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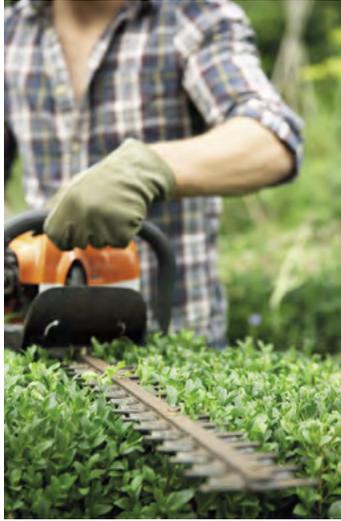
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WELCOME

Hello and welcome to the latest edition of the Garden Centre Magazine for Rouken Glen Garden Centre,

Inside this edition you can find a plentiful amount of information on what you can find in store, as well as a handy double page spread with monthly garden tips. With knowledgeable and friendly staff on hand in store to help with advice or inspiration, complimented by the huge variety of stock available, you will be sure to find what you need for your upcoming garden and/or home projects. This edition also includes many different informative editorials and alongside you will find local businesses whose services may just be what you are looking for.

We have also launched a digital copy of the magazine, available to view on your smart phone instantly. Please scan the QR code, featured at the bottom of this page, and this will bring up the publication for you to view. You can also access the digital magazine at touchpoints in the garden centre. One of the most exciting features of our digital publication is that you can interact with the garden centre's social media or connect with local business websites with just a quick tap on your device.

As always, we welcome feedback on our magazine, if you have any comments you'd like to add, we would love to hear them. Please email: info@yhgmedia.co.uk

Kind regards and happy reading!

Jessica Leech
Garden Centre Magazine
Magazine Editor

GARDEN CENTRE
MAGAZINE

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Annual **GARDEN** Tips

January

- Plant Garlic cloves in pots ready to transplant later
- Order seed potatoes
- Prepare ground for Asparagus
- Plant Fruit trees and canes
- Remove fallen leaves from the borders
- Cut down and compost the annuals
- Take hardwood cuttings of shrubs & fruit trees.

February

- Remove fallen leaves from the borders
- Take hardwood cuttings of shrubs & fruit trees
- Continue planting bare-root Roses
- Plant bare-root ornamental and fruit trees, soft fruit and hedging plants.
- Check the fruit stores for rotting fruit

March

- Finish any digging
- Force Rhubarb
- Sow early crops under cloches
- Warm soil using cloches
- Prune Apple trees and other hardy fruit trees
- Plant container grown trees and mulch well
- Dig in manure around the base of fruit trees
- Prepare Strawberry beds.

April

- Warm soil using cloches or polythene
- If not already done, prune autumn fruiting Raspberry canes to 6"
- Plant fruit trees, fruit canes and fruit bushes
- Prepare Strawberry beds
- Tidy up the lawn. Re-sow patches that look bare.

May

- Look out for late frosts
- Build hanging baskets
- Sow vegetables outside
- Tie up soft fruit cordons
- Sow Beans
- Fertilise Roses and Shrubs
- Treat wood with a stain
- Protect blossoms from frost with Fleece
- Water trees
- Start thinning Grapes as required
- Place straw around early Strawberries.



June

- Hoe weeds regularly
- Thin out seedlings
- Plant later season crops under glass
- Water salad crops regularly
- Feed crops with a liquid manure
- Pick peas to encourage more flowers
- Harvest early potatoes
- Cut back excessive growth
- Water soft fruit regularly
- Prepare netting for trees
- Check for parasites on trees
- Pest alert: Inspect fruit bushes & trees for pests and diseases.

July

July in the garden is a time to sit back and take a look at what you have achieved over the last year. Fruit and vegetables are ripening fast, and the plants are flowering like mad. Keep all salad crops well watered in hot weather.

August

- Grow & train vegetables, trim tomatoes, blanch celery, protect Cauliflowers, Harvest herbs, & dry excess for winter use
- Feed plants with a quick acting fertilizer to keep them in top condition
- Seeds to be sown: Spring Cabbage, Chicory, Winter Lettuce, Autumn Onion, Turnip
- Stake and tie plants
- Pinch out the tops of Chrysanthemums
- Water and feed sweet peas
- Take cuttings
- Re-pot potted plants if required
- Trim deciduous hedges.



Harvest Apples

September

- Sow now: Spring Cabbages, Turnips for green tops, Winter Lettuces, Spinach, Land Cress and baby salad leaves
- Harvest Apples, Pears, Plums and store Apples, wrapping them individually in newspaper
- Collect seeds & beans for sowing next year
- Pot up herbs to use in Winter in a cool light place
- Take hardwood cuttings from fruit bushes
- Dig up Strawberry runners and pot them up
- Plant new Strawberry beds
- Plant out Garlic in mild areas, or start Cloves in pots to transplant later
- Protect autumn Raspberries and Blackberries with netting to protect them from birds
- Lift and store onions and main crop Potatoes
- Clear crops once they've finished & fork over.

October

- Prune climbing Roses and fruit canes
- Mow lawns
- Plant Cabbages
- Order next years seeds
- Prepare asparagus beds for spring planting
- Cut back Asparagus foliage
- Dig over unused vegetable plots and apply manure
- Continue to lift Potatoes
- Plant later season crops under cover
- Remove Tomato leaves to expose unripe fruit
- Pick and store herbs, collect seeds where possible
- Water all crops where required.

November

- Plant Garlic cloves
- Plant early varieties of veg in the greenhouse
- Prune cane fruits when they have finished fruiting
- Take any hardwood cuttings from fruit bushes.

December

- Plant Garlic cloves in pots ready to transplant later
- Broad Beans should be planted away from wind
- Plant early varieties of veg in the greenhouse
- Take any hardwood cuttings from fruit bushes
- Prune Blackberry canes
- Plant soft fruit canes.



