



Ann Duncan

Professional Real Estate Broker

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RESALE HOMES COLLECTIONS

AURORA/KING
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 King Weekly Sentinel • www.kingsentinel.com



ANN DUNCAN

A trusted and experienced realtor in King Township

BUYING A HOME will most likely be the biggest and most important investment in your entire life.

After working hard and saving up a down payment, you are ready to start looking for your new home. This is when you will need advice and guidance from a trusted, respected, and knowledgeable realtor who can help guide you through the entire process.

Ann Duncan, with Sutton Group-Admiral Realty Inc. Brokerage, is an experienced Sales Broker whose knowledge spans two continents.

While Ann had her start in real estate in Europe, she now focuses on King Township and the surrounding area, as well as in Toronto and the GTA. She has been working in the real estate industry for 28 successful years.

"I started working in real estate in Europe," Ann said of her start in the industry. "I started when I was 18 years old. My mom at the time was selling homes, and I was working with her in her brokerage."

After immigrating to Canada, it was an easy transition for her to continue selling real estate. The industry, Ann explained, works pretty much the same in Europe as it does here.

Much of the profession relies on a sales representative's ability to deal with the public.

"You have to know how to treat people and how to solve problems," Ann explained. "You have to be very patient, and you really must have good social skills. It requires building your own clientele, which of course takes time."

Ann's linguistic skills, in many ways, distinguish her from many local realtors. She is fluent in English, Arabic, Farsi, and Russian. This allows her to not only serve her local clients – but also those from outside of the country who are interested in investing in the region.

When selling a home, Ann starts with a comparable market analysis of your home to determine the proper current market value. From there, she uses several strategies to market the home to potential buyers.

This includes home staging, repair and renovation, cleaning, advertising the property to local and international communities, and extensively marketing the property on social media. Marketing may include professional videography including the use of aerial drones, photography, and print media to reach many potential buyers and get your home sold.

Ann's extensive client base means that quite often she is able to sell a home by introducing new listings to clients who are actively seeking property before it is even necessary to place the property on a listing for the public.

Many of her clients are people who have used her services previously and were so impressed by her professionalism and skill they have come back to her when they are ready to make another transaction. Others have been referred to Ann by satisfied clients who have recommended her to family and friends.

Ann's professionalism includes treating her customers with respect and striving to help them meet their needs and home-buying goals. She enjoys the social aspect of her work and the fact that working as a real estate broker allows her to be involved in the community.

"This is why it is so important to have a good reputation, especially in a small place like King Township," Ann explained. "In real estate, you are always out there and meeting new people. This is what I really like about the industry – and it's fun for me. I enjoy seeing new homes and new designs. I studied interior design in university – this has really helped me a lot when I stage homes for my clients. Seeing new homes all the time really gives you new ideas of what can be done."

Ann is naturally a 'people person' who enjoys meeting with clients and helping them meet their goals.

If you are looking for a home or considering selling your property, Ann Duncan can be reached at 647-895-6355 or via e-mail at annduncanteam@gmail.com.

WRITTEN BY Brian Lockhart

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MARKET UPDATE – JUNE 2023

AURORA	KING
AVERAGE SALES PRICE	AVERAGE SALES PRICE
\$1,399,231	\$2,312,339
AVERAGE 12 DAYS ON MARKET	AVERAGE 22 DAYS ON MARKET
NUMBER OF SALES	NUMBER OF SALES
85	32
152 NEW LISTINGS	84 NEW LISTINGS
SALE TO LIST RATIO	SALE TO LIST RATIO
106%	98%
YEAR OVER YEAR % CHANGE	YEAR OVER YEAR % CHANGE
-1.77%	-2.01%

*The statistics provided were obtained from the Toronto Regional Real Estate Board's Market Watch JUNE 2023. Summary of Existing Home Transactions for All Home Types JUNE 2023 + Focus on the MLS Home Price Index for Composite for York Region's Aurora and King

Things are slowing in the market with the time of year and the two most recent rate announcements. Our overnight rate is now the highest it has been since 2001. The number of Offers trickling in on offer nights are slowing, if any, and Sellers are going to have to be realistic about a potential softening in the market over the summer months. For Buyers, now is a great opportunity, after a slight resurgence of price increases and inventory moving more quickly. Make sure your approvals are updated and you are working closely with your trusted real estate advisor to capitalize on this opportune time in the market. We are returning to more of a normal trading landscape, where days on market may increase.

– Provided by Key Advantage Team Royal LePage RCR Realty
 Susie Strom, Sales Representative
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* Not intended to solicit buyers or sellers currently under contract.

JUST LISTED IN AURORA!

