

Gardens Add Life and Equity to Your Home

When it comes to investing in a new home, the one word you always want to keep in mind is equity. The more equity you build up in your home the more valuable it will be should you decide to sell one day.

Or, part of your retirement plan might include applying for reverse mortgage. If you're 62 or older, you can tap into all that equity you've been growing by paying your monthly mortgage on time. If approved, you can receive your proceeds in one lump sum payment or equal monthly disbursements.

To find out more on how a reverse mortgage works just click on this link: <https://reverse.mortgage/how-does-it-work>.

But if you're still a decade or two away from retirement and you're looking for new and unique, if not healthy, ways to increase the value of your home, go no further than your own backyard. Studies have shown that [growing a garden](#) is a beneficial and vibrant way to add equity to your home. It also provides you with a healthy lifestyle.

According to a recent article by [Gardeningetc.com](#), gardens not only make your home more appealing to potential buyers, it virtually guarantees they will give you a nicer offer for it. During the recent pandemic, gardens proved to be an invaluable way to spend your home lockdown time while building something that was both creative, beautiful, and in the case of a vegetable garden, nutritious.

Presently, the people who took the time and effort to grow a garden during the pandemic are now reaping the financial rewards when it comes time to sell their home.

Garden Growth Study

A new study conducted by AA has discovered that growing a garden on a portion of your property will potentially increase its value by an average of 5 percent. This proves a substantial financial add-on to already increasing home values in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. The study was said to examine properties with and without gardens in more than 30 cities and towns where gardens seem to be valued the most.

Also, the study examined three-bedroom homes without gardens and compared them to homes with gardens, then looked at what the sellers were charging for each. Sellers that contained gardens and stunning landscaping on their property were getting upwards of seven to 15 percent more per offer depending upon where the property was located.

But In the Big City

Says Gardeningetc.com, properties located in the big city (in this case, London), went for less money than properties without gardens. This came as a surprise to those in charge of the study since it would seem those living and working in a largely urban environment would appreciate a garden, no matter how humble.

However, the study indicated that because of the spike in price for newly constructed penthouses and flats, the price add-on for a garden became inconsequential. In fact, London ranked as the city where a garden added the least amount of money to new housing for sale.

Why People Love Their Gardens

Despite the extra value a garden can give your home, it's vital to know why homeowners with green thumbs love their gardens so much. A recent survey found that more than 50 percent of people who possess gardens on their property spent a great deal of time maintaining them during the pandemic lockdowns. The information varies from town to town, but, gardening is good for the body and good for the soul.

It also helps that when making their gardens better, bigger, and more productive, homeowners fully realize they are investing in their property. They are increasing its value upwards of 15 percent in some cases.

While urban prices don't increase all that much due to a garden, people who lived with gardens previously are willing to shell out extra money for a small garden in the city. For them, gardening is as much a hobby as it is a healthy way of life.

Your First Garden

Gardeningetc.com states that if you're planning your first garden, it helps to contact a designer who will plan your new backyard and who also work directly with a contractor who can provide the initial work. Gardens aren't just about growing things. They are all about recreating your backyard space, including new landscaping. Of course, you can always DIY the project also.

But if you go with professionals to plan and build your first garden, you can expect to pay around \$10,000. But you will more than make up for this fee when it comes time to sell your home, or when you apply for a reverse mortgage come retirement age.

Ways To Have Sustainable Meat Without Slaughtering Animals

There are several ways to eat sustainable meat without killing an animal. For example, you can buy cultivated meat, support

animal-friendly farmers, buy in bulk, and buy plant-based or fermented substitutes. In addition, you can reduce your carbon footprint by avoiding slaughterhouses and other animal-related activities.

In a world where sustainability is becoming increasingly essential, conscientious consumers are seeking ways to enjoy meat without sacrificing their ethical principles. One effective approach lies in choosing meats from brands committed to humane and sustainable practices. For instance, selecting the [best liverwurst](#) from a trusted brand ensures not only a delicious meal but also peace of mind, knowing that it comes from a source dedicated to responsible farming practices. By making thoughtful choices in their meat purchases, consumers can play a significant role in promoting sustainability within the food industry.

