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GET YOUR GARDEN STARTED RIGHT!

Spring has sprung, to borrow the old cliché, and it's time to get those gardens going! Depending on what you're planting, you may be a little bit behind at this point, but still, there's no time like the present. You might want to have things like tomatoes and peppers in the ground already. Peas, hardy greens, carrots, and beets should be on the go or just about ready to go.

But when it comes to flowers, we can't afford to be too optimistic. Those of you who have experienced a few Ottawa springtimes know that we can often get the first spring, second winter, second false spring, a snowy day, and then, finally, real spring arrives. This means that it can be pretty risky to start planting your spring annuals before the May long weekend. And now that it's fast approaching, you're probably wondering which of Ottawa's gardening stores are the best.



Here are three of our favorite gardening stores where you can get the seeds, bulbs, and potted plants to get started on your 2024 garden.



Peter Knippel Garden Centre - 4590 Bank Street

This is a locally owned garden center that, according to their own description, provides "top-quality plant material, a wide selection of garden statuary and decor, and excellent gardening advice." It's always great to get more info from experts, especially if you're new to gardening, making it a great choice for folks starting a garden in The Glebe or anywhere else around Ottawa.

Ritchie Feed & Seed - 1390 Windmill Lane

If you're looking for a business that has deep roots in Ottawa, look no further than Ritchie Feed & Seed. They were founded by John Ritchie in 1930 and the original store was located on York Street, in the heart of Ottawa. They moved in 1960 to their current location and have even expanded to another operation just west of Ottawa in Stittsville. You'll find a great selection of garden supplies here, including "Eastern Ontario's largest selection of spring and fall bulbs, seed packages, and bird feeders."

Green Thumb Garden Centre - 17 Tristan Ct, Nepean

Looking for a garden centre that has plants that are specifically intended for the strange and wonderful weather patterns of the Ottawa area? The folks at Green Thumb Garden Centre in the Nepean area have got you covered! They'll spend time with you to ensure that what you're bringing home is suitable for you, your garden, and the Ottawa climate. They're great folks who don't mind spending time talking to you about your garden, helping you to "envision your gardening dream."



JAZZ FEST IS AROUND THE CORNER!

Those of you who know me are most likely fully aware that I love music. One of my absolute favorite times of year is when the Ottawa Jazz Festival gets into full swing. And it's only a month away! There's a lot to do and a lot to see, so here are a few of my recommendations for don't-miss events this year.

Preservation Hall Jazz Band - Elgin St, Sunday, June 23, 8:30 p.m.
Jazz got its start in New Orleans, and no one demonstrates the spirit, tone, and history of jazz in The Big Easy like the Preservation Hall Jazz Band. The septet have recently released a new album of all original music with roots that go all the way back to the city's "Afro-Cuban roots, through its common ancestry with the Afrobeat of Fela Kuti... Pharoah Sanders, and John Coltrane." Ready to dance? This is the spot!

Lake Street Dive - Main Stage Confederation Park, Thursday, June 27, 8:30 p.m.

An Ottawa jazz fest favourite is back! This band from Boston has captured the hearts of Ottawa jazz lovers and people all over the globe. They're a band that creates "joyously soulful rock & roll with equal parts ingenuity, intelligence, and irresistible abandon to a diverse and loyal fan base," according to a release from the people at jazz fest.

It's been five years since the band has graced an Ottawa stage, and this year it's going to be bigger than ever when they headline the main stage in the heart of downtown Ottawa.

Al Di Meola The Electric Years - Main Stage Confederation Park, Wednesday, June 26, 8:30 p.m.

Ready for a real jazz guitar hero?

Al Di Meola, the virtuoso guitarist who has released more than 30 albums, will grace the big stage in downtown Ottawa, bringing his blend of "world music and jazz, his exploration of flamenco, tango and other influences [that] has captivated audiences globally." He has four decades of original music to draw from, and never disappoints. Don't miss Al!