\$2,648,000

Spectacular & elegant bungalow w/3 car garage! Absolutely stunning renovated custom gourmet kitchen w/heated floors, custom walnut island, high end appliances, breakfast area, & W/D to gorgeous landscaped gardens! This home will WOW you with its 10 foot ceiling heights, large quality windows & fabulous floorplan. Amazing finished basement has huge recreation room w/ fireplace & bar, 4th bedroom, exercise room, awesome modern bathroom & spacious workshop/storage area too! Walk up from basement to garage.

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BANK OF CANADA STRIKES AGAIN: Interest Rates & GTA Real Estate

AS YOU MAY HAVE HEARD, the Bank of Canada raised its interest rate again on July 12th 2023, increasing the cost of borrowing for the 10th time since March 2022. The 25 basis point hike leaves the Bank's overnight rate at 5 percent – the highest it has been since 2001. According to the Bank of Canada, the interest rate increases are necessary in order to slow economic growth and reduce inflation.

Interest rates are essential in steering the real estate industry and local housing markets. We understand that the sizeable amount of terms used in real estate, such as interest rates and mortgages, can be a lot to understand for new homeowners. That is why we are unpacking interest rates plainly and highlighting why they may matter to you, as a Buyer, Seller or someone looking to enter the market for the very first time. With twenty-plus years of collective real estate experience in the King and surrounding regions, The Michele Denniston Real Estate Group will use our expertise to make the real estate world as straightforward and digestible as possible for you; read below!

WHAT ARE INTEREST RATES?

To make it as simple as possible, interest rates are the different prices you pay a lender to borrow money. When there is a strong return on a purchase, government interest rates are likely to increase to 'level the playing ground'. When interest rates are lower, you pay less, but the market may be a little faster paced. The two different prices you can pay relate to buyers' two mortgage rate options.

FIXED RATE

This option means the interest rate will stay the same over the period you are 'locked in' to your mortgage. The price you pay in your first year will be the same in your fifth year, there are no surprises, and you can budget accordingly. This is increasingly advantageous for homeowners who "lock-in" their rate when they hear that interest rate hikes are imminent.

VARIABLE RATE

Adjustable rates change as per the prime lender's interest rate. The appealing side is that the initial interest rate is often lower than a fixed-rate mortgage (depending on the market) which may help buyers qualify for larger loans and properties.

HOW ARE RATES DETERMINED?

In short, the Bank of Canada determines the overnight rate, which leads to an increase in the prime rate you, as a borrower, receive from a major financial institution, such as TD Bank, CIBC, BMO, etc.

OVERNIGHT RATE

The overnight rate, determined by the Bank of Canada, is the interest rate at which major financial institutions can lend and borrow funds from one another. This is the rate which has been subject to the increases since March 2022.

PRIME RATE

The prime rate represents the minimum interest rate at which a bank will lend money, which encompasses the overnight rate and their operating costs.

WHY DO THEY MATTER TO US, YOUR REALTORS?

Interest rates are a critical deciding factor for buyers considering entering the market, purchasing an investment property, or sellers looking to line their homes up to list.

If interest rates increase, it may push potential buyers to take a step back as the increase means it will cost more to afford a home under a mortgage, especially for first-time home buyers or those looking to stick within a strict budget. In real estate, we often see that the market slows with each interest rate hike as the Buyer pool is reduced. The market then shifts towards Buyer's market, giving the buyers more negotiating power & often correlates with lower ratios of sale price to list price.

When interest rates are low, this often brings a flood of new buyers into the market, thereby increasing sale prices. The increase in demand often correlates with a lack of supply, producing a Seller's market.

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN TO YOU?

Interest rates rise and fall with the country's economic state flow. Looking back at the market through COVID, we saw home prices soar with interest rates to follow. Still, today we see fluctuating and changing interest rates. We suggest giving you and your family strong confidence in understanding the different interest rates, mortgage options and which decisions best serve your current financial position. Once familiar with these industry terms,

you can have confidence navigating the existing markets and making fantastic financial decisions when buying or selling!

OUR ADVICE TO YOU

By choosing to work with an experienced real estate team who knows the ins and outs of interest rates, mortgages and best-decision making, you will succeed in whatever your real estate goals may be! The Michele Denniston Real Estate Group also offers expert in-house mortgage financing and consultations on top of our five-star buying and selling services. Visit us at Kay Dr. Unit 22 in Schomberg, or call Michele directly at (416) 433-8316 to learn more! We are committed to providing you with honest, reputable and top-tier real estate service; we look forward to working with you soon!



