

YOUR HOUSE YOUR HOME

YOUR WEEKLY GUIDE TO CENTRAL ALBERTA HOMES

APRIL 5, 2019

Central Alberta's
OPEN HOUSE LISTINGS
inside

17 LONGMIRE CLOSE, RED DEER SOAK IN THE SUNSHINE!

Backing onto the pond in Laredo, this 3 bdrm, 3 bath 2126 sqft 2 Storey will Impress! **\$624,900**



Nicole Dushanek
403-342-7700



Royal Carpet Realty Ltd.

See page 16 for more details

Home Security Tips **FOR SENIORS**

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Create Your **SMART HOME**

A5

Things to Consider Before Building **A GREENHOUSE**

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VIEW OUR E-EDITION ONLINE AT
www.yourhouseyourhome.ca

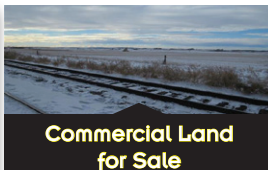

ROYAL LEPAGE
Network Realty Corp. 403-346-8900
 3608-50 Ave www.networkrealtycorp.ca

TAKE THE 3D TOUR OF MY PROPERTIES AT www.geraldlore.ca or call me at 403-872-4505

Gerald Doré
 403.872.4505

NEW LISTING
17 RYAN CLOSE
 Luxurious 1506 sq. ft. bung. w/5 beds and 3 baths on quite close. Main floor laundry, hardwood, granite, counters, MB w/ensuite. Fantastic home! **\$434,900** MLS# CA0160926

WHY RENT?
7359 59 AVENUE
 MLS# CA0159068
\$229,900
ANDERS PARK
4 ANDERS STREET
 4 beds, 2 baths, many upgrades, MLS# CA0159254. Incredible value at **\$274,900!**
OPEN HOUSE: SUN, APR 6, 1-3 PM
4 ANDERS STREET
SIERRA GRAND
418 4805 45 STREET
 Facing south, 1100 sq. ft., 2 beds, 2 baths, 4th fl. MLS# CA0157045
\$337,500!
1464 SQ. FT. BUNGALOW
#36 - 173 AUSTIN DR.
 Adult, luxury, Lakeside Villas! MLS# CA0152296
\$574,900!
CONDO
56 CARROLL CRES #315
 2 bed, 2 bath condo! MLS# CA0153943
\$209,900!
BUNGALOW - NEW PRICE!
19 VOISIN CLOSE
 MLS# CA0153944
\$649,900!
RIVERFRONT
4756 56 STREET
 MLS# CA0153943
\$949,900!
NEAR RIVER TRAILS
74 WILTSHIRE BOULEVARD
 MLS# CA0156712
\$474,900!
CONDO ON PARK
103 5110 36 ST
 MLS# CA0154027
\$229,900!
NEW LISTING
23 JENNER CRESCENT
 Stunning newer bi-level, 4 beds, 3 baths. MLS #CA0156534
\$409,900!
OPEN HOUSE: SUN, APR 6, 1-3 PM
23 JENNER CRESCENT

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Commercial Land for Sale
 130 acres. Ideal property for various types of industries requiring rail service.

Land For Sale
Downtown Sylvan Lake
 Excellent location with a view of the lake! Seller has plans for a 10 unit apartment.

Super Value, Business Only for Sale
 Superb location on Gaetz Ave. Very high traffic area. Store includes bakery and meat counter. Very long standing profitable business.

Cozy Bi-Level Located In Quiet Area of Penhold
 3 Bdrms, 2 Bths, air conditioning, new paint throughout, alarm, new hot water tank and furnace, lots of room for garage and RV parking.

YOUR HOUSE YOUR HOME

YOUR WEEKLY GUIDE TO CENTRAL ALBERTA REAL ESTATE





DEBORAH HANSEN
HANSEN REAL ESTATE TEAM
(est 1986)



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403-358-9999

PROPERTIES QUALIFY FOR DOWNPAYMENT HELPERS IN THE AMOUNTS OF \$31,589 - INTEREST FREE AND WITHOUT PAYMENTS, PAYABLE UPON FUTURE RESALE ***

