

YOUR HOUSE YOUR HOME

YOUR WEEKLY GUIDE TO CENTRAL ALBERTA HOMES

MAY 24, 2019

Central Alberta's
OPEN HOUSE LISTINGS
inside

36 - 173 AUSTIN DRIVE

Lakeside Villas!

Live a low maintenance, 40+ lifestyle in this custom built 1464 sq. ft. bungalow. **\$574,900**

OPEN HOUSE: Sunday, 1-3 pm



Gerald Doré
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ROYAL LEPAGE

Royal LePage Network Realty
403-346-8900

See page 2 for more details

When to tackle
WEEDS IN YOUR LAWN **A3**

Gardening
DURING A DROUGHT **A8**

The benefits of child-safe
HOME IMPROVEMENTS **A15**

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



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

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



Gerald Doré
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1464 SQ. FT. BUNGALOW

OPEN HOUSE: SUNDAY, 1-3 PM
#36 - 173 AUSTIN DR.
Adult, luxury, Lakeside Villas! MLS# CA0152296 **\$574,900!**

BUNGALOW
19 VOISIN CLOSE
MLS# CA0153944
\$649,900!

GORGEOUS BUNGALOW
17 RYAN CLOSE
Luxurious 1506 sq. ft. bung. w/5 beds and 3 baths on quiet close. Main floor laundry, hardwood, granite, counters, MB w/ensuite. Fantastic home! **\$424,900** MLS# CA0160926

RECREATIONAL LOT
#41
WHISPERING PINES

Near golf course and marina at Pine Lake. MLS# CA0160643
A steal at \$49,900!

NEW LISTING!
405, 100 LAKEWAY BLVD

2 beds and a den, 2 baths, 2 PARKING STALLS! 1155 sq. ft. Live at the lake for an affordable price. MLS# CA0165486
\$189,900

2308 12B IRONSIDE ST
2 bed, 2 bath, 2 parking stalls. MLS# CA0161957
\$199,900!

NEW LISTING!
77 TRIMBLE CLOSE
4 beds, 3 full baths, fully finished and RV parking. **\$349,900** MLS# CA0164310

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!

REDUCED!
23 JENNER CRESCENT
Stunning newer bi-level, 4 beds, 3 baths. MLS #CA0156534
\$389,900!



Alex Wilkinson
Followor
contact me on
f 403-318-3627 t



\$344,000

OPEN HOUSE: SAT 1-3 PM
OPEN HOUSE: SUN 2-4 PM

14 MAXWELL AVENUE
Location awesome, updates awesome - fully finished with detached double garage!
Call Alex!



\$510,000

OPEN HOUSE: SUN 2-4 PM

88 TIMBERSTONE WAY
Fabulous 2 storey backing onto park. This one has 4 bedrooms up plus bonus room!



JUST \$304,000!

23 STEWART STREET
Location perfect for this fabulous fully finished Sun-nbrook home just steps to the local school and parks. Home comes with detached double garage!



JUST \$289,888!

48 ARTHUR CLOSE
Fully developed and nicely updated home with attached garage. Close to all amenities! NO CONDO FEES! **Call Alex!**



75 WINDERMERE CLOSE
Need room for all your toys? A workshop and garage? This one has what you are looking for! There are 5 bedrooms in total. **Call Alex!**



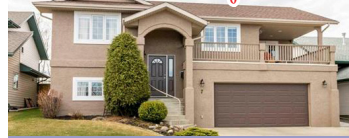
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7 Pritchard Close, Sylvan Lake



OPEN HOUSE: SUN, MAY 26, 2-4 PM

FULLY developed Bi-Level on quiet close backing onto playground/reserve/lane and tree line. Spacious open kitchen/dining/living room design with two exits to huge decks. Upgrades include kitchen flooring, bathrooms, trim throughout, hot water tank, air conditioning and fence. Treat yourself to move-in ready family home with 24x36 heated garage attached.

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YOUR HOUSE YOUR HOME

YOUR WEEKLY GUIDE TO CENTRAL ALBERTA REAL ESTATE

To advertise
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Central Alberta's
OPEN HOUSE LISTINGS





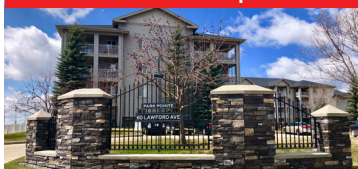
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215 60 Lawford Ave | \$169,500



CA0164126, South side Condo, looking on to park

52 Oakdale Place | \$549,800

NEW PRICE!