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What home renovation customers need to know about smart home technology

(NC) Homeowners are increasingly looking for ways they can conserve energy and lower their utility bills. And, according to one recent survey, four in five Canadians recognize that smart home technology can help them manage their energy consumption. But, only one in five is actually using these systems. Here are three key benefits of smart home technology.

HOME AUTOMATION

A smart home is one where Wi-Fi-connected lights and appliances can be controlled via apps on your phone no matter where you are. On the way to the airport and worried you forgot to turn off the curling iron? You can check on your app – and turn off the appliance remotely if you did. Your kid forgot to bring their key? Unlock the door remotely to let them in. There are even refrigerators with internal cameras so you can see what you already have inside while you're standing in an aisle at the grocery store.

HOME AND PERSONAL SECURITY

With smart systems, you can program lights to go on and off to give the appearance that your home is occupied while you're away. Inside, you can use an app or voice controls to turn on lighting before you enter a room or approach a stairway to avoid a tripping hazard. Camera-equipped doorbells let you see who is at the door before you open it, or you can speak directly to a courier to give them instructions on where to hide a package if you're not home.

Smart appliances can also send notifications if there are any problems, whether you're out for the day or on holiday. You can set up your HVAC system, for example, to send you a message if the heating or cooling doesn't kick in within a specific period of time. There are also water detectors that will notify you of a potential leak.

Finally, security sensors and cameras can send you alerts if there's unexpected activity in or around the property.

ENERGY CONSERVATION

Of course, the biggest benefit of utilizing smart home technology is the power it gives homeowners to reduce their energy consumption and help lower their household carbon footprint.

One of the most important smart home tools for this is a home energy monitor. These tools, such as Schneider Electric's Wiser Energy, can be paired with Wi-Fi enabled switches like Square D to turn your home devices on and off from your phone. Homeowners also receive real-time home energy usage so they can make adjustments to reduce their energy load, such as unplugging appliances that draw power even while idle.

Find more customer-friendly information about home energy monitors at se.com/ca/en.

www.newscanada.com

How automation can keep your home secure

(NC) Whether you're planning a sunny getaway to escape the cold or are back in the office on a regular basis for the first time in years, it's reasonable to be worried about your home when it's empty. The good news is, there are easy ways to keep a watchful eye.

KEEP IT BRIGHT

While the days are getting longer, illuminating your walkway and entryways after dark can deter people from approaching your property. Set your lights up on timers or install motion-sensitive models.

GET SMART WITH SECURITY

While you shouldn't live in fear, theft and break-and-entering do occur. For an easy and effective way to monitor your home, consider an all-in-one smart security system that includes 24/7 monitoring and real-time alerts. That way, you're immediately notified of activity around your home such as someone walking up your driveway or if a door or window has been opened.

AUTOMATE FROM ANYWHERE

Whether you're out shopping at the mall or visiting relatives out of town, take advantage of the ability to secure and control your home from anywhere with an all-in-one smart security system such as Telus SmartHome Security. Schedule or manually turn your lights on and off to give the illusion someone is home, or lock and unlock your doors when your children get home from school. True automation can provide added peace of mind and security from near or far.

www.newscanada.com



Living & Working In Your Neighbourhood



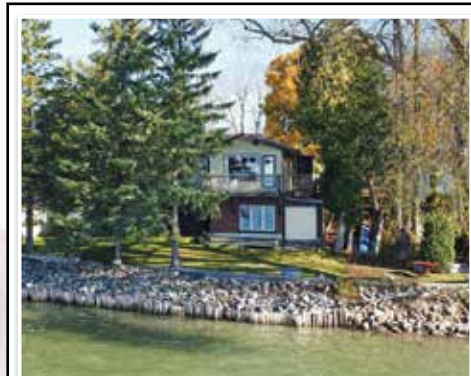
15 LONG VALLEY ROAD, AURORA
\$2,699,000



236 HIBISCUS COURT, NEWMARKET
\$1,199,000



290 BANKSIA COURT, NEWMARKET
\$1,089,000



92 ALSOPS BEACH ROAD, BEAVERTON
\$999,000



1 RAIFORD STREET, AURORA



19 CADY COURT, AURORA

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*Based on sold units & volume in Aurora from Jan 1 - Dec 31, 2022 from IMS incorporated Statistics



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3 myths every custom home buyer needs to be aware of

(NC) A new construction home can be an exciting but also scary undertaking for many of us. When you choose a builder, you'll want someone who plays by the rules.

is "off the hook" as a result. As the one responsible for the construction of your new home, they are still required to be licensed and provide the warranty.

In Ontario, this means they are licensed and that they enrol your home into the provincial new home warranty program.

