

Ensure a relaxing winter by doing fall maintenance on your new home

Ensure your winter is spent relaxing in worry-free comfort by taking the time to conduct any maintenance on your new home in the fall.

Proper maintenance will not only protect one of life's most substantial investments, but the warranty coverage you receive from the Ontario New Home Warranty Program (ONHWP) as well.

Start from the bottom up. Air out the basement and crawl spaces. This prevents mold and mildew from accumulating. Have the furnace and humidifier professionally serviced, and take special care to clean and eliminate all dust and dirt around the furnace, registers and condensing unit.

The chimney and venting system should also be checked to ensure they are both in safe operating condition. Where applicable, inspect and oil exhaust ventilation fans and heat recovery ventilators.

In the kitchen, your range hood filter should be scrubbed with soapy water to prevent grease buildup thus eliminating any potential fire hazards.

Windows and doors should be examined for drafts

and weatherstripping should be applied as needed. Exterior doors also need care to prevent shrinkage and warping due to exposure. As an added precaution, invest in storm doors to protect non-insulated entrance doors and improve heat conservation.

If the garden hose connection has a valve inside the house, it has to be shut off and drained from the inside to prevent freezing and bursting.

Other areas outside the home in need of your attention prior to winter include exterior wood finishes, paint and siding. Look for signs of moisture penetrating wood or blistering and peeling paint as this can lead to water seepage. Replace worn window caulking to prevent moisture and cold air from entering the house.

Clear eavestroughs, gutters and downspouts of any debris and ensure that drainage from the roof is unobstructed to prevent leakage into the interior. While on

the roof, check any vents, louvers and chimney caps for any birds' nests or animals that may be obstructing their openings.

Keep window wells free of leaves to allow water to drain properly toward the footing drainage system. Lot drainage systems are designed to direct water away from the house. Walk around your property and examine the driveway and walkways for cracks that, with water penetration and freezing, could lead to larger, more expensive problems.

Finally, fertilize your lawn or plant a new one. Autumn is the ideal time to do so. And don't forget to protect your shrubs and bushes against the cold with burlap.

For more information regarding your home's maintenance log on to ONHWP's Web site at www.newhome.on.ca.

- News Canada

Kitchen modeling is hot

Sprucing up the kitchen is one of the hottest trends of the new year. In fact a recent survey by Kitchen and Bath Business magazine shows that homeowners looking to remodel will most likely target the kitchen.

The kitchen is one of the least expensive and most rewarding remodeling projects. Even minor changes to a kitchen can pay dividends in the long run— return on remodeling investment for something as simple as a new faucet can average 114 per cent.

With faucet manufacturers offering an array of styles, functions and finishes, replacing a faucet and sink can revitalize a tired kitchen for a fraction of the cost of a major makeover and be completed in an afternoon.

The key for any faucet facelift is flexibility. Faucet manufacturers offer product lines for homeowners to choose spout design, handles and accents to create a unique look to complement the kitchen decor.

The following are some of the considerations before updating the kitchen:

New finishes for the kitchen

The best way to give the kitchen an update is to choose a faucet finish that is unique. Leading-edge technology has delivered a durable polished brass finish for faucets that is just as durable as chrome but more stylish. Other metallic finishes such as pearl nickel also have a virtually indestructible finish. With all of the rigors of kitchen life, it is very important to ensure a durable finish that won't tarnish, corrode or discolour.

Function, function, function

Today's faucets combine form and function with features such as pull-out spouts, multi-spray options and soap dispensers. However, basics are also important. A functional spout height will ensure that the faucet can handle all the important jobs. A nine inch arched spout can provide the reach required for most double-bowl sinks and ample clearance for filling large pots and buckets.

Another decision will be a single handle or a two-handle model. Again, the handle set-up is a personal choice and with so many options, homeowners can customize to suit their preferences.

Pull-out faucets are becoming more popular offering increased flexibility in the kitchen. A pull-out can allow for up to 38 inches of reach for getting to coffee makers and large pots and new models provide a powerful spray.

Vegetable sprayers are also becoming a necessity— not just a luxury. It is also a finishing touch that enhances the overall look and style of a kitchen as well as being a welcome kitchen helper. Some manufacturers now offer a vegetable sprayer in a matching finish to the kitchen faucet— a perfect accent to tie the kitchen look together.

A soap dispenser can also be an easy way to update your kitchen and keep the soap in convenient reach. Some tips for a soap dispenser: look for one that can be filled from above the counter— you don't want to keep filling from below the counter; look for a dispenser that says it has an internal liner— this will prevent the pump from becoming clogged.

With all the choices, homeowners can choose the style that suits their personality and budget.


For more information and ideas contact Delta Faucet at 1-800-345-DELTA (1-800-345-3358) or visit our Web site at www.deltafaucet.com


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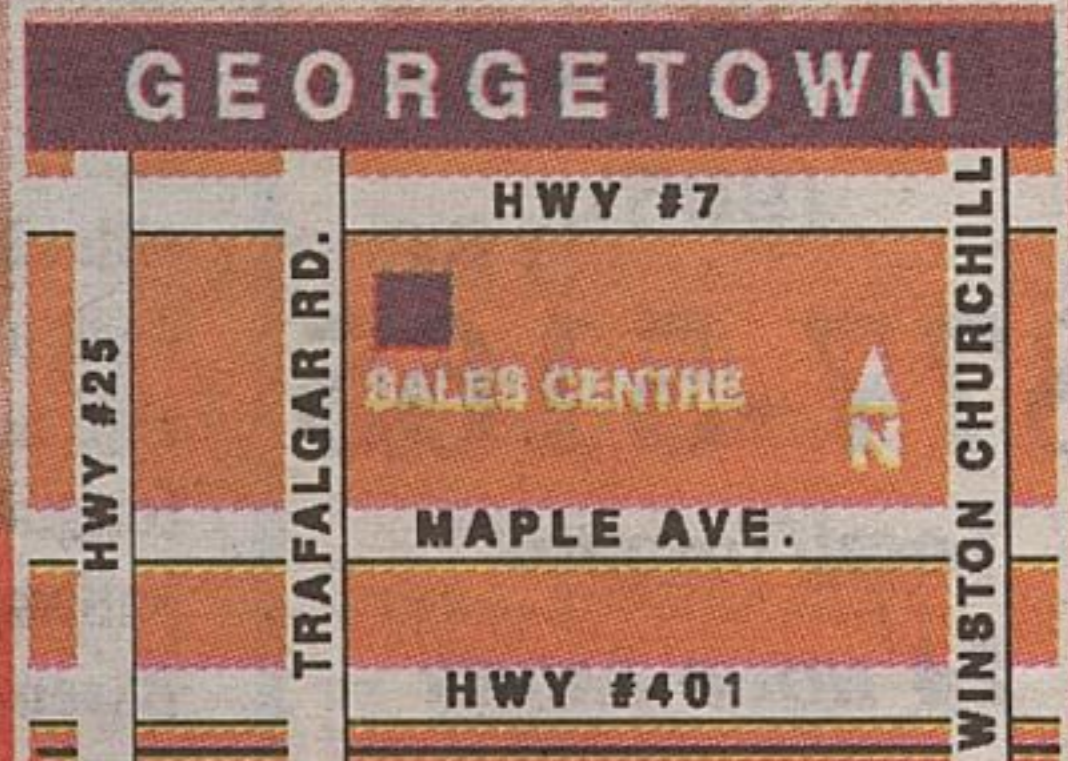
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