OPEN HOUSE: SUN, MAY 26, 2-4 PM

CA0162548. **PRICED TO SELL!** TED OLSON
Executive Bungalow on a close backing on to path.

97 Vintage Close, Blackfalds | \$399,800



CA0161586. Walk out modified Bi level
backing on to treed reserve



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CA0165019. **\$629,900**



35358 RR 283

Great potential land 100 acres across Hwy 11 from Alberta springs Golf, Pavement to your driveway.
CA0157626. **\$1,199,900**



0 RR 282

Between Penhold and Innisfail, 4 acres, just off pavement, great place to build. Great views to the west.
CA0162156. **\$269,900**

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When to tackle weeds in your lawn

Weeds are the bane of lawn and garden enthusiasts. Weeds can spread rapidly and overrun pristine grass, choking lawns and robbing them of their lush green look. In garden beds, weeds can steal water from thirsty plants, threatening their survival.

A proactive approach that prevents weed growth is easier and less frustrating than dealing with weeds after they have sprouted. That means addressing weeds before they release seeds, and not waiting so long that the damage is already done. According to the home and landscape experts with This Old House, spraying herbicide for weeds in June and July can address weeds before seeds are set. Tilling and installing a new lawn in late August or the beginning of September can help the lawn establish itself before the first frosts arrive, all the while avoiding weed growth.

The weed control experts at Roundup also suggest a springtime application of weed killer if this is the desired route. Early treatment can prevent weed roots from spreading too far in the soil, which can reduce the chances that weed remnants will be left behind to grow at a later time.

Homeowners with small lawns or gardens or those who prefer hand-weeding or using nonchemical ways to treat weeds must take steps to address the weeds early. Gardeners can try suffocating weeds by placing wood, blocks or plastic over them.

Wet newspaper used as mulch can block weed formation and also clear patches of unwanted grass so that garden beds can be mapped out. Pouring boiling water on weeds or pulling them by hand is more effective when roots are young and have not yet spread.

The UK-based company Lawnsmith also suggests a mid-spring weed killer application. This ensures that all weeds that have surfaced are addressed and that none are missed by weeding too early.

The Idaho-based Town & Country Gardens suggests lawn and garden enthusiasts wait to tackle weeds. By waiting and applying weed treatments in the fall, when dandelions and other weeds are absorbing food and nutrients in larger quantities to survive winter, homeowners can rid their lawns and gardens of weeds efficiently.

Weeds are a nuisance and an eyesore in lawns and gardens. Choosing the right time to treat them can ensure they don't adversely affect lush landscapes and thriving gardens.





Bett Portelance



120 Andrews Close

1149 SQ. FT. 1/2 DUPLEX
BUNGALOW, 5 BDR, 3 BATHS,
ATTACHED GARAGE



Open House

OPEN HOUSE: SAT, 1-3 PM

6 Ladwig Close

919 SQ. FT. BI-LEVEL,
3 BDR, 2 BATH,
LARGE DETACHED GARAGE



Exclusive Listing

70 Ainsworth Crescent

1177 SQ FT BI-LEVEL, 4 BDR,
3 BATH, ATTACHED GARAGE
& 1 DETACHED

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Decorating small spaces

Warm weather often inspires renewed vigor in decorating or organizing a home. People who live in apartments, small homes or condos or those who have embraced the "tiny house" movement must rely on clever decorating to maximize their spaces. Here are some ideas when space is at a premium.

- **Go vertical.** Utilize vertical space, such as lights hung on a wall beside a bed instead of lamps on a nightstand or bookshelves and other shelving to keep items off of the floor.
- **Bench seating:** Benches can provide more seating when entertaining guests and also can be moved to the living room or elsewhere as needed. Place a small bench in a foyer and put

some wicker bins beneath for storage.

- **Utilize natural light.** Rooms that have ample light can seem

more spacious. Pull up blinds (or skip them if privacy isn't an issue) and use the sunshine to help spaces appear more airy.



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TO BUY A
HOME IS
ALWAYS FIVE
YEARS AGO.**

RAY BROWN



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Gardening during a drought

During the early and oftentimes rain-drenched days of spring, it can seem like there may never be a time when plants will struggle to get their share of water. But drought can affect any area, and arid climates in particular. Ensuring gardens can survive drought takes patience and forethought.