MYTH 2: Paying tradespeople directly voids your warranty. Paying tradespeople yourself instead of relying on your builder to compensate them is a good practice to follow. It ensures that construction stays on track and prevents potential situations that could end up costing you more. Contrary to what some builders might say, it does not void your home warranty coverage.

New home builders who operate outside of these rules are working illegally, and ultimately putting you at significant risk.

MYTH 3: Calling it a seasonal home makes it different. Just as a rose is still a rose by any other name, so is a new home a new home regardless of what you call it. Your builder may lead you to believe that if you say you're building a seasonal home or cottage, you'll end up saving money because you won't need to enrol it into the warranty program. The rule of thumb is that if a new home is built to specific building code standards that make it capable of year-round living, it needs to have a warranty.

New home buyers are entitled to consumer protection from the new home warranty, but illegal builders may say many things to get out of their responsibilities. Here are a few myths to keep in mind as you shop around for the builder of your dream home:

For more information about buying a new home or if you're ever in doubt contact the organization that oversees new home warranties at tarion.com.

MYTH 1: Applying for the building permit makes you the builder. You may decide to apply for the building permit yourself instead of having your builder do it. If so, it does not mean that your builder

www.newscanada.com

5 AFFORDABLE WAYS TO GET A GREENER HOME

(NC) Many of us would love to save on our home water and energy use. Whether your motivation is to cut your costs or help the planet – or both – here are a few things you can do that won't break the bank.

CUT BACK

Of the three r's of reduce, reuse and recycle, the first is the most powerful – and the cheapest – way to go green. It's the simple stuff you've heard of forever, but the steps can be effective. Put on a sweater instead of raising the heat as fall temperatures arrive. Cut back on long showers. Only do your laundry at off-peak hours. They may not be convenient but they're certainly cheap and effective.

INSTALL A RAIN BARREL

Rather than using fresh water to tend your garden, set up a rain barrel and take advantage of wet weather. Although

you won't want to drink it, rainwater is perfect for your plants. You can create a makeshift rain container yourself or buy one at a local hardware store or online. Either way it should have a tap to connect a hose or fill up a watering can. Being mindful of how often you water your garden and choosing native plants that require less water can also help you cut back on water usage outdoors.

GO LOW FLOW

Low-flow faucets and showerheads are a simple do-it-yourself swap from the hardware store. While newer homes may be fairly efficient, older systems can really guzzle water. Adding a small low-flow attachment or replacement head slows the rate at which the water flows out of your pipes. Don't worry about losing water pressure with this fix – it works by mixing air into the water, which maintains or even improves the pressure you feel.

UPDATE YOUR THERMOSTAT

At a basic level, a programmable thermostat allows you to set your heating and cooling in advance so you can use less when you don't need it. You might cut down on air conditioning costs since you won't have to run the system while you're out all day to still arrive home to a cooled space. Lower-end models will cost about \$50 to \$100. More advanced, "smart" models with more bells and whistles can run you roughly \$100 to \$400.

MAKE USE OF GOVERNMENT PAYMENTS

Benefits and credits might add a little extra cash to your wallet that you can put towards energy-efficient updates. You may be eligible for the Climate Action Incentive payment if you live in a province with federal pollution pricing: Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Ontario, Newfoundland and Labrador, Nova Scotia and Prince



Edward Island. And in October 2023, eligible residents of New Brunswick will receive their first payment. The exact amount of the quarterly payments varies by region – you'll get more if you live outside a major urban centre. You don't need to apply; you just need to file your taxes every year.

Find more information about how this benefit works at canada.ca/cai-payment.

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First time offered for sale, 58.8 farm with 1344 sq. Ft. Bungalow with 4 bedrooms, 1 bathroom, walk-out basement and single car garage. Renovate or build a new dream home and grow your own food on your own farm. Ideal to start your own self-sustaining lifestyle. Approximately 30 acres of prime rich black loam, specialty crop farmland with 28 acres of bush that has potential to be cleared to create more farmland or used for recreational use. Vegetables, root crops, garlic, onions, potatoes grow well in this soil. Farm is tiled for drainage. Old homestead site allows for house to be built. Zoned Agricultural Special Crops (ASC) allows for a broad spectrum of potential. Ideal for starting your own market farm. Home base business, vertical-farming, greenhouses, accessory building or dwelling, Bunkhouse. Paved highway access and is very close to highway 400 corridor and the new Bradford Highway Bypass Junction, Highway 11 for easy transportation and shipping. Tanger Outlet Mall is meters away. Proximity to the new concept Innisfil transportation Hub site. Minutes to GTA, Newmarket, Bradford and Barrie. Can be purchased with "0" County Rd. 89, Innisfil, 28.8-acre farm which is also listed.

