

3 Reasons to Invest in Smart Tech

AI is becoming more and more a part of modern life. Whether you are for it, against it, or somewhere in between, embracing AI at home can have considerable benefits.

Saves \$\$\$ – With smart technology, you can set usage modes based on time of day or set vacation mode with your thermostat, lights, and refrigerator. If you forget to turn down the heat before you leave, you can remotely control it with your phone from anywhere.

Time-saving alerts and reminders – Have you ever put a load of laundry in the washer only to forget about it until the next day? With smart technology, you can receive alerts when your laundry is complete. For the kitchen, you can now buy smart fridges that track food inventory and expiration dates and notify you when items are running low.

Security – Wouldn't it give you peace of mind if you got a



notification when the oven was left on or the front door was unlocked? Smart technology can do just that and rectify the situation – remotely. There are now also smoke and carbon monoxide detectors that can alert you of an emergency when you are away or notify you when batteries need to be changed.

If you want to save time, increase your home's value, and have peace of mind, you might want to consider investing in smart technology.



Nosy Neighbours: Yard Privacy

Maybe you are friendly with your neighbour, or maybe you find them a little on the nosy side and could use a little privacy. If that's the case, there are many options available to choose from.

The most obvious solution might be a fence, but if you don't want to create possible tension or future issues that may arise if you erect a boundary fence, consider a softer approach, such as a **hedge**. Look into different types of shrubs or trees to plant. Important factors are how tall they will grow and how long it will take to grow to create a hedge at the height you want.

If a fence or hedge isn't something you want to tackle right now, or it's not what you want or need, focus on creating a smaller enclosure for privacy with **screening** (e.g., bamboo, partition, sun shade, or curtain panels) on a porch or by installing panels on a pergola.

Another way to get some privacy is through **vertical gardening** – think trees, shrubs, ornamental grasses, and fast-growing vines (e.g., on a trellis).

There are many other yard privacy ideas available to be found online. Whatever you decide, your privacy efforts will benefit your comfort in the short-term and make it more desirable to buyers long-term.

Ditch the Lawn Mower: Alternatives to Grass Cutting

At this point in the summer, if you have a lawn to cut, you may be a little weary of grass cutting. Take the worry and work out of your lawn by considering alternatives to natural grass, that are not only less work but have other benefits as well.

- **Mulch** – Adds colour and texture to your yard, keeps the weeds down, and retains moisture so you won't need to water the surrounding plants as often.
- **Ground covers** – There are many different types, some of which are evergreen, depending on your growing zone. Creeping thyme, sedum, clover, moss, and chamomile are just some options. To add dimension and texture choose a few.
- **Gravel** – You can also add rocks of varying sizes strategically placed within the gravel for a modern look. If you want some accent colour try adding some neighbouring plants, shrubs, and trees. Other benefits of gravel are that it helps to keep the weeds down and requires no water.

It might take a bit of upfront work to transition to a natural grass alternative, but when it's all said and done, you will have more time to sit back and enjoy your yard.

