

Creative Living

Marie McGee editor/591-2300



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organizing

Dorothy Lehmkuhl

Degrease windows

Betty spent the whole day washing windows, only to realize later that her windows reflected a cloudy appearance. After all that work, what went wrong?

Betty had used what she'd always used — ammonia — but this time the sun and wind had quickly dried the solution before she could rinse it off. The result: bleached windows. Besides surface bleaching, other reasons to be careful using ammonia include potentially dangerous fumes. Ammonia should be used only in well ventilated areas and never mixed with bleach. The results could be deadly.

Many retail items like Glass Plus or Windex work well for everyday window cleaning, but are far more expensive than concentrates. Concentrates, purchased at janitorial supply stores, can easily be mixed in spray bottles designed to measure appropriate ratios. These end up costing less than 25 cents per pint, while you can pay \$1.50 per pint for ready-mixed retail cleaners.

A degreaser is needed for the first spring window cleaning because grease accumulates through the air over the winter. Once degreased, regular glass cleaners can be used. You can do this by adding about 25 drops of a degreasing dishwashing detergent, such as Dawn, to a gallon of your regular cleaning solution. (Not all detergents contain degreasers.)

My favorite janitorial supply — Oliver's in Pontiac — sells a product called Blue Max which contains a degreaser and works perfectly on windows when mixed 50-1.

The myth that vinegar is a washing agent needs correcting. Vinegar is a rinsing agent and works well for neutralizing soapy residue. It is not a soil remover. Some people use one to two teaspoons of kerosene per gallon of water, but this will dry out putty and cause it to pop out prematurely. TSP (Trisodium Phosphate) is inexpensive and fairly effective but more than one teaspoon per gallon can leave a chalky residue. Hospital disinfectant cleansers also clean windows and mirrors nicely, but are designed to be used daily and won't handle soil buildup.

One last warning: Don't mix different cleaning agents together unless you know it is all right; otherwise, dangerous conditions and/or poor performance could result.

To get your copy of Lehmkuhl's new "Organizing — Vol. 1" booklet containing her first 52 columns, send a long, self-addressed envelope with 65 cents postage and a \$5 check payable to Organizing Techniques, 6185 Worthington, Birmingham 48100.

condo queries

Robert M. Melsner

Q: I am a real estate broker and am concerned about the recent article in your column where you pointed out that brokers were liable for the acts of their employees based upon a recent Michigan case. This will, no doubt, change my whole outlook on my salespersons in terms of our firm's potential liability. What can we do to insulate ourselves?

A: I am reasonably confident that real estate brokers will mount whatever legislative efforts that are necessary in an effort to reverse and/or revise the recent opinion of the Michigan Court of Appeals by legislative fiat. But, whether or not that happens, the real estate community should be alarmed about the decision of the Court of Appeals and should take the appropriate measures to ensure that real estate brokers and their firms are adequately protected by way of liability insurance and otherwise in connection with the acts of their "salesperson-employee" agents.

This may result in a change in the relationship between the broker and the salesperson contractually, as well as an increase in the responsibility undertaken by the salesperson by way of indemnification or otherwise to the real estate broker by the salesperson.

With the courts becoming increasingly sensitive to the legal and ethical responsibility of brokers and real estate people, particularly in a conflict of interest situation, exposure for brokers is becoming increasingly substantial. Make sure you are properly insured and have consulted with legal counsel in terms of listing the various areas whereby you can insulate your potential liability.

Robert M. Melsner is a Birmingham attorney specializing in condominiums, real estate and corporate law. You are invited to submit topics which you would like to see discussed in this column, including questions about condominiums, by writing Robert M. Melsner, 30200 Telegraph Road, Suite 467, Birmingham 48010. This column provides general information and should not be construed as legal opinion.



Artyno Cherrin gathers up silk flower blooms at one of two Silk Forest shops she owns. Her success, she says, is due to service-oriented decorating. Many new office building owners, for instance, are opting for floral arrangements in lobbies and atriums, she said, rather than artwork.

JERRY ZOLYNSKY
staff photographer

New leaf in decorating

By Cherlene Mitchell
special writer

PLANTING, pruning, watering and grooming. Those are just some of the time-consuming chores that go into maintaining beautiful plants and flowers.

If you don't exactly have a green thumb but still enjoy the fresh feel provided by plants, look no further. Entrepreneur Artyno Cherrin is improving the look of hundreds of homes and floral arrangements that are nearly foolproof. With showrooms in Southfield and Birmingham, Cherrin is able to display an amazingly large number of tropical and desert varieties.

"Can you believe we've carried nearly 20,000 different species?" says Cherrin as she walks through the rows of ficus trees, scheffelers, apple trees in blossom and hanging baskets. "Just look at these wonderful silk plants, aren't they just gorgeous, and you'd never know they weren't alive would you?"

AS THE PLANT LADY continues her oration on the merits of silk blossoms, she relates the story of the woman who was allergic to live plants and found satisfaction in silk counterparts. "There are also a lot of plant lovers who just can't seem to keep the plants alive. They waste so-o-o much money replacing them."

Don't be fooled though, silk plants can be costly, too, but they are guaranteed to live forever and the only maintenance they need is a bit of dusting now and then.

The beauty of the merchandise at The Silk Forest which Cherrin first opened in 1985, is that it is part of today's rapidly growing trend in service-oriented decorating.

Owners of large office buildings who may not want to invest a bundle hiring a decorator to select artwork for a lobby or atrium area, may opt instead to hire someone like Cherrin, who will work with them to decorate with plants and flowers. Goldfarb Advertising Co. at Northwest Corn Highway and Lahser is one example of a

new building that decided to hire Cherrin.

The Silk Forest claims to have an unlimited service covering all of metro Detroit as well as out-lying areas like Ann Arbor and Lansing. Since going into business more than 300 homes and almost 100 businesses have become Cherrin's regular clients.

For example, the popular Bean Jack's restaurant in Birmingham has its plants re-furnished every other year in order to freshen the look and get rid of the smoke odors that accumulate.

The exclusive Rodier Store at Somerset Mall has its own New York designer work directly with Cherrin when decorating the shop. Doctors' offices are also fun for the perky businesswoman who never seems to tire. She convinced cosmetic surgeon Dr. Joseph Stern into giving a beauty lift to his waiting room at the Cosmetic Surgery Center in Farmington Hills.

Whether it's a big job, or a small one, Cherrin says her heart is always in it.

"I buy all my goods in person at the marketplace, and that means traveling to Atlanta and Texas a few times a year," she says. Cherrin added that many retailers who deal in silks buy from catalogs, something she considers very compromising if you are interested in getting the best.

THE HIGH QUALITY silks are 100 percent pure, with no oil to attract dirt. Some of the species, because of the nature of their appearance, contain a small percentage of polyester for durability and flexibility. These artificial plants or flowers that contain more synthetic than silk are usually not as authentic looking. Another thing to look for in buying silk trees, for instance, is whether the trunks are from "real" trees. Cherrin says that's the thing that makes them appear so real.

"But it's not just the product they get, it's the service," says Cherrin. "We'll use their pots or ours. If they have certain fresh floral arrangements that they just love, we'll re-create it for them in silk so that it's always there looking good to make them smile everyday."

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