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LIST: \$489,999**

**PART 3 MLS#: S5996524,
LIST: \$499,999**

**PART 4 MLS#: S5996612,
LIST: \$499,999**



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1 bedroom, 1 bathroom main floor condo unit in the prestigious Palisades of Briar Hill. Includes 1 underground spot and locker, sliding patio door to private unistone terrace. Solid brick and cement construction. Common area party room with kitchen.

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LIST PRICE \$589,000**



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3280 19TH SIDEROAD, KING

This 78-acre farm in a rural area boasts a 5-bedroom farmhouse exuding charm and character. Adjacent to it is a newer 2-bedroom bungalow constructed in 2009, offering modern comforts. A long driveway leads to the property, which is conveniently located near Highway 400. The farm also features a barn and a driveshed, providing ample storage and space for a buyer's needs. With fields, picturesque views, and a blend of old-world and contemporary dwellings, this farm is an idyllic retreat for those seeking the beauty of the countryside.

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**RESALE
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THE TRANSFORMATIVE DANCE: How renovations and real estate coalesce for an expert's eye



By **Julien Laurion**
The Big Tuna of Real Estate

In the vast world of real estate, where location, aesthetics, and value converge, renovations stand as a transformative force.

AS AN EXPERT IN THE FIELD, I have witnessed the enchanting dance between renovations and real estate, where dreams take shape and properties become works of art.

Join me as we unravel the symbiotic relationship between these two realms and explore how they interweave to create captivating living spaces.

Renovations possess an inherent power to rejuvenate and elevate a property's allure. They offer a platform for home owners and investors to breathe new life into their living spaces, infusing them with personal touches and modern comforts. Beyond their aesthetic appeal, renovations also serve as catalysts for increasing a property's value, as they enhance functionality and address contemporary needs.

In the realm of real estate, renovations act as a conduit for capitalizing on opportunities.

An expert understands the pulse of the market and identifies properties with untapped potential. By envisioning the possibilities and conducting a thorough cost-benefit analysis, they strategically leverage renovations to transform diamonds in the rough into highly desirable properties.

Expertise lies in identifying key areas where renovations can significantly impact a property's value.

Whether it's updating a dated kitchen or revamping an outdated bathroom, strategic renovations enhance a property's appeal to potential buyers or tenants. The expert knows how to strike a balance between cost and impact, choosing renovations that provide the highest return on investment while aligning with market demand.

In the competitive real estate market, renovations allow properties to stand out from the crowd.

An expert possesses a keen eye for design trends,

marrying contemporary aesthetics with timeless elegance. By transforming a property into a haven of sophistication, they create a unique selling proposition that captures the hearts and minds of discerning buyers or tenants. Renovations serve as the tool to craft an immersive experience, connecting potential residents to their future homes on a visceral level.

Real estate is a dynamic industry, subject to evolving trends and shifting demands. Renovations serve as an adaptive strategy to stay ahead of the curve. As an expert, I understand the ebb and flow of market preferences, enabling me to guide clients toward renovations that align with current and future trends. By staying attuned to the evolving needs of buyers or tenants, we can adapt properties to meet those demands, ensuring sustained value and relevance.

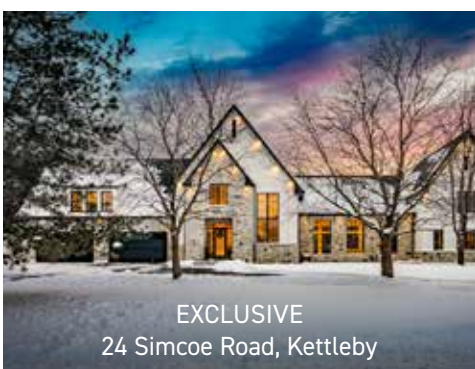
Beyond their immediate impact, renovations can also function as investment vehicles. An expert evaluates properties with a discerning eye, identifying those with the greatest potential for transformation. By strategically investing in renovations, individuals can not only increase the value of their properties but also generate a higher return on investment when it's time to sell or rent. Renovations act as a means to unlock hidden value and create lucrative opportunities within the real estate market.

The synergy between renovations and real estate is an exquisite dance, orchestrated by experts who possess a deep understanding of both realms. It is important to note that I am an expert in both fields. Renovations breathe life into properties, adding value, allure, and character. Meanwhile, real estate acts as a canvas for these transformations, providing a stage where dreams become reality. As an expert, I invite you to embrace the transformative power of renovations and witness the magic they bring to the world of real estate by giving me a call.