Supporting Farmers Who Treat Their Animals Well

If you care about animals, it's important to support farmers who treat their animals well. This includes making your purchase decisions based on the welfare of the animals. Like [Paul Shapiro](#), you can also act politically and fight efforts that benefit factory farms. You can also make an impact by traveling to countries that support farmers who treat their animals well. When you travel, avoid eating local cuisine that includes animal cruelty. For example, do not eat live fish or "bushmeat." You can also sign up for action alerts.

Animal welfare has become increasingly important. Approximately 99% of animals raised in the U.S. are raised in factory farms, where workers are exposed to hazardous conditions and often have to sacrifice their health to make profits. As a result, the animal welfare issue is a growing concern among consumers, and consumers must take action to help farmers improve the lives of the animals.

Buying Plant-based Substitutes

Buying plant-based or fermented alternatives to meat can be a sustainable way to consume meat without slaughtering animals. These alternatives have a low environmental impact but may be more expensive. In addition, they may have a limited sensory appeal and are not as popular among consumers as animal-based alternatives. This may be due to a lack of consumer education, food neophobia, or perceived inferior quality. Nevertheless, the ability to substitute meat for meat-based alternatives depends on consumer recognition of the substitute. The substitute should be similar in shape and form to meat. It should also be prepared like the meat, which consumers are used to.

The production process of plant-based or fermented meat substitutes is highly varied, and a range of textures is available. Some have undesirable off-flavors, such as astringent or bitter flavor. However, these compounds may be removed via germination or heat treatment. In addition, they might contain traces of phytochemicals, which may have anticancer properties.

Buying Cultivated Meat

You can try cultivated meat if you are looking for sustainable meat without slaughtering animals. This product is produced by using immature cells. After maturing for two to eight weeks, the cells are harvested, processed, and packaged to make various products. Cultivated meat has some advantages over conventional animal agriculture. For one, it uses less land, emits fewer greenhouse gases, and [reduces agricultural pollution](#) and eutrophication. It is also free of antibiotics and other chemicals, which means less contamination and fewer foodborne illnesses. However, some people worry that cultivated meat will reduce competition in the world protein market. They fear that it will result in a greater

concentration of power in the hands of a small group of firms.

Buying In Bulk

Buying bulk sustainable meat without slaughter is possible and can effectively minimize your grocery bill. However, the meat industry produces a lot of waste during the slaughtering process, including bones, tendons, skin, contents of the gastrointestinal tract, and blood. This waste varies depending on the animal species.

Different Types of Loans

By Loans Canada

Are you looking to get a loan and you're not sure which one? In this article we'll look at the [different types of loans available](#).

Car Loan

A car loan is a loan taken out to purchase a vehicle. It can be for a brand-new vehicle or one that's second hand.

A car loan is different than a car lease. A car lease is like renting the vehicle. You're just paying for the privilege to use it for the next several years. With a car loan, you actually own the vehicle. This means that you can resell it later on if you so choose.

There was a time when five-year car loans were standard.

However, this day in age six- or seven-year car loans are the standard.

If you choose to take out a longer car loan, you have to be careful about not finding yourself in a situation of negative equity. This is when your car dies and you still have money owing on the loan. As such, you might choose to keep your loan short at five or six years if you can afford the slightly higher payments.

Student Loan

Whether you're attending school for the first time or you're going back to school, a student loan can help you pay for it.

Student debt is considered good debt in most cases. If you can reasonably expect to grow your income, that's when a student loan can make sense.

Student loans tend to come with lower interest rates and grace periods. You can get student loans from the government, as well as individual banks.

Small Business Loan

They say that small business is the backbone of the Canadian economy. If you're thinking of starting your own business, a small business loan could be the funds that you need to jump start your business.

Starting a business tends to come with a lot of risk. As such, you can be expected to pay higher interest rates with a small business loan. You can try to get a more competitive rate by backing up your business loan with a well written business plan.

Debt Consolidation Loan

Do you have high-interest debt you want to pay off? That's when a debt consolidation loan can make sense.

With a debt consolidation loan, you use a single loan to pay off any higher interest loans you owe. The whole idea is to save money and simplify the process of repaying any debts you have owing.

You save money when the debt consolidation loan has a lower interest rate than the debts you paid off. It also makes it easier to pay everything off because you only have one payment to worry about, instead of several.