#202, 91 Cosgrove Crescent	427 Jenkins Crescent	24 Nordegg Crescent
 <p>\$25,603.00 less than last sale</p> <p>low interest rates + low condo price = affordability</p> <p>Condo has been pre-qualified for \$15,000 government approved additional cash to turn this condo into your dream home. This is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for buyers looking to invest in a condominium. 2 bedrooms, white glove clean, vacant and only \$334.15 P1 per month</p>	 <p>ADULT / SENIOR HOME Custom built, original owner, sparkling & meticulously maintained, developer put in everything - the cheque book was open when this was built, fully developed, walk out bungalow, 3 bedrooms, 2 baths, main floor laundry, fireplace, in floor hot water heating, additional parking.</p>	 <p>FOOTBALL FIELD BACKYARD This home has been pre-qualified for \$40,000 government approved additional cash to turn this home into your dream home. Everything is supersized in this home - southern exposed rear fenced yard - rv/trailer/boat parking - covered deck - 4 bedrooms - 4 baths - over \$25,000 spent on upgrades - central air - on crescent - faces treed reserve - all you will hear are the songbirds (not traffic) - and all this for only \$1,398.92 P1 per/month</p>
<p>OPEN HOUSE: Sat, Apr 6 2:39 PM - 4:39 PM</p>	<p>OPEN HOUSE: Sat, Apr 6 10:39 AM - 1:39 PM</p>	<p>OPEN HOUSE: Sun, Apr 7 12:39 PM - 2:39 PM</p>

***Down Payment Helpers are subject to lender and CMHC approval, monthly payments are based on 2.89% with 25 years amortization

NEW CONTEST:

STOP BY THESE OPEN HOUSES AND GUESS THE FINAL SALE PRICE, CLOSEST (HIGH OR LOW) WILL WIN A \$100 TIM CARD

Home security tips for seniors

Seniors are often targeted by criminals. Though many criminals target seniors from afar via telephone or internet scams, criminals seek to enter seniors' homes. The Bureau of Justice Statistics offers that, between 2003 and 2013, the ratio of property crime to violent crime was higher for the elderly and persons between the ages of 50 and 64 than it was for younger persons between the ages of 25 and 49.

Home security is important for people of all ages, but especially so for seniors and aging individuals living alone. By following certain safety tips and developing a home security plan, seniors can feel safer at home.

- **Lock windows and doors.** It may seem like common sense, but failure to repeatedly lock windows and doors can, and often does, give burglars easy entry into the home.
- **Think about a smart doorbell.** Technology now enables doorbells to provide a video feed to a person's smartphone or tablet over WiFi. This allows residents to see who is at the door and speak to this person without having to open the door. Some products like Ring® will even register motion activity and



record short videos from outside of the house.

- **Don't share or leave keys.** Avoid leaving keys under a mat or in a flower pot. Others may be watching your actions and gain access to your home while you are away.
- **Ask for ID.** When service people or other individuals come to the door, verify their credentials by asking to see some identification.
- **Get a home security system.** The best protection against burglars is a home security alarm, states HomeSecurityResource.org. Such an alarm often deters burglars from breaking in.
- **Install a lockable**

mailbox. Locked mailboxes restrict access to sensitive information, such as bank account numbers, sent in the mail. Make sure retirement checks or other payments are deposited directly into bank accounts instead of having them sent by check.

- **Use home automation.** Home automation, or a "smart home," can be utilized to turn on lights, set the thermostat, lock doors, and much more.
- **Adopt a dog.** Dogs can be an asset to seniors. Dogs provide companionship and can bark or alert seniors if someone is around or inside of the home.

Home security is serious business for seniors who are vulnerable to criminals.



Bett Portelance



70 Ainsworth Crescent,
RED DEER

1180 SQ FT BI LEVEL
4BDR, 3BATH
ATTACHED 22X24, 16X21
DETACHED GARAGE

\$449,900

Helping You Make The Right Move **403-307-5581**



Quick and simple ways to make a front door pop



Visitors' impressions of a home are often dictated by the home's entryway. Just as one may judge a book by its cover, the same can be said about the impression that a front door and entryway can create, regardless of how accurate that impression is.

Making certain changes to an entryway can go a long way toward improving curb appeal. Entryways also can set the scene for a home's interior. Whether one chooses to be classic or bold, modern or traditional, there are various ways to quickly transform a home's entryway.

- **Bold front door color:** Color can dramatically enhance an entryway. Painting an existing door or replacing it with a more vivid option can do the trick. The DIY Network says certain colors stand out as favorites. These include turquoise, yellow, red, indigo, orange, and black. The door color should complement the other shades of the home, such as those on siding and trim.