Raspberries



Potatoes



Plant Early Veg

Battery vs Petrol GARDEN TOOLS

When it comes to your garden, having the right tools is essential. Fortunately, there are a wide variety of tools available that will make your garden the envy of your neighbours while saving hours of hard graft. But which is best: battery or petrol? In this article, we'll explore the pros and cons of each to help you decide.

BATTERY POWERED GARDEN TOOLS

Petrol and corded garden tools have been a garden staple for many years. However, the development of cordless, battery powered garden tools means the game is changing and there are a number of benefits to using them. For example, they are often lightweight, quiet, more efficient and more environmentally friendly than petrol versions. What's more, you don't have to worry about fuel or negotiating trailing cables, making them safer and more comfortable to use.

That being said, there are also some drawbacks to battery powered garden tools. If you have a large garden, for example, you might not be able to get your jobs finished on a single charge. In addition, some battery powered tools aren't as powerful as petrol powered versions, so you might have to work a bit harder for a bit longer to get the job done!

PETROL POWERED GARDEN TOOLS

Petrol lawn mowers, hedge trimmers and leaf blowers have long been used to keep gardens neat and tidy. These types of tools are often more powerful than their electric counterparts and can be used for longer in many cases. This makes them a great choice for green fingered homeowners with large gardens or professional gardeners who are no strangers to big jobs involving long grass and thick branches.

On the other hand, petrol garden tools can be quite heavy and unwieldy thanks to their engines and fuel tanks, not to mention more complex to maintain due to all their moving parts. What's more, petrol tools aren't fantastic for the environment due to their emissions; they can also be louder and having to buy fuel for them will put an extra job on your already endless to do list!

If you're not sure which garden tools might be right for you and your outdoor space, hopefully this article will help you make a decision. Ultimately which type you choose will come down to how big your garden is, the job in hand and your personal preferences.



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HOW TO CHOOSE A GARDEN FENCE

Not only do garden fences keep you safe and your garden private, they can also be used to highlight and accentuate your landscape design to great effect. But where to start? In this article, we'll explore what you need to consider when choosing the best garden fence for your property.

WHAT'S YOUR STYLE?

First of all: how do you want your fence to look? This isn't just about aesthetics but security and privacy too. Luckily, there are many high-quality, contemporary and stylish garden fences to choose from.

Solid fence panels with no spaces between the slats are a first choice if you're looking for privacy, and they can also provide some noise reduction, too. Other options include slatted panels and trellises. Both of these can add a unique twist to your garden, allowing in more light and providing a structure for climbing plants. However they don't provide the same level of privacy or acoustic quality as their solid counterparts.

LOCATION, LOCATION, LOCATION

Location is everything when it comes to choosing a garden fence. For front gardens, shorter slatted fence panels look more welcoming than tall, solid panels. Alternatively, if your back garden is used by pets or young children, it is advisable to choose a strong, solid perimeter fence to ensure they stay safe and secure.

You should also take into account light and wind. If your fences have a history of blowing over at the slightest gale, a semi-solid panel might be a better choice than solid. Similarly, if you want to make the most of the sunshine in your garden, tall fences might not be the greatest choice!

STEEL vs CONCRETE vs WOOD POSTS

Choosing the right fence posts for your garden you should consider aesthetics, durability, cost and sustainability. Wooden fence posts most definitely look more natural than concrete, however there are new alternatives made of steel that look great and can be customised with colour matched capping rails, gravel boards and post caps.

When it comes to durability, concrete can last for around 20 years with minimal maintenance, treated timber between 10-15 years and galvanised steel posts up to 25 years!

There are a wide range of elements to consider when choosing the perfect garden fence. But, taking all of the above into account, you should have no problem finding the right fence to complement your garden and be enjoyed for many years to come.

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Waste Not Want Not: **RECYCLING** Made Easy

Waste is an inevitable part of our day to day lives. No matter how eco friendly we try to be, we still have things we need to throw away. While there's no getting away from waste, it is possible to responsibly dispose of it by recycling where we can. So, what can and can't you recycle? And how can you make sure you're doing the right thing with your rubbish?



FOOD WASTE

Shopping more efficiently, batch cooking and meal planning all help to reduce food waste. However, waste such as egg shells and banana skins will never be on the menu - we hope! Composting is a really easy and efficient way to turn food into material that will nourish and feed your garden all year around. That being said, many homes don't have the space or resources for a compost heap. If that is the case, your local recycling centre may have the capacity to take food waste and use it to create fertiliser or even electricity.

CLOTHING

If your wardrobe is more of a floordrobe, it may be time for a clearout. It goes without saying that high-quality items should be donated to charity, sold or gifted. No doubt there's someone out there that would love to get their hands on your unwanted clothing and shoes. However, if you discover a few moth eaten, unwearable pieces not suitable for donation, you can easily take them to be recycled.

ELECTRICAL ITEMS

We've all got a kitchen drawer full of old phones, batteries and abandoned chargers. It goes without saying that these items shouldn't end up in your waste bin, or worse, fly tipped. The best way to dispose of electrical items is to take them to a recycling centre. This is especially important for TVs and fridges, both of which contain harmful chemicals and gases. If you're unsure of how best to dispose of an electronic item, contact your local recycling centre, they will most certainly know what to do with it.

REDUCE. REUSE. RECYCLE

We all have our part to play in minimising our impact on the environment. From reducing waste and reusing what we can to recycling items we no longer need or can't use. Your local recycling centre is the best and most efficient way to dispose of almost any items in a responsible and environmentally friendly way. So, next time you're having a clear out, make sure you have a recycling pile and do your bit. Who knows what your old, unwanted items could become in the future?

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4 Ways To Care For Your **OLD TREE**

In a world becoming increasingly urbanised, trees are a powerful and necessary force of nature. Here we give you the low down on how to care for a beautiful well-established tree, so you can continue to enjoy the benefits and happy memories it brings for years to come.

Keep The Bark Protected

Like our own skin, the bark of a tree is vital to its health so it's important it remains intact. To do that, ensure lawnmowers and other power tools are kept well away to avoid accidental damage. A fantastic way to do this is to create a border around the base of the tree with mulch.

