



# HOME & GARDEN 2020

## Spotlight on outdoor lighting

Do you long to admire your garden day and night? You can! Highlight your landscaping with strategically placed light fixtures throughout your yard. Once lit, your plants, your pathways and even your pool will give your garden a magical feel after sundown.

A well-integrated landscape lighting system will allow you to create the atmosphere you desire, whether you wish to relax in a peaceful oasis, entertain in an enchanting atmosphere or impress your guests with the fanciest of backyards.

### A few tips

Lighting vertical surfaces such as tall trees or fences will make your yard seem bigger.

Combine function and form by lighting up your pathways, entrance and outdoor

kitchen. Don't overdo it, though: the goal is to be able to move around safely, not to see as if it were daylight.

Finally, shine the spotlight on the main features of your landscaping. You could use projectors to make your pool or water fountain shimmer. Other options include illuminating flowerbeds, shrubs or your deck.

Call in the pros to design an outdoor lighting system that's as functional as it is beautiful.



## Small home? Maximize your living space!

Is your home feeling cramped? Before you consider an addition, here are some ways you can maximize the space you have.

### Repurpose space

Many people have parts of their home that are underused. Consider turning the attic into a guest room, a storage space into an office or a closet into a reading nook for the kids.

### Design vertically

Use vertical space to free up more room. A loft bed in a kid's bedroom provides space for a desk underneath. And shelving units can hold lots of items without taking up a ton of floorspace. You can even install a shelf above the bathroom door

to store toilet paper and cleaning supplies.

### Head outdoors

An outdoor living room allows you to gain extra square footage without sacrificing indoor space. You may not be able to use it year-round, but you'll undoubtedly appreciate it in warmer months. Install a firepit or outdoor heaters so you can keep using it once the weather gets colder.

If you live in a small home, it's also important to think carefully about what you own. By purging what you don't use, you'll free up extra room.



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# HOME & GARDEN 2020

## Interior designer vs. interior decorator: what's the difference?

You've probably heard the terms interior designer and interior decorator used interchangeably. However, they actually describe two different but similar professions.

Interior designers complete two- or four-year degree programs that involve studying subjects like colour theory, architecture, computer-aided design and spatial planning.

They work with architects and contractors to plan and renovate spaces and can be involved in every step of the re-

modelling process, from drawing up floor plans to adding the final touches.

Interior decorators focus on esthetics. They help transform spaces that are already built by making recommendations about paint colours, furniture styles, lighting and accessories. They're not required to complete professional training (though many decorators do), and they usually work directly with businesses and homeowners.

Should I hire a designer or a decorator?  
If you need help with designs during a renovation, it's best to go with an interior designer. They'll help you create a space that serves your specific needs and aligns with your particular tastes. However, if you're mainly looking to update the appearance of a space, a decorator can help you achieve a whole new look by rearranging and redecorating.

In the end, what matters most is not the job title, but the skills of the designer or decorator in question. Choose a company or professional with a reputation for high-quality designs and expertise in the type of work you're looking for.



## The art of lighting your property and landscape

Embellishing your deck, yard or garden with lighting involves more than simply lining your pathways and flowerbeds with light fixtures. Indeed, there are certain rules you should follow for your landscape lighting to effectively show off your property come sunset.

First, let's focus on safety. Your steps and pathways need to be clearly visible so that you can walk around with ease while staying out of harm's way. Wall-mounted sconces and embedded ground lights are extremely useful for lighting dark areas with style. Next, think about which elements of your landscape you would like to showcase. A beautiful plant that you're particularly fond of? The entrance gate? The fountain? The statue? To add a bit of magic, play with the lighting and install your fixtures (lights, lanterns, projectors, etc.) at random. All it takes is a well-focused beam of light to create an illusion of depth and volume in any yard, big or small.



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## Four unique ways to use tree stumps

Gone are the days of old tree stumps rotting away in the middle of the garden. Here are four unique ways to incorporate stumps in your landscaping.