- **Custom walkway:** Guide guests right to the front door with an attractive (and safe) walkway. Stamped concrete or decorative paver blocks may fit the bill. This walkway can extend to the street or to the driveway.

- **Contain plants.** Landscaping around the entryway should be neat and well-tended. Overgrown plants or shrubbery may give off an air of neglect. Container plants and carefully curated shrubs can create a neat and inviting aura.

- **Highlight the address.** Make sure the home can be found easily with bold and decorative house numbers. Consider two different address signs: one illuminated and easily viewed from the curb, and another closer to the front door.

- **Utilize high-end materials.** The relatively small area of real estate by the front door enables homeowners to splurge on more opulent materials that can really add a feeling of luxury. These can include colorful tiles, ornate planters, decorative wooden doors, or elaborate knobs and lighting fixtures.

- **Add architectural details.** Find out which architectural elements will meld with the style of the home and then incorporate them. Moldings, columns, shutters, and trim are areas to consider.

The entryway to a home garners a lot of attention. Homeowners can enhance their spaces with entryways that really make a statement.

Items to get you started on creating your smart home

Technology has changed the way people live in the 21st century. Once ubiquitous, land lines anchored to kitchen walls have now given way to smartphones that can be taken anywhere. Bulky television sets that required at least two people to move have been replaced with high-definition offerings so light and thin they can be mounted on living room walls.

It's no great surprise that technology also is changing the physical places we call home. Smart homes are a rapidly growing trend. In a typical smart home, devices such as the thermostat, television and even the refrigerator can be controlled remotely through the internet.

Converting an existing home into a smart home can seem intimidating, especially for people who don't consider themselves tech savvy. But today's user-friendly technology makes it relatively easy for anyone to turn his or her home into a smarter one.

Before you get started, recognize that there are certain must-have items to turn a home into a smart home.

Hub

The hub refers to software or hardware that connects all of your devices and gets them to work together. Think of the various devices you have and then think of their manufacturers. Chances are strong you have devices manufactured by various companies, and enabling those to work together might seem impossible. A hub does that work for you. And because they can be connected to your smartphone, hubs also make it possible to control devices while you're away from home.

WiFi router

Some people rent their routers from their internet/cable providers, while others buy their own routers. Regardless of which category you fall into, you're going to need a good WiFi router to get your smart home up and running. Determine which type of WiFi your home currently has and then find a router that's compatible with that WiFi. Request a list of routers that are compatible with your WiFi from your service provider, as not all routers will necessarily work with your internet connection. If



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possible, upgrade to the fastest WiFi your internet provider offers, as that will make your smart home that much more enjoyable and frustration-free.

Devices

You won't necessarily need to upgrade your devices to get a smart home. In fact, if you control or can control any device in your home with a smartphone, you are already on your way to having a smart home. Upgrading to a programmable thermostat that's compatible with your smartphone might be a great idea if your current thermostat is old and not internet-compatible. With a programmable thermostat, you can control the temperature in your home remotely. That ensures the home is a comfortable temperature when you arrive home and allows you to turn off costly heating and cooling units when no one is home.

Smart homes may seem futuristic. But chances are strong your home only needs some simple, inexpensive upgrades to join the smart home revolution.

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311-300 Ramage Crescent
\$543,900

JUST LISTED

IMMACULATE family home - Fully developed many extra features including triple heated attached garage, media room, wet bar, main floor laundry - amazing yard! Quiet upper scale Neighborhood, a must see!

OPEN HOUSE
SUNDAY
1-3 PM



HUGE REDUCTION!

VANIER EAST

\$689,900

CA0156489

43 Veronica Close



JOHNSTONE

CROSSING

\$359,900

CA0159495

260 Jennings Crescent



PENHOLD

JUST REDUCED!

