



Prepare a bedroom for balmy breezes by draping sheer fabric over the bed and windows and replacing a warm comforter with crisp, white bed linens.

Spruce up your home for spring

By Terisha d'Elgin
Copley News Service

The days lengthen. At the first opportunity, we throw open the windows to breathe something besides forced-air heat. Eureka! Spring is bursting out all over.

Want to bring the outdoors inside in some way other than on your shoes? Start with spring cleaning. Reveal fresh surfaces and chase winter cobwebs out of corners. Scrub winter must out of the season with lemon or herb-scented ammonia.

Get rid of the indoor-outdoor boundary. Open the windows and doors. Let branches drift into rooms. Position whirligigs near a breeze.

Casually arrange items you associate with the outdoors under your roof — kites, straw hats, parasols, fishing poles, tennis rackets, decoys, birds' nests, walking sticks, weather vane.

In configuring your belongings consider feng shui. A Taoist philosophy imparted from the Chinese, this is the sacred art of placement or interior arrangement.

Translated literally, feng shui means "wind and water" and encourages resonance between the Earth's energy and the body's. Feng shui-conscious arrangements give the eye a chance to rest. For example, a dish with a noreg soybean stalk bathroom. Wind chimes counter an uninvited bank of windows.

Put away those cozy throws. Toss crisp, light slipcovers over those nubby dark fabrics that were so comforting in winter.

Made of stripes, florals, cotton duck and poly-cotton damask, slipcovers are easily laundered.

Dismantle heavy drapery, leaving cornices or valances in place. Swap light mesh muslin, linen or lace over rods. Fabric or straw window shades are also more summery. If window coverings won't move with the breeze, remove them.

Ruffled chintz pillows and dust ruffles make furniture look like flower beds. It's not an aesthetic everyone can support, but it looks comfy and springy in a cottage-style home.

Bring out the cotton tablecloths, the starchier the better.

Roll up dark, rich carpets and store them until autumn. Try sisal or handpainted linoleum "rugs." Hooked area rugs are made from fabric scraps, old neckties or, the latest recycling material, plastic bags. Angling a carpet bares more floor space and adds openness.

You might want to stencil patterns onto bare wooden floors that can be covered with rugs when cooler weather kicks in again. If rooms need a permanent lightening up, try bleaching or "washing" the hardwood with a light stain.

Dispense with the clutter that was so comforting in colder months. Clean lines and minimal accessorizing shift the focus to outdoor panoramas. Furniture made of wrought iron, birch, rattan, Adirondack and wicker lends an indoor-outdoor feel.

Without overdoing it, juxtapose your summery collectibles on furniture, in windowsills and near doorways. Folk art animals, botanical prints, gardening accessories

Two decorating books that offer spring/summer inspiration are "A Roomful of Flowers" by Paul Bot (Abrams) and "Outside Inside" by Barbara Aria (Thames and Hudson).

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New kitchens and baths can make a splash

sizes and colors, and can be recessed into the floor or built on platforms with decorative tile or furniture-quality aprons.

Side by side or replacing whirlpool tubs in an increasing number of baths are so-called power showers.

For the busiest people, shower time is the only time they can allow for privacy and relaxation. That has triggered a demand for power showers with a variety of functional and luxury options — accessories include everything from multiple shower heads to therapeutic massaging jets of water and steam options.

In this age of the environment, it's important also to consider water-saving and low-water consumption products for the bath, especially if you live in an area where there are water-usage restrictions.

CHOICE KITCHENS
Sleek, sterile kitchens have shed their antiseptic image to become warmer, more welcoming places, with a style that combines charm

Even kitchens with every modern convenience can have old-fashioned warmth. Here, an ice box serves as storage space.

privacy is necessary for a kitchen's large windows, a bath's windows generally overlook a secluded garden or private hillside vista.

When remodeling and updating, white is the color for fixtures. While warm and vivid colors are the rage today, people have a tendency to get tired of color. It's more economical to change wallpaper, paint, towels and shower curtains than tubs, refrigerators and countertops.

And now, some specifics on creating today's best baths and choice kitchens:

BEST BATHS
The master bathroom is joining forces with the master bedroom and closet to become a dressing-grooming-exercise-relaxation suite.

Today's master bath suites have separate showers and oversized tubs, his-and-her vanities, whirlpools and steam rooms, dressing rooms and dual walk-in closets. Some even have exercise areas, reading nooks and fireplaces.

Whirlpools are becoming a mainstay of even middle-class master baths, providing psychological and physical therapy after a hard day's work.

They come in various shapes, sizes and colors, and can be recessed into the floor or built on platforms with decorative tile or furniture-quality aprons.

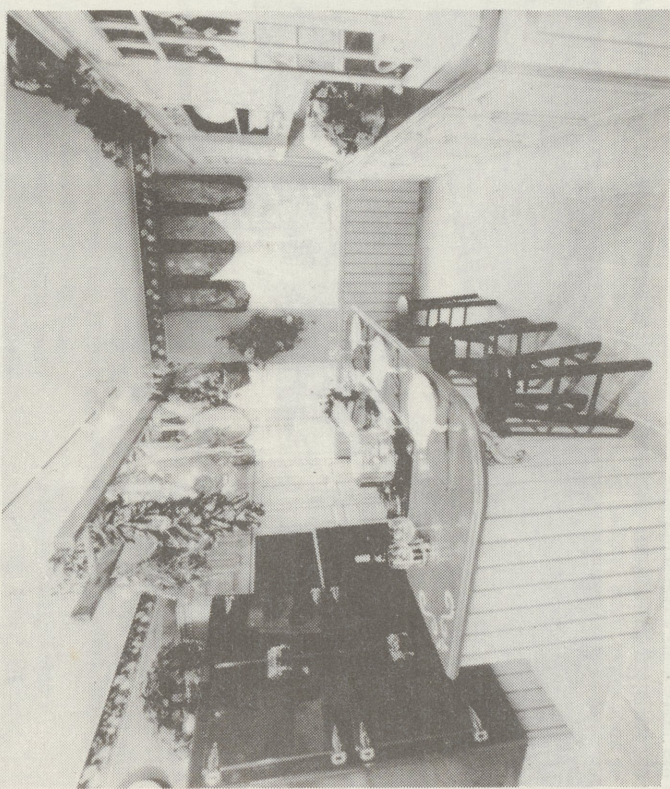
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The kitchens of people who love to entertain at large parties often contain two of every appliance as well, including microwaves, warming drawers, dishwashers and refrigerators.

Since most kitchens run the



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LANDSCAPE EDGING

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By Sharon Achatz
Copley News Service

The splashy attractions of the '90s home are the most public and private of rooms — the kitchen and the bathroom.

Today's kitchen is not merely a place to cook, chat and chow down. It also has become the principal gathering area for everything from family discussions to cocktail parties. And the bath has become the last truly private refuge, a hideaway where a person can float, dream and unwind.

While the function of these rooms has been modified over time, the design of many has not. Therefore, kitchen and bath remodeling are two increasingly common home improvement projects — and two that provide the best return on investment dollar when it comes time to sell the home.

With kitchen and bath renovations home priorities of the '90s, there is a burgeoning industry of design innovation for these rooms encompassing everything from appliances, components and cabinets to fixtures.

A design element common to both rooms is an openness to the outside, either through the use of skylights or windows. While no

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