



LOVELY LILIES

IN THE GARDEN | D9

THE VANCOUVER SUN

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POST & BEAM



Colchicum 'Waterlily'

PLANT PICK

Colchicum

Autumn crocus

Colchicums are so eager to bloom, you can often find them busting into flower in their display boxes at the garden centre. They are wonderful for adding a bright splash of colour under shrubs and trees.

Plant them as soon as you get them and they will quickly produce white, pink or purple chalice-like blooms almost immediately after hitting the ground they hit the ground.

The plant does not produce leaves until spring. These die away in summer and the flowers appear from September through to October. The ideal way to plant colchicum is in dense groups, 3 to 4 inches (7.5 to 10 cm) deep, 6 inches (15 cm) apart.

The name "autumn crocus" is a bit misleading as colchicum are not technically crocus and there are crocus that do flowering in fall, such as *C. longiflorus* and *C. sativus* (the saffron crocus). Nevertheless, colchicums are still mostly referred to as autumn crocus.

They are native to Asia Minor and Europe and are poisonous. Exceptional cultivars are 'The Giant' (rosy lilac with a white throat), 'Album' (brilliant white), 'Waterlily' (large, rose-mauve flowers with up to 20 petals).

- Steve Whysall



Dwaina Sprague and Brent Neave of Good Space take the needs of all members of the household into consideration when designing a plan for their clients, including the family dog.

Calling in the coach

INTERIOR DECORATING |
Design experts offer an economic way to get the professional touch

BY JOANNE BLAIN
VANCOUVER SUN

We hire personal trainers to whip our bodies into shape and financial advisors to keep our retirement dreams on track. So when your home isn't working for you, why not bring in a design coach?

Most of us mere mortals can't afford to hire an interior designer to do everything from picking paint colours to fluffing the new pillows on the sofa and everything in between.

But some designers now offer an alternative — a way to get professional advice on how to overhaul a tired interior on something more modest than a Sarah Richardson budget, if you're willing to do some of the work



Homeowners felt their living room (above) was sadly in need of a redesign.

yourself.

"We all need guidance," says Karen Wolinsky of Vancouver's New Interiors, who offers a service she calls design coaching in addition to full-service interior design. "A lot of people could benefit from a professional critique and a coaching session before they make a big expenditure."

Too often, she sees the unfortunate and costly results of what happens when people see something they like on a home-decorating show, then try

to duplicate the look in their own homes.

"I go in and see the scale is too big, the colour is wrong, the style is wrong — it just doesn't mesh. And then they have to spend a lot more money to make it work for them."

That scenario is also familiar to Dwaina Sprague and Brent Neave of Good Space, a Gastown firm that offers a design planning service to clients who don't want or can't afford a full-service interior designer.

"Most of our clients have made some kind of design blunder in the past and say 'come and rescue me,'" Neave says.

Buying the wrong sofa or area rug "can be an expensive mistake," adds Sprague. "I always tell people that the small cost of planning saves a lot of headaches and a lot of money in the long run."

For all three designers, the idea is to give clients all the fundamentals of a

See **PROCESS BEGINS** D2



Karen Wolinsky of New Interiors gave the room a more homey look.

WESTCOAST HOMES SATURDAY

FOREST RIDGE is a four-builder development organized by two White Rock realtors. It has been such a success — 32 of the 37 homes had been sold by this week — that those involved have decided to do it again.

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KARIN KONOVAL, MATT PALMER, DEBBIE TIMUSS. PHOTO BY DAVID COOPER

Process begins with consultation

From D1

good design, from a workable floor plan to advice on paint colours, floor and window treatments and furnishings. Then it's up to the homeowner to follow through by hiring contractors or doing the work themselves, and buying new furniture and accessories to complete the look.

For an introductory rate of \$250, Wolinsky offers a two-hour consultation during which she'll come to your home, figure out what's working and what's not, and come up with a plan for how to fix what ails your decor. That involves everything from choosing paint colours to suggesting furniture styles and fabrics, and sketching out a furniture-placement scheme.

She's often asked to incorporate existing pieces of furniture or artwork into the plan and she's happy to do so.

"People travel, people inherit things, people collect and they always have a few pieces that they want to keep," Wolinsky says. "It's their personality, it's their history, it says who they are. If a place doesn't have a few pieces that have a story to tell, it becomes a place without a lot of personality."

Once she has come up with a plan, she'll guide the homeowners toward retailers and tradespeople who can help them turn that vision into a reality. Or for an additional fee, she'll do as much of the work as they want her to, from shopping with them for furniture to showing them how and where to hang their artwork.

"It clarifies and solidifies a person's direction," she says. "Then they have a plan and they can add pieces as years go by."

Sprague and Neave developed what they call the Good Space Plan about a year ago to give homeowners the same kind of design guidance they give their full-service customers, minus the execution.

They start by having clients fill out a brief questionnaire about their home and lifestyle, and asking them to gather up magazine clippings of rooms that inspire them.

Then a designer will go to the home, talk to the client about what they like about a room and what's not working, and take photos and measurements.

Finally, they come up with a comprehensive written plan that includes everything from a detailed floor plan to a lighting design, plus recommendations on paint, window treatments, floor coverings, furniture and accessories — complete with photos and information on where to buy everything locally.

Clients also get an hour of follow-up consulting time afterwards, during which they can do everything from asking questions about how to execute the plan to getting an opinion on a fabric sample.

Then it's up to them to decide what to do. "They can implement everything right away if they want, or they can take their time," says Neave.

Sprague says some clients have simply gone out and bought the exact same pieces they have recommended, while others shop around and add one piece at a time. And they have no problem with someone finding a \$200 version of a \$2,000 chair if that's what their budget permits.

"You control the time and you control the budget," says Sprague. "And that's a really powerful thing."

The cost of a Good Space Plan depends on size of project, but an average one-room plan will be between \$1,200 and \$1,600. That compares to \$5,000 to \$10,000 for the cost of a full-service designer, who will see the project through from beginning to end.

"It's generally about the cost of a low-priced sofa," Neave says of the design plan. "And you're going to walk away with a plan that will ultimately give you a well-designed room."

Wolinsky says this kind of service is often less intimidating for homeowners who may not be concerned only about money, but also about turning over their home to a designer.

"A lot of people feel an interior designer is going to come in and create a space that reflects the designer and not the person," she says.

And some homeowners are just itching to be involved in the process so that they can take credit for their role in it afterwards, Neave says. "We have clients that could totally afford to hire us full-service, but they want to be involved in the design of their own space."

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For more information on Good Space or New Interiors, visit www.good-space.ca or www.newinteriors.com.



Beulah Hooper's living room took into consideration how lighting sets a tone.



Good Space clients Kim and Brad Nick took into consideration their personal sense of style in designing a master bedroom (top); Good Space designer Dwaina Sprague (above) goes over a plan for a living room and entry foyer with client Angela Scardillo.

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