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RESALE HOMES COLLECTIONS

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By Julien Laurion
The Big Tuna of Real Estate

Hi Julien, I am a long-time reader, and I very much enjoy your articles and social media!

Julien, I am a renter, and I am starting to look into buying a home. I've noticed online some listings will say things like 'new composite decking' or 'new 25 year shingles'. Are these important to consider? Thank you in advance, Clara.

HI CLARA, congratulations on starting your home search! It can be both overwhelming and exciting.

Upgrades are tricky and take a lot of consideration both as a new homebuyer and as the listing agent since it is subjective. It is no secret that certain upgrades do add value to a home, however, some upgrades decrease the value of the home, and some just justify the asking price.

For example, as a long-time reader, you probably read my article about the shower beer fridge. This was an upgrade that if it was not well thought out it could potentially decrease the value of the home. Pools are also a great example of this. Some buyers will pay a premium for this; however, some buyers find pools a burden and an extra expense they may need to take on.

In your example regarding composite decking, this is a natural upgrade.

When I see this when showing homes, it shows me that the current owner cares for the home. Composite decking is expensive compared to its wood alternatives,



When paying for upgrades make sense

I would point this out to my clients and look to see that the home matches this upgrade to help me understand what the best price to offer should be if they want to try to buy the home. Whereas I have been on a showing with a client and they didn't like composite decking at all because they did not like how composite decking tends to be warmer on the feet in the summer months.

Major upgrades like kitchens, bathrooms, bedrooms, floors etc. typically add value and justify a higher asking price depending on your neighbourhood average. When listing agents put comments in their listings

regarding things like decking, roof, furnace etc., it is to indicate the home was cared for and justify their asking prices. You are getting a quality home.

Clara, it is pretty simple. If you walk into an unkempt home that has aged everything, you will not be willing to pay top dollar. However, if the home is clean and cared for with thoughtful upgrades, then it may make sense for you to pay close to the listing price. As I said, upgrades are tricky and subjective, so it is best to work with a Realtor like myself to help navigate those waters. Happy house hunting!

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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3 DIY PROJECTS TO TACKLE SOLO

(NC) Home renovations are on the rise. A new report by Re/Max Canada found that more than half of Canadians renovated their home last year for personal, non-ROI reasons. Of this, 29 per cent did so for recreation-inspired DIY projects.

When it comes to do-it-yourself home renovations, there are things you can easily try and some that are better left to the pros. Here Zac Matchett-Smith, a professional contractor, shares some popular DIYs.

SWAPPING YOUR SHOWERHEAD

A simple showerhead swap can truly transform your bathroom experience. Most showerheads easily unscrew from the showerhead arm — a job that can be completed in 10 to 15 minutes. Changing the colour of your showerhead can also instantly enhance your bathroom. Matchett-Smith recommends replacing old showerheads and moving away from a chrome finish.

Try choosing a sleek and functional matte black showerhead. Almost all showerheads share the same threaded connection, so compatibility should not be an issue.

PRO TIP: Always apply fresh Teflon tape to the showerhead arm connection before attaching your new showerhead. Using tape as a proactive measure can prevent future leaks.

REPLACING YOUR FAUCETS

Bathroom and kitchen faucets can also be replaced easily for an instant refresh, but don't forget to shut off

the water lines before getting started. The clean lines of the Delta Kitano collection deliver elevated style to any contemporary bath for a fresh look.

PRO TIP: Prior to purchasing, make sure your new faucet is compatible with the holes cut in your countertop.

APPLYING A FRESH COAT OF PAINT

While re-painting can take time, it is a rewarding and doable task that is the first step to transforming the feel of any space.

PRO TIP: Before getting started, remove everything that you can from the area and cover up the rest with drop sheets, including your floors, or you'll end up with paint in undesired places no matter how careful you are.

Find more information at deltafaucet.ca.

www.newscanada.com



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Wonderful 4 bedroom Executive home on almost 1/2 acre with inground pool & 3 car garage!! Great floorplan - open concept living/diningrooms, family room w/fireplace off kitchen which walks out to huge deck & pool! Rec. room w/fireplace & office in basement too! Fabulous location minutes to Cinemas, restaurants, GO train, & shops!

"COMING SOON"!! STUNNING BUNGALOW!!



