

Grow-it-yourself movement is in full swing



CARSON ARTHUR
OUTDOOR
LIVING

Ready to jump on the GIY bandwagon? Grow-it-yourself has more than swept the nation, it's quickly becoming one of the top hobbies again according to Forbes.com.

For the last 10 years, gardening made way for landscaping in our backyards with all of the focus on useable space like decks and patios instead of on perennials.

Now the pendulum has swung again in favour of more plants especially for the first-time homeowner. What amazes me is the ingenuity and the technology that

is now available for anyone without a plot of ground to plant in.

For many condo owners, this lack of yard is the hardest one to overcome. I have good news though, whether you have a rooftop, a balcony or even a window ledge, growing fresh produce has never been so easy but there are a few things that you may need to overcome to get the ingredients or that perfect summer salad or salsa.

Light is needed for plants. There is no way around this one. If you don't have at least a few hours of direct sunlight, growing any produce is going to be a challenge. If you are trying to grow in a north-facing window or on a covered balcony, you have a few options.

First, start with plants that have large green leaves. Kale and spinach do well in low-light situations because their leaves are better at converting small amounts of light into the energy they need to grow.

If you are determined to grow fruiting options, like peppers and tomatoes, you will have to invest in grow lights to supplement the available sunshine.

Consistent watering is key. Plants grown in a container that has proper drainage often dry out much faster than if they were planted in the ground.

I am a huge fan of the self-watering systems of gardens for a couple of reasons. The best ones have a reservoir under the roots that allows the plant to stay moist with-

out getting waterlogged.

The larger the reservoir, the less often you have to fill it which makes it perfect for homeowners like me that are always on the go. Lee Valley has introduced the Vegepod To the condo market for this very reason.

The largest of the three sizes has a water storage space for up to 64L, which is so important during those hot sunny months ahead.

These unique containers also come with some pretty sweet add-ons including a cover to keep out the birds that love to steal strawberries and cherry tomatoes from my pots every year.

Take a look at your own grocery list. Are there a few things on it that you could grow yourself?



The Vegepod from Lee Valley is a planter featuring a self-watering system and protective covers to help plants thrive through the seasons.

Having a garden and growing food is no longer something that our ancestors did, it's now something that everyone wants to try. Don't let your small outdoor space limit you.

— Carson Arthur is an outdoor design and lifestyle expert and TV personality currently appearing on HGTV's Home to Win. For more information, visit www.carsonarthur.com.

Why wait to move to stage your place



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You can't deny the importance of styling a home before listing it on the market. After all, everyone knows that staged properties yield better returns on resale.

This begs the question, why do most people wait until they're on the verge of leaving their home before achieving that Instagram-worthy interior everyone wants (and will pay more for)?

Now, many of you might feel intimidated at the thought of styling your space, or you're unsure of where to start. Relax, and keep reading.

You've always got the option of bringing in some trained professional like myself for help. Here are some of my simple styling tricks of the trade that you can try now, using your existing decor and without spending a single dime!

Whether you're styling a tabletop, a fireplace mantel or a corner of your home, follow these tips for instant styling success.

Odd one out

This is the famous rule of odd numbers. Have you ever noticed that displays just look better with groupings of odd numbers? It's true. Sets of threes and fives are more pleasing to the eye. The arrangement appears centered and anchored. Your photos, glassware and accessories will never look better!

Even out

Okay, so this principle sounds like the exact opposite of what I just suggested above. In this case, think "even" in terms of your distribution. Ensure accessories are weighted evenly at each end of the table, bookcase or surface, to bring balance to the overall aesthetic.

Mix it up

Introduce colour, texture and shape into the mix. Look at items that you already have throughout your home and select ones that are complementary to each other, visually or thematically. A pile of books paired with a magnifying glass and a hefty paper weight are a great match.

Think wood, aged metallics,

chrome and organic elements to up the interest. Set it all on a tray, and you've just turned it into a mobile display perfect for a well-used spot, like the kitchen table or countertop.

The right height

Introduce one element into your arrangement that is taller than the rest. This is what decorators and designers call "tables-

caping" creating a line similar to a landscape or city skyline.

The tallest piece becomes a beacon, attracting attention and anchoring the eye. If you're in need of some more inspiration, take some cues for your favourite decor stores and interior decorating magazines.

Love it or leave it!

I have one final, no-fail styling tip that every professional designer and stylist swears by. Choose pieces that you really love, and be selective!

It may be an item that evokes deep emotion, fond memories or brilliant inspiration. Choose pieces that speak to you, and express yourself. A home without accessories is like a shirt without buttons — it's incomplete.

But remember, like those shirt buttons, your accessories have to be in the right place, and arranged in the right way, to make the right impact.

You may need to arrange and rearrange your pieces a few times before you hit the right mark. Experiment and at the end of it all, if you love it, then it's right.

— Red Barrinuevo is principal of Redesign4more and endeavours to create stylish spaces for clients using their home staging and interior design services. Visit www.redesign4more.com.



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