Julien Laurion AKA Big Tuna is a local Real Estate Sale Representative with Royal LePage Your Community Realty in Aurora. I am a real estate agent who has expertise in both Real Estate and Renovations and has been involved in this community for over 20 years. If you have a question for my monthly article or if you are considering buying, selling or leasing a home please feel free to call or email me directly at (416) 402-5530 or julien@bigtuna.ca or by alternatively visiting my website www.bigtuna.ca or Facebook page @bigtunarealty



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KINGSCROSS LOT FOR SALE
21 Westgate Blvd, King City | \$3,788,000



FOR SALE
18 Evans Dr, Kawartha Lakes | \$2,250,000



6 ACRE LOT FOR SALE
188 Fog Road, King City | \$2,498,000



SOLD! \$7,298,000
282 Burns Street, King City



SOLD! \$5,400,000
14248 Caledon King Townline, Caledon



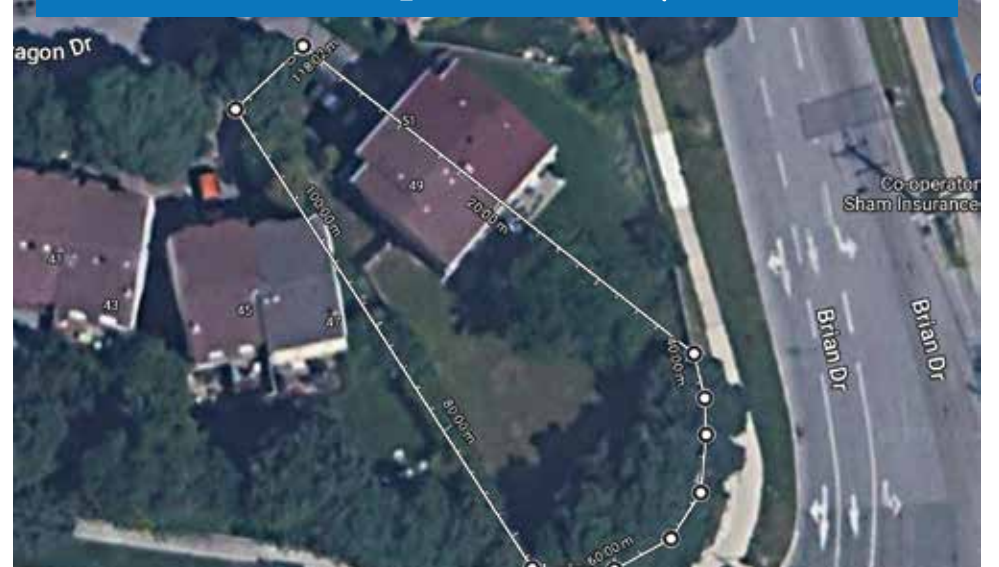
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Money-saving tips to weatherproof your home

(NC) Every year, Canadians spend hundreds of dollars on air conditioning to keep their homes cool throughout the summer months. Between routine maintenance and monthly usage fees, these costs can add up faster than you think.

Weather proofing your home shouldn't have to be expensive or complicated. Save money with these budget-friendly tips to stay cool this summer.

INSPECT THE GAPS: If you have older doors and windows that need some extra TLC, redo the caulking or install weather stripping to block any drafts to reduce cooling costs.

DRESS UP YOUR WINDOWS: Upgrade your windows with blackout curtains or install plastic window film to get some extra shade on those sunny summer days.

SWAP OUT YOUR AIR FILTER: Before turning on your central air conditioning unit, be sure to replace your air filter. Clogged air filters can cause your HVAC

system to fail. Replacing them every couple of months creates proper air flow and ensures your AC unit is working when you need it.

HAVE YOUR GUTTERS CLEANED: Cleaning your gutters may not be glamorous but not checking them could potentially wreak havoc on your home. Clogged gutters, caused by old leaves and other debris, can prevent rainwater from flowing properly which can cause long-term damage. Consult a maintenance professional in your area to make sure your gutters are as good as new this season.

INSPECT YOUR ROOF AND EXTERIOR WALLS: Summer is the best time to replace any shingles on your roof that are broken or loose to avoid water leaks. Have a maintenance professional inspect all walls for developing cracks that need to be sealed to keep water out and avoid major damage. To ensure you have the best water protection, be sure to consult an insurance provider such as Belairdirect to find coverage that suits your needs.

This summer, try out these budget-friendly tips so you don't have to choose between protecting your home and spending money on the things you love. Find more ways to protect your home at belairdirect.com.

