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News You can Use

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July ~  
August  
2014

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Thank You for your trust and continued support.

*Glenn*

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# Squirrels

**Such cute little furry critters, they appear to be busy little nut gatherers, how could they do any harm?**

Not only are squirrels notorious bird feeder bullies, they can also invade your home! They fall down chimneys, scamper through open doorways or find their way in under the eaves. Squirrels usually live in trees or in ground burrows, but they'll just as easily set up home in your attic, walls or crawlspace. Once inside your home they can wreak havoc, chewing on wood and electrical wires, building nests - producing young, storing food and possibly infesting your pets with parasites.

Squirrels play an important role in the ecosystem - they eat insects and other rodents. They are welcome additions to our backyard wildlife sanctuaries, where their playful scampering is a delight to watch. **Did you know....**it's estimated that millions of trees worldwide are accidentally planted by squirrels who bury nuts and then forget where they hid them! The squirrel-challenge is to **keep them outside** where they belong.

### Prevention as your first line of defense.

Start outside your home; *the further away from your house you keep them, the less likely they'll be to move from scampering around the birdfeeder and patio to taking up residence inside your house!*



✓ Don't leave pet food outdoors. Keep bird seed in the garage or in a metal garbage can if you decide to store it outside.

✓ Install baffles on your birdfeeders and locate them far enough away from the house so that your patio, decking, and downspouts don't become a part of their usual route to a food source.

✓ Ensure garbage cans are sealed tightly, or better yet, store garbage cans inside the garage until garbage collection.

✓ After barbecuing, burn off the grill and scrape clean, wipe down spills or splatters on any surrounding surfaces. Don't throw 'burnt offerings' out into the yard, or under nearby shrubs for your backyard wildlife!

✓ Trim tree branches back from the roof line and walls of your house.

✓ Check your chimney cap and cover - if your chimney does not have a screen cover, installing one is a good idea - ditto the dryer vent.

✓ Carefully inspect the exterior of your home for any entry holes. Use steel wool or small pieces of wire mesh screen to seal any spot that may look like an open invitation.

### What to do if you suspect a squirrel (and it's family) may be in residence inside your house.

Squirrels are diurnal - they are outside foraging for food during daylight hours and nest at night. Young are born between March and June. If you suspect a squirrel, and it's family, has taken up residence somewhere

### Greetings!

I'm sending you this Newsletter with hopes that you find it interesting and informative

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inside your house the best time to deal with the problem is between July and October when you are best assured that you aren't sealing them into the house!

Using a live-trap to ensure they are in fact 'out of the house' is your best bet. Contact your local animal control agency for traps and additional info, or consider hiring a professional.

# Eggs

Don't know what kind of eggs to choose?...Here's some interesting info you may not know about eggs!

- **White eggs** are laid by hens from a white-feathered breed, while brown eggs are laid by hens from a larger, red-feathered breed.
- **Free-range** refers to eggs from hens raised cage-free, either outside or with daily access to the outdoors.
- **Organic eggs** are laid by hens restricted to feed free of commercial fertilizers, fungicides, herbicides & pesticides and are labelled 'organic'.
- **Omega-3 eggs** are laid by hens consuming feed that is 10 to 20% flaxseed. These contain higher levels of both polyunsaturated fat and omega-3 fatty acids than regular eggs.

**The nutrient value of all eggs, except omega-3, is the same.**



## Fast facts

- ▶ The average working hen lays 260 eggs annually.
- ▶ It takes a hen 24-26 hours to lay an egg.
- ▶ A hen starts to lay eggs when she is 17 or 18 weeks old.
- ▶ A hen can live up to 20 years - laying eggs her entire life - the number of eggs she lays decreases every year.



'So, who's first?'

## Storage Tip

Instead of transferring eggs to the cups on the refrigerator door, leave them in the carton (new fridges don't even have this feature anymore). **Why?** Because the temperature on the fridge door fluctuates due to opening and closing; eggs should be kept in the coldest part of the fridge, with enough room for air to circulate around the carton. Stored this way, under typical home conditions, eggs will last up to 4 weeks.

If you've decided that your current home is no longer meeting your needs and it's time to move to a different house, you need to decide what to do first: **buy the new house or sell your current home.**

There are pros and cons to each approach. When it's a buyer's market (lots of homes for sale and few buyers), most people opt to sell first. This is a safe route to ensure you do not end up owning a new house and unable to sell your current home. The downside to selling first is finding just the right house you want during the time allowed. You may have to opt for a home that doesn't quite meet your expectations. If you buy first in a buyer's market, you may get a good price for your new house but you will face lots of financial pressure to sell as quickly as possible.