Personal Loan

Then there's a general purposes personal loan. The general-purpose personal loan can be used however you like. It could be used for home renovations, to start a business or go back to school.

This is the most flexible option, but tends to come up with higher interest rates, since the reason isn't specific.

How to Design a Pollinator-Friendly Garden



Gardens are more than just an attractive feature in one's home. They also help boost ecological balance by supporting pollinators. But before we go into designing a pollinator-friendly garden, let's refresh our memory on some basic biology concepts.

What are pollinators, and why are they important?

The process of transferring pollen to the reproductive parts of plants is called pollination. This is the first step to fertilizing plants, which results in the food that we eat – namely fruits and vegetables – and a variety of other flowering plants that also provide us with raw materials.

Though plants can self-pollinate, wind and water also help with the transfer of pollen, and the majority of flowering plants rely on the help of animals to do so. [Findings from the journal Oikos](#) indicates that 87.5% of the world's flowering

plants are animal-pollinated, which accounts for around 308,006 plant species. This figure highlights the urgent need to preserve the population of these humble agricultural heroes, especially as they continue to be threatened by habitat loss and the widespread use of chemicals.

The most common pollinators are bees, wasps, butterflies, birds, as well as many other insects and small mammals. If you see insects hovering around and feeding off of your garden's beautiful flowers, don't shoo them away! What you're witnessing is a magical process in nature – something that we humans quite literally cannot live without.

How to attract pollinators

1. Plant a variety of flowers: Ensuring diversity in your garden is the best way to entice different kinds of pollinators. For example, sunflowers and hyacinths are particularly appealing to honeybees, while butterflies are partial to mild-scented plants like lavender and pansies. Consider planting native species, as they're more adapted to the local environmental factors and will also attract native pollinators.

2. Plant flowers in masses: There are some species that have difficulty in locating flowering plants. Butterflies, for example, need to be within 10-12 feet of an object for them to see it. What helps in this case is to plant flowers in big clumps, so they're a lot easier to spot.

3. Reduce or eliminate use of pesticide: If you absolutely have to, [researchers from Michigan State University suggest spraying pesticides at night](#) or early in the morning, when most pollinators are asleep or away. Treat specific plants individually rather than spraying your entire garden with chemicals. Alternatively, opt for organic pest control solutions or low-toxicity pesticides to minimize harm to pollinators.

4. Consider the plant seasonality: You also want to think about plant seasonality to ensure that you have beautiful blooms all year-round. When it comes to pollinators, a consistent supply of nectar is key to keeping them around.

Here are some additional tips if you want to attract specific pollinators:

- **Bees:** [Recalling our article on 'Creating Bee-Friendly Landscaping for Your Home'](#), you want to make sure that your plants also provide enough cover. Some bees like to burrow, some like to build nests, and some like to settle in hollow spots, so keep that in mind when attracting bees.
 - **Wasps:** Like bees, wasps also like to take shelter in holes, so consider adding a decorative log with holes in, somewhere in your garden. You can also cultivate plants that attract wasps, such as sweet fennel, Queen Anne's Lace, yarrow, and spearmint. Just be sure to keep them away from your house, because if they sting you, it will hurt. [A feature on how to deal with wasps by HomeServe](#) recommends putting sugary food away, as well as disposing rubbish and covering trash bins in the correct manner. If you don't it will be like an open invitation for them to enter your house through a door or window. Wasps are attracted to sweets, so be sure you have plenty of flowers in your garden that will attract them.
 - **Birds:** Hummingbirds are some of the most common avian pollinators. [The Spruce notes that they're attracted to water sources](#), which means that including a simple water feature in your garden enables them to drink from it, and is a great way to invite them over. A hummingbird feeder with nectar is also an easy way to entice them.
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5 DIY Tips That'll Transform Your Home

It's 2020, which is a great year for DIY-ers. The world of Pinterest and DIY blogs have skyrocketed us into a new era of decorating our houses. Say goodbye to pricey home furnishings and hello to sustainable, recycled/upcycled home decor. With the right resources, you can transform your living situation into an Instagram worthy space without spending a lot of money.