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4 ways to reduce energy costs at home

(NC) With rising inflation impacting the cost of pretty much everything we need and use in our daily lives, it's no wonder that homeowners are increasingly looking for ways to lower the amount of energy they use to heat and cool their homes.

Plus, conserving energy helps reduce a household's carbon footprint in the battle against climate change. Here are four ways you can reduce energy consumption in your home.

SEAL THE GAPS

When windows and exterior doors are installed, they're sealed in place with caulking. Over time, that caulking dries out and shrinks, exposing gaps around the frames where air can leak into or out of your home. Inspect ground-level windows from outside and upper-level ones from the inside to see if you spot any gaps. A reasonably skilled DIYer can remove the old caulking and reseal with new. Or hire a pro to do the job for you.

INVEST IN EFFICIENT LIGHTING

If you haven't already made the switch, you should consider swapping out old incandescent lightbulbs

for LEDs, CFLs or halogen bulbs. LEDs are the most energy efficient option, using only a fraction of the energy of incandescent lights. Incandescent bulbs also give off heat. Replacing them will help lower your cooling costs in the summer.

INSTALL A SMART THERMOSTAT

Heating and cooling are the largest consumers of energy in the home. So, it makes sense to focus on ways to reduce the amount of energy your HVAC system consumes. With a programmable thermostat you can set the cooling (or heating) to decrease while you're asleep or while the house is empty during the day, and then kick in to your comfort level just before you wake up or arrive back home.

MEASURE AND MANAGE YOUR CONSUMPTION

The only way to truly understand where and how you're using energy around the home is by using a monitoring system, such as Wiser Energy. While the system can be used on its own, you can pair it with Wi-Fi enabled switches. This allows you to use your smartphone to turn devices on and off using an app. With such detailed information in hand, you can make adjustments to your lifestyle at home to reduce your monthly bills.

Learn more about home energy monitoring at se.com/ca/en/home/smart-home/wiser.

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5 outdoor cleaning tips to get your home in tip-top shape

(NC) Whether you love projects around the yard or would rather be lounging with a good book or TV show, sprucing up your home's exterior does more than make it pleasing to the eye.

Simple, year-round maintenance will help you avoid costly problems down the line, such as rot or insects spreading indoors. Here are a few easy and important steps.

CLEAN YOUR EAVESTROUGHS

All sorts of weather conditions can wreak havoc on your gutters. If water runs back toward your foundation or pools on the roof, it may lead to water damage inside your home. Give your eavestroughs and downspouts a careful look every season. Clear any debris and make any repairs.

WASH YOUR SIDING

Pressure washers are handy for cleaning the outside of your home. If you don't own one, you may be able to borrow one from a friend or rent one. Check for any blisters, cracks or problem areas in your siding and fix them up to prevent rot.

REFRESH YOUR AIR CONDITIONER

Shut off power to the outdoor unit and clean debris from the grill/cage and the fan to prevent clogging and subpar performance. Rake around the unit and cut back surrounding branches for a clean look and to allow for proper airflow.

INSPECT THE DECK

Wooden decks, including railings and stairs, require staining every few years to look their best and protect against the elements. Decks can be pressure washed but remember to keep the sprayer moving for a thorough clean. Be sure to examine deck posts and support beams for signs of rotting, too.

TIDY THE LANDSCAPING

Low lying areas of your lawn should have additional soil laid down to prevent pooling of rainwater. You should also trim your bushes and trees as required to help avoid future storm damage.

Find more tips on how to clean and protect your property at cooperators.ca.

www.newscanada.com



4 simple and sustainable backyard improvements

(NC) One in three consumers say they have increased their efforts to incorporate environmentally friendly practices into their daily life, according to a recent Trusted Media Brands survey. Some of the easiest steps toward a more sustainable lifestyle can be taken right in your own backyard.

Create an outdoor oasis with these simple and sustainable tips - no green thumb required.

SAVE TIME - AND WATER - WITH LOW-MAINTENANCE LANDSCAPING

Sow the seeds for a hassle-free backyard by planting perennials or shrubs, which require minimal upkeep. Support your local environment by choosing native plants, as they typically require less watering, fertilizer and pesticides, and they're beneficial to pollinators. Plus, many native plants can store excess carbon dioxide for better air quality.

COLLECT AND REUSE RAINWATER

Conserving rainwater is a simple way to make your outdoor space more sustainable. Install a reusable drum in your yard below gutter spouts to collect water when it rains. Once full, use the rainwater to water plants or clean exterior surfaces like decking, siding and outdoor furniture.