PARK PLACE

\$344,900

CA0156636

6 Mcdougall Close



EXQUISITE MODERN LUXURY

LAREDO

\$1,189,900

CA0158425

53 Larratt Close

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YOUR HOUSE YOUR HOME

YOUR WEEKLY GUIDE TO CENTRAL ALBERTA REAL ESTATE

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Central Alberta's
OPEN HOUSE LISTINGS

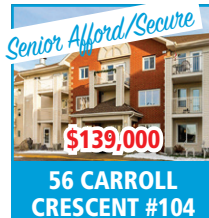


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Sweet Bi-level in Lacombe.
3 bedrooms 2 baths
Detached garage, fully finished
Quick possession



WITH MANY Amenities;
Suite has open floor plan;
5 Appliances; Beauty
Salon; Dining room service optional; Craft room;
Guest suite; Handy bus service weekly; Condo fee \$277.83 IMMEDIATE POSSESSION



Well maintained ;3
Bedroom on 5.86 Acres
Backing onto Raven River
on 2 sides (1193 sq ft)
24x24 garage

Won't Last



1168 sq ft Bi-level Home; 4
Beds, 3 Baths; Fully Finished;
newer flooring through the main
and lower level; newly painted;
new furnace & water tank.
Shop [49x101] has gas, metal
barn [36x176] two approaches;
mature landscaping; surveyed;
IMMEDIATE POSSESSION



3 km east of Blackfalds.
8.75 acres, mobile with 3
beds, 2 baths, 2 additions,
quick possession, on
pavement. Mature
trees, large deck, private
location. Great spot for a
new home.


#36 369 INGLEWOOD DRIVE


A well priced and great starter or empty nester home. This immaculate two storey condo offers 3 bdrms (large master with walk-in closet and vaulted ceiling), 1&1/2 bathrooms, hardwood flooring, an open floor plan, 2 assigned parking stalls.

48 ISBISTER CLOSE
NEW LISTING!


This fully finished modified Bi-Level is located on a quiet close with a pie lot & a walkout basement. Features inc. vaulted ceilings, hardwood flooring, ceramic tiles, 3 bdrms, 3 baths, walk-in closet, underslab heat in bsmt, 22x24 attached garage.

80 DEMPSEY STREET
NEW LISTING!


Fully dev. bi-level features 4 bdrms & 3 baths, vaulted ceilings, open floor plan, lrg kitchen with loads of cabinet space & pantry, with large dining area. Finished bsmt has a large family room, 2 bdrms, 4 pce bath and underslab heat. 24 x26 heated garage with 10' ceiling.

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YOUR HOUSE YOUR HOME



Come visit us at our **Show Home 24 Lundberg Crescent**
Wednesday to Sunday 1 - 5 and get a quote for your next home build.

Choosing your lot for your custom build with Edge Homes

When clients talk with me about building a custom home, lot choice is one of our first topics of discussion. What is important to you when choosing your neighbourhood?

New subdivisions these days are intricately planned and set up for comfortable living. Playgrounds and green spaces create beautiful areas while having direct access to most amenities. Speed limits are set for safety and slower speeds will also minimize road noise. Make sure to take your neighbourhood out for a test drive. Communities with good schools are important when looking at resale.

Lot size should be chosen to meet your needs. Do you have a trailer to park, you may want to look at easements on the property to see what options you have for side room. Looking for a walkout, lot size, shape and grade will play a factor. A longer lot may have room in the rear for a detached garage for more storage.

The sun will play a major factor in your new home. Choose a lot that suits your solar needs. Southern exposure at the rear will not only bring heat in through rear windows but excellent exposure for those who want a garden. The eastern side brings in the morning sun while the western side will get afternoon rays. With our cooler climate, your front steps and driveway will give you more trouble if it doesn't have southern or western exposure to help melt ice and snow.

We build all over central Alberta, give me a call to discuss your preferred location.

If you have any questions you would like answered in this forum please send questions to sales@yourhouseyourhome.com