Hurry in for this gorgeous Fifthshire bungalow on almost 1 acre w/3 car garage and basement in-law apartment! Spectacular renovated kitchen with high end appliances, gorgeous gardens & landscaping, spacious living/dining rooms plus main floor family room with w/o to patio! Main floor also has 3 large bedrooms & master suite w/walk in closet & 4pc ensuite! Gorgeous hardwood floors, incredible lot & minutes to all amenities!!!

RARE 176 FT. RAVINE LOT!



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Should I be worried about chemicals and pollutants in my home?

(NC) You probably use many household chemicals in and around your home and garage. These may include cleaning products, drain cleaners, paint and paint thinners, liquid laundry detergent packets and pesticides.

Be aware that these types of products can be dangerous and cause burns, poisonings, fires and explosions if not handled safely. Keep you and your family safe by following these tips:

- Always read and follow the instructions on the labels of household chemicals. The label must include instructions on how to use and store the product safely. It also shows hazard symbols and cautionary statements of potential hazards.
- Never mix household chemical products together. Some mixtures can produce harmful gases.
- Ensure proper ventilation by opening windows or doors and running exhaust fans, during and after using the product.
- Use protective clothing such as goggles and rubber gloves as required to protect your eyes and skin when using the product.
- Wash your hands with soap and warm water after using the product.
- Kids are naturally curious, so always keep chemical products locked away or out of sight and out of reach of children.
- Check that child-resistant closures are in good working order.
- Child resistant does not mean childproof. Close the cap on the container all the way even if you set it down for just a moment.
- Teach kids that hazard symbols mean "Danger! Do not touch."
- Program emergency numbers including the poison control centre into your phone.

Find more information at canada.ca/healthy-home.

www.newscanada.com

3 easy tests that can help sell your home



(NC) Planning to put your home up on the market? While this can be a stressful time, there are a few things you can do for a more seamless process and to help make your property more attractive to prospective buyers. Here are some evaluations to consider before listing your home:

1 INDOOR AIR

Even before the pandemic, we spent about 90 per cent of our time indoors. And with COVID-19 making us more aware of ventilation and what we breathe, top indoor air quality can be a great selling point in a home.

Fortunately, testing for everything from allergens and mould to dust and formaldehyde can be done with simple DIY test kits available at your local hardware store. If you have the dollars or want a more thorough evaluation, you can also call in a professional.

2 WATER QUALITY

Canadian private and public drinking water supplies are generally of excellent quality. But contaminants can sneak into your water supply via plumbing — including pipes and fittings that connect homes to water mains and well casings. Potential buyers will want to know your water is safe, especially if your home is in a rural area or you're selling a cottage or property with lake access.

That means testing the quality of your water can be a smart idea. For an easy and affordable option, consider services from My Water Quality, which uses an accredited and licensed laboratory to bring water supply sampling and reporting to homeowners across Canada. You'll receive a DIY test kit, including return shipping label and sampling instructions. An easy-to-read report card will arrive within five to 20 days and provide you with all the results, which have been reviewed by a professional hydrogeologist.

3 ASBESTOS

Older homes, cottages and other buildings across the country still have asbestos in them, which can cause cancer and other health issues diseases if inhaled. While it's not dangerous to have asbestos that's

undisturbed, if you or the new owner plan to undertake a remodel or renovations, it can become a serious problem.

To give potential buyers peace of mind, have a professional come in to test for asbestos — it's mostly found in attics, vinyl asbestos flooring tiles, sound-proofing ceiling tiles, roof shingles and insulation. If the test reveals asbestos, never try to remove it yourself. This can be dangerous, so hire a pro.

Find more information at mywaterquality.ca.

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Winter outdoor entertaining tips: How to host a cold-weather get-together



(NC) Over the last year and a half, many of us have embraced outdoor living and started enjoying our balconies, patios and backyards to the fullest. But just because it's cold out doesn't mean spending more time outside needs to stop. Be a great cold-weather get-together host by following these tips:

ALWAYS KEEP GUESTS WARM

Probably the top concern when it comes to cold-weather get-togethers is making sure everyone is warm and comfortable. Fortunately, you can accomplish this

in style with a rustic firepit, chiminea or patio heater. You can also light candles and provide cozy blankets for some added warmth.

