

HOME IMPROVEMENT

ANTHEA SAVAGE



I'VE SOME BIG IDEAS FOR SMALL PLACES

Are you fed up with clutter in your home? Not to worry, here's ten ways to open up your living space and give you something to look forward to for Spring

If your home feels claustrophobic, and you won't be moving or extending any time soon, don't despair. There are lots of things you can do to enhance the space in your home.

Spiral Staircases Traditional staircases can be bulky, solid and take up quite a bit of space in your hallway. If you want to reclaim more hall space or are thinking of extending up, then consider spiral staircases which can be narrower and more open to let light travel through.

Under Stairs Toilet Many homes may have a traditional timber staircase with a store cupboard beneath, but many modern homes are now being creative and converting this valuable space into a small cloakroom/wc.

Bedroom Storage Small bedrooms can maximise space by merging storage furniture into one. If you don't have the luxury of a walk-in wardrobe, consider the Elfa range from Howards Storage World, which allows you to create your own little dressing area from a variety of frames, doors, storage accessories and free standing fittings.

Built-in Appliances If counter top space is limited, why not 'build-in' all your appliances. It not only provides a seamless finish but is a practical solution for small kitchens. Everything can have its place!

Windows A dark and gloomy room can often appear smaller. Enhance the flow of natural light by fitting sun tunnels, additional windows, glass blocks or fitting partially glazed doors.

Fold Away Dining Table Research has highlighted the benefits of sitting together for a family meal but if your kitchen isn't big enough to accommodate a dining table, this could be difficult to fulfil. IKEA have a range of tables that might help. From tall bar style tables to fold away or island attachments.

Utility Corner in a Garage If you have under-utilised space in your garage, why not turn a redundant corner into a utility area? You can paint the concrete a vibrant colour and integrate shelving and cabinets for appliances. Similar storage solutions available from Howards Storage World or IKEA.



Clutter Free Bathrooms Some people like nic-nacs sitting around the bath and on the sink . . . and on the floor, but if you are tired of the dust building up, why not add storage units. They can double up as mirrors, be transparent with glass or be fully closed in (and off the floor) to prevent little ones touching things they shouldn't!

Cantilever Units If you have an open-planned living/dining area that doesn't quite provide the floor space needed for storage and display, think about building a cantilever unit which still allows walk through access. It makes a stunning feature when used for books.

Raised Vegetable Bed There is a growing trend to grow your own at the minute but if your garden is paved over or doesn't provide any green space for planting, a raised bed might be the solution. These are essentially a homemade box filled with soil, where seedlings are planted. All you need to do is water and wait. You could be eating your own lettuce, carrots or spring onions in summer!

Anthea Savage is Editor of Ireland's only home improvements publication, *Decorate Extend & Renovate*. www.decorateireland.ie



1 Floor painted with International Concrete Sealer and International Quick Drying Floor Paint in granite grey. Other brands of concrete sealer are available so ask your local paint store for advice.

2 A raised bed can be the answer if you have a small garden. These are homemade boxes filled with soil, where seedlings are planted.

3 Spiral staircases can be real space savers and are particularly useful for attic conversions. Make a contemporary statement with wood treads and powder coated aluminium balustrade. Similar available from Spireco in Dublin 01 839 5956.

4 Elfa Platinum Storage Range from Howard's Storage World in Dublin, 01 294 8003. The ELFA system starts from €85 for a 3 basket system.

5 The IKEA MUDDUS drop leaf table is perfect for a small room. It can be adjusted to seat 1-2 people and comes in vibrant orange so it's bright, bold and very affordable at only £27. Available from the Belfast store. www.ikea.co.uk