Owner: Shawn Main | Ph: 1-403-348-7299 | Email: shawnmainedgehomes@gmail.com

OPEN HOUSE

CENTRAL ALBERTA'S OPEN HOUSE LISTINGS

SATURDAY, APRIL 6

RED DEER

24 Lundberg.....	1:00 - 5:00 pm	Nadine Marchand	RCR ROYAL CARPET REALTY.....	358-0546	\$574,900	Laredo
#202 91 Cosgrove Crescent..	2:39 - 4:39 pm	Deborah Hansen	EXP REALTY	358-9999		Clearview Meadows
427 Jenkins Crescent.....	10:39 - 1:39 pm	Deborah Hansen	EXP REALTY	358-9999		Johnstone Park - Adult Senior Home
95 McLevin Crescent	2:00 - 4:00 pm	Mitzi Billard.....	RE/MAX REAL ESTATE CENTRAL ALBERTA	396-4005	\$336,000	Morrisroe Extension
260 Jennings Crescent.....	2:00 - 4:00 pm	Mitzi Billard.....	RE/MAX REAL ESTATE CENTRAL ALBERTA	396-4005	\$359,000	Johnstone Crossing
14 Chism Close	1:00 - 3:00 pm	Gord Phillips.....	MAXWELL REAL ESTATE SOLUTIONS LTD	357-7720	\$259,900	Clearview Meadows
60 Trimble Close.....	1:00 - 3:00 pm	Tony Sankovic.....	RE/MAX REAL ESTATE CENTRAL ALBERTA	391-4236	\$329,900	Timberstone
60 - 369 Inglewood Drive	11:00 - 1:00 pm	Roxann Klepper	RE/MAX REAL ESTATE CENTRAL ALBERTA	872-4546	\$259,900	Inglewood
11 Sydney Close.....	2:00 - 4:00 pm	Roxann Klepper	RE/MAX REAL ESTATE CENTRAL ALBERTA	872-4546	\$389,000	Sunnybrook
48 Isbister Close	1:30 - 4:00 pm	Dale Stuart.....	COLDWELL BANKER ONTRACK REALTY	302-3107	\$384,900	Inglewood
62 Kidd Close	1:00 - 4:00 pm	Milena Toncheva	CENTURY 21 ADVANTAGE.....	304-5265	\$288,800	Kentwood
35 Ion Close	2:00 - 4:00 pm	Keri Jensen.....	ROYAL LEPAGE NETWORK REALTY	304-2707	\$524,500	Ironstone
1 Duvall Crescent.....	1:00 - 3:00 pm	Tim Maley.....	RE/MAX REAL ESTATE CENTRAL ALBERTA	550-3533	\$317,900	Deer Park
32 Daines Unit 26A	2:00 - 4:00 pm	Ed Katchur	MAXWELL REAL ESTATE SOLUTIONS INC	506-7171	\$269,900	Deer Park
304-4614 47A Ave	2:00 - 4:00 pm	Bob Gummow	ROYAL LEPAGE NETWORK REALTY	598-7913	\$224,900	Parkvale
56 Cosgrove Close.....	2:00 - 4:00 pm	Rob White	CENTURY 21 ADVANTAGE.....	346-0021	\$234,900	Clearview Meadows
#405 4522 47A Ave	2:00 - 4:00 pm	Bob Wing.....	CENTURY 21 ADVANTAGE.....	391-3583	\$229,000	Downtown

SATURDAY, APRIL 6

OUT OF TOWN

652 Robinson Avenue.....	2:00 - 4:00 pm	Kim Fox/Ernie Sandstra	RE/MAX REAL ESTATE CENTRAL ALBERTA	506-7552	\$364,900	Penhold
4404 49 Ave	2:00 - 4:00 pm	Deanna Zunti.....	ROYAL LEPAGE NETWORK REALTY	396-9937	\$279,900	Sylvan Lake
97 Vintage Close	2:00 - 4:00 pm	Janice Mercer.....	ROYAL LEPAGE NETWORK REALTY	598-3338	\$399,800	Blackfalds

SUNDAY, APRIL 7

RED DEER

24 Nordegg Crescent	12:39 - 2:39 pm	Deborah Hansen	EXP Realty.....	358-9999		Normandeau
71 Excell Street	2:00 - 4:00 pm	John Cloke.....	ROYAL LEPAGE NETWORK REALTY	741-4222	\$314,900	Eastview
3 Wells Street.....	1:00 - 3:00 pm	Tony Sankovic.....	RE/MAX REAL ESTATE CENTRAL ALBERTA	391-4236	\$259,900	West Park
56 Valentine Crescent	2:00 - 4:00 pm	Kim Fox/Ernie Sandstra	RE/MAX REAL ESTATE CENTRAL ALBERTA	506-7552	\$685,000	Vanier Woods
311-300 Ramage Crescent..	1:00 - 3:00 pm	Barb McIntyre.....	RE/MAX REAL ESTATE CENTRAL ALBERTA	350-0375	\$543,900	Rosedale
4 Anders Street.....	2:00 - 4:00 pm	Janice Mercer.....	ROYAL LEPAGE NETWORK REALTY	598-3338	\$274,900	Anders Park
23 Jenner Crescent.....	1:00 - 3:00 pm	Gerald Dore/Rick Burega	ROYAL LEPAGE NETWORK REALTY	350-6023	\$409,900	Johnstone Crossing
61 Adams Close.....	2:00 - 4:00 pm	Rob White	CENTURY 21 ADVANTAGE.....	346-0021	\$259,900	Anders South
56 Carroll Crescent #104 ..	12:00 - 2:00 pm	Margaret Comeau	COLDWELL BANKER ONTRACK REALTY		\$139,000	Clearview Meadows

