

In no time, we will be facing the joys and challenges of moving through life in snow country.

BY IRENE TURNBULL

Coming in FROM THE COLD

COSY IDEAS FOR YOUR HOME

As we pull on our boots and begin to add layers of seasonal clothing, we trade our outdoor barbecues for festive gatherings around our dining room tables and snuggle up to watch our favourite movies. The operative word for this time of year is cosy.

But, what does cosy mean exactly? Well, simply defined, cosy is synonymous with comfort, warmth and security. But I say cosy means much more than just feeling physically warm. It's a feeling, one that drives our need for emotional comfort from our homes. When we are satisfied on this level, we're nourished in the most amazing ways. Life is better when it "feels good to come home."

But this warm and fuzzy stuff is very subjective. What's cosy to one person is not necessarily cosy for another. Some people need to curl up on a sofa with a soft blanket and a crackling fire to seal the experience. Others might incorporate a good book or a warm cup of tea on a cold day into their story.

Nevertheless, despite our individual preferences for style, colour, shape, balance and scale, we all have a built-in radar system for discovering just what our unique definition of cosy is, and it's much less complex than you might imagine. So, all we have to do to know what cosy is on a personal level, is to draw upon good memories by igniting our senses.

Give it a try... take a moment and visualize your version of cosy. As you create your perfect picture, try to focus on each of your senses.

Remember though, we live in a four-season geographical region where both practicality and cost impact our ability to change wall colours and furnishings on a seasonal basis. Our ability to embrace seasonal change comes more easily with flexible, high impact, budget-friendly decorating options.

HERE ARE SOME WAYS TO ENGAGE YOUR SENSES AS YOU TRANSITION FROM ONE SEASON TO ANOTHER...

1. Add heat with fire!

When a wood-burning or gas fireplace isn't an option, think electric. The choices are excellent. When a fireplace is out of reach, create a glow with a focal point built around multiples of staggered candles in varied shapes and sizes. Get extra reflection and sparkle by placing them in front of a mirror or a feature window, where black glass becomes a mirror at night.

2. Lighting

Use the glow of inexpensive up-lighting against the softness of an indoor plant to fill a lonely corner, along with the twinkle of rope lighting and LEDs to add sparkle around windows or over doorways. Use soft, warm bulbs (now available in compact fluorescents) in table and floor lamps. And don't forget the dimmers on light switches for soft evening ambience.

3. Fabric

Use the versatility of fabrics to express warmth and a change in seasons. Think layering – just like your wardrobe. After all, home fashion is only an extension of the fashion world.

Draperies can be designed to accommodate seasonal add-ons, much like adding a pretty scarf to a basic dress. Add textured and colourful side panels and valances over existing basics.

Tablecloths and runners give weight. Change the colours of cloth napkins and add a seasonal centerpiece to your table – new looks are created for festive times.

Fleecy, velvety soft throws in cosy colours over the back of occasional chairs and sofas are instant cuddle-ups.

Slipcovers can be used to cover up spring and summer pillows or a favourite ottoman. They can also be added to his-and-her chairs at the dining room table.

4. Rearrange Furniture

In large open spaces, rearrange furniture to create intimate seating areas, using an area rug to anchor the grouping. If your décor permits, rugs can be moved between rooms. Tall, green plants help create visual boundaries while allowing light to filter through.

5. Scent

While many people are allergic to artificial perfumes in candles and pot pourri, few would find objection to a simmering pot of natural herbs and spices (like cinnamon sticks and cloves), warming on the stove.

6. Sound

Don't forget the power of sound. Our sense of hearing is always turned on. Use your favourite music to enrich your living experience.

The important thing to remember, as you look for ways to bring "cosy" to your home, is that the ultimate test is in the answer to this question: "Does it feel good?" If it does, then it is right for you. **OH**