



Over the Garden Gate

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Nothing is more of a turn-off than a dark home — and nothing is easier to fix. Rule number one: Wash all of the windows so natural light can fill the space. Rule number two: Replace dark window treatments with light gauzy ones. Rule number three: Layer the light in your home. Experts say there should be at least 100 watts for every square foot of space, and well-staged homes have overhead lights, floor lamps, and task lighting (for reading, cooking). One trick: Wall sconces can uplight walls or ceilings, making rooms look bigger. Freshen up any built-in lighting.

Visually Dark wall color can make a room look smaller; focus on lighter neutral tones. Float furniture (pushing it against the walls actually makes the room feel smaller) in logical conversational groupings, with enough space for people to move between pieces easily. Make sure large pieces of furniture don't block sight lines to a great view or a pretty focal point, such as a fireplace. Stagers suggest that rugs stop a foot or two from walls. A rug that's too big shrinks a room; if it's too small it just looks awkward. If your dining room is modest in size, take extra leaves out of your table and limit chairs to four.

Staging Tricks 2



Happy Valentine's Day

Day



New buyers won't necessarily want a pink girls' room or a whole room devoted to sewing. Paint gender-specific rooms in more generic colors, and reduce the "kids' room" effect by storing large collections, posters, musical instruments, and personal items. Turn that sewing room into a more general-use guest room with desk or table space for projects (hide away the project materials). The more versatile your home, the more buyers will be able to see themselves living there. They may want your playroom to be a home office or gym; help them see the possibilities.



Rosemary Chicken

R e c i p e

Nonstick cooking spray

1-1/2 lbs skinless, boneless chicken breast halves/thighs

1 9-ounce package frozen artichoke hearts

12 cloves garlic, minced

1/2 cup chopped onion

1/2 teaspoon ground black pepper

1/2 cup reduced-sodium chicken broth

1 tablespoon cornstarch

2 teaspoons dried rosemary, crushed

1 tablespoon cold water

1 teaspoon finely shredded lemon peel

Lemon wedges (optional)



1. Coat an unheated large nonstick skillet with nonstick cooking spray. Preheat over medium heat. Brown chicken, half at a time, in hot skillet. In a 3-1/2- or 4-quart slow cooker, combine frozen artichoke hearts, garlic, and onion. In a small bowl, combine broth, rosemary, lemon peel, and pepper. Pour over vegetables in slow cooker. Add browned chicken; spoon some of the garlic mixture over chicken.



Cleome

A perfect cottage-garden plant, cleome bears spikes of fragrant flowers in shades of white, pink, magenta, and purple. It's so easy, it practically starts itself — in fact, in many gardens it self-seeds year after year.

Easiest Seeds to Start

Starting Tips: Spread seeds over the ground; they usually don't need to be covered. Cleome seeds typically sprout in one to two weeks

2. Cover and cook on low-heat setting for 6 to 7 hours or on high-heat setting for 3 to 3-1/2 hours.

3. Transfer chicken and artichokes to a serving platter, reserving cooking liquid. Cover chicken and artichokes with foil to keep warm.

4. If using low-heat setting, turn to high-heat setting. In a small bowl, combine cornstarch and the cold water. Stir into liquid in slow cooker. Cover and cook about 15 minutes more or until slightly thickened. Spoon sauce over chicken and artichokes. If desired, serve with lemon wedges. Makes 6 servings.

I'M LISTENING.

It's a privilege to live and work in Maple Ridge.

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