Water When Thirsty

Just like any other plant, trees need water to flourish and this is even more necessary in times of drought. During the growing season, should you experience a stretch of dry weather, it's important to take the time to water your tree. This should be done slowly, so grab a hose and lay it just beneath the branches. Then, turn it on to a very light trickle and leave it for around 20 minutes. Continue to do this at equal intervals until you've covered the full circumference of the tree to allow the roots to absorb what they need.

Keep Off The Roots

This may seem strange, as you would imagine tree roots are situated far beneath the surface. But if the soil around roots becomes too compacted it can inhibit the absorption of water. Footfall around the base of the tree can cause this to happen, so best to keep it to a minimum.

Consult With Professionals

Just like our own bodies, it may be easy to spot there's a problem with your tree but sometimes it can be much harder to tell. Older trees are more susceptible to disease or rot, so it's best to get it looked at by a qualified arborist and, if possible, pruned by a tree surgeon.



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INJURY PREVENTION DURING GARDENING

We all love to get out in the garden. Sometimes even bad weather can't hold us back.

This often involves hours of hard physical work in the garden: digging, pruning, trimming, raking, sweeping, cutting, pulling and much more.

How often do you think of gardening as exercise? If someone asked you to go and play tennis for a few hours would you firstly think about warming up a bit before hand? (I would hope so).

We often will head out into the garden without even thinking of the tasks we are about to undertake and the effect on our bodies. Gardening undoubtedly means you will be bending to reach the floor, sometimes for extended periods of time, sometimes crawling on your hands and knees, sometimes you will be reaching way above your head.

Gardening accounts for a significant number of visits to physiotherapists and doctors each year, some of which could be avoided. Here are some tips and hints to help prevent injury in your garden.

1: DON'T WORK TO EXHAUSTION

It sounds silly but generally we keep gardening until we are too tired to carry on, this is when injuries happen. Stop before that and enjoy a rest in your garden and come back to it later on.

2: TAKE REGULAR BREAKS IN A TASK

If you spend hours bent over in a bed weeding you may not notice how stiff you're getting until you straighten up again. Stop regularly and stand straight, you may also want to even arch backwards to counter the bending you have just done.

3: SET YOURSELF ACHIEVABLE GOALS AND DON'T EXCEED THEM

Targets are great when you can achieve them and frustrating when you can't. Make them achievable, then reassess after completion. If you have had a chance to see how your body is feeling then you can make a better decision whether you can set new goals and continue.

4: WORK WITHIN YOUR REACH

Don't stretch too far, move yourself into a better position. It will be slower but it will be less stressful for your body and less likely to cause injury. That applies when you're pulling up weeds and when you're up a ladder pruning!



5: LISTEN TO YOUR BODY

If you are starting to ache, you may not have injured yourself but your body has had enough. The likelihood is you will get more achey over the coming hours even if you stop now. Have a rest and do some stretches.

If however you have injured yourself seeing a physiotherapist can help to get you back into the garden quicker.

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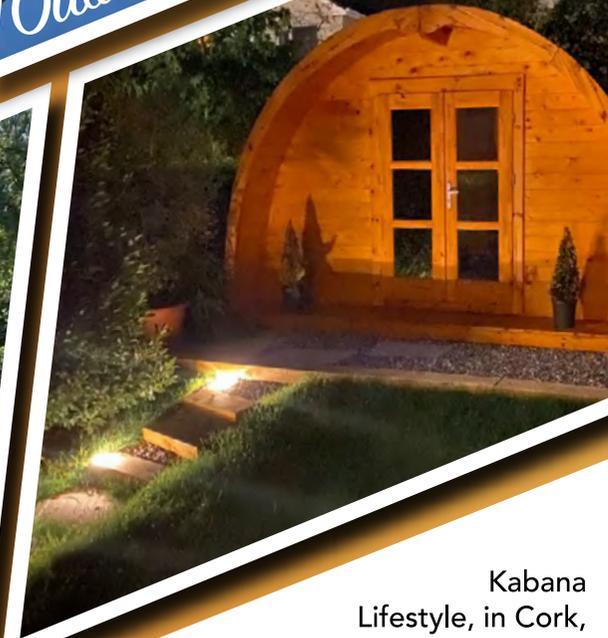
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HOME POOLS

Private pools are increasingly becoming a popular addition to homes in the UK. This is for a number of reasons. The weather overall is warming up, as is the preference to exercise at home. Combined with the affordability and ease of maintenance of improved pool materials such as fibreglass, this makes an attractive investment. Construction methods for private pools vary greatly. The main types of in-ground pools are concrete, vinyl liner and fibreglass.

TEMPORARY POOL

Above-ground pools are cheaper to build. Inexpensive temporary PVC pools can be bought in supermarkets and taken down after summer. They are used mostly outdoors in gardens, are typically shallow and often their sides are inflated with air to stay rigid or they have rigid side panels. When the season is finished the water and air can be let out and this type of pool can be folded up for convenient storage. They are regarded in the swimming pool industry as "splash" pools intended for cooling off and amusing toddlers and children, not for serious swimming.

PERMANENT POOLS

Fibreglass pools are now more popular than ever before. They offer a high quality pool at an affordable cost and minimum maintenance. Their design means that they are easy to install as a DIY project which can save thousands of pounds. Suitable for both indoor and outdoor use, they can be installed in a couple of

weeks with minimum disruption to their environment. To add to the enjoyment most fibreglass pools are run on a salt-waste cleansing system meaning that you can regulate the maintenance of the pool automatically and do not need to use chlorine. The pool is pleasant to use, slightly salty (but less salty than a tear drop!) and the waste is sanitized by passing through a specially made filter in the plant room, needed only a top up of salt to keep it in the useable condition all year round.

EXERCISE POOLS

In the last two decades a new type of pool has gained popularity. These consist of a small vessel (usually about 2.5 x 5m) in which the swimmer swims in place, either against the push or an artificially generated water current or against the pull of a restraining device.