SUNDAY, APRIL 7

OUT OF TOWN

5602 Prairie Ridge Ave.....	2:00 - 4:00 pm	Mitzi Billard.....	RE/MAX REAL ESTATE CENTRAL ALBERTA	396-4005	\$254,900	Blackfalds
99 Mitchell Crescent.....	1:00 - 3:00 pm	Danielle Perry	CENTURY 21 ADVANTAGE.....	505-9596	\$339,900	Blackfalds

Find your **dream house** this weekend!

View our complete publication ONLINE at www.yourhouseyourhome.ca



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CENTURY 21 Advantage

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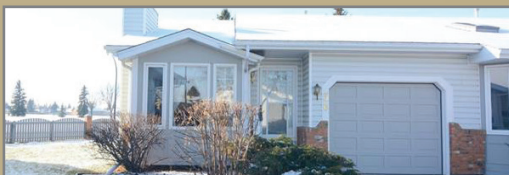
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WING**

403-391-3583

CENTURY 21 Advantage

21 photos of every property

Parkland Mall,
Red Deer



NOW \$234,900

56 COSGROVE CLOSE

FULLY FINISHED, ADULT BUNGALOW: CLEARVIEW 1 bedroom + den, 2 bath, end unit in clean condition with nice oak kitchen, gas FP, MF laundry, double vaulted ceilings, finished basement, garage, covered deck with a view of the park and NO CONDO FEES!

OPEN HOUSE: SATURDAY, 2-4PM



\$229,900

405, 4522 - 47A AVENUE

ADULT CONDO IN GOOD DOWNTOWN LOCATION! This 2 bed/2 bath unit with Euro cabs and open design is right across from The Golden Circle and Rec. Centre swimming pool, walking distance to shopping, transit, etc., well built/maintained with 2 indoor parking stalls!

"SENIORS REAL ESTATE SPECIALIST" Designation!



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YOUR WEEKLY GUIDE TO CENTRAL ALBERTA REAL ESTATE

**CALL 403-314-4357 OR EMAIL sales@yourhouseyourhome.ca
FOR MORE INFORMATION OR TO BOOK YOUR ADS.**

Things to consider before building a greenhouse

Avid gardeners may be enticed by the idea of a greenhouse that allows them to explore their passion for plants year-round. While it's true that greenhouses afford this luxury, there are important things to consider before erecting a greenhouse in your yard.

Greenhouses require ample time to maintain. Greenhouses are not self-managing; they require heat, water, venting, electricity, and maintenance on the part of gardeners. Individuals need to determine how much time they have to devote to a greenhouse and then consider their options.

Start by choosing the size of the greenhouse. Many experts, like those at the home and garden information site The Spruce, suggest getting the largest one you can afford and fit into the yard. It is much easier to fill a large greenhouse than try to expand on a small one later on.

Next, consider whether you want

to build the greenhouse from scratch or utilize a prefabricated kit that can make easier work of the job. Kits typically contain all of the materials needed, and are easiest for someone who is a construction novice. Look for "grower greenhouses," which are all-purpose options with adjustable shelving and space for growing plants full-term.

The next step is deciding where the greenhouse will be located. The goal is to have a consistent amount of sunlight year-round. A south-facing locale is ideal, and structures should remain north of the greenhouse so they do not cast a shadow on it. The building, cars and technology resource Popular Mechanics advises gardening enthusiasts to take into consideration the angle of the sun during all seasons before choosing a location. Doing so ensures that the sun is not obscured in the winter or fall.

Select a spot that also has ample

drainage, as you will not want water pooling up along the sides of or underneath the greenhouse. Raise the greenhouse on footings to alleviate flooding concerns.

Consult with a gardening or agriculture expert about the best way to heat the greenhouse. Options abound with electric, gas- and propane-powered heating sources. Some systems will require venting. You also will need to know what is available and legal in your area. Check to see if you need a building permit for the greenhouse and any accompanying heating elements.

Once the greenhouse is situated, you can begin to add other items, like benches, additional shelving, hooks for tools, and even an automated watering or misting system.