Most people who plan on selling their home don't want to spend too much extra money preparing to look presentable. Staging is an important step in the real estate process, but you don't always need to go out and buy a ton of new items. In today's article, I'm going to provide you with 5 DIY tips to take your home from outdated to fabulous and ready to sell!

Create additional storage

You don't have to install a new closet or cupboards to upgrade your storage. Start by revamping what you already have. For example, repurpose old wooden planks for shelves in the kitchens and the bathrooms. Not only is this super inexpensive, but it'll also make your home look more roomy and put together. Most people look out for good storage when house hunting, and some quick DIY upgrades can go a long way. Of course, that's not to say you should avoid brand-new fittings altogether! Sometimes, store-bought storage options – such as these [Garage Cabinets](#) – can provide you with solutions that you never would have considered or been able to fit yourself.

Make your kitchen inviting

The kitchen is one of the most important rooms when it comes to the success of a house sale. We understand that kitchen remodels can be extremely expensive, but there are some very affordable options that won't cost you much at all. Start by looking into repainting the walls with a brighter color or even adding a backsplash. Other [DIY tips](#) for staging your kitchen include creating a vignette by rearranging some of the decor to draw attention to specific parts of the room. You can do this with flower arrangements, cook books, and even appliances!

Create a dining room tablescape

Have a dining room that could use some help? Have a little fun by creating an eye catching tablescape for it. Start with a tablecloth or throw and layer on placemats, centerpieces, napkins, plates, and silverware. Not only will this spruce up an otherwise bland room, but it will also make the house look more valuable overall. Try to match the look of the house and also keep it simple. The goal is to add taste, not overdo it!

Upgrade the landscaping

The exterior of your house is the first thing that people will see, and first impressions count. Start by adding grass seed to the front yard to help the yard blossom into something more lively. Have flower beds that could use some work? Add some new mulch to clean up your garden and create framing or walkways with stones. Fresh landscaping is one of the most valuable [home improvements](#) you can make and oftentimes yield the highest return on investment. And, you don't have to spend thousands of dollars to hire a professional landscape.

Declutter the house

When people view a house, the last thing they want to see is clutter everywhere. Declutter rooms such as the living room and bedroom by artfully rearranging furniture and decorations to create space within the room. You might want to think about hiring a waste removal company, [click here](#) for more information, so that anything you really do not need can be disposed of in enough time before people come around to see the house. Getting ready to sell is a perfect time to do a proper clear out as you don't want to be taking these things with you. You can also use items like books and pillows to bring attention towards eye catching parts of the room. These rooms are also good spaces to try out new storage ideas to assist in organizing all of your belongings!

Staging your home doesn't need to be an expensive and over the top endeavor. Use some of these DIY tips to add storage, create space, and direct people's attention towards attractive features. You'll have no issues impressing the people who come to view your home!

7 Reasons to Rent Instead of Buy a Home



A ripped up kitchen homeowners will have to pay for.

One of the main aspects of the American Dream is becoming a homeowner...isn't it? This might not necessarily be the case anymore.

For many Americans, there seems to be a declining interest in owning a home. The decline in home buying goes hand in hand with increasing percentages of millennials that consider buying a home unfeasible due to financial inability.

There are a lot of downsides to buying property instead of simply renting. The millennial generation isn't missing out on much by choosing to rent. For those who have the ability to buy a home, you might want to think twice before you do. You may be able to have the garden of your dreams if you decide to purchase your own home, but there are other factors to consider.

Here are seven reasons why you might want to consider renting instead of buying a home—or at least putting off [a home purchase](#) for a few more years.

1. No Property Taxes

If you own your own home, you will need to pay taxes on that property, and depending on your state and county, they can be pretty expensive.

2. Lower Utility Costs

Homes are usually bigger than rental apartments, which means the utility costs per month can be significantly higher than those for a rented space. It's costly to heat up a full home, as they typically have more rooms and large open spaces. Rental properties tend to have more compact floor plans, making them way more affordable to heat.

3. No Maintenance or Repair Expenses

If you are renter, your landlord is responsible for all the maintenance costs that come up in your apartment or house. This includes organising repairs, making any necessary improvements, and contacting services such as those that offer [mold remediation in Scottsdale, AZ](#), or wherever the house is based. Other issues that the landlord would be responsible for are things like plumbing issues, roof leaks, and appliance breakdowns. If you own a home however, all these labor issues and expenses come straight out of your pocket.