CHOOSE ENERGY-EFFICIENT LED LIGHTING

Replace outdated, energy-draining deck and landscape lighting with energy-efficient or solar-powered outdoor lights. LED lights are extremely long lasting, easy to install and use significantly less energy compared to once more-commonly used incandescent bulbs. Not only can you enjoy your yard long after the sun goes down, but you can feel good knowing you are making a sustainable choice.

CONSIDER WOOD-ALTERNATIVE DECKING

Among the greenest products available for the home is composite decking, such as Trex, which is manu-

factured from more than 95 per cent recycled materials. Unlike wood, composite decking resists fading, staining, scratching and mould, and needs only an occasional soap-and-water cleaning. Since composite decking never needs to be stripped, stained or painted, no environmentally harmful chemicals are required.

These easy upgrades not only benefit the planet but also create an outdoor space that will leave your neighbours green with envy. Find more information at ca.trex.com.

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Outdoor living trends for this summer



(NC) According to real estate website Zillow, a functional outdoor space is the most sought-after amenity by today's homebuyers. For those looking to make the most of their outdoor spaces, here are six trends shaping backyards this year:

MIXED MATERIALS

Gone are the days of matchy-matchy monotony. Today's homeowners are embracing eclectic design schemes with lots of visual interest by juxtaposing materials like concrete and composite, wicker and aluminum, copper and stone – as well as mixing colours and patterns for added personality and visual intrigue.

SUSTAINABLE SELECTIONS

Sustainability is no longer a “nice to have” but a meaningful requirement among increasingly eco-conscious consumers. Composite decking is an eco-friendly choice that outperforms and outlasts natural wood.

LIGHT NEUTRALS

Light, neutral hues are permeating home design inside and out due to their ability to create a sense of calm and serenity. Provide a perfect foundation for an on-trend outdoor space with low-maintenance composite decking that features refined, trend-forward colours such as the Trex Transcend collection, with creamy taupe, deep mocha, coastal brown and mountain grey.

STYLISH SECLUSION

Privacy has become a huge selling point. This is driving demand for stylish fencing, pergolas, privacy panels and lattice, which create a sense of sanctuary through visually appealing, durable and easy to maintain features.

LUXE LIGHTING

Rising inflation will have homeowners looking for small investments that make a big impact. From

candles and string lights to firepit tables and deck lighting, a little illumination can completely change the look and feel of an outdoor space without breaking the bank.

ADDED FUNCTION AND VALUE

Make the most of your outdoor space by optimizing the area beneath the deck. With the addition of an under-deck drainage system, this space can be used for storage or as a bonus outdoor living area.

For maximum moisture protection and design flexibility, opt for a system that's installed above the joists of the substructure. This application allows you to run electrical and gas lines safely and discreetly to power lighting, fans, appliances and entertainment components to create a fully functional outdoor room.

Find more outdoor living ideas, tips and inspiration at ca.trex.com.

3 ways to ensure your deck stays high and dry

(NC) Because they are exposed to the elements, decks and their supporting substructures are highly susceptible to water penetration. Without proper protection, rain, dew and snow melt can seep into screw holes and sit on boards, joists and beams causing them to rot, decay and deteriorate over time, posing serious safety issues. Here are three easy ways to protect your deck from moisture damage:

1 SEAL THE SUBSTRUCTURE

One of the simplest ways to prevent premature deterioration of a deck's substructure is to apply protective tape to the joists and beams of the foundation. Butyl-based tapes are best and are available in easy peel-and-stick options that apply as a “cap” to the tops of wood joinery. This creates a moisture barrier and also helps hold deck screws and fasteners strongly in place for longer. And don't forget the ledger board. This key connection point where the deck attaches to a house is especially vulnerable to moisture, but it can be fully sealed with a wider flashing tape.

2 CONSIDER COMPOSITE DECKING OVER WOOD

Made from a blend of plastic and wood fibres, composite decking won't absorb water like treated lumber. It also won't crack, warp or splinter in colder climates and will hold up to humidity and precipitation. High-performance composite decking is extremely durable and easy to maintain, so there's no need to spend time and money every year sanding and painting or staining your deck. Instead, simply give it an occasional cleaning with warm soapy water and get back to enjoying your space.

3 DIVERT WATER WITH A DECK DRAINAGE SYSTEM

For an elevated deck, consider adding a deck drainage system, such as the Trex RainEscape system, to protect your deck's substructure from moisture while also creating dry, usable space beneath the deck. This innovative system installs over joists and beams to completely shield foundational components from moisture. The added bonus is that homeowners can safely add furnishings as well as gas lines and electrical wiring to accommodate lighting, ceiling fans, appliances and entertainment centres to create an outdoor oasis under the deck.

Find more information to protect and extend the life of your deck at ca.trex.com.

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