Drought can be particularly troubling for avid gardeners because it can wreak havoc on lawns and gardens. In addition to causing changes in the physical appearance, including wilted, dried out leaves and stalks, drought can weaken the integrity of plants. This makes plants more susceptible to disease and attacks from plant-preying insects, according to Better Homes & Gardens. In addition, it can take years for plants to recover from drought.

So what can gardeners do? While they may not be able to prevent damage to plants from drought, gardeners are not helpless.

- **Water well infrequently.** Get plants used to a thorough watering every week or every other week. This will help develop strong, deep roots rather than shallow ones that will need frequent watering to thrive.
- **Choose drought-tolerant plants.** Homeowners can work with garden centers and landscape professionals to create gardens that are full of water-wise plants and flowers. Some examples of plants that can survive with minimal water include the blanket flower, Spanish lavender, euphorbia rigida, and kangaroo paw.
- **Apply a layer of mulch.** Mulch can protect delicate plants and the rest of the landscape by reducing the evaporation of soil moisture. Mulch will keep soil cool and moist.
- **Skip the fertilizer.** Since fertilizers encourage



plant growth, it's best to skip them during drought, as growing plants require extra water.

- **Invest in rain barrels.** When it rains, maximize the amount of water that can be collected by connecting rain barrels to downspouts on the house. This water can be used to water gardens when dry weather returns.
 - **Use organic materials.** Amend the soil with organic materials, like compost. The Grow Network advises that light, fluffy soils with air pockets in between the soil particles route water efficiently during floods and retain moisture for plants. Therefore, such soils can perform very well during drought.
- Gardens can survive drought with simple actions and smart planting.

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 5 Beds/3 Baths
 Bi-Level
 4 Car Garage
 Fully Fenced
 New Home Warranty
 High End Upgrades
 Fully Dev. Basement
 6 Burner Gas Stove
 Huge Fridge/Freezer
 Air Conditioned
 Wet Bar



CA0164518
 188 Illingworth
 Close

IRONSTONE
 (Walk Out)
\$569,900

EASTVIEW
ESTATES
\$264,900

May 25 - 2-4 PM



CA0165082
 32 Ellis Close

OPEN HOUSES



CA0162479
 49 Cunningham
 Crescent

May 26 - 2-4 PM
CLEARVIEW
MEADOWS
\$344,900

WASKASOO
\$449,900



CA0162499
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 (Lot Size: 50x250)

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Mitzi Billard (403) 396-4005



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\$219,900 IMMACULATE HOME in a close, fully developed with a HUGE pie shaped back yard.. Lots of parking, rv, parking and tons of room to run your dog. Come see it Saturday from noon - 3 PM.



OPEN HOUSE

121 Waskasoo Estates | \$109,900
1450 SQ FT HOME! Huge amount of room for the price. You can walk to Costco and gasoline alley. Come see it Sunday from noon - 3 PM. Follow the signs south of Taylor Drive.



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#36 369 INGLEWOOD DR


A well priced and great starter or empty nester home. This immaculate two storey condo offers 3 bdms (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


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 bdms, 3 baths, walk-in closet, underslab heat in bsmt, 22x24 attached garage.

259 KENDREW DRIVE


This 1/2 Duplex is a great starter home. It offers 3 bdms, 2 baths, an open floor plan, main floor laundry, and all appliances included. Has fully fenced yard, nicely landscaped, two sheds & lots of rear parking. Close to two public playgrounds, schools, and a bus route.

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4 beds, 2 baths, custom
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garage.

Family Lifestyle



**90 PINE CRESCENT,
BLACKFALDS**

Spacious open plan of
living room and kitchen,
4 beds, 3 baths, custom
cabinets. Across from a
playground, fenced.

**Open House:
Saturday & Sunday,
3 - 5 pm**

Reduced!



**39310 RR 250,
LACOMBE COUNTY**

Acreage, 11.91 acres with
updated house, shop and
two metal barns. Short
distance from Red Deer.

Privacy/Quality



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High land overlooking a
beautiful river! 3 bed plus,
spotless, wood burning
stove, large family room,
double detached garage,
new condition, private
getaway. Immediate
possession, sunset beauty,
treed.

