



LIFE AT HOME

DECOR • DOMESTIC ARTS • RENOVATIONS • RENTALS • RESALE

EDITOR: LISA MONFORTON 235-7428 Fax: 235-7379

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SATURDAY, AUGUST 25, 2007



Photos, Grant Black, Calgary Herald
Camryn Hoher, 2, Gregory, 3, and Chloe, 5, play on the solid redwood playset, complete with cedar roof, in the shade of a couple of mature trees in the family's backyard.

Backyard bling extends to posh playsets that not only look good but are much safer

Swinging in style

LISA KADANE
CALGARY HERALD

Back in the day, backyard swingsets were made of metal and became rusty, squeaky eyesores long before the kids grew up. They also weren't that sturdy, prompting falls that led to injuries.

"I'm pretty sure my brother broke his arm on ours," recalls Heather Smith of her childhood playset.

"They're so much fun for the kids, but playsets can be dangerous."

That's one reason Smith and her husband Joe Hoher extensively researched different brands and styles of swingsets before choosing a Rainbow Play System for the backyard of their North Glenmore Park home. But more than safety, the parents of Camryn, 2, and Brennan, three months, wanted a playset that was durable, would grow with their young children and would look good, too.

"They're just beautiful playsets," says Smith of the cedar-framed clubhouse that was installed in June.

Wedge in a shady corner



Five-year-old Chloe plays with an oversized pair of binoculars in a friend's backyard play set.

of the lot between a mature spruce and a hawthorne tree, the unit, with its green slide and accessories, blends with the landscaping and looks like it belongs.

"We tried to go as natural as we could," says Smith, noting they chose a cedar roof and green accents for the playset so it would integrate

organically with their mature yard.

As more Calgary families add play equipment to the backyard — or build it in to the landscaping plans — form has become just as important as function. Backyard playgrounds have to be safe and beautiful.

"People want the play-

ground, but they don't want it to stick out," says Steve Neubauer of Blue Grass Ltd. nursery near Balzac, which sells Rainbow Play Systems along with more typical yard offerings of sod, trees, shrubs and flowers.

"I'll order just as many forest green toddler (swing) buckets as all the other colours combined."

He says customers love the solid redwood and western cedar sets, which have a natural mountain look (unlike their garishly-coloured, plastic play structure brethren).

The chains on swings are vinyl coated, preventing finger pinches while keeping hands warmer, helping to extend the playground season. The units are also customizable depending on the kids' ages, so toddler buckets can be exchanged for regular swings as children grow.

SEE SWINGING, PAGE G2

AROUND THE HOUSE



'Fess up to your mess

CONTEST • Does your teenager live in Calgary's messiest bedroom? You know, the one with dirty clothes covering the floor and half eaten sandwiches (that missed the overflowing garbage bin) decomposing on the clothes.

If your teen's lair is that messy — or worse — we want to hear from you. Please e-mail a paragraph describing the disaster, plus no more than two images of the offensive space, to lifethomecomment@theherald.com by Aug. 29.

The winner will receive a \$100 gift certificate toward a consultation with professional organizer Debi Stephenson of Room2Organize.

His or her bedroom will also be featured in a Life At Home story about organizing the teenage space for a fresh start to the school year.

— Calgary Herald

Energy smart

APPLIANCES • Home appliances — those traditional energy- and water-hogs — have made great strides in recent years toward greening themselves and becoming Energy Star qualified. Leading the pack is Bosch, the only manufacturer whose entire product line is Energy Star certified. The company's fall 2007 line showcases new features that will help save more water while lowering household energy bills.

■ The latest model of Bosch's In-tegra dishwasher checks the soil level in dirty water, then adjusts the water level and cycle accordingly.

■ The front-loading Axxis clothes washer uses 79 per cent less energy than conventional top loaders. Its hand-washables setting can handle cashmere.

■ The Induction Cooktop range heats only the contents of the pot or pan, not the entire kitchen.

■ Bosch's line of wall ovens have a fast-preheat option, and a built-in temperature-detecting probe that allows the oven to turn itself off once a meal's pre-set internal temperature is reached.

For more information go to Bosch-appliances.ca or call 1-800-921-9622 to request a brochure.

— Calgary Herald

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15 Springbank Mount, SW \$695,000

Cul-de-sac, 2-storey with dev'd basement, almost 3100 s.f. of living space, hardwood floors, maple kitchen, formal dining rm, big bonus rm, 3 bdrms.