

Home & Garden



Advertisement feature

The exotic house of 2007

New year resolutions to get ourselves fit and shapely are common but don't forget your home. Make sure it's up-to-date by following our trend predictions

ZAPPING our bodies and lives into shape is what the New Year is all about, but one key area is too often overlooked – our homes. Which is strange because they are such an inviting personal space – where we can be ourselves, express our taste and feel truly comfortable. Interiors have never been more important.

After all, there's no point putting loads of energy into yourself if your rooms look neglected. That doesn't mean making drastic, expensive changes – like crash diets these are doomed to failure. Instead, simply ensure rooms are up to scratch by echoing some of the latest trends. Get on track with our guide to 2007 trends and affordable ways to follow them.

Celebrated interior designers Gail Taylor and Karen Howes – winners of 'The Andrew Martin International Interior Designer of the Year Award' – predict that trendy homes will be following fashion's passion for grey.

They say: "The colour grey, from the very pale to charcoal, pinstripe and plain is the new black! "Other strong colours for 2007 are navy blue, soft blue and pastel pink. Classic furniture will take on a fresh look with bold, high gloss finishes, such as Louis XV chairs in red gloss with a grey pinstripe upholstery."

They also advise taking a walk on the wild side, adding; "Animal prints and faux fur and leather,

used sparingly, should feature on rugs, wallpaper, mirror frames or upholstery."

● Top tip

Personalise a room with black and white photos in chrome frames grouped as a feature on one wall and add decoration with beaded, sequined or lace cushions. House of Fraser's beaded and sequined cushions, from £15, are in store from February. Designer Joanna Wood, who numbers celebrities amongst her clients, says: "We are using white, silver and all shades of grey from charcoal to dove in our interior design projects."

"We incorporate the colour silver through our use of metallic wallpapers, silver print in fabrics, silver furniture and mirrors."

● Top tip

Add gloss and glamour with fashionable lacquered furniture – especially in ivory, white, black and taupe shades – and echo the effect in shiny satin fabrics. Graham & Brown's wallpapers have patterns and designs in shades of grey/black. Go glossy with furniture from stores like Habitat. Helena Fletcher, furnishing advisor for John Lewis Oxford Street, tips nature's colours as 'a breath of fresh air after the complex, rich tones of winter'.

She says: "Green has a strong affinity with nature and growth so it's ideal for freshening up the home in spring. Inject a flash of colour with some green cushions or rugs dotted around. A pale lemongrass green, although it sounds scary, looks brilliant on the walls because it complements natural lighting to reflect a warm, brightening effect around the room."

● Top tip

Make a statement with a table in a strong design such as a zebra print – use it to show off souvenirs from your travels. Get the look with John Lewis' spring range of furniture and accessories in nature's shades, including dazzling green wall prints Leaves in Sunlight or Palm Leaf Green, £120 each.

Designer Cath Kidston says: "This has to be the year when people chuck out the beige - colour is in and it's not going to go away and will contrast with lots of fresh white. "Wallpapers will feature larger scale patterns and bolder designs. Sharp, shocking pink, emerald green, and yellow are colours that will star on the home's cat walk."

She also predicts highly lacquered, vintage-style furniture will star. "That's an easy look to create - simply by getting old furniture and giving it a coat of gloss paint."

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Home & Garden



Wisteria demands attention

Realistic planning

MOST gardens are paved with good intentions and planted with wishful thinking. That's because few of us have enough time to spend on our gardens and most of us are usually trying to catch up on the essentials rather than creating something new. Having a realistic plan will help get your priorities right and using time-saving gardening aids will ensure the efforts will be well rewarded.

While most plants are dormant, it's a good time to prune back rampant climbers to reduce leaf growth and to ensure they bloom well. Wisteria sinensis is one such climber that demands this sort of attention if it is to provide a mass of flower-trails. Left to its own devices wisteria can turn into a mass of green leaves that carry very little flower. To encourage plenty of flowers cut back any main stems that are not needed to build up the framework and cut back all the sideshoots to about 8 to 10cm (3-4in). Do this now while the plant is dormant.

The tangled growth of late flowering clematis can also be cut back to within a few inches of the soil, thus encouraging strong new shoots and taking away any growth that continues to carry any powdery mildew on the dead leaves.

Established climbing roses can be cut back and the new long shoots tied down to encourage lateral growth along their length. At this time of the year these new shoots can be bent

down to a horizontal position without damaging buds or risk of them snapping.

Unwanted branches of shrub roses too can be cut out at this time of year. Aim to remove any dead or weak branches leaving the strong newer branches untouched.

Late season flowering shrubs such as Caryopteris and Ceratostigma can be given a general overall pruning to encourage the growth of vigorous flowering shoots. Leave stems a few centimetres long so that you know where not to dig and where to apply your spring fertilizer.

We all need to get our lawns in order as early as possible in the spring, so that they are thick, green and healthy before the summer sun shines. Applying a lawn feed that feeds for several weeks will give the roots enough energy to grow longer and deeper where they can most easily avoid the dryer surface. You can apply EverGreen Lawn Food that will prove attractive to anyone who has bought into the 'apply after cutting' concept. This new and improved formulation feeds and greens for up to six weeks - a real long-lasting lawn food that makes a big difference that anyone will see. To tie in with our warmer climate, it has an improved drought tolerant formulation that doesn't need to be watered in and it also contains a wetting agent.



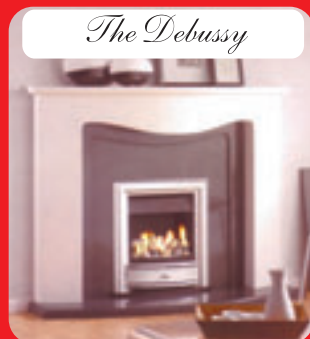
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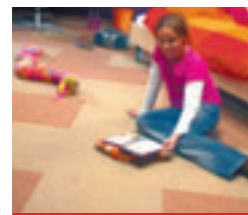
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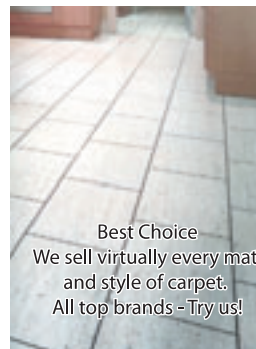
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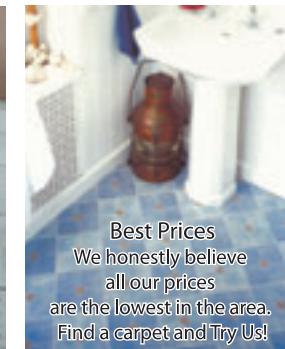
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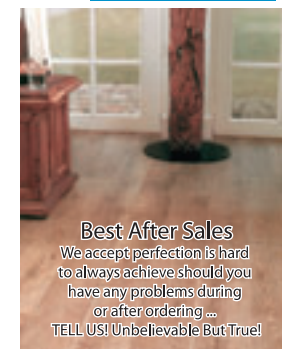
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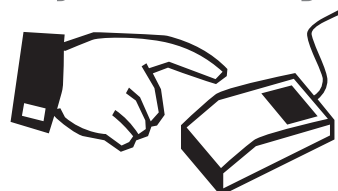
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