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A Guide To Choosing GATES & RAILINGS

Gates and railings aren't just a security measure for your home, they play a big part in how it looks too. Therefore, picking the right type for your home is crucial for adding value and maintaining your desired aesthetic. After all, potential buyers and guests will make quick judgements on a building from the moment they pull up. And you never get a second chance to make a first impression.

LOCATION, LOCATION, LOCATION

Before you dive in, consider the type of gate you are looking for and where you want it to be. Most gates and railings are installed to block entry to a building, driveway or small passage, and there are different types and specifications available for each location. For example, garden gates aren't just a way to secure your property, but serve as an attractive landscaping element, too. Alternatively, driveway gates are the first glimpse of your home a visitor will have and should complement the surrounding fences, railings, walls or pillars on which they are attached.

WOOD OR METAL?

Another key factor in choosing gates and railings is to decide which material you'd like to use. Metal or wood? In order to make the right decision, it's important to consider their main purpose, the location and your budget.

Metal gates and railings have many benefits. They are stronger and most definitely look the part, especially when used around older properties.

Metal can also be easily fashioned into ornate patterns for a striking finish. Wood, on the other hand, tends to blend in more easily with existing fences and gates, and the nature of the material (such as the knots and the grain) means no two gates, or fences, look the same. Each will have its own unique finish.

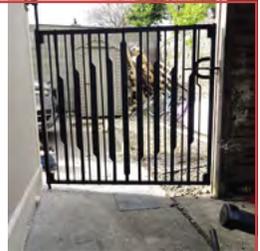
AUTOMATIC OR MANUAL?

As well as aesthetics, ease of use is also important for gates especially. If you plan to install gates in your driveway, consider whether you'd like them to be automatic or manual. Both wooden and electronic gates that open using a fob or access code are more secure and can be remotely controlled.

Whether wood or metal, automatic or manual, garden gates and railings are attractive, functional additions to any home. The hardest part isn't choosing whether you should have them or not, it's more likely to be which style, size and variety you go for!



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As choosing new windows and doors is something most of us only do once or twice in a lifetime, Senator puts a particular emphasis on support and expertise to guide you on this journey. Declan Twomey, Senator's Dealer Principal in Cork says "Customers have a lot of choice, so it's important to ensure people understand what sets Senator Windows apart. I became a Senator Dealer in 2015, after a decade in the business. For me, customer service is at the heart of everything, which means listening as well as advising. We have a team of eight, all dedicated and professional, all as proud to be part of the Senator family as I am.

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Why Work With An **ARCHITECT** For Your Construction Project

Architects are highly skilled and professionally trained individuals whose job it is to turn your building aspirations into reality. Regardless of the scale or scope of a project, they will guide you through the design, planning and construction process. In short, making life much easier for you! In this article, we'll look at several reasons why you should consider commissioning an architect for your building project.

BESPOKE, PROFESSIONAL SERVICES

Consulting a professional is essential for any kind of building project. And architects don't just produce a set of drawings for you to work from. Instead, they bring their training and experience in design and construction to the table, not to mention the imagination and creativity to bring your vision to life in line with your individual needs.

EFFICIENCY & VALUE FOR MONEY

Experienced architects have an eye for detail and therefore are able to add value to your project through the most efficient use of space, and careful selection of materials and finishes. What's more, through their knowledge and experience in past projects they will be able to take into account factors such as environmental sensitivity, energy efficiency, and maintenance costs to bring extra benefits to your project and those all-important long term savings.

PEACE OF MIND

There are lots of elements that come with a building project including planning permission and building regulations. An experienced architect can support you through these processes and monitor the

builder's programme of works through to completion. On top of this, architects by law must be properly qualified, insured and registered with the ARB (Architects Registration Board), giving you much-needed peace of mind through what can be a complex and sometimes stressful process.

CREATIVITY & IMAGINATION

Whatever your style or preference, be it traditional, modern, bold or minimalist, an architect can take your vision and elevate it to its highest point. Not only do architects offer you their expertise and knowledge, but also flair, imagination and style that can lift your project out of the ordinary and into the extraordinary.

KNOWLEDGE & EXPERIENCE

A building project, be it big or small, can be daunting. When you select a chartered, fully qualified architect, you are appointing someone who has undertaken many years of professional training. It is unlikely you will find someone with the same skill set, or experience, who isn't an architect, and they certainly won't have comparable skills or knowledge to support your vision.



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Welcome to Issue 4 of our Garden Centre Magazine. We are excited to introduce some new ranges of wooden garden furniture and stone water features to our garden centre this year. We have also expanded our range of rattan garden furniture, and we have some stunning new BBQs and BBQ accessories available for the upcoming summer & autumn barbequing season. So do come along to our showroom to discover how you can make the most of your outdoor living this year.

As always, we aim to stock the highest quality plants at all times. Our horticulturalists Jody and Paul are on hand to answer all your questions about choosing and planting the best plants for your garden. We have some stunning new specimen plants from Italy including large olive trees, cupresses and laurel which are really evocative of long, hot summer days. And as always, we have fabulous, fresh colourful bedding, perennials and edibles from many local and national suppliers.

We love to provide a wide selection of beautiful houseplants here at Botanic Home & Garden centre also, and our ranges are changing all the time, so keep popping in to select a variety of species for all different rooms in your home.

As always, a Botanic Home & Garden Centre voucher makes a great gift, so if you cannot choose between some of our gorgeous indoor pots or decorative items, our stone garden features, or top-quality gardening tools and accessories for that special occasion, why not buy a gift voucher and let them choose themselves!

We are open from 9-6 on Mon-Fri, and from 10-6 on Sundays and Bank Holidays.

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What to Plant, Where?



