

Changing times

Environment awareness a part of life

This article is provided by local Realtors and the Ontario Real Estate Association (OREA) for the benefit of consumers in the real estate market.

Times have changed significantly since the days when the three R's referred to reading, writing and arithmetic. In today's climate of increasing environmental awareness, they stand for reduction, reuse and recycling and are becoming an integral part of our everyday language.

If you haven't incorporated the three R's into your lifestyle yet, perhaps it's time you gave it more thought. Homeowners produce a veritable gold-mine of recyclable material - from soup cans and newspapers to old furniture and Christmas trees!

Take a moment and think about all the goods you consume on a day-to-day basis and the amount of household waste you generate. Did you know that the average Canadian produces about 657 kilograms of garbage a year?

As our landfills become increasingly overburdened, consumers are becoming more and more aware of the problem that our wastes pose. People now realize that garbage dumps aren't endless receptacles and that the future of our environment is dependant on the action we take today.

By reducing the amount of waste we produce, we can make a significant dent in the amount of space we require for landfills. And by re-using various items, we also cut down on the amount of waste generated. Recycling and recyclable wastes also ensures that our natural resources are used over and over again.

COMMON SENSE AND ORGANIZATION

Adopting the three R's in your

home doesn't take a lot of effort - just an organized approach and some common sense.

You can start by purchasing products without packaging or those that come in environmentally friendly packages or recyclable containers. You should also try to buy containers that can be refilled.

Re-use your shopping bags by taking them along with you each time you go shopping - especially to the grocery store. You can also buy special, re-usable shopping sacs.

Avoid purchasing disposable products such as paper and plastic plates, razors and diapers. Instead, buy products you can use again. For instance, try buying rechargeable batteries and a battery charger, instead of buying new packages all the time.

If you have any leftover paint, check to see if a friend or relative has any use for it, before disposing of it. Unwanted old paint can be taken to special household hazardous waste depots for proper disposal.

If you have some furniture you no longer want, see if someone you know would like it, or try donating it to a charitable group for refurbishing, instead of throwing it out.

Make sure you save your glass jars and bottles, as well as those made out of plastic, for recycling. Old newspapers, metal cans and corrugated cardboard are also easy to prepare for recycling.

Most communities throughout the province have adopted blue box multi-material recycling programs. While many of these programs were initially geared to service single dwellings, many high-rise apartment and condominium dwellers can now participate as well.

To get an idea of exactly how much recyclable waste you're diverting from your local landfill, try weighing your blue box sometime

when it's full (weigh yourself while holding your blue box, then weigh yourself and subtract the difference) - it may not seem like a lot in small weekly or biweekly batches, but it does add up over the course of a year!