- 1. As a pedestal**  
Thanks to their flat surface, tree stumps make perfect pedestals. Use your stump as a base for a bird feeder, a bonsai tree, a statue, a floral arrangement or even a fountain. As a finishing touch, surround the stump with flowers or decorative stones.
- 2. As lighting**  
Hollow stumps are great for hiding outdoor lighting in plain sight. Drill holes in the wood's surface or cut slats in the sides to let the light shine through. Use your stumps to subtly illuminate a tree, a shrub

- 3. As art**  
If you have certain artistic talents, why not turn your tree stumps into works of art? Sand then paint them to create unique decorative elements for your garden. You could even engrave or sculpt the wood if you'd like.
- 4. As a planter**  
Fill up hollow tree stumps with soil and sow some seeds inside. Choose plant varieties that spread quickly to add character to your garden in no time at all.  
To find all the plants, materials and tools you'll need to make your project a success, visit a gardening centre or plant nursery near you.

## 3 springtime home improvement projects

- Are you thinking about updating your home this spring? If so, these three projects are perfectly suited to the season.
- 1. Upgrade the landscaping.** Spring is the perfect time to upgrade flower beds and walkways or even install a pool or hot tub. Your garden will have time to grow in and you'll be able to enjoy your new outdoor space all summer long.
  - 2. Rebuild or refinish the deck.** If your deck has seen better days, this is the ideal time to repair or rebuild it. Consider

- expanding it to create zones for eating, cooking and relaxing.
- 3. Replace the siding.** If your siding took a beating over the winter, now's the right time to replace it. Choose a quality product and consider using a more modern colour. Cool tones like grey, blue and green have been popular in recent years.  
Spring is the best time of year to tackle most outdoor projects. Just be sure to get to them before the hotter weather arrives.

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## How to choose the right landscaping specialist

A beautiful exterior designed by a professional landscaper is a sure way to enhance your home's curb appeal and increase its market value. Here's how to find a landscaping expert that will know how to interpret your preferences and respond to your needs accordingly.

First, determine what it is that you want — an intimate, Zen-inspired terrace? A garden bursting with colour, or perhaps a functional yard for entertaining guests? The choice is yours! For inspiration, tour your neighbourhood, search the web or flip through landscaping design magazines. Next, find out which businesses offer landscaping services in your area. Ask to see a portfolio of their past creations to figure out if their style matches what you have in mind. A professional landscaping artist that values their clientele will take the time to answer all of your questions.

*A beautiful exterior designed by a landscaping artist will inevitably enhance your home's curb appeal.*



Ideally, you want to get a price estimate from at least three different companies. Each estimate should include the landscaping design plan, estimated duration of the project and, of course, total cost (including materials, warranties and labour).

No matter which company you end up choosing, a written contract for your review should be made available before any work commences. Make sure to read each line attentively before signing away! Lastly, ensure the company will supply you with all of the pertinent information regarding the proper care of your new plants. Better yet, ask if they offer maintenance services so that you can enjoy your beautiful new yard without having to lift a finger!

## SPRING MAINTENANCE: 5 key things to inspect outside your home

When spring arrives, it's important to inspect the exterior of your home to make sure it hasn't been damaged over the winter. Here are five key things you should check.

1. The roof. A visual inspection from the ground or a window will indicate if immediate repairs are needed. In particular, look out for curled, wavy or missing shingles. Also, check the ceilings inside your house for signs of water infiltration.
2. Gutters and spouts. Make sure they're still firmly attached to the house and that nothing is blocking water from flowing through them. Remove any debris that's accumulated over the winter.
3. Foundation. Examine the concrete for cracks or signs of water damage. Even the smallest fissure can cause big problems for your home. If you see any signs of degradation, schedule a repair as soon as possible.
4. Balcony or patio. Clean your deck thoroughly and secure any loose boards. Wood patios should be stained every one to three years. If it needs to be done this spring, sand the surface and apply your chosen stain.
5. Windows and doors. Check the caulking around each window and door, and replace it if necessary. Inspect wooden frames to make sure they don't show signs of water infiltration or rot.