We here at Botanic Home & Garden Centre are always being asked about the best plants for particular conditions – such as those for shade or full sun and so on. We've decided to create this handy guide so you know what to embrace and, therefore, what to avoid for all parts of your garden. Not all areas of your garden will be in seemingly perfect part-sun, part-shade, with well-drained fertile soil along with nice shelter and a lovely aspect. But neither do all plants like or indeed thrive in such conditions. So, all of your garden will be stunning if you make the most of differing planting conditions as opportunities to plant a really superb and wide variety of plants.



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FULL SUN

These are areas which get at least 6 hours of direct sunlight, with most of this occurring in the afternoon when the sun exposure is stronger.

Embrace: sedum, salvia, geraniums, lavender, dahlia, achillea, sunflowers, succulents, along with most vegetables.

Consider: Adding some shade in the form of hedging, hard landscaping, stone features or fencing.



PARTIAL SUN/SHADE

These areas get sunshine, but most of this will occur in the morning when the sun exposure is not so strong

Embrace: A lot of flowering plants love partial sun/shade – think campanula, delphiniums, rhododendrons, hellebores.

Consider: Cutting back overgrown shrubs and pruning trees to bring more light to the area.



FULL SHADE

These are areas which do get some sunshine, but even a couple of hours of dappled morning sun will suffice. You can plant under trees or in the shade of walls/buildings. Plants suiting these areas usually make good houseplants. Full shade plants tend to be low maintenance.

Embrace: Ferns, hellebores, euphorbia.

Consider: Cutting back overgrown shrubs and pruning trees to bring more light to the area.





WINDY

These areas are high up, or face the prevailing wind, or are generally exposed areas of the garden.

Embrace: Phormium and cordyline, grasses, geranium, low-lying plants like heathers and rockery plants.

Avoid: Acers and delicate fruit trees, both of which can have their delicate new spring leaves and early blossoms knocked or burnt by the wind.

Consider: Adding wind-breaks in the form of hardy hedging, walls, fencing to protect some areas.

VERY WET

Very wet clay soil or waterlogged soil.

Embrace: hydrangeas, astilbes, primulas, irises, hostas, day lillies.

Consider: Aerating the soil, adding sand, or adding a pond to more permanently water-logged soil



VERY DRY

These areas can be very stony or sandy, or simply in full-sun positions.

Embrace: Lavender, sedums, rockery plants (and no, this is not the place for your prize tomatoes either).

Consider: Mulching the ground to add more organic matter to help retain moisture.

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ACIDIC SOIL

These are areas with low pH soil, usually found where there is a lot of organic matter break-down, such as wooded areas. You can buy a pH kit from the garden centre to check the pH of the soil in different areas of your garden.

Embrace: Magnolias, azaleas, camelias, blueberries, rhododendrons.

Consider: adding lime if you want to make the soil less acidic.



ALKALINE SOIL

These are areas with high pH, usually found in limestone areas. You can buy a pH kit from the garden centre to check the pH of the soil in different areas of your garden.

Embrace: Lilly of the valley, lavender, honeysuckle.

Consider: Adding ericaceous compost if you want to make the soil less alkaline.

POOR SOIL

These are areas including bits of prior wasteland, areas of the garden where builders rubble might have been placed, or generally previously unloved unkempt areas around yards etc.

Embrace: Buddleja, some hardy climbing old-fashioned roses, ivys and some grasses.

Avoid: hybrid roses, hydrangeas.

Consider: Digging in composts and fertilisers to help improve the quality of the soil.



COASTAL AREAS

These have a combination of being exposed to strong winds, can have heavy rainfall in addition to strong sun exposure, and also have salt to factor in to the equation.

Embrace: Phormium and cordyline, buddleja, crocosmia, pittosporum.



THE KIDS HAVE PLACED A GOALPOST IN THE GARDEN:

Embrace: If you're feeling vindictive – a spikey plant (only joking!), otherwise plant soft feathery grasses, and perennials such as wallflowers which will bend and not break.

Avoid: lillies, anything that needs to be staked, your prize tomatoes...



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You are more than welcome to visit our showroom here at Botanic Home & Garden Centre and view a sample of our extensive range.

Our contact details are also below if you would like to arrange an appointment or a survey.



We look forward to catching up soon!

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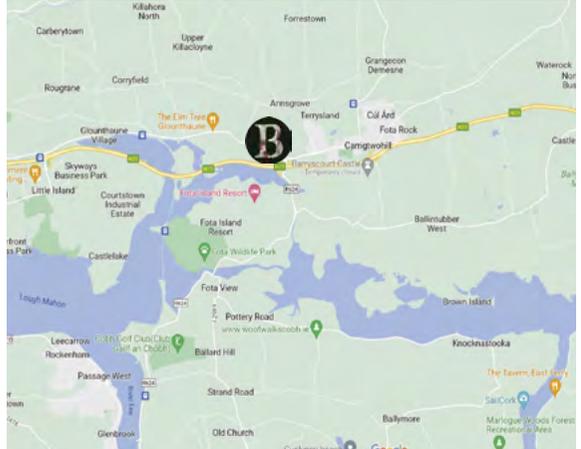
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FIREPLACES & STOVES

Wood-Burning Stove or Open Fire?

A fireplace isn't just about keeping your house warm. They're visually stunning and a feast for the senses. But where to start when it comes to choosing what's right for your home? Here we take a look at the pros and cons of the two big contenders: wood burning stoves and open fires to help you decide.

Open Fires

A roaring open fire lends splendour to a room. From feeling the raw heat against your skin to the smell of burning logs permeating your house, there's a certain draw that for many cannot be resisted.

Not only that, but the mantelpiece around an open fire can act as a stunning focal point to your room. Perfect for those who shun the television and prefer to snuggle up with a good book, seating can be arranged around an open fire to create a convivial mood that's best enjoyed with good friends and a glass of something delicious.

When it comes to creating an ambience that can be enjoyed all year around, an open fire is hard to beat.

Wood-Burners

When it comes to keeping your house warm, wood-burners are most definitely the front runners in this race. Many makes and models are highly efficient, with the ability to regulate the heat they provide and, crucially, how fast fuel is burned.