Greenhouses take commitment, but the reward is the chance to enjoy gardening all year long.



Weeding through lawncare service options

Millions of acres across North America are devoted to lush, green lawns. According to Duke University's Nicholas School of the Environment, lawns take up 40.5 million acres and individuals spend \$30 billion on average for lawn and garden upkeep in the United States alone. People certainly love their lawns and often wonder if those lawns are best left in the hands of professionals.

The National Gardening Association states that 72 percent of American households do some work in their yards. However, a growing number of homeowners also hire others to make their lawns look pristine. Homeowners who want to leave lawncare to the professionals can consider the following factors as they search for a company that best suits their needs.

- **Work with a licensed and insured company.** Lawncare services that are licensed and insured provide more peace of mind to homeowners than the alternatives. Should an injury occur on your property while work is being done, an insured business will be able to take care of it and you won't be liable.

- **Ask about membership in a professional or trade organization.** Businesses that belong to an organization invest in continually learning about the evolution of lawncare. This increases the likelihood that member companies will be up-to-date regarding the latest, most environmentally friendly lawncare techniques. Participation in a trade organization also may indicate education in the landscaping field.

- **Research reviews before hiring.** Although public reviews may not paint the entire picture and they often reflect only the very positive or very negative experiences previous customers have had with a given business, they can provide an idea of how a lawncare company interacts with its customers. Prospective customers who

contact the Better Business Bureau may learn if there have been any glaring complaints against a particular contractor.

- **Find out which services are offered.** Ask each business what services they provide. While nearly every lawncare contractor will mow the lawn and trim shrubs, many homeowners prefer companies that can adapt when the yard needs a change. This may include pest treatments, fertilization, aeration, and seasonal cleanups.

- **Look for a company that's organized and connected.** Customer service should be a factor when choosing a lawncare service. You want to be able to reach the company promptly. A company that responds quickly is ideal, especially if you need to change a service or need to inquire about additional or emergency work.

Shopping for a lawncare service can take time and effort, but the results will be well worth it when homeowners have lawns and landscapes that make their neighbors green with envy.



Maximize your basement's potential

By Scott McGillivray

If today's real estate market has you frazzled, a home renovation project may be just the right answer. With home prices on the rise, finishing a basement is the latest trend towards building even more equity in the home.

A finished basement can offer a little extra room and give a growing family space to breathe, and with so many uses, a renovated basement may be exactly what your home is missing. It can provide additional storage, a sound-proofed media room, craft room, guest room, or income suite. The possibilities are endless. Here are some tips on how to give your basement a 180-degree makeover:

Waterproof it. Check the interior foundation and floors to make sure there are no existing moisture issues, water damage or mold problems. Address any primary moisture issues before finishing the space. Examine grading to ensure water runs away from your foundation.

Soundproof it. Installing acoustic insulation is the perfect excuse to crank up the subwoofer, host a get-together or let the kids run wild. Soundproofing is the ultimate solution to maximize your basement's peace, quiet and privacy. Industry experts suggest using Roxul Safe n' Sound, which effectively absorbs sound and is easy to work with.

Add or replace flooring. Installing a new floor can improve the overall comfort level and look of your basement. Vinyl, laminate, ceramic tile, and engineered



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hardwood are great options. Say no to carpet, which can harbor mold and allergens, particularly in the basement, and don't forget to lay a subfloor.

Add color. Transform the dull and boring space into an inviting oasis or a colorful playroom with a simple coat of paint. If your basement has low ceilings or limited natural light, choose lighter, warmer tones to brighten the space. To add some drama, consider adding depth and visual interest to your space with a different colored accent wall.

Accessorize it. Throw pillows, rugs, lighting, and artwork are simple additions that can immediately enhance or change your basement's look and feel. Pot lights can modernize, while artwork and throw pillows can add a splash of color. Accessories are really an opportunity to make it your own and let your personality shine through. They also provide an inexpensive way to keep your space looking fresh from year to year.

Scott McGillivray is the award-winning TV host of the hit series Income Property, a full-time real estate investor, contractor, author and educator. Follow him on Twitter @smcgillivray.



The Real Estate Purchase Contract

When you've found a home and feel ready to make an offer, it's important to understand exactly what you're committing yourself to – beyond just the purchase price of the property. Look into other related costs or potential issues associated with the purchase, including:

- Property taxes
- Monthly utilities
- Zoning or building restrictions

- Home Association or Condo Fees
- Restrictions on title

If you feel ready to make an offer, your Realtor will assist in preparing the "Real Estate Purchase Contract" to present to the Seller.