If you notice any major damage during your inspection, be sure to make the needed repairs.



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## Wood decks: durable and affordable

Among all of the flooring options available on the market for decks, terraces and patios, treated lumber is undeniably one of the more popular choices, mainly for its reasonable cost and long lifespan. Often made from pine or spruce, these pressure-treated wooden planks are equally suitable for

ground-level patios and elevated balconies. Are you looking to complement your yard with a beautiful terrace? Treated wood might be exactly the building material you're looking for.

Easy to cut, carve and paint, treated lumber is the perfect choice of material for a terrace that is unique

in design and resistant to insects and rot. In addition to its superior resistance, it's also very easy to work with. For example, to preserve the natural beauty of the surface, you can stain or paint the wood in a colour of your choosing. Furthermore, to ensure your deck remains in prime condition for years to come, you can apply a transparent, waterproof sealant available at any hardware store.

Contrary to popular be-

lief, wood is actually one of the more eco-friendly options available for deck flooring. Given their exceptional durability, wooden planks limit the number of trees chopped down each year. Additionally, wood is a reusable and biodegradable material that is highly regulated by environmental agencies worldwide. To build a timeless wooden deck of the highest quality, entrust your project to a professional carpenter!

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## Embellish your yard with a pond

Adding a pond to your property is an excellent way to embellish your outdoor space and give it personality. To incorporate a pond that harmonizes with the rest of your landscaping, keep these tips in mind.

### LOCATION

Determine the ideal spot for your pond. First of all, you'll need to consider sunlight, because your water feature might house various living species (plants, fish, frogs, etc.) with different needs. Make sure that your pond will receive enough sunlight for flora and fauna to thrive. Furthermore, avoid placing your pond next to a tree, because its roots may eventually damage it.

### SIZE

After finding the perfect spot for your water feature, you'll need to determine its

size and shape. To choose the appropriate size, consider how big your yard is. If it's relatively small, a giant pond would only make it feel more cramped. The opposite is also true: a tiny pond might go unnoticed in a sprawling yard.

Remember that your pond should complement your yard and that everything is a matter of balance. Preformed models (made of fibreglass, resin or polyester, for example) in various sizes and shapes are available on the market; you're sure to find one that perfectly matches your yard.

### FINISHING TOUCH

Once you've set up your pond, you'll be able to highlight it with plants, a sculpture, solar-powered lanterns, a rustic bench, or any other accessories you'd like.



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## It's spring!

Yay, spring is officially here, according to the calendar at least! I couldn't be more excited about that, Old Man Winter was really getting on my nerves!

Many of us have been cooped up in our homes lately and with no certainty of when we will get back to "normal." Between that and the longer days and spurts of warm sunshine I think it's safe to say many of us are getting that "spring itch."

To keep you from getting too stir crazy I have come up with a few ways to "scratch that itch" all while giving your home a fresh new look!

### CLEAN IT UP

This is the perfect time to get your home feeling fresh. From windows to walls, give everything a wipe down and deep cleaning. There is nothing better than clean windows to bring in even more of that beautiful spring sunshine.



### ADD SOME PAINT

As for the walls, a scrub down is a great way to freshen up your home but I like to take it one step further and give them a fresh coat of paint (my Mom always cringes that I prefer to paint instead of wash). It's like killing two birds with one stone, you don't have to wash the walls and you get an amazing fresh new look! Of course, some walls get a little greasy and grimy and need a scrub before painting. In that case add some TSP in your water to help prep for the new paint. I always say paint is one of the most dramatic and economical ways to make a huge impact and what better way to get you started on a fresh new spring look. Paint is also a great way put a breath of life back into a tired piece of furniture, taking it from something you want to hide to a feature piece in your home.