Not only that, but with regular upkeep and maintenance, a wood-burner can be left to its own devices without supervision, unlike an open fire. This is particularly good for busy families with young children, and those with busy lives who may find it taxing to maintain the upkeep of an open fire which may sometimes prove a bit messy.

Finally, if you're after more of a relaxed feel within your house, a wood-burner can be fitted within a corner in a family room and even a kitchen. So, you can enjoy the atmosphere of an open fire in a smaller, more contained setting.



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Safe as Houses: How **HOME SECURITY** Can Bring You Peace Of Mind

Developments in home security means that there's now more choice than ever when it comes to protecting our homes. But unpicking the finer details and finding an alarm system for your property isn't always a walk in the park. To help you, we've given you a rundown of current equipment and features available and how they can be used to keep you, your family and belongings safe.

BURGLAR ALARMS

In a perfect world, secure locks on windows and doors would be sufficient in securing your home. But that unfortunately isn't the case. According to London's Metropolitan Police, you're less likely to become a victim of burglary if you have a well-fitted and well-maintained burglar alarm system.

There are different types of burglar alarms available. One of the most common is a 'bells-only' alarm which, when triggered, will make a loud noise with the aim of scaring off intruders and alerting you or your neighbours to the intrusion. Advancements in technology means there are also landline home security systems and wireless home security systems that will notify you, or the police, when the alarm goes off. These are generally more expensive but will give you more peace of mind when you are away from home.

DOORBELL AND FLOODLIGHT CAMERAS

An increasingly popular choice in home security, doorbell and floodlight cameras will record anyone who stops by your front door or onto your driveway / garden. Some variations will also allow you to speak to the person remotely, whether you're at home or not. Much like CCTV, they can provide valuable video footage should someone break into your home, as well as act as a visual deterrent.

SMART HOME INTEGRATION

Smart home security systems go one step further in protecting your property. Often, these systems combine the latest security with home automation technology, allowing you to remotely connect with your home and stay in control through your smartphone, tablet or laptop. With many of these security systems, you can also subscribe to professional monitoring services which will alert both you and the relevant authorities if and when a threat to your home is detected.

Feeling safe while at home, or knowing your property is protected when you are away, is hugely important for all of us. And with the right security system in place, you can feel totally secure and safe in the knowledge that your belongings are protected and your home secure.



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We're friendly and accommodating and always available for your questions and concerns. Feel free get in touch.



Conor Spillane - Director
MIPAV TRV MMCEPI



Con Spillane - Director
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INTERIOR DESIGN Trends To Steal This Year

If you're looking to reinvent and refresh your home, we've got you covered. In this article, we're taking a deep dive on the biggest interior trends to steal for your home. So grab a cup of tea, load up your Pinterest boards and let's get started!

MORE IS MORE

Free spirits rejoice! The maximalist look is in and we are living for it. Think mixing contrast patterns across a scheme, harmonising with different scales of print and using one or two common tones to pull those brave patterns together. While maximalist interior decor may feel haphazard, there is method to the madness and balance is key. If you're looking to jump on this trend, consider your overarching colour schemes and plump for patterns that feed into it. Then, make it your own with both large and small scale decorative details.

CHERISH YOUR CURVES

For neutral spaces where you want to unwind and relax, consider creating a carefully curated display of shapely figures and organic forms. Sofas and chairs with curved backrests are really effective for this, especially when paired with the softness of abstract ceramics that draw the eye without being imposing. A mix of natural textures also works really well with this trend, such as wooden vases and tables contrasting with fluffy throws and rugs.

GO COTTAGECORE

If you love modern home comforts but still want to inject some character into your living space, Cottagecore is the only way to go. This trend is all about nostalgia and comfort, but also offers room for touches of glamour to create a luxe traditional style. To create cottagecore in your home mix Cath Kidston style patterns like gingham and checks with quirky vintage prints and motifs. Don't be afraid to add in elegant vintage style barware or statement gold accessories either for a touch of sophistication!

Whether you're a maximalist, minimalist or somewhere in between, the key to styling the interior of your home is to be true to yourself. After all, your home should be a reflection of your style while remaining comfortable and practical for everyday living. Remember: interior design trends come and go with the seasons. In the end, the fixtures, furnishings and decor that make you feel most at home are the right choice for you, no matter what the magazines say. Happy decorating!

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Is It Time To **REINVENT YOUR KITCHEN?**

Our kitchens aren't just places to cook and eat. For many homes, they're hives of activity. At parties, it's often the most popular room for family and friends to catch up, while day to day they also double up as offices, meeting rooms, study spaces and much more.

If you're considering a kitchen makeover, there are countless good reasons to jump in with both feet. Here are just a few to get you started.



UPDATE YOUR LAYOUT

While kitchens are one of the most productive rooms in the house, they're not always designed that way. If you find yourself wishing for extra storage space for your culinary gadgets or a more logical layout, a makeover is a fantastic choice. When you invest in a new kitchen, you take control of the design and have the chance to plan out a better layout.

What's more, a facelift in your kitchen can freshen up those problem areas, like peeling lino floors and scratched countertops to breathe new life into your home.

MAKE SPACE FOR YOUR FAMILY

Growing families need more space - but don't necessarily want the stress and upheaval of moving house. That's where a new kitchen comes in! If you need more space for seating, countertops, appliances, food storage, or even wine bottles, a kitchen remodel can help you maximise your space for chaotic family dinners and relaxed grown-up dinner parties alike.

OWN YOUR STYLE

A new kitchen also presents the opportunity to put your own stamp on the space. Perhaps you've just moved in and the previous home-owners taste in oak cabinets just aren't your style. Or maybe you've grown out of your last kitchen makeover and fancy a change up. Whatever the case, you deserve to live in a house that feels like home and fits your aesthetics. A kitchen overhaul can help you do that to stunning effect!