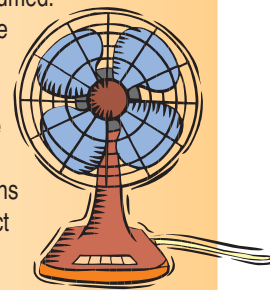
It's a good idea to consult your realtor to help make the decision - knowing market conditions in both the neighbourhood in which you are buying, and the community in which you are selling, is very important. Many other factors must also be considered such as interest rates and the time of year.



# Buy first or Sell first?

# Keeping your House COOL

- **Shut out the Sun.** Windows with southern or western exposures allow the most sun and heat into your home. Keeping these windows closed and covered during the day enables you to keep your home closer to its cool, early-morning temperature. Window awnings installed on the south and west facing windows of your house will also cut down on solar heat. If you're window shopping...ask about Low-E glass windows. These windows do more than keep warm or cool air in or out. They also prevent sun damage, by filtering out much of the ultra-violet sunlight that fades furniture, draperies & carpeting.
- **Higher efficiency...Lower operating costs.** Air conditioning units are more energy-efficient than ever. An air conditioner's efficiency rating is measured by Seasonal Energy Efficiency Ratio (SEER). The higher the SEER number, the more efficient the system, and the less energy consumed. When shopping for an air conditioner, compare the EnerGuide labels of different units.
- **Use a dehumidifier.** It's not the heat, it's the humidity! A dehumidifier really does make the air a lot less sticky, and a heat wave a lot more bearable. Installing or running ceiling fans will move air around, producing a cooling effect (set fan direction to push air *down* during the heat of summer).
- **Landscaping.** If you're thinking about doing some landscaping, consider planting shade trees on the south and west sides of your house. A shade tree can help you save 15 to 50% on air conditioning!
- When its time to redo your roof - **opt for paler shades of shingles** instead of darker ones, which absorb heat.
- **Roll up the area rugs.** Rugs, especially wool, hold warmth, and they look and feel warm too! The same holds true with dark fabric covered sofas & chairs - consider slip-covers in light summery shades in crisp cool fabrics.
- **Cook Smart.** Most appliances give off heat, so use them sparingly during hot spells. Cooking meals on your barbecue, or in a microwave or toaster oven, will help keep the heat down. Running dishwashers, washing machines and clothes dryers at night will also help reduce heat build up in your home.
- **Replace incandescent bulbs** in lamps or ceiling fixtures with compact fluorescent ones. 'Watts are basically heat', the benefit of fluorescent is you get more light per watt and less heat.



## Chuckles

*If you lie down with dogs, you'll.....stink in the morning.*

*You can lead a horse to water but.....how?*

*No news is.....impossible*

*Strike while the.....bug is close.*

*A penny saved is.....not much.*

*Don't bite the hand that.....looks dirty.*

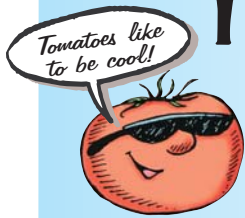
*If at first you don't succeed.....get new batteries.*

*Where there's smoke there's.....pollution.*



# This 'n That

## TOMATOES



Store ripe and unripe tomatoes at cool room temperature out of direct sunlight.

**Don't** refrigerate; it lowers the quality of flavour and texture. Canned tomatoes are just as nutritious, or more so, than their fresh counterpart. A quick look at the label tells you that canned tomatoes contain just that - tomatoes, a little salt and a couple of food additives to ensure maximum quality.

## CAMPFIRES

**Did you know that campfires are the leading cause of forest fires?**

Recreationists; campers, canoeists, picnickers, hunters & anglers - cause the greatest number of forest fires.

**Here are some tips for enjoying a safe campfire.**

- ✓ Choose your site carefully; select a site with easy access to water, one sheltered from prevailing winds, on a patch of sand or gravel or ideally on an area of bedrock.
- ✓ Your fire should be at least three metres away from any log, stump or overhanging tree branches and 15 metres away from any forest debris that could ignite. If you make a circle of rocks around your fire, make sure the rocks do not hide hot coals that could smolder and ignite after you leave the site.
- ✓ Keep your fire small - a forest is no place for a bonfire - and a small fire is easier to control and to put out. **NEVER** leave your campfire unattended. Drown or extinguish your campfire before going to sleep or leaving your site.