DECORATE WITH SEASONAL ITEMS

Enhance the theme of a festive winter get-together with country and farmhouse décor, like plaid linens and pillows. You can also create a nature-inspired tablescape with fresh pinecones and evergreen branches. A vintage wooden sled makes for a charming side table to set with drinks and snacks.

SERVE COMFORT FOOD AND DRINK

There's nothing like old favourites to make spirits bright. You'll never go wrong with a classic hot chocolate and marshmallows or s'mores by the fire. If you're feeling creative, try French toast fingers

dipped in maple syrup. Want to give guests a hearty meal? Make some chili earlier in the day and reheat it, or fire up the grill for some maple-glazed wings and stuffed squash to add some extra warmth.

EXPERIMENT WITH SOUND

Nothing sets a positive atmosphere quite like some good music. Bring people together and create the perfect ambience for an evening with friends or family with ad-free music from SiriusXM. Simply connect the SXM App to your smart speaker and browse through the extensive catalogue of genres and artists to find the right soundtrack for a memorable, merry gathering.

www.newscanada.com

CUT DOWN *winter* COSTS WITH THESE ENERGY-SAVING TIPS

(NC) When the winter weather turns frightful, staying warm indoors is delightful. But the arrival of cold temperatures also means taking on the added costs that can come with spending more time at home.

By finding ways to save on energy during these months, you can combat this impact on your wallet and help your home operate more efficiently, which is better for the environment, too. Kickstart your energy savings with these three tips:

LOCK IN WARMTH

The first step toward saving energy in your home is to stop the heat inside from escaping. Check for drafts and extra space around your windows and doors where you can feel cold air and apply weather-stripping or sealant.

Curtains and blinds can also play a leading role. Allow natural heat and sunlight in by opening them in the morning and closing them in the evening to trap warmth.

Your ceiling fan can also help your home feel warmer. Change its rotation to pull cold air upwards and push warm air near the ceiling down.

BE WATER SAVVY

Saving can be as simple as finding ways to make everyday tasks more energy efficient, such as doing laundry in cold water and only running the dishwasher when it's full.

Being savvy with your water also includes knowing what you are covered for in your home insurance policy — and where you can save. For example, if you have up-to-date mechanical systems that are kept in top operating condition you may be eligible for savings with companies like Belairdirect.




REMEMBER TO UNPLUG

Your electronics and appliances still use energy when plugged in, even if turned off. Try disconnecting electronics when not in use and, for larger appliances, see where you can use a toaster oven, microwave or electric kettle before turning on your stove or oven.

Saving energy can start small to have a big difference. Learn more at belairdirect.com.

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Learn about DIY HOME SECURITY



Homes are a safe haven and comfortable retreat for individuals and families. Home invasions can compromise that feeling of safety and security, making people feel uncomfortable and unsafe in their own homes.

Although the FBI Uniform Crime Reporting Statistics indicate property crime rates have seen a significant decline in the last few years, there are still roughly 2.5 million burglaries a year, 66 percent of which involve home break-ins. Break-ins are 6 percent more likely to occur between 6 a.m. and 6 p.m. when people are out at work or running errands than at other times of the day. Homes without a security system are 300 percent more likely to be burglarized, according to the National Council for Home Safety and Security.

Installing a security system may be the goal of homeowners looking to protect themselves and their belongings. Thanks to the availability of new, user-friendly products, do-it-yourselfers can, in many instances, install their own home security systems.

Safety.com says smart home integration, mobile apps and wireless connectivity are hallmarks of modern DIY home security systems. Many have the same components as traditional home security

systems but do not require professional installation or monitoring, even though such options are available.

When shopping for home security systems, people can look for the following features to compare offerings.

SENSORS: Sensors will detect motion and activity in the house. Sensors also may be attached to doors and windows to determine if either is open. Some systems are designed to send alerts to a phone when triggered.

CAMERAS: Working in conjunction with sensors, cameras can provide an eye on activity in and outside of a home, adding another layer of protection.

SMART FEATURES: With smart home connectivity, security systems can be engaged and turned off from remote locations.

Many DIY versions of home security systems work wirelessly and can be set up in a relatively short period of time. While wired systems use existing electric and telephone lines to connect security components, wireless systems connect components to the main panel via radiofrequency. One of the benefits of wireless tech is that it enables DIYers to add components and replace them as needed without major hassle. In addition, wireless security systems do not require construction during the installation process.

More and more homeowners are embracing DIY home security systems to keep their homes safe.

