

# Celebrity designers share their top tips for small spaces

**Condo living.** Industry experts provide advice on designing small spaces, DIY projects and condo gardening

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Spring arrived early last week at the annual International Home and Garden Show and Successful Gardening Show. It was a double bill with both events being held under one roof at Toronto's International Centre.

The shows featured more than six acres of home and garden shopping and 500 exhibitors. Celebrity designers and gardening gurus were on hand to present seminars and information sessions.

Lynn Spence, a regular style expert on Citytv's CityLine, talked about classic styles that can be done on a budget. For condos, she recommends using one paint colour and one type of flooring throughout, which makes your unit look bigger and more unified.

She also suggests choosing furnishings that can serve multiple purposes. "Multitasking is really important in small spaces ... Your needs might change. What you would need for yourself or with your partner might be very different from what you need if you've got company coming, if you've got a party planned, or if you want to turn one part of the condo into an office."

Canada's Handyman Shawn Monteith has more than 30 years of experience in the construction industry. He shared his DIY tips and tricks with audiences at the show.

His advice to condo owners about doing your own renovations is to do your homework first. "What you don't want to do is go out and spend the money on material, come in and try to install it and forget to do something. The next thing you know you've got to rip it up and have a professional come in. So read as



Lynn Spence, regular style expert on Citytv's CityLine show. CONTRIBUTED



Outdoor and gardening expert Owen Reeves from the Marilyn Denis show at the Home & Garden Show. CONTRIBUTED

many books as you can, see as many videos as you can, ask as many experts as you can — do it once, do it right."

Outdoor and gardening expert Owen Reeves from the Marilyn Denis Show shared his organic landscaping tips and explained how to make a backyard into an eco-conscious oasis.

He warns Metro readers not to put their plants out too early this year. "We've had quite a warm spring, which is great and I think a lot of people are very excited to get out and garden. But the one caution I would have is that for a lot of things — usually with condo gardening we're working with annuals or vegetables — they're very frost-tender, they're very tem-

perature sensitive, so I think people need to be careful about how quickly they put things outside.

"That's important for some condos. There's really less risk of frost because you don't get ground frost on the 30th floor. But for (the 20th floor) or down, there's a definite risk of frost and if a lot of plants get hit, they'll be killed," he says.

The Ontario Horticultural Association held a flower competition with everything from bonsais and cactuses, to flowering and fruited plants. Heinke Thiessen is chair of the flower show and explained that judges look for a combination of balance, rhythm and proportion from the various entries.



Canada's Handyman Shawn Monteith at the Home & Garden Show. CONTRIBUTED