As a renter, therefore, the most you'll likely ever have to consider is looking for a company offering a [commercial carpet cleaning service in Denver, CO](#) before you move in. This is mostly for your sake too, to ensure you've got a freshly cleaned space to move into that you can feel secure in. Getting the place cleaned is typically part of the contract with a landlord however, so don't be surprised if this were come up in a lease agreement.

4. More Freedom

Plenty of people would prefer not to be nailed down to any one geographical location. When you purchase a home, you don't have a lot of flexibility or freedom when it comes to where you want to live. You can't just pick up your stuff and go. If you are a renter, you can have a change of scenery when you want to, and you won't struggle to find a place to stay when you do move.

5. No Down Payment

There aren't up-front costs with renting like there is with home buying. Sure, renters usually need to pay a security deposit that may be equal to one month's rent, but when you are buying a home you usually need to put down about 20% for a mortgage. That is a very large chunk of cash!

6. Lower Insurance Costs

The average cost for homeowner's insurance is somewhere between \$30 and \$80 a month, while the average for renter's insurance is only \$10 to \$20 per month. When you add that up to a year's worth of savings, it's a pretty penny.

7. Decreasing Value

Property value is not a stable asset. The value of homes, condos, and apartments go up and down unpredictably—which can affect property owners substantially. The possibility of depreciating property value doesn't have as big of an effect on renters.

Sadly, one cost that both homebuyers and renters still have to cover is the expense of moving. If you are struggling to cover the truck rental, boxes, and moving help, then you should consider [a title loan](#) or some other form of temporary funding.

No matter whether you decide to buy or rent, put the time and effort into making sure you are making the decision that is

best for your particular financial situation.

Photo credit: [Beck Gustler](#), via Flickr.

Repel Cockroaches Naturally Using These Ingredients At Home

No one wants to see a cockroach running across the floor of their home. Cockroaches generally prefer to stay put of the light but they'll scuttle around if they have to. In fact, if you think you have a cockroach issue you should leave the room in darkness for 10 minutes and then quickly open the door and turn on the light, you'll see the disappearing.

But, it's more than just an unpleasant feeling. Cockroaches are known to carry several dangerous diseases, including cholera, dysentery, typhoid, [salmonellosis](#), and even the plague. In short, you don't want them in your house.

If you've seen them in your home you need to [click here](#) and get in contact with an expert who can eradicate the issue for you. It's not enough to kill the ones you see, you need to take care of all the ones in the nest. That's why you should get professional help. In fact, the best firms will even give you advice regarding how to help keep the cockroaches away from your home. This is perhaps more important than dealing with the issue, you don't want them returning to bother you.

If you have an issue and aren't sure who to contact then [click here](#).

The good news is that once the infestation is sorted you can

repel cockroaches, you simply need to know the right ingredients to use.

Diatomaceous Earth

This white powder is actually a naturally occurring compound which is the fossilized remains of diatoms. These are single-cell algae with hard shells that have died millions of years ago.

The great thing is that you can purchase food-grade diatomaceous earth and it is completely harmless to humans and pets. The powder can be easily mixed with any type of food, such as some cocoa powder. You then put this down so that the roaches can help themselves.

Unfortunately for them, once they consume this powder it starts to destroy their exoskeletons, effectively killing them. You will also have some success targeting the nest in this way as cockroaches will take the bait back to the nest with them, infecting more than one cockroach at a time.

Essential Oils

Peppermint oil is particularly effective when dealing with roaches. However, lavender oil, citronella, and other essential oils are effective when dealing with other pests.

Unfortunately, this doesn't have the same effect as diatomaceous earth. Instead of killing the cockroaches they simply don't like the scent and will stay away from it. You can mix a few drops of essential oil with a little water in a spray bottle and cover the internal perimeter of your home. It will help to keep the roaches away.

Catnip

You may be surprised to learn that roaches don't like catnip. Specifically, they don't like [nepetalactone](#) which is the active ingredient in catnip.

Again, this isn't something that will kill the roaches. But, placed in a variety of strategic positions around the home it will help to ensure they don't enter your home.