TLC Required



**56 LARNE PLACE,
PENHOLD**

5 Bedrooms, 1 bath, large
family room, 2 tiered deck,
27x27 heated garage,
quick possession, fenced.

**Open House:
Saturday, May 25,
11 am - 2 pm**



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**LAST
WEEKEND
TO VOTE!**

OPEN HOUSE

CENTRAL ALBERTA'S OPEN HOUSE LISTINGS

SATURDAY, MAY 25

RED DEER

63 Landry Close.....	1:00 - 3:00 pm	Roxann Klepper	RE/MAX REAL ESTATE CENTRAL ALBERTA	872-4546	\$484,500	Lonsdale
6 Ladwig Close.....	1:00 - 3:00 pm	Bett Portelance	ROYAL LEPAGE NETWORK REALTY CORP	307-5581		Lonsdale
14 Maxwell Avenue.....	1:00 - 3:00 pm	Elaine Wade	ROYAL LEPAGE NETWORK REALTY CORP	396-2992	\$344,000	Morrisroe
110, 150 Vanier Drive.....	1:00 - 3:00 pm	Deb Simpson	CENTURY 21 ADVANTAGE	396-0165	\$276,900	Vanier Woods
174 Asmundsen Ave.....	2:00 - 4:00 pm	Bob Gummow	ROYAL LEPAGE NETWORK REALTY CORP	598-7913	\$629,900	Anders On The Lake
49 Cunningham Cres.....	2:00 - 4:00 pm	Mitzi Billard	RE/MAX REAL ESTATE CENTRAL ALBERTA	396-4005	\$344,900	Clearview
118 Illingworth Close.....	2:00 - 4:00 pm	Mitzi Billard	RE/MAX REAL ESTATE CENTRAL ALBERTA	396-4005	\$569,900	Inglewood
7 Tory Close.....	2:30 - 4:00 pm	Marina Kooman	RE/MAX REAL ESTATE CENTRAL ALBERTA	341-0004	\$520,000	Timber Ridge

SATURDAY, MAY 25

OUT OF TOWN

56 Larne Place.....	11:00 - 2:00 pm	Margaret Comeau	COLDWELL BANKER ONTRACK REALTY	391-3399	\$265,000	Blackfalds
29 Rolling Hills Ridge.....	12:00 - 2:00 pm	Marina Kooman	RE/MAX REAL ESTATE CENTRAL ALBERTA	341-0004	\$280,000	Blackfalds
25 Prairie Ridge Close.....	12:00 - 3:00 pm	Ivan Busenius	RE/MAX REAL ESTATE CENTRAL ALBERTA	350-8102	\$219,900	Blackfalds
30 Aurora Heights Blvd..	1:00 - 4:00 pm	Viviana Dal Cengio	ROYAL LEPAGE NETWORK REALTY CORP	598-4053	\$329,900	Blackfalds
5727 - 45 Avenue.....	2:00 - 4:00 pm	Blake King	BIGEARTH.CA REALTY	350-7672	\$234,900	Lacombe
49 Woodland Drive.....	2:00 - 4:00 pm	Steve Cormack	ROYAL LEPAGE NETWORK REALTY CORP	391-1672	\$699,900	Lacombe
90 Pine Crescent.....	3:00 - 5:00 pm	Margaret Comeau	COLDWELL BANKER ONTRACK REALTY	391-3399	\$364,000	Blackfalds

SUNDAY, MAY 26

RED DEER

121 Waskasoo Estates.....	12:00 - 3:00 pm	Ivan Busenius	RE/MAX REAL ESTATE CENTRAL ALBERTA	350-8102	\$109,900	South Red Deer
36, 173 Austin Drive.....	1:00 - 3:00 pm	Gerald Doré	ROYAL LEPAGE NETWORK REALTY CORP	872-4505	\$574,900	Anders On The Lake
32 Ellis Close.....	2:00 - 4:00 pm	Mitzi Billard	RE/MAX REAL ESTATE CENTRAL ALBERTA	396-4005	\$264,900	Eastview
100 Irving Crescent.....	2:00 - 4:00 pm	Steve Cormack	ROYAL LEPAGE NETWORK REALTY CORP	391-1672	\$449,900	Inglewood
130 Jones Crescent.....	2:00 - 4:00 pm	Janelle Geddes-Backman	REALTY EXECUTIVES RED DEER	816-0006	\$285,000	Johnstone
14 Maxwell Avenue.....	2:00 - 4:00 pm	Alex Wilkinson	ROYAL LEPAGE NETWORK REALTY CORP	318-3627	\$344,000	Morrisroe
52 Oakdale Place.....	2:00 - 4:00 pm	Janice Mercer	ROYAL LEPAGE NETWORK REALTY CORP	598-3338	\$549,800	Oriole Park
90 Osmund Close.....	2:00 - 4:00 pm	Len Parsons	RE/MAX REAL ESTATE CENTRAL ALBERTA	350-9227	\$598,000	Oriole Park West
88 Timberstone Way.....	2:00 - 4:00 pm	Alex Wilkinson	ROYAL LEPAGE NETWORK REALTY CORP	318-3627	\$510,000	Timberstone
4758 - 56 Street.....	2:00 - 4:00 pm	Mitzi Billard	RE/MAX REAL ESTATE CENTRAL ALBERTA	396-4005	\$449,900	Waskasoo