## On the Road

Properly inflated, high quality tires provide the best traction and fuel efficiency - proper inflation increases fuel economy by as much as 5%. At least once a month, check tire pressure (remember to check your spare tire as well). Since having four matching tires improves vehicle handling, don't mix tires with different tread patterns or internal construction.

## Trip Tip

Check your tire pressure and adjust it if necessary before heading out on a road trip. **Underinflation is a tire's #1 enemy.** Underinflation results in unnecessary tire stress, irregular wear, loss of control and accidents.

## Fun with SUMS

Write down the street number of the house you live in.

Now double it.

Add 5 and multiply the answer by 50.

Next, add your age.

Now add 365.

From the sum, take away 615.

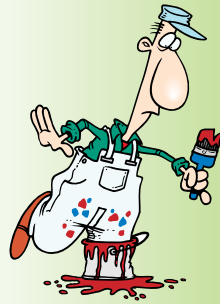
The result?

...your age is on the right.

...your house number on the left.



## EXTERIOR Painting



Remember to properly dispose of left-over paint and solvents with a trip to a hazardous-waste facility.



## Ladder Safety

**Falls are the number one accident to occur around the house! When using a ladder use extra precaution and follow these safety tips.**

- Ideally, ladders should be equipped with nonslip safety feet and set on solid, level surfaces. If the support surface is not level, shim the foot of the ladder with a nonslip support such as a brick or concrete block.
- Set the ladder close to your work. If your hips go outside the ladder's side rails, you are overreaching and risking a fall.
- When setting up a stepladder, make sure all four legs are supported and the spreaders are fully opened.
- Lean a straight or extension ladder against the house so that the distance from the foundation of the ladder's base is about one-quarter of the ladder's height. Check to see that the tops and bottoms of both ladder rails are making firm contact.
- When using an extension ladder, place it so the movable section is outermost and the top extends several feet above the edge of the roof or platform.
- Raise the movable half on an extension ladder only to its safety mark.
- Never adjust the height of an extension ladder when you are on it - climb down and raise or lower the ladder. Double-check that

- all locks are securely fastened over the rungs before climbing. Be sure your feet and the ladder rungs are dry and free of mud, grease, paint, or anything that might cause a slip.
- Always face the ladder when ascending or descending. Grip the ladder firmly with both hands and place your feet squarely on each rung. Do not turn around on the ladder.
- Don't stand on the top of a stepladder. On a straight or extension ladder, stop climbing when your shoulders are even with the top of the rails.
- Always wear slip-resistant footwear when working on any ladder.
- Never use a metal ladder when working around an electrical current.
- Don't carry tools loosely in your pocket; they could fall on someone below, and **before** carrying any materials up a ladder, make sure you have a secure place to put them when you get to the top.
- Read and take note of the safety warnings printed on the ladder as well as any manufacturers' instructions - particularly those indicating the ladder's strength (generally stamped on the side rail).

## CHOOSING COLOURS

As in all aspects of decorating - **continuity** is key. The different coloured building materials on the exterior of your house should flow from one to another without harsh lines. The siding should blend with the brick, the stonework should flow to the doors, eaves, roof etc. While it is not necessary that these colours *match*, they should be related. Choosing colour is often one of the most challenging aspects of any exterior painting project.

**Here's some advice from the pros.** Choose a main colour for siding, a complementary accent colour for trim or architectural details and a bold shade for the front door. Pick up an assortment of colour chips from a paint store and carefully look at them in natural light - near your house, preferably in a shady area or on a lightly overcast day. Keep in mind...paint always looks darker once it's applied - particularly on large areas, like garage doors.

**EXTERIOR** 'For exterior use' will be printed on the label for all coatings formulated for use outdoors. Exterior coatings allow for heat expansion and contain ultraviolet light blockers to help prevent colours from fading.

# Tidbits

## MovingTip

**Packing it up...**Remember to pack things into other things - fill your washer and dryer with soft stuff, like pillows and cushions. Wrap your breakables in towels, and clothing (don't use newspaper or you'll have to wash everything before putting it away). Keep clothes on the hangers, just bundle several together and secure the hooks together with packing tape. Protect the clothes with garbage bags - tie the open end together at the neck of the hanger (don't waste a bag by poking a hole in it). Garbage cans and recycling bins are great for garden tools and sports equipment.



## Preventing

# BACK PAIN

When lifting anything, be sure to keep knees bent. And if you have to carry something heavy, keep it close to your belly.