Organize and declutter room-by-room

Clutter can be a major source of stress that affects how individuals feel about their spaces.

Psychology Today indicates messy homes and workspaces can contribute to feelings of helplessness, anxiety and overwhelming stress. Clutter bombards the mind with excessive stimuli, makes it more difficult to relax and can constantly signal to the brain that work is never done.

Tackling messes no matter where they are lurking is not a one-time project. Much like losing weight and getting healthy, clearing a home of clutter requires dedication and lifestyle changes. With these organizational tips and tricks, anyone can work through their home room-by-room and conquer clutter.

FIND A PLACE FOR EVERYTHING

Clutter creeps up as people accumulate possessions over the years. Over time, failure to regularly go through

belongings and thin the herd can lead to the accumulation of clutter. But clutter also can accumulate if people fail to find a place to put items. Racks for garages, organizational systems for closets and furniture with storage capacity, such as storage ottomans, are some storage solutions that can help people find a place for their possessions.

UTILIZE VERTICAL SPACE WHEN POSSIBLE

Getting items up and off the floor can maximize square footage in a home. Bookshelves, hanging wall shelves, hooks, cabinetry, built-ins, and other storage solutions that rely on walls and ceilings are simple and effective storage solutions. Unused space behind a cabinet or closet doors are some additional places to store belongings. Hang razors or toothbrushes on medicine cabinet walls and curling irons and other hair tools on the interior of cabinet doors in bathrooms.

CREATE A CODING SYSTEM

Home offices can be some of the more disorganized rooms

in a house simply due to the volume of electronics and paperwork within them. HGTV suggests using a colour-coded system for important files to keep them organized. Label important items, whether they're paper or digital files, in accordance with your system.

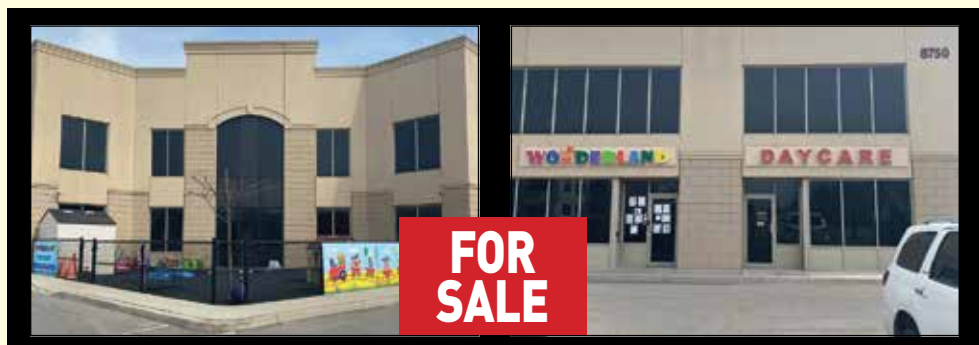
PUT IT AWAY

When you finish using an item, return it to its storage location. This eliminates piles of belongings strewn around the house and hunting and pecking for missing things. If you can't put it away immediately, have a few baskets on hand labelled for the different rooms in the house. Pop the items in the requisite baskets and then routinely take each basket around the house to return the items.

Investing in custom cabinetry and organizational systems also can help people organize their belongings. Tackle rooms such as the garage, basements, bedroom closets, and pantries, or those areas that tend to accumulate clutter the fastest.



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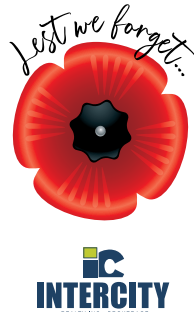
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Signs it is time to *overhaul your kitchen*

Remodelling a kitchen adds value to a home. Remodelling Magazines Cost vs. Value Report indicates mid-range kitchen remodels cost about \$66,000, and homeowners can expect to recover about 60 to 80 percent of that cost at resale.

HOMEOWNERS may wonder if remodelling their kitchens is worth the investment. Homeowners should not just consider cost, but also the current conditions of their kitchens when deciding if a renovation project is the right move to make. These signs indicate it may be time to renovate a kitchen.

BREAKERS ARE TRIGGERED:
If the lights go dark from a tripped circuit breaker every time you try to microwave and run the toaster oven at the same time, your wiring is likely not up to the task of handling the workload and could be out of date. A kitchen remodel will assess wiring load needs, and an electric overhaul may be necessary.