SUNDAY, MAY 26

OUT OF TOWN

76 Chinook Street.....	12:00 - 2:30 pm	Viviana Dal Cengio	ROYAL LEPAGE NETWORK REALTY CORP	598-4053	\$429,000	Blackfalds
4103 - 45 Avenue.....	1:00 - 3:00 pm	Tim Maley	RE/MAX REAL ESTATE CENTRAL ALBERTA	550-3533	\$378,500	Sylvan Lake
18, 37470 RR 265.....	2:00 - 4:00 pm	Len Parsons	RE/MAX REAL ESTATE CENTRAL ALBERTA	350-9227	\$699,900	Red Deer County
90 Pine Crescent.....	3:00 - 5:00 pm	Margaret Comeau	COLDWELL BANKER ONTRACK REALTY	391-3399	\$364,000	Blackfalds

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Caring for kitchen countertops



Kitchen remodels are a popular home improvement project that help homeowners recoup large percentages of their initial investments at resale. A kitchen remodel can invigorate a home and make the most popular room in the house more functional.

According to HomeAdvisor, a home-improvement informational guide, homeowners spend an average of \$22,000 on kitchen remodels. However, lavish projects can cost more than \$50,000. Protecting such investments is important and requires that homeowners understand how to properly maintain kitchen features so they have the longest life possible. This includes the new countertops that make the kitchen look complete.

Countertops come in various materials, not all of which should be treated the same way. Quartz, granite, marble, laminate, and tile countertops require different types of maintenance.

Quartz

Engineered quartz countertops are popular. Quartz countertops are nearly maintenance-free and resistant to stains, scratches and even heat. Quartz will not need to be sealed like natural stone and can be cleaned using just a damp cloth with a mild, nonabrasive soap.

Granite

Polished or honed granite countertops offer a high-end look that adds instant value to a kitchen. Natural variations in granite give each kitchen a custom look. To keep granite countertops clean, avoid abrasive cleansers that can scratch, and opt for warm, soapy water instead. Stains are possible, but can be remedied with a baking soda paste left to sit for a couple of hours, advises Angie's List. Wipe up oils, acids and soda promptly to avoid stains, and follow advised sealing routines.

Marble

Marble is a natural stone that is porous and will need to be resealed periodically. Because marble has high levels of the mineral calcite, it can be reactive when acids come in contact with it, and etch marks may appear. Promptly wipe away tomato juice, lemon juice, perfume, or toothpaste. Marble is softer than granite and will wear at a faster rate. Avoid scratching and exercise caution when using knives or sharp objects around marble.

Laminate

One of the more budget-friendly materials, laminate countertops can be fabricated to mimic the look of natural stone, wood or even quartz. Laminate is less resistant to damage than other materials and will need a gentle touch. Formica® says to never use abrasive cleansers, scouring pads or steel wool when cleaning laminate countertops. For tough stains, an all-purpose cleaner should suffice when applied with a nylon-bristled brush. Test any cleanser in a discreet area first.

Tile

Cleaning tile countertops requires getting into crevices along the grout lines. A toothbrush and a mildew-fighting cleaner or bleach diluted with water is advised. Also, unglazed tiles need to be sealed yearly. Some soap may leave residue, which can be removed with a solution of vinegar and water.

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Check with the manufacturer or installer of the countertops to learn more about the ways to clean and maintain new counters.



Awnings can make outdoor spaces more comfortable



Many homeowners are eager to step outdoors upon the return of warm weather. Outdoor living spaces have grown in popularity as more and more homeowners embrace opportunities to entertain and lounge around in their yards.

Outdoor entertaining areas can be great, but such spaces may go unused when summer sun makes it uncomfortable to spend time outdoors. But a retractable awning can change all that. Homeowners often find awnings can be worthwhile investments that can be beneficial both inside and outside of the home.