**OTTAWA
JAZZ
FESTIVAL**

JUNE 21 - 30 JUN 2024
OTTAWAJAZZFESTIVAL.COM

Norah Jones • Laufey • Lake Street Dive
Trombone Shorty & Orleans Avenue
Al Di Meola (The Electric Years) • **Preservation Hall Jazz Band**
The Yussef Dayes Experience • Kathleen Edwards
Veronica Swift • Elisapie • Chief Adjuah (Formerly Christian Scott)
SuperBlue: Kurt Elling & Charlie Hunter • Butcher Brown

Moon Hooch • Begonia • Huntertones • aja monet • Tom Harrell Quartet
Ches Smith & We All Break • LA LOM • Lakecia Benjamin PHOENIX
Lemon Bucket Orkestra • Chris Potter Trio ft. Matt Brewer & Kendrick Scott • Kellylee Evans
Steven Bernstein's Millennial Territory Orchestra • Geoffrey Keezer & Gillian Margot • Le Ren
Darcy James Argue's Secret Society • OCEANS AND Tim Berne, Aurora Nealand & Hank Roberts
Nation Beat • Gabi Hartmann • Mats Gustafsson - THE END • Mali Obomsawin
"Goodbye Ground" Sakina Abdou Solo • Ulysses Owens Jr. & Generation Y
Petr Cancura w/ Charlie Hunter & Scott Amendola • Laura Anglade • SticklerPhonics
Longhand Plays Long w/ special guests Jesse & Josh Zubot • Kjetil Mulelid Trio
Bellbird • Marianne Trudel - Time Poem • The Commotions • Jeff Rogers • Hand to Earth
The Senator: A Tribute to Tommy Banks - Hutchinson Andrew Trio ft. Al Muirhead & PJ Perry
Miguel de Armas & The Ottawa Latin Jazz Orchestra... and more / et plus !

**CONFEDERATION PARK, MARION DEWAR PLAZA & NATIONAL ARTS CENTRE
PARC DE LA CONFÉDÉRATION, PLACE MARION-DEWAR, CENTRE NATIONAL DES ARTS**

OTTAWA'S VACANT TAX DECLARATION

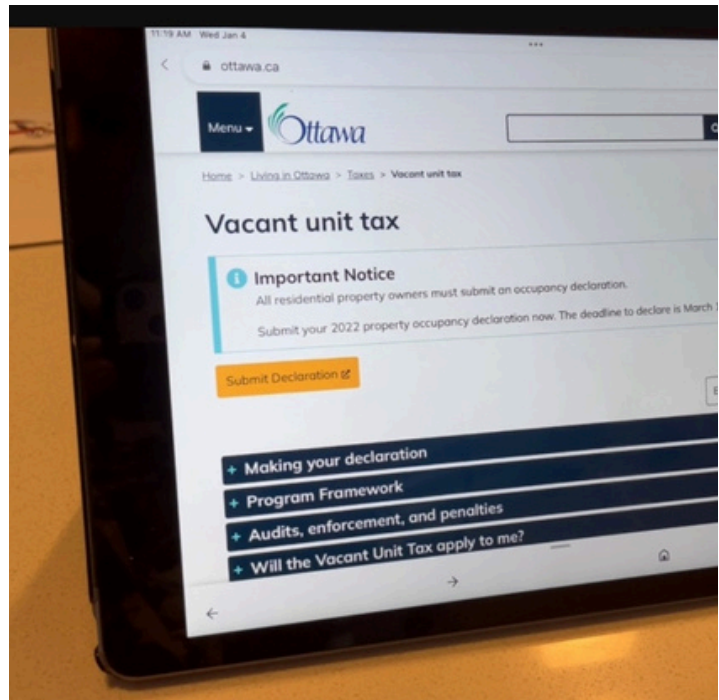
You have until March 21 to submit your Vacant Unit Tax form to the city of Ottawa. The new bylaw was added in 2022 in an effort to get those who own homes to either occupy or rent their properties. While the intention is to try to deal with a lack of housing in the Ottawa area. The revenue that the city collects from this tax is being used to provide more funding to affordable housing.

The bylaw states that any property that is vacant for 184 days or more during a calendar year will be taxed at a rate of one percent of the assessed value of the property. In December of last year, a story by CTV News in Ottawa noted that 1,525 properties had been audited.

