adequate storage space?
- Does the kitchen meet the needs of everyone in the household including anyone with special needs, extended family and guests?

Consider your options:

- Plan thoroughly before you start. Sometimes a simple reorganization of the space will solve many of the shortcomings of older kitchens.
- Consider an addition or adding space from adjoining areas to meet your space and function requirements.
- Use a professional designer to help you design a plan to best meet your existing and future needs.

And if you don't . . .

- You will have to live with the results even if they don't meet your needs.
- A poor layout will seriously detract from your enjoyment of the renovation.

• The layout may not be flexible enough to meet existing or future demands for space, storage and anyone with special needs such as wheelchair accessibility.

### Fixtures and Appliances

Ask yourself:

- Do the existing fixtures and appliances have years of useful life left?
- Do you like the style and features of your appliances? Are they energy-efficient?
- Is there adequate general and task lighting?

Consider your options:

- Replace or repair worn out appliances or fixtures.
- Familiarize yourself with available products and options.
- Choose efficient fixtures that will reduce water and electricity consumption. New kitchen appliances carry an EnerGuide label identifying their energy efficiency rating.
- Update lighting so that it provides the brightness that you need.

Compact fluorescent light fixtures are four times more efficient than standard incandescent bulbs.

And if you don't . . .

- Old fixtures may have to be replaced later and the new fixtures may not fit into the spaces allowed.

This may involve further modification of cabinets or room layout.

- If you don't do your homework, you may find more appropriate, appealing appliances or fixtures after you have completed the work.
- Outdated appliances and lighting usually mean higher ongoing energy costs.

### Cabinets and Countertops

Ask yourself:

- Are existing cabinets or countertops damaged? Do you like the style of the cabinets and countertops?
  - Is there enough storage and workspace?
- Consider your options:

• Replace or repair damaged or outdated cabinets or countertops.

• Install additional cabinets or countertops to meet your work needs. Consult with a kitchen planner to organize storage and workspace more efficiently.

And if you don't . . .

- Damaged, hard-to-clean countertops can harbour bacteria.
- The kitchen may be less functional and an unappealing work and living space.

### Structural Problems

Ask yourself:

- Are there any existing structural deficiencies in this area or nearby areas of the house?
- Do any structural walls or lintels need to be removed?
- Will installation of new windows or doors require special structural details?
- Are the walls, ceiling, floor or basement areas well-insulated and air-sealed to provide a comfortable energy-efficient space?

Consider your options:

- Carry out a complete inspection. You may want to hire an expert.
- Repair, strengthen or replace structural components so they can carry the new loads.

• Insulate and air-seal the building to provide warm interior surfaces and a draft-free living space.

• Remove wall coverings, when possible, to properly insulate and install a sealed air and vapour barrier. The open wall cavities will also make it easier to install new wiring, plumbing and other services.

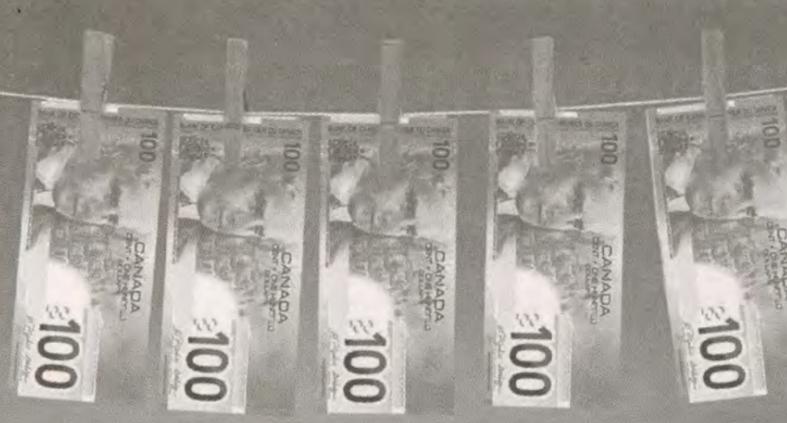
And if you don't . . .

- Structural deficiencies can lead to cracked finishes, floor vibration, bowing or displacement of walls, floors or roof structures and possible structural failure.
- Exterior walls that are poorly insulated and not air-sealed will lead to continued high energy costs, possible condensation problems and discomfort in the living space.

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# SPRINGTIME HOME IMPROVEMENT



PHOTO BY DERRICK LUNDY

**ROCK PILE:** Stonemason Amos Lundy surveys a huge quarry of stone on Salt Spring.

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