



let's remodel

# Be informed when picking material

**Q:** I am somewhat overwhelmed by the number of choices of products on the market for my remodeling project, which is a kitchen update. Can you give some criteria for purchasing products?

**A:** This is an easy situation in which to find yourself overwhelmed. Not only does the product need to fit within a budget and the style of the room, but it needs to work with your other product choices. Below are some considerations to keep in mind when choosing products or materials.

■ Price is not always an indication of quality. Judge each product individually and do not use prices as a factor in determining quality.

■ If you have a question about the life of a product or its effectiveness, talk to your remodeler. If he or she cannot help you, seek advice from professional showrooms or from the manufacturer of the product.

■ Don't make uninformed decisions



about a product — find out what it has to offer over the other choices available.

■ Divide the cost of an item by its anticipated longevity to figure the annual cost. An expensive product that will last for 20 years may be a better choice than an inexpensive product that will only last five years. Product life should be a factor in your selection process.

■ Ask about manufacturer guaran-

tees and service options available on each product. Written copies of manufacturer warranties should be available from your contractor.

■ Talk to your contractor about which product will best suit your needs. Some materials wear better than others in given circumstances. For example, painted surfaces might chip and peel more in a humid environment like the bathroom. Your contractors should be able to guide you toward the best choice for your lifestyle and environment.

■ Some products have internal parts which may or may not be replaceable. Ask your contractor about the maintenance and repair costs for each of your product choices. You don't want to spend a lot of money on a fixture that can't be repaired down the road.

■ Some products are better investments than others in adding to the resale value of your home. Your contractor should be able to offer an opinion on whether a specific product is a

good choice for a particular situation.

Choose wisely. The product chosen will be a factor in the final cost of the job. A professional contractor will be invaluable in helping you look at all of the products available. They have installed products and have been called for repairs on the ones that give people trouble.

Taken from "The Master Plan" — The National Association of the Remodeling Industry.

For your home improvement questions or a copy of our roster book, call Gayle Walters, executive director of the NARI-Michigan Remodeling Association at 810-478-8215. Questions can be mailed to the association office at PO Box 153153, Livonia, Mich. 48153. Members of the association include professional contractors, wholesalers, manufacturers, consultants and lenders representing all facets of residential and light commercial remodeling. Members also answer questions on "Home Improvement Radio," with Murray Gula on WEXL-AM, 1340, 1-2 p.m. Saturdays. Call in your questions at 810-544-1340.

## Nature classes scheduled

This winter brush up on your botany or learn the ancient art of bonsai.

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Call (313) 998-7061 for information.

Classes include:

- **Bonsai** — 2-4:30 p.m. three Sundays, Jan. 5-19, \$45. Classes will be a mixture of lecture and hands-on experience as students will be given time to create their own bonsai. Topics will cover the art and culture of bonsai, including plant selection, styling, fertilization, pest management and other basic guidelines for development and care of these attractive miniature woody plants. Material will be available for purchase. Instructor is Connie Baille.

- **Adult Botany** — 7-9 p.m. five Thursdays, Jan. 9-30 and Feb. 6, \$65. This is an introduction to the diversity of land plants, from mosses to flowering plants. Emphasis is on the major groups of plants as responses to ancient and modern ecological challenges. Instructor is David Michener.

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