ADD VALUE

People on the hunt for a new home are often looking for properties with updated kitchens. If you're considering selling your home in the near future, a new kitchen can see up to 90% of your investment added to your home value on completion. What's more, it's likely that your property will sell much quicker as buyers will pretty much always plump for a newly renovated home over one that needs a little more TLC.



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How To Choose The Right UPHOLSTERY FABRIC

Choosing the right variety of upholstery fabric is tricky, especially with so many patterns, materials, and colours to choose from. Whether you're refreshing an old armchair or picking out a brand new piece of furniture for your home, we've put together our top tips for choosing the right upholstery fabric.

THE MARTINDALE RUB TEST

The Martindale Rub Test ratings are a good indication as to how hard wearing certain upholstery fabric is. There are 6 different scales of use: decorative, light domestic, general domestic, heavy duty, general commercial use, and commercial grade. 15,000 plus (general domestic) is great for dining chairs, headboards and occasional furniture. For anything else, particularly high traffic areas or furniture that will get a lot of use by children or pets in particular, choose 30,000 upwards (heavy duty).

FIRE SAFETY

All upholstery fabrics, regardless of whether they are for domestic or contract use, must comply with current fire safety regulations. Therefore, it's important to ensure that your upholstery fabric is fire retardant. If not, it needs to be treated with a fire retardant coating, or used with a fire retardant liner. If you are working with a professional upholsterer, they will be the best placed to advise you on which option is best for your furniture.

FABRIC TYPE

Once the practicalities of durability and fire safety are out of the way, it's time to think of fabric types. And there are lots of different colours and patterns to choose from. For larger furniture, like a sofa, neutral or pattern-less fabric is recommended. While other decor like rugs and cushions can be changed out easily, your sofa will stick around for a while. If you love bright pops of colour and bold prints, consider using them for a small chair, or maybe a stool, for a real statement piece.

Aside from colour and print, the type of material you choose is also important. Hard wearing fabrics such as polypropylene fabric is easy to clean and resistant to light fading.

MAKE YOUR CHOICE

The right upholstery fabric for your project will depend on a wide range of fabrics. But ultimately, it comes down to your personal taste, home decor and preferences. If you're looking to find suitable upholstery fabrics, there are plenty of services and upholsterers who would be thrilled to advise you on making the right choice. Happy shopping!



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Is It Time You Got A **NEW CARPET?**

There are few things better than a fresh, new carpet. Not only do they look great, they're also fantastic at keeping your home warm throughout the year. But it can be a challenge to know whether your current pile is in need of a refresh or if a total overhaul is needed.

So, to help you out, we've put together three signs to look out for that may mean you're overdue new carpets in your home.

You're Suffering with Stubborn Stains

There are lots of stains that can be easily removed, either with carpet cleaning products or a professional machine. That being said, ingrained, stubborn stains may only fade and not disappear – and that can very quickly become a problem.

Rather than buying a multitude of rugs or rearranging furniture to cover stains, it's probably more cost-effective to consider a replacement carpet.

You're Experiencing a Growing Problem

Well-used carpets come in to contact with all sorts over the years, especially with kids and pets. While cleaning can remove some bacteria, it is possible that a build-up can lead to mould. Mould impacts the smell, appearance and safety of your carpet. In short, it's a bit of a nightmare.

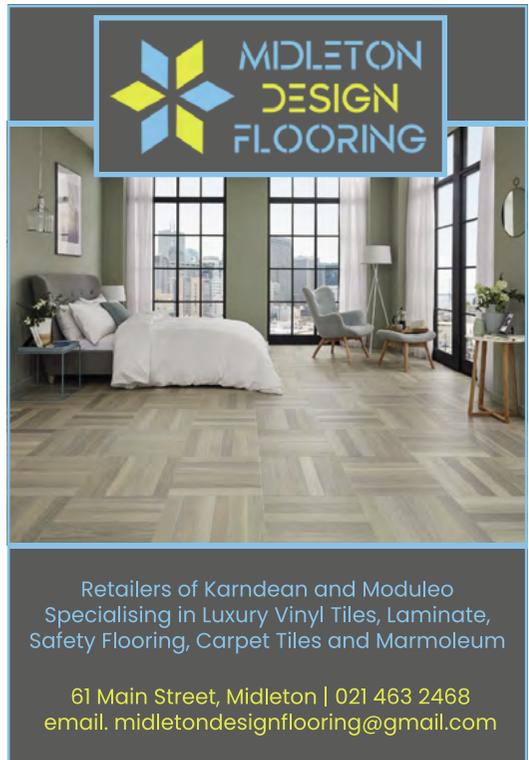
Lookout for damp or musty smells in your home – this is a classic sign of mould. If this is the case, cleaning will only go so far in solving the problem. The only way to really overcome the issue is to have clean, new carpets laid.

Your Carpet Is Threadbare or Matted

Areas of high traffic and the most frequented rooms in your home will be most prone to this problem. Matting happens most commonly in polyester carpets that have been frequently trodden on.

Once this has happened, there isn't much you can do. But a new carpet can breathe new life into your home and solve the problem with ease.

Depending on the quality of your carpet, they tend to last between 5-10 years. As a rule of thumb, if you find yourself on the higher side of this estimate, it's probably time to hit refresh!



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STAYING INDEPENDENT WITH MOBILITY AIDS

There are a number of reasons why you may need to make adaptations to your home and lifestyle in order to move around and live independently. Whatever the circumstances, there are a variety of products available to support you and your family to achieve this, which we'll explore in this article.

OUTDOOR RAMPS

Whether you use a wheelchair, mobility scooter, or other type of walking aid, getting in and out of your home can be tricky without the right aids in place. Installing an outdoor ramp makes this task much easier and less stressful. When chosen and installed correctly, these simple additions to your home will eliminate the risk of injury posed by navigating stairs and make it easier to leave the house independently as and when you need to.

STAIRLIFTS

Stairs can become too difficult to navigate due to limited mobility, weakened muscles or lack of stability. One solution to this is to downsize to a single-level home, however that's not always an attractive solution for everyone. Fortunately, a stair lift provides a quick, cost-effective alternative that enables individuals with mobility issues to use the stairs safely and comfortably at home, restoring independence without the need for drastic action such as moving house.