Issues can arise for those who have had trouble with renting their investment properties, or have had trouble with tenants. One landlord, according to another CTV story, had to deal with damage from a former tenant, as well as squatters. This meant his property sat empty between April and November of 2022 while the property underwent interior renovations.

The best way to deal with any issues that may arise is to file your declaration early. A spokesperson from the City of Ottawa notes that "there is a process to waive the late declaration fee under certain circumstances, which is defined in the City's Vacant unit Tax Bylaw."

It's a bylaw that could affect those who have vacation homes in the region, or who spend time living in warmer climes during the winter. Whatever the effect it has on your property, it's best to make your declaration on time and to be aware of the potential tax increase that it may have on your property.



CAPITAL GAINS CHANGES: WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

TAs you have probably heard, the federal government is getting ready to make some changes to the capital gains inclusion rates this year. The changes are not yet implemented, but if they are adopted, the new rules take effect on June 25, 2024.

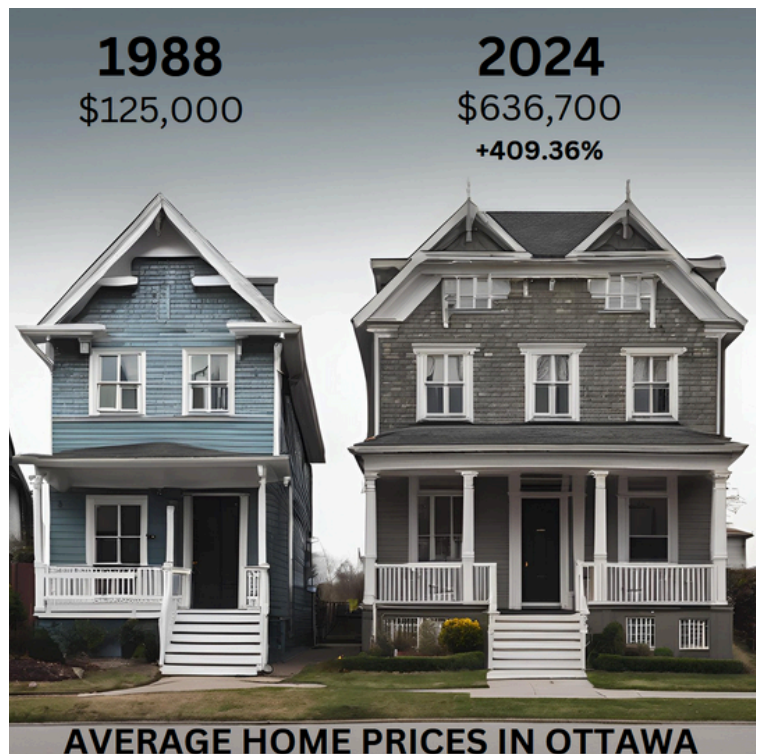
While the intention appears to be the federal government aiming to get a bigger piece of its tax pie from wealthy Canadians, the effects may trickle down to folks who have cottage and recreation properties that they're looking to sell, or even gift to their kids.

An article in the Toronto Star notes that, "According to a 2023 Royal LePage survey, conducted by Leger, 11 per cent of Canadians — approximately 4.4 million people — invest in residential real estate. Sixty-four per cent of residential real estate investors own one property, and 32 percent own two or more."

The article notes that experts do not expect the behaviour of investors to change a great deal. Many properties have doubled in price over the course of a decade, indicating that real estate is still a lucrative asset.

What it comes down to is how much of a gain one has achieved before selling the property. That said, some investors might want to sell before the end of June in an effort to dodge the coming higher tax rates. For example, a property that earned the seller \$400,000 would be eligible for an extra tax bill of around \$13,000 higher than it would have previously.

One real estate advisor notes that some may wish to hang on and see whether or not the changes are reversed by what could, potentially, be a new government next year. We'll wait to see how this plays out and whether or not the new tax is actually adopted, and will be able to further advise you on the direction you may wish to take from there.



For sound advice follow us...