It's critical that you understand all of the terms and conditions in your offer to purchase before you sign it and send it to the seller. For example, have you clearly specified exactly which items will stay with the house

you're buying and which items the seller will take away? Do you have all of the conditions that you need and are they clearly stated? Don't make assumptions and risk forfeiting your deposit! Talk to your Realtor and make certain that you understand all the terms and conditions you're accepting in the contract. If you want further clarification before you sign the offer to purchase you should contact the Real Estate Lawyer that will be working with you to complete your home purchase.

For resale homes, it's advisable to make your purchase conditional on a satisfactory home inspection – the cost of a home inspection is a small price to pay for peace of mind down the road, knowing there are no substantial issues with the property. We also suggest that you save a copy of the listing material and other ads the seller's realtor may have prepared or distributed on the property, in the event of any future disputes.



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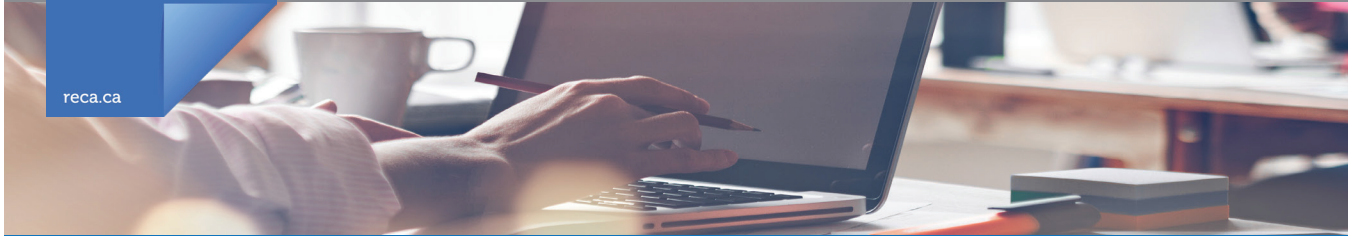
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I want to buy a resale condominium, but I'm worried about rising fees and possible assessments. How can I ensure the condominium is a good one?

Condominiums can be a great housing option, and with some due diligence, you can find one that is well suited to your needs, and a financially sound purchase.

Condominium refers to a type of ownership that includes the individual ownership of a unit and shared ownership of common property with other unit owners. Condominiums can be apartment-style, townhouses, attached, or detached.

Condominium owners typically pay monthly condominium fees to cover their share of expenses for the common property, and some of this payment goes into the condominium corporation's reserve fund. The reserve fund is used to pay for major capital repairs and replacements. All condominium corporations must have a reserve fund. As a buyer, you want a condominium corporation that has a healthy reserve fund because it reduces the likelihood of a special assessment. Special assessments occur when a condominium corporation has major work to do and there isn't enough money in the reserve fund. The corporation assesses an amount owing to the owner of each unit.

So how can you find out if the corporation you're thinking of buying into is a healthy one? A good place to start is a condominium document review.

Condominium documents relate to the operation of the condominium corporation, which you want to ensure is financially stable and well managed. Condominium documents include but are not limited to:

- current reserve fund study (5 years old or less) and 25-year reserve fund plan
- current operating budget and fee schedule
- current balance sheet
- registered bylaws

When buying a condominium, you can hire a professional to review your condominium documents. They can provide you with a summary of the documents, and identify potential areas of concern. Reviewing condominium documents can uncover financial difficulties, bylaws you find unacceptable (for example, restrictions as to size, number, or type of pet), upcoming necessary maintenance, or even discussion in Board meeting minutes about water issues.

Even a healthy reserve fund and a review of condominium documents can't guarantee you won't have a special assessment or that your fees won't go up. In fact, you should expect your fees to go up a small amount each year, from factors such as inflation or rising utility costs. However, reviewing the condominium documents will give you a good idea of the health of your condominium, and if it's the right one for you.

"Ask Charles" is a monthly question and answer column by Charles Stevenson, Director of Professional Standards with the Real Estate Council of Alberta (RECA), www.reca.ca. RECA is the independent, non-government agency responsible for the regulation of Alberta's real estate industry. We license, govern, and set the standards of practice for all real estate, mortgage brokerage, and real estate appraisal professionals in Alberta. To submit a question, email askcharles@reca.ca.



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