ADJUSTABLE BEDS

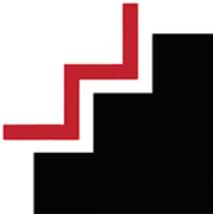
Nothing beats a good night's sleep, especially if you have a long-term health condition or disability. An

adjustable bed can significantly improve quality of life and well-being by providing a solid foundation for a comfortable sleeping position that promotes better circulation, relief from joint pain and improved independence by making getting in and out of bed easier and safer.

WALKING AIDS

If you or someone you know finds it difficult to walk or get around, a walking aid can help make it easier and more enjoyable. There are a number of different walking aids to choose from, many of which will provide confidence and make walking less painful including walking sticks, walking frames (like Zimmer frames or rollators), wheelchairs, and mobility scooters.

Simple adaptations, like those above, can provide a cost-effective solution that allows either yourself or a loved one to continue living in the comfort of your home despite mobility problems. These changes can be greatly beneficial to accessibility and independence in day-to-day living, and with lots of different options available you can be sure of finding an aid or home adaptation that suits your needs and circumstances no matter what.



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How To Prepare For Your NCT

The National Car Test is a compulsory vehicle inspection that all cars must undergo at least every 2 years. Avoiding it or delaying it is simply not an option, as you could be issued with penalty points and a fine. If your NCT is due, we've put together some of our top tips to help you prepare.

SCRUB UP WELL

We've all been guilty of letting our cars become a bit of a dumping ground. For this reason, you should start by giving it a good clean, inside and out. Particular areas to focus on are your mirrors, windows, lights, registration plates and the underbody of the car. All of these are areas which will be examined but take care to go the whole hog to make it easy for the test inspector to do their job.

TOP UP FLUIDS

Before your test, check the engine coolant, brake fluid, engine oil, windscreen wash and power steering fluid. If you're running low on any of these, be sure to top them up well in advance. The last thing you want is to fail the inspection over something that is so easily rectified in the first place!

CHECK YOUR LIGHTS

A blown bulb is an instant fail in the NCT, so this is one not to be missed. Take some time to check all of your indicator bulbs, front and rear parking lights, rear number plate lights, headlights, fog lights and brake lights. You might need to enlist the help of a family member or friend to make sure you don't miss anything.

INSPECT THE TYRES

All of the tyres on your car must be the right kind and size for your vehicle, properly inflated, free from defects and have a tread depth of at least 1.6mm. Substandard tyres increase the risk of blow outs and aquaplaning, both of which can be very dangerous. What's more, you could be fined or given penalty points.

Think Ahead

The above tips don't cover everything you should check before your NCT, but it's a good start. The key is to be prepared. Don't start checking on the day of your inspection, it won't give you enough time to fix the problems. Give yourself plenty of times to assess what needs to be done and get everything ticked off as soon as possible beforehand!



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Your Quick Guide to Car **DAMAGE REPAIR**

Have you ever returned from the supermarket to discover your car has been hit or scratched? Or maybe you've experienced a prang that has caused a dent in your bumper? These kinds of incidents are all too common for drivers, and though we might all know the stories it doesn't make it any easier when it actually happens!

Often, scratches and bumps are unavoidable. And if they do happen, the only next step is to assess the damage and take steps to repair it. So, we've put together a handy car damage repair guide to help you decide what needs to be done.

QUICK FIXES: DIY OR DI-DON'T?

Your car will have been sprayed with three layers of paint to get it looking as glossy and shiny as it does today. These are called: the clear coat, base coat and primer. When assessing the depth of a scratch it is important to keep this in mind.

That being said, it isn't easy to identify the depth of a scratch, or really know how to remove it yourself. While there are some DIY treatments on the market, these can do more harm than good when used incorrectly - so best to leave it to the professionals. You may also be tempted to try and knock out dents to panels or your bumper yourself, but beware that this could end in disaster if you aren't knowledgeable about what you're doing!

PROFESSIONAL SCRATCH REMOVAL & REPAIRS:

For scratches that go deeper than the clear coat and base coat and any sort of dent, more specialist action needs to be taken. We highly recommend that you take your vehicle to a garage and have it assessed by a professional as soon as possible to avoid long term problems such as rust. And when it comes to bumps you have no way of knowing what damage may have been done to internal components.

While it may seem like a good idea to try and repair problems yourself, if you are unsure of the depth or severity, self-removal can cause more extensive damage in the long run. When it comes to problems with your bodywork, the old saying rings true: It's better to be safe than sorry!



Start Your Engines:

OUR TOP TIPS FOR BUYING A NEW CAR

Getting a new car isn't like nipping to the supermarket to do the weekly shop. It takes a bit of thought and thorough research to ensure you're making the right decision. Here are our top tips for getting it right.



MAKE A LIST

Whilst many makes and models may be tempting, if they don't meet our needs then they're not going to do the job properly.

That's why you should take some time to think about your requirements before you start to shop around. What do you use your car for? Who uses it? What are your preferences? Once you know all of these things you can start to make a shortlist.

DO YOUR RESEARCH

Once you've drawn up an idea of what kind of car you need, start to research suitable models. Read reviews, check out the specifications and available add ons, price ranges, and fuel types.

Armed with this information you'll be ready to hit the showrooms with a firm idea of what you're looking for.

GO FOR A SPIN

When you've found a few makes and models, arrange to go and see the car. If you're buying second hand, you're going to want to physically see and inspect the car to check for damage or faults.

Taking it for a test drive lets you see how it handles and check it lives up to expectations. It's entirely possible that something might not work for you, such as the height or size of the car, which could put the brakes on your purchase.

SHOP AROUND

If you've found the right car, don't get carried away just yet. Do a bit of shopping around and be prepared to haggle. There's every opportunity for negotiation, so use the listed price as a starting point and get yourself a discount.



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