LACK OF STORAGE:
One of the biggest hassles homeowners encounter in their kitchens is a lack of storage space. If making a meal involves a Jenga-like stacking and rearranging of kitchen tools, or if an avalanche occurs whenever you search for an item, you might need more storage. A carefully planned redesign can achieve this, even in a smaller kitchen.

OUTDATED APPLIANCES:
Even if your appliances are not avocado green or mustard yellow relics of the 1970s, they might still need to be replaced. According to CRD Design, appliances are only expected to last around 10 to 15 years. If appliances have become unsafe or energy hogs, it could be time for a remodel.

FAMILY IS EXPANDING (OR SHRINKING):
Kitchens often are the heart of a home. They need to meet the needs of the family that resides in that home. A remodel can add space as needed. On the flip side, when a couple becomes empty nesters, kitchens can be redesigned and downsized to reflect their new needs and desires, such as the addition of a wine chiller or espresso station.

POOR LIGHTING:
Task lighting is essential in a kitchen, but older homes may not be equipped with lighting where it's most needed. A carefully designed remodel can improve

lighting with under-cabinet lights, pendants, overhead lighting, and even natural light to make the space attractive and more functional.

FREQUENT RUN-INS:
The notion that you can have too many cooks in the kitchen refers to having too many people trying to pitch in or offer their opinions. However, it also can apply to when too many people are gathering in a

small space. Redesigning a kitchen can improve the efficiency of a space and make the room feel larger.

AESTHETIC APPEAL:
Many kitchen remodels have been inspired by unsightly kitchens. Cosmetic changes can lead to big improvements.

Kitchen renovations can add instant appeal and help address issues that tend to plague outdated rooms.



PRIME NEWMARKET LOCATION

Spacious 4+1 bedroom offering 2700 Square Feet plus professionally finished basement. Beautiful bright centre hall plan featuring large separate living & dining rooms, Open concept white kitchen with island, breakfast room & walk out to landscaped yard & interlock patio. Open family room layout boasts herringbone hardwood floors & fireplace. 4 large bedrooms with hardwood floors all accommodate queen & king beds, finished basement with huge recreation room/play room, media area and large office or 5th bedroom. Offered for **\$1,388,800**

CUL-DE-SAC LOCATION WITH IN-LAW SUITE

Stunning renovated home situated on a premium pie shaped lot nestled at the end of the court! Gorgeous exterior stonework & perennial gardens set the tone for this special property featuring a professionally finished separate walk up 2 bedroom in-law suite! Hardwood floors throughout, hardwood staircase, oversized gourmet kitchen with 8 foot island, separate bar & servery, built in appliances and huge walk in pantry are showcased. Open concept family room with stone fireplace with large timber mantle, 4 spacious bedrooms, renovated baths, main floor laundry & basement laundry. Backyard oasis complete with new huge outdoor living room style patio! Too many features to list... **\$1,388,800**

THE 905's MOST BREATHTAKING LOCATIONS!

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I am in touch with many buyers actively looking for property to build or renovate their dream homes, so please reach out if you are thinking of selling.

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Sure, many real estate companies can say the same thing, but **we are a different type of real estate team.** In an industry that sometimes gets a bad reputation, Team Jordan is working **to change the way people think** about real estate and real estate agents.

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Things to consider before warming up next to your first *fire this winter*

A warm fire can make even the coldest winter day more enjoyable. Fireplaces may not get much use in spring or summer, but come late fall and throughout the winter, the fireplace can be a great place for families to gather.

BEFORE FIREPLACE SEASON hits full swing, homeowners might want to brush up on a few fireplace facts so they can safely enjoy nights spent sitting by the crackling flames.

The Chimney Safety Institute of America advises homeowners with fireplaces to hire a CSIA-certified chimney sweep to clean their fireplaces. After a lengthy period of non-use, various issues could be affecting the chimney, many of which might not be noticeable to an untrained eye. Professional, certified chimney sweeps

have extensive knowledge of fireplaces, making them valuable resources who can let homeowners know if any safety issues developed since fireplaces were last used. The National Protection Agency recommends that chimneys be swept at least once per year.

