

S P R I N G  
  
**HOME & GARDEN**  
 G U I D E



**FLOWER POWER:** Six year old Ashley Dicarlo helped her grandmother pick out some of the great deals at the annual Acton Horticultural Society plant sale on Saturday. The sale was supposed to start at 8:30 a.m., however by 8 a.m., people were waiting for the group to "open the gates". - Angela Tyler photo

## Spring Deck Prep Tips

It's finally spring! Time to move out the patio furniture and get ready to enjoy the great outdoors. But, before you do, make sure you clean, restore and protect your deck so you can get the most out of it during the spring and summer months ahead. Here are some deck prep tips.

\* Clean the deck thoroughly to remove embedded dirt, fungus stains and gray surface wood with a formulated deck cleaner. The weathered gray wood left behind from last year's sun exposure, black or green stains from mildew, moss and algae, or brown-black tannin bleed common on new Cedar can ruin the look of your deck. Even newly built decks can require cleaning to remove invisible surface barriers like mill glaze on new Cedar or excess wax on pressure-treated wood. These invisible barriers can prevent the adhesion of protective coatings, including colored

stains and clear sealers.

\* Strip any deteriorating or unwanted finish. If the colored stain on your deck has seen better days — or if you want a different look — now is the time to strip your deck's finish.

\* Once the wood is restored and your deck is rid of any surface barriers or unwanted finishes, it should be sealed with a protective water repellent finish. You may want to apply a semi-transparent stain to enhance your deck's appeal, or a transparent finish to let the natural wood color and texture show through. But, even if you are undecided on whether or not to stain — or on the deck color — it's important, at minimum, to protect it with a clear water repellent. Water repellents stop spring showers from penetrating the wood surface, which can cause swelling, shrinking, warping and cracking. Many water repellents also contain

a mildewcide that will impede the growth of mildew on your deck during the warm months ahead. Look for products that offer a guarantee on water-repellent longevity, as they will provide longer lasting protection so you won't have to apply a new coat every year.

Preparing your deck for spring will protect your investment in it and enhance the enjoyment of your outdoor living space.



**MAGNOLIAS BLOOM:** This magnolia tree on Willow St. S. indicates Spring is here whether the weather cooperates or not. Gardeners are anxious for warmer weather so they can get in their garden.

## Dealing With Stains and Mildew

It's bound to happen — a leaky roof, a burst pipe, melting snow, excessive bathroom moisture — all leading to one of the most common household problems — water stains on walls or ceilings.

You might be tempted to cover a water stain by applying a fresh coat of paint. But, chances are, it won't work. Most water stains will bleed right through ordinary paints. They also can create an ideal environment for the growth of mold and mildew.

Here's some advice from the experts to help you deal with water stains and mildew on painted surfaces:

\* First, make sure the surface is sound. Identify and fix the source of the moisture or leak or you'll soon have another unsightly water stain.

\* Clean the surface thoroughly to remove dirt and the

*Continued on page 10*

**GARDEN CENTRE**  
 will be  
**OPEN**  
 on  
**Victoria Day**  
**Monday, May 20**  
**10am ~ 2pm**  
 (weather permitting)

**Great Selections of Hanging Baskets, Annuals, Perennials, Shrubs, Soils and Much More**

Main store will be closed subject to the restrictions under the Retail Business Holidays Act



**ACTON HOME HARDWARE**  
 362 Queen St. E. • 519-853-1730

**Deckman's** 905-632-1074  
**Professional Service**  
**ALL Decks Stripped & Refinished to NEW**  
 • Cedar specialists

We feature the world's highest quality stain sealers, which in addition to superb protection against damaging ultra-violet rays, have a unique microporous quality to allow wood to breathe and help moisture escape, inhibiting blistering and cracking.



*Discover*  
 ...one of the best selections  
 of plants and garden accessories  
 from the usual to the unusual

**TUITMAN'S GARDEN CENTRE**  
**(519) 853-2480** Hwy. #25, 1-1/2 mi. S. of Acton