Increase usable yard space

Awnings can create privacy and establish boundaries for outdoor living areas. Place an awning over a deck, tables and chairs, or an entire patio area. Some people like to install awnings over a portion of their pools to provide shade for those who want to escape the sun's rays. Motorized awnings can be retracted with the push of a button, which can help homeowners with physical limitations.

Protect against sun damage

Awnings provide excellent protection against sun damage, as they can shield outdoor furniture from

direct sunlight, helping to reduce the chances for discoloration or fading.

Reduce air conditioning costs

In addition to shading outdoor living areas, smaller awnings can be placed over southern- and western-facing windows, shielding interiors against the sun's rays. In turn, this may reduce reliance on air conditioners.

Expand gardening possibilities

Some plants require very specific light conditions to grow. Awnings can protect shade-loving plants from harsh sunlight and filter the sun for plants that require indirect light. They can be placed over a patio container garden or permanent garden structure.

Add value for buyers

For those who may be selling their homes soon, awning may help them receive top dollar. Today's buyers want houses that have attractive and functional exteriors, and an awning can provide that competitive advantage over similar homes in the neighborhood.

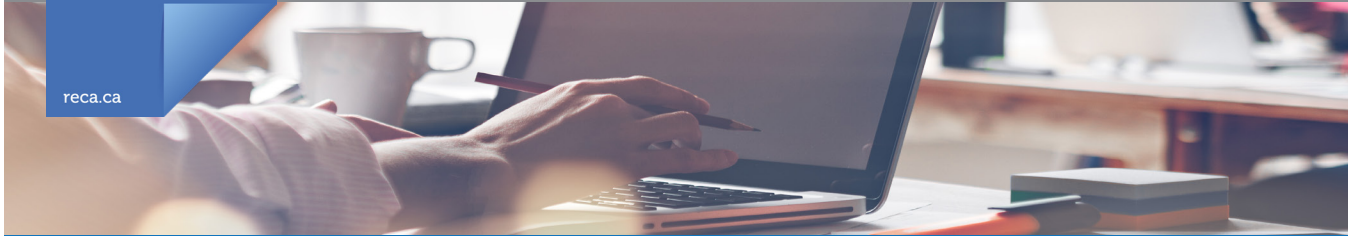
When renovating outdoor areas, homeowners should not overlook awnings that can make outdoor living spaces more livable.

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ASK CHARLES

The authority for a positive real estate experience.



I want to hire a real estate agent and I've noticed some have designations after their name, such as Accredited Buyer Representative or Certified Condominium Specialist. Are these important?

Whether or not they are important is up to you. Usually, designations after a real estate agent's name indicate additional education or experience in a particular area that resulted in a designation or certification from an industry body. If you are in the market for a condominium, maybe hiring someone who has a Certified Condominium Specialist designation will make you more comfortable. It's entirely up to you.

Typically, to receive these types of designations, a real estate agent will have to complete additional education and/or attain a certain level of experience. For example, the National Association of REALTORS®, an industry trade association, offers an education program to attain an Accredited Buyer's Representative (ABR) designation.

In addition to formal designations from industry trade associations, some real estate professionals may also claim particular expertise or experience. That expertise or experience may relate to a geographical area (for example, they'll call themselves "Downtown Neighbourhood Specialist"), or in a type of property (for example, "Your Farm and Ranch Specialist").

When making these claims, a real estate agent needs to ensure they can demonstrate the qualification or experience they are claiming. If an industry professional advertises particular qualifications or expertise, the Courts and RECA will typically hold them to a higher standard. That means if a real estate agent has never assisted a buyer or seller with a condominium, they shouldn't call themselves a condominium specialist. But, if they do, and RECA receives a complaint about their conduct when assisting a condominium buyer or seller, RECA will hold them to a higher standard than someone who does not call themselves an "expert" or "specialist."

At the end of the day, what you think is important when hiring a real estate agent is up to you. If a real estate agent you're talking to has an additional industry designation, ask them about it. Find out what it took to attain it, and how they keep their designation current. If you're seeking a specific type of property or have a desire to stay in a specific area, you may want to seek out a real estate agent who indicates – and can prove – extensive experience and expertise in that area. In all cases, though, ask questions to figure out what is important to you, and who you're comfortable working with.