A full inspection of the chimney might be in order as well. Chimney service technicians will conduct thorough examinations of readily accessible portions of the chimney exterior and interior and accessible portions of the appliance and the chimney connection. The CSIA recommends that homeowners who plan to use their chimneys as they have in the past request a Level 1 inspection, which will examine the soundness of the chimney structure and flue as well as the basic appliance installation and connections. Technicians also will verify if the chimney is free of obstruction and combustible deposits.

Homeowners also should inspect their chimney dampers before lighting their first fires of the season. Dampers should open and close smoothly. If not, a service technician can help fix or replace the damper.

Firewood is another thing homeowners must

consider before lighting their first fires of the season. The CSIA says that well-seasoned firewood works best, noting that wood that is not well-seasoned will produce more smoke than heat. In addition, the home improvement resource This Old House recommends using dense wood that's been split and stored in a high and dry place for at least six months. Oak is an example of dense wood that, when stored properly, can make for an enjoyable fireplace experience. Avoid softwoods like pine. Pine can produce a lot of creosote, which is a byproduct of wood combustion. Creosote is highly flammable, and as it builds up in a chimney, the risk for a chimney fire increases. Choosing the right wood, making sure it's well-seasoned and having a chimney professionally cleaned can reduce the risk of a creosote-related chimney fire. A Level 1 inspection should determine if there are potentially dangerous levels of creosote deposits in the chimney.

Before nestling up to a fireplace this winter, homeowners should consider a host of factors and safety measures to ensure their fireplaces are safe and ready for the season ahead

How to create a photo wall collage

(NC) A wall collage or gallery wall is a great way to display your favourite photos and memories in your home. It may seem daunting, but if you follow a few simple tips and tricks, you'll have a professional-looking focal wall in no time.

START WITH A THEME. Wall collages look tighter and more cohesive when the elements fit together around a unifying theme. Whether it's family vacations, nature shots or a special event like a wedding, pick one subject to curate your photos and stick to it.

USE QUALITY PHOTOS. While taking photos with your phone is convenient, once you blow up and print them, these images won't be of high enough quality to display like artwork. For first-rate photos that look fantastic in print, try a camera from Canon. Available at Henry's, the brand has a range of cameras for all levels of expertise that give you more control over lighting, autofocus and creative possibilities.

IT'S ALL ABOUT LINES. What's the secret to sharp, Pinterest-worthy wall collage? Making sure your frames or canvases share similar lines across the space. Imagine a grid going across the space, with different pieces sharing a few grid lines. For example, the outer edge of the frame at the bottom-left corner should line up with the inner edge of the wooden letter in the top-left corner.

MIX UP THE AESTHETIC. Variety is appealing to the eye, so it's important to incorporate some diversity into your collage, whether it's a statement piece like an antler set, quotes on wood blocks or a range of frame sizes. If you want to stick to only photos, make sure to mix it up to create visual interest and keep the eye engaged.

TEST OUT YOUR LAYOUT. Practice the "measure twice, cut once" rule but for hanging. Start by experimenting with a few layout options on the floor before even thinking about hammering a nail. Play around with it, snap some pictures and take a day or two to sit on it. You can even try putting the outline of your layout on the wall in painter's tape. Once you've decided, a level is your best friend.

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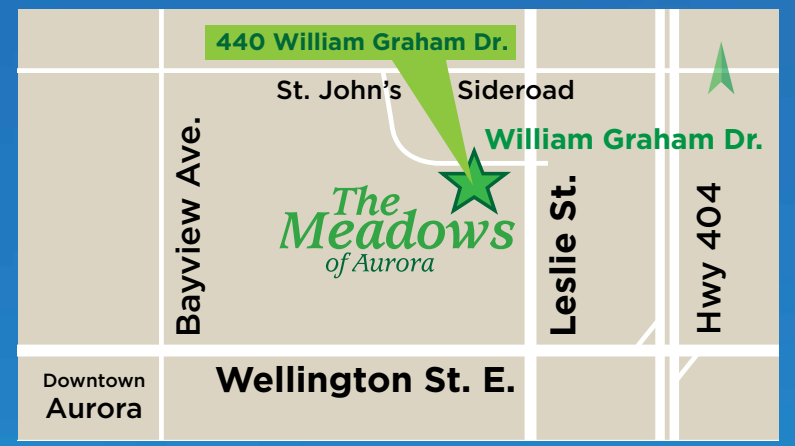
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**RESALE
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Support local with this tasty brunch recipe

(NC) Recently, many of us have started shopping for more local foods to support Canadian jobs. Not only does this help our economy, it also helps us reduce our carbon footprint and eat more sustainably.