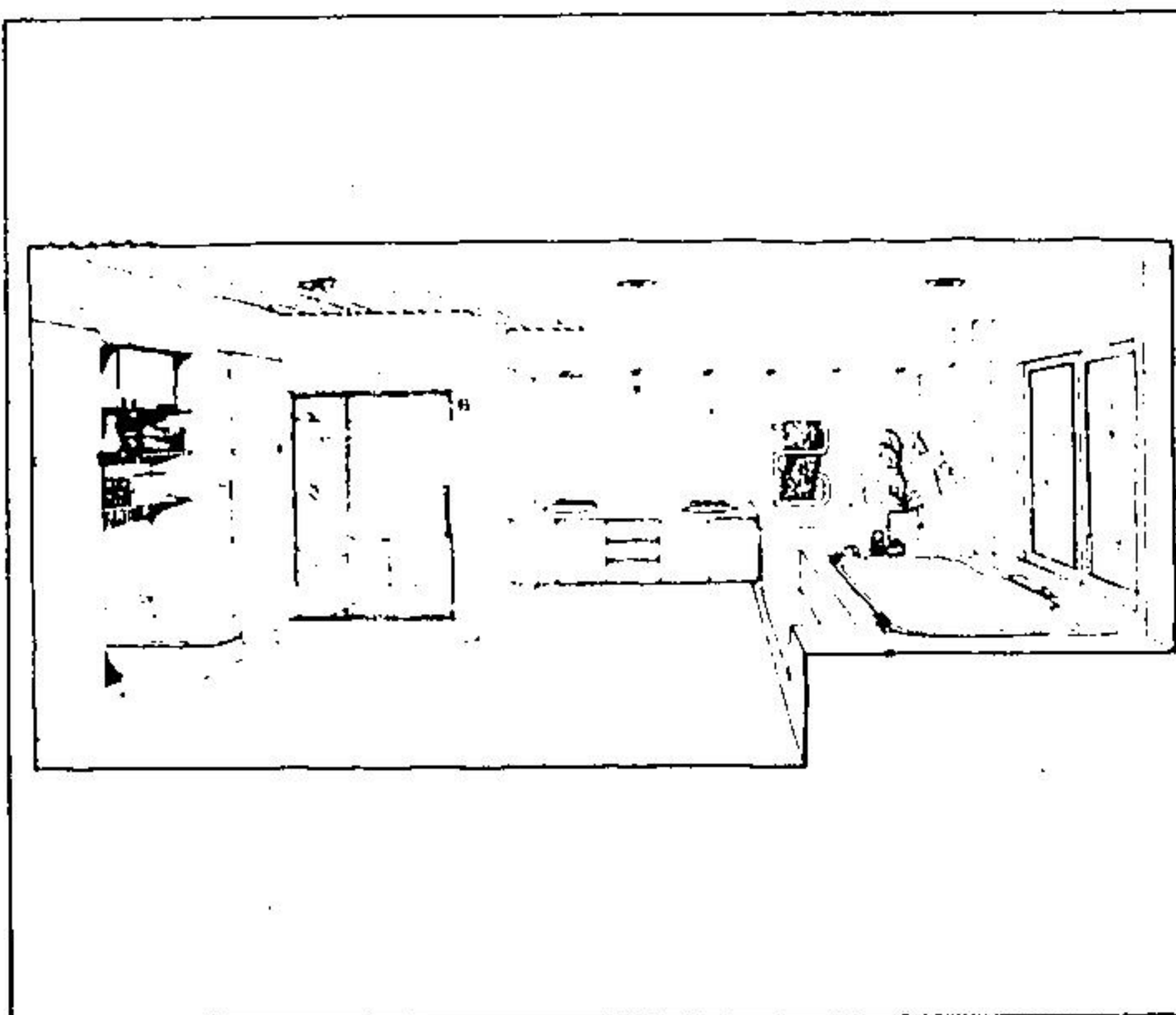
LEAVES, GRASS CLIPPING AND BRUSH

If your municipality has a special leaf or grass composting program, make sure you participate in it, because it's an excellent way to recycle organic material. Municipalities usually request that you put the leaves in clear plastic bags and pickups are usually made on on designated days.

You can also start your own compost pile, using leaves, clippings and other yard waste, along with kitchen scraps. Special compost containers can be hand-made or purchased at some hardware or gardening stores.

By composting, you'll make a significant dent in the amount of garbage - particularly food waste - that you discard every day. You'll also be gaining a nutrient-rich soil enhancer for your garden.

By adopting the three Rs philosophy into our homes and lifestyles, we can make sure we do our part to ensure a healthy environment for the future.



MINIMUM CLEARANCE DISTANCES must be observed in bathroom planning to ensure that the room is safe and functional.

HOME OF THE WEEK

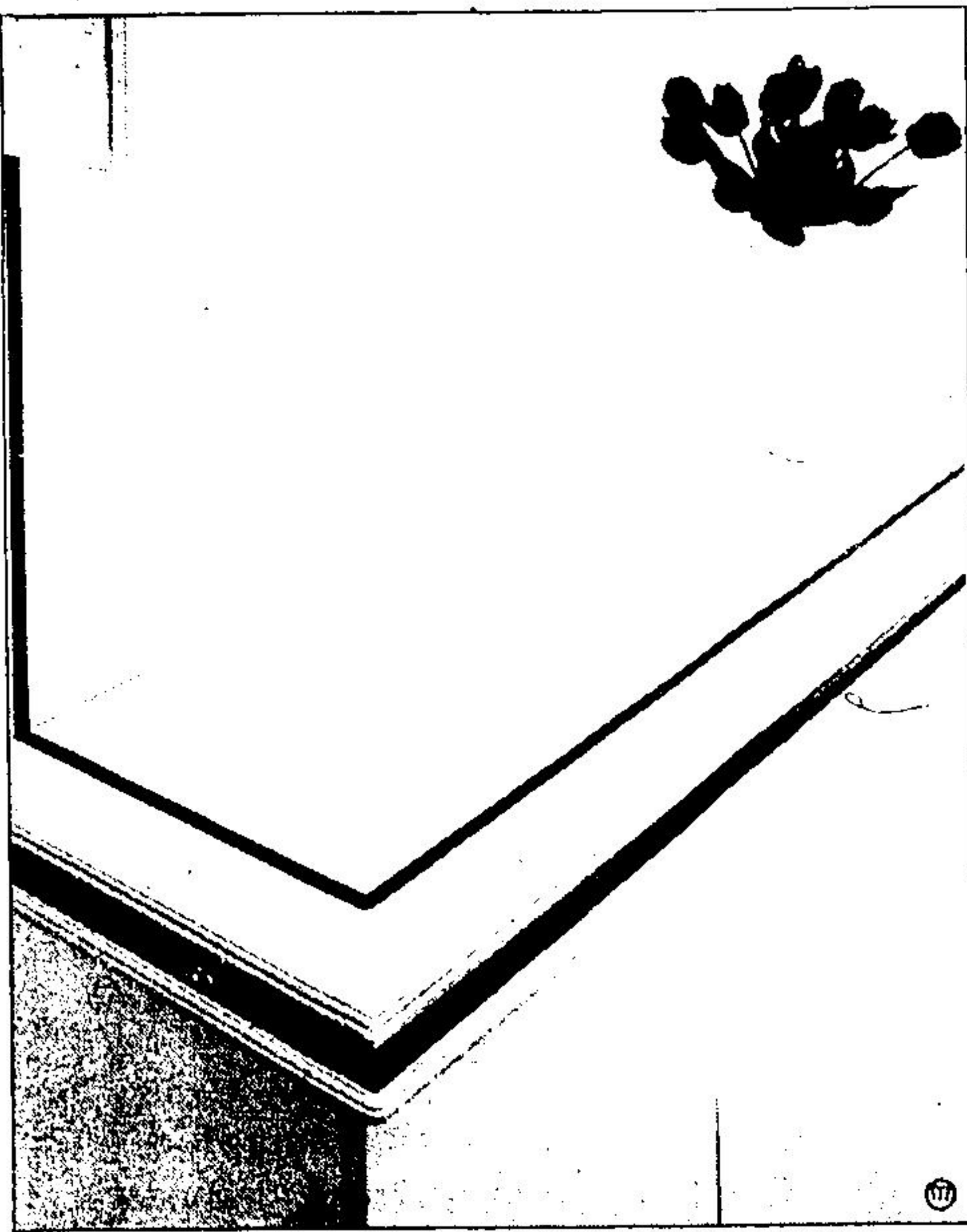
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