"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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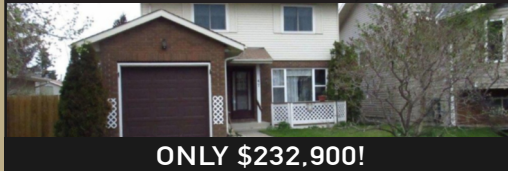
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Clean indoor air can help reduce **asthma attacks**

Did you know that, according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, more than 25 million Americans, including roughly seven million children, have asthma? It's true, and those numbers have steadily risen in recent years.

Asthma is more than occasional wheezing or feeling out of breath during physical activity. Asthma is chronic and can lead to coughing, wheezing, shortness of breath, fast breathing, and chest tightness, states the Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America. In the 21st century, people spend significant time indoors at home, school or work, and indoor air environments could be triggers for asthma. Improving indoor air quality can help people breathe clearly. The AAFA notes that the following agents can adversely affect indoor air quality, potentially triggering asthma attacks.

Allergens

Allergens such as mold, dust mites, pet dander and fur, and waste from insects or rodents thrive in many homes. Ensuring indoor air quality is high can cut back on the amount of allergens in the air. People with asthma can invest in an air purifier and vacuum regularly, being sure to use a HEPA-equipped appliance. Routinely replacing HVAC system filters can help prevent allergens from blowing around the house. Also, frequent maintenance of HVAC systems will ensure they are operating safely and not contributing to poor indoor air quality.

Mold can be mitigated by reducing moisture in a home. Moist environments in the kitchen and bathroom may promote mold growth. Ventilation is

key to keep mold at bay.

Tobacco smoke

Thirdhand smoke, or THS, may be unfamiliar to many people. A 2011 report published in Environmental Health Perspectives says THS is an invisible combination of gases and particles that can cling to clothing, cushions, carpeting, and other materials long after secondhand smoke has cleared from a room. Studies have indicated that residual nicotine levels can be found in house dust where people smoke or once smoked. Studies have indicated that smoke compounds can adsorb onto surfaces and then desorb back into air over time.

Keeping tobacco smoke out of a home can improve indoor air quality and personal health.

VOCs

Volatile organic compounds, or VOCs, are gases released from commonly used products. These can include paints and varnishes, cleaning supplies, air fresheners, new furniture, and new carpet. People with asthma may find that VOCs can trigger attacks. Airing out items, reducing usage of products that are heavily scented and choosing low- or no-VOC products can help. Making cleaning products from baking soda, vinegar and liquid oil soap also can keep indoor air quality high.

Homeowners who plan to renovate their homes can consider using the appropriate specifications for HVAC systems to promote good indoor air, as well as address any other potential problems that may be compromising indoor air quality.

The benefits of child-safe home improvements



All family members should be considered when home improvements are being planned, especially the youngest household residents who may not be responsible enough to avoid accidents and injuries.

According to a recent Vital Signs report from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, accidental injuries are a leading cause of death among the country's youth — with one fatality occurring every hour from something entirely preventable. The CDC notes that the leading causes of child injury include suffocation, drowning, poisoning, fires, and falls. More can be done to keep children safe, and many strategies start at home.

Install security systems

A security system can be just as effective at keeping little ones inside as it is at keeping unwanted guests outside. Alarms can be set to sound anytime a window or door is breached, which can deter curious children from trying to leave the house without permission. Pair the alarm system with secure locks and high latches that can also stop children in their tracks.

Remove fall hazards

Safety devices installed on windows that are above ground level can keep children safe. Stair rails should be secure and in good working order. Temporary gates can block kids from getting on stairways. Improve lighting around staircases to

help children and adults avoid falls, and remove any obstacles.

Anchor heavy furniture

The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission warns that unanchored televisions and top-heavy furniture can tip over onto children and cause severe injuries and even death. Everyday furniture can be tempting to climb; therefore, using anchors to secure furniture to walls for security is a must.

Install locking cabinets

Locking cabinets can keep medications, household chemicals, home improvement paints and solvents, and other potential poisons out of reach.

Erect fencing around pools and yards

Install fencing around pools to keep children from wandering close to the water's edge. Towns and cities may require certain fence heights or self-latching gates to keep little ones safe. Young children should never be left to their own devices around any source of water, whether it's a pool, tub or toilet.

Test and replace smoke alarms

Smoke and carbon monoxide detectors are only useful if they are functional. Homeowners should inspect such devices regularly to ensure proper operation and promptly replace old or faulty detectors to improve safety.



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