For example, buying Canada Grade A eggs ensures your eggs have travelled from farm to grocery store in less than five days. This means cooking with eggs is an easy way to support local farmers and the other local businesses they support, all while boosting your protein intake.

In need of some local food inspiration? For your next brunch, try this tasty hash featuring delicious eggs and autumn flavours. You can customize it further by adding your own preferred selection of seasonal ingredients, be it another kind of squash or root vegetable. It's perfect for a cozy meal with family and friends.



Butternut Squash and Shallot Hash with Fried Eggs Prep time: 20 minutes Cook time: 20 minutes Serves: 4

INGREDIENTS:

- 1 tbsp (15 mL) olive oil
- 4 eggs
- ½ cup (125 mL) chopped shallots
- 1/3 cup (75 mL) diced pancetta
- 1 red pepper, chopped
- 1 tbsp (15 mL) finely chopped fresh rosemary
- 2 ½ oz (70 g) butternut squash, peeled, seeded and cubed
- ½ cup (125 mL) low-sodium chicken broth
- 3 tbsp (15 mL) butter, divided
- 1 tbsp (15 mL) apple cider vinegar
- 1 tbsp (15 mL) honey
- ¼ cup (60 mL) grated Parmesan cheese
- 2 tbsp (30 mL) finely chopped fresh chives
- ½ tsp (2.5 mL) each salt and pepper, divided
- Pinch hot pepper flakes

DIRECTIONS:

- 1 Heat oil in large skillet set over medium heat; cook shallots, pancetta, red pepper, rosemary and hot pepper flakes for 3 to 5 minutes or until vegetables start to soften and pancetta starts to brown.
- 2 Stir in butternut squash, ¼ tsp each salt and pepper. Cook, stirring occasionally, for 5 to 7 minutes or until squash starts to brown. Stir in broth, 1 tbsp butter, vinegar and honey.
- 3 Cover and cook for 6 to 8 minutes or until liquid is absorbed and squash is tender. Sprinkle with Parmesan and chives.
- 4 While hash cooks, melt 2 tbsp of butter in non-stick skillet set over medium heat; break eggs into skillet. Season with remaining salt and pepper.
- 5 Cover and cook for 2 to 3 minutes or until egg whites are just set for sunny-side up, or cook until done as desired. Divide hash among four plates. Top each serving with a fried egg.

TIP: You can substitute Parmesan for finely crumbled goat cheese or feta cheese. Or substitute a pinch of smoked paprika for hot pepper flakes if desired.

Find more recipes at eggs.ca.

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What to do with your kitchen scraps

(NC) Many of us are trying to live a more sustainable life. Reducing waste and reusing what we have are cornerstones of helping to create a healthier planet. At the same time, it's important to evaluate how we follow these principles to make sure they are not doing more harm than good.

KITCHEN SCRAPS are an important example of this. For many farmers, the best thing to do with food waste or leftovers is to feed it to their pigs. These animals eat outrageous amounts of just about anything, so it's an economical and seemingly environmentally friendly solution to prevent waste in your kitchen.



But overall, feeding any animal kitchen scraps is not the safest choice for their health. Not only can it lead to overfeeding and weight issues, but it could also potentially expose your animal to harmful diseases. For pigs, the risk of contracting African swine fever (ASF) is especially great. ASF has not been found in Canada yet, but it's been present in countries across Africa, Asia and Europe. A virus that cannot be contracted by humans, it's highly contagious and deadly for pigs. It can survive for months in fresh, frozen, cooked or processed pork products. If contaminated food is fed to a pig it could start an outbreak, even from trace amounts of the virus.

Safer uses for food scraps include:

- Composting (as long as it's stored far from your pigs) – there's always a need for nutrient dense soil

- Making broth by simmering leftover bones and veggie scraps on the stove
- Freezing them, if your garbage collection is rare or inconvenient or until you have enough to cook with
- Getting creative—extra meat scraps from butchering can make sausages, chili or meatloaf to use up less desirable bits of meat

To avoid harm to your pets or livestock, always practice good biosecurity and follow regulations in your area.

Find more information about measures to prevent African swine fever at inspection.gc.ca/asfbiosecurity.

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