Shannon Houff

### GET RID OF THE CLUTTER

While washing and/or painting your walls you've most likely removed all of your pictures, art, and decor. Before putting it all back up, take the opportunity to declutter and decide if each item is something you really want or if it's time to let it go. The items you are ready to let it go, consider passing to someone who has admired it in the past or take it to your local thrift store.

### ACCESSORIZE

This is the perfect time to give your rooms some life by changing out some of your accessories and adding in a few new pieces. I like to pack away the warm and fuzzy pillows and blankets from winter and throw in some fresh coloured curtains, pillows, throws, and maybe even replace the area rug.

### MOVE IT. MOVE IT.

I am constantly rearranging my things (I bet you would have never guessed that!). Move your sofa and chairs and switch things up a bit, then step back and see how you like it. It is a quick and easy way to give your room a fresh new look.

### ADD GREENERY

Lastly, one of the nicest ways to freshen up any space

for spring is with plants. Real plants are great but I prefer the convenience of realistic faux botanicals. Don't get me wrong, I do love real plants and gardening is one of my most treasured pastimes, but when you want to enjoy lake life and vacations in the summer, faux botanicals tend to do a little better with no water!

So until next time, it's That Girl Shannon saying, "Got the itch....let's scratch it!"



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## 4 easy ways to revitalize your home for spring

Spring is the perfect time to refresh your home. Here are some easy ways to perk up any room in your house.

**1. Add a bright rug.** A cheerful print will infuse new life into the surrounding space. Just be sure that it's large enough for all the furniture in the area to rest on it.

**2. Change your linens.** Curtains, bedding and towels can make a big difference in the look of a room. Swap out what you have now for bright prints and cheery colours.

**3. Get some greenery.** Plants are the perfect design accent. If you don't have a green thumb, mimic the look with artificial flowers or plants.

**4. Refresh your walls.** A fresh coat of paint can work wonders. Whether you choose a fun new colour or stick to neutrals, your home will feel brand new.

Updating your home doesn't have to cost a lot of money. If you're on a budget, try simply rearranging your furniture or moving some of your decor around. The space will feel new and it won't cost you a thing.



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# HOME & GARDEN 2020

## 4 ways to avoid a renovation disaster

Whether you just bought a fixer-upper or are upgrading your home, avoiding renovation mistakes will save you time and money. Here are four rules to follow that will ensure your next project goes smoothly.

### 1. Have a plan

Taking the time to plan your project will save you time and money in the long run. Make a list of every improvement you want to make, decide on the order in which they should be completed and then establish a timeline and budget.

### 2. Expect the unexpected

More often than not, you'll encounter unexpected issues when renovating your home. Always allow yourself more time and money than you think you'll need. This way, unforeseen complications are less likely to delay completion.

### 3. Make room in the budget

Whether you're completing the work yourself or hiring contractors, you should allow for a contingency of at least 15 per cent and ideally 25 per cent. The additional funds will allow you to deal with unexpected problems.

### 4. Don't DIY everything

Trying to do everything yourself can be overwhelming. More importantly, some things need to be done by professionals, no matter how handy you are. This includes structural as well as electrical work.

By following these tips, you'll avoid making mistakes and help ensure that your next home improvement project goes smoothly.



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## How often should you inspect your roof?

Your roof is an integral part of your home and plays a big role in shielding you and your loved ones from the elements. Though roofs last a long time, they must be inspected regularly and repaired as needed.

So, how often should you inspect your roof?

Most contractors recommend checking it twice a year; once in the spring and once in the fall. However, if you're not comfortable climbing on top of your house, it's best to hire a professional roofer to perform the inspection.

Some things to look for are:

- Soft spots
- Shingles that are loose or curling

- Loose material around the chimney
- Anything protruding from the roof
- Large amounts of shingle granules in the gutters

Biannual inspections are crucial, but they aren't the only time your roof should be given attention. Be sure to also visually check them after big storms, especially those with heavy precipitation and strong winds.



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