### Here are several things you can do to help keep your back in top form:

- Exercise. Overall endurance, strength and flexibility are key. Also, be sure to exercise abdominal muscles - they're crucial to keeping the back in proper alignment.
- Control your weight. A sagging belly pulls your back forward and makes it curve inward; this strains back muscles.
- Don't stand still for long periods of time - especially in high heels, which throw your posture off, putting stress on your spine. When doing activities such as ironing, stand with one foot on a low stool to help keep your back straight. To avoid tiring out spinal muscles, frequently shift your weight by alternating the foot on the stool.
- Sit up straight when working or driving. Slouching bends your spine unnaturally and puts extra stress on your lower back. When sitting, support your lower back (a rolled-up towel placed at the small of your back will do the trick). When driving, position your seat so you don't have to stretch forward to grasp the steering wheel.

## Around the Yard Maintenance

### Decking...

Mix a solution of 1 cup of ammonia, 1/2 cup of white vinegar, and 1/2 cup of baking soda mixed in 4 litres of water. Use a bristle brush or broom dipped in the solution and brush onto the deck to remove mildew.

### Concrete...

Remove stains and unsightly marks by pouring full-strength white distilled vinegar over the area. Repeat as necessary until stain fades.

### Bird Nests...

Use vinegar to deter birds building their mud nests in your facias. When you see where they are interested in building, drench the area with full-strength white distilled vinegar.

### Bird Droppings...

Remove bird droppings by spraying them with full-strength apple cider vinegar. Or pour the vinegar onto a cloth and scrub off.

### Brickwork...

To get rid of calcium buildup on brick or on limestone, use a mixture of half white distilled vinegar and half water. Apply using a spray bottle. Let it set, the solution does all the work.

## In the Garden



### TLC for Tools

▶ Gather all metal tools; spade, hoe, pruners, shovel, trowel etc. Plop them into a bubble bath of liquid dish detergent and hot water. Use steel wool to scrub off stubborn stains and rust.

▶ Let tools air dry, then sharpen blades. Protect them from corrosion with a light coating of lubricant.

▶ Inspect tools with wooden handles for nicks and chips. Use sandpaper to lightly smooth - then rub on some linseed oil with a soft cloth.

### Dealing with Pests!

Before using a harmful herbicide, insecticide or pesticide in your garden first try an organic solution. Here are just a few simple solutions.

① Keep your garden clean. By cleaning up spent plants, weeds and other garden debris, you eliminate hiding, and breeding, places for pests and diseases.

① Mint, marigolds, daffodils, hyacinth, garlic and basil serve as nature's repellent for many insects and garden pests - try interplanting amidst your veggies.

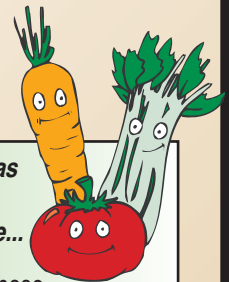
① Use compost and organic fertilizers to grow healthy plants. Strong, healthy plants are more pest resistant.

① A couple of bird baths (bird houses too) located near your garden will encourage insect-eating birds to visit often!

① Encourage beneficial insects like Ladybugs (who gobble up aphids and whiteflies - and their alligator-like larvae eat even more) and Nematodes (who eat flea eggs and larvae from lawns & gardens).



## Veggie Patch



*Nothing tastes as good as homegrown veggies!  
Here's some sage advice...*

**Be Selective.** Grow only those vegetables that your family likes to eat. And, 1 or 2 plants of each veggie is ample. In most cases, choose to plant your garden from seedling plants, not seeds.

**Start small.** Don't grow too much - 1 or 2 plants of each veggie is ample. And, keep things as simple as you can! **Remember...** *it's better to be proud of a small garden than to be frustrated by a large one!*

**Choose the right site.** Vegetables like sun - to thrive they need at least 6 hours of direct sunlight each day. Try to locate your garden someplace that you'll walk by every day - close to a water source and on a relatively level plot. Avoid locating your garden too close to trees - a tree's root system will rob your garden of both nutrients and water!

**Soil basics.** The best soil; well-drained, fertile, amended with compost. Consider raised beds which will allow soil to drain faster plus you won't be compacting the soil by walking on it, so plants will grow stronger.

**Kids love to grow veggies.** Introduce your children to gardening by providing them with their own spot to plant and care for. Carrots, cherry tomatoes, pole or runner beans, green onions, peas and corn are fun and easy-to-grow.