

The Homes & Gardens Report





INTRODUCTION

With all of us living through a period of huge change during the last year, our homes and gardens became even more central to everything we do. Sheds became offices, spare rooms transformed into gyms and kitchen tables turned into classrooms as we all spent more time at home than ever before.

In the midst of the chaos and upheaval, however, Brits sought peace and comfort from their homes and gardens as they made mindful changes focused on boosting their personal wellbeing and that of their families and roommates

by improving the spaces around them. Whether through picking up a paint brush and embracing bolder, more uplifting colours in the home, updating the garden to create living room levels of comfort outdoors, or making their homes more sustainable, we've seen millions of people across Britain 'have a go' and make small changes to improve the place they live, work, rest and (hope to soon) entertain.

We predict consumers will continue to focus on making small changes that have a big impact on how they feel

about their homes and gardens. It could be paneling a wall, mowing the lawn, or even just buying a new cushion. These small changes help people to brighten up their surroundings and their mood, too.

We are proud to have been there with the products, expertise and inspiration home makers needed to improve their homes and gardens over the last 12 months. Here's what we learnt and the trends we expect to continue as we look forward to the rest of 2021 and beyond.

TRENDS

80%
increase in
cushion sales
during the last
12 months



"It is no secret that our décor and how we keep our homes says a lot about who we are, but it can also have a huge impact on how we feel."

Suzanne Roynon
Expert Interiors Therapist

THE CUSHION EFFECT

While lipstick might once have been a barometer of national consumer confidence, a year of lockdowns and mask wearing has seen sales of the much loved cosmetic drop by almost half (49%). Instead, 'The Lipstick Effect' – where consumers look to spend on less costly luxury goods in a time of economic crisis – has taken a new guise altogether.

Enter: 'The Cushion Effect'. During the last 12 months, we've seen sales of cushions increase by 80%, as Brits look to make small purchases to give themselves that uplifting feeling that they might once

have enjoyed when buying a lipstick.

This trend isn't limited to cushions either. Sales of home accessories, which includes everything from clocks and curtains to mirrors and picture frames, have risen by 62%, while searches on our website for 'home décor' increased by 115% as customers sought to create beautifully decorated, feel-good homes.

Suzanne Roynon, Interiors Therapist, states: "It's no secret that our décor and how we look after our homes says a lot about who we are, but it can also have a huge impact on how we feel."

DREAMING OF DINING ROOMS

As social restrictions came into force, our homes transformed into offices, schools and gyms as each room had to become multi-functional. However, our optimism around one day being able to entertain guests again never wavered.

Over the last year, customer searches for 'dining room' (including dining sets and glasses) more than doubled (115%), while the number of people searching for 'dining room furniture' rose by 33%. Searches for gin, cocktail and cham-

pagne glasses increased by 257%, 225%, and 91% respectively; and even shot glasses saw a 25% uplift in searches as the UK dreamed of once again hosting parties and entertaining family and friends.

As lockdown continues to ease, we predict there will be a further increase in sales of dining room furniture and table-top products, particularly when we head back indoors after the warmer summer months.



57%
increase in
searches for gin
glasses over
the last year



"Looking for greener alternatives for the home is a trend that's here to stay, particularly as having an environmentally home doesn't need to be expensive. We're proud to offer a range of products and advice to help customers turn their green ambitions into a reality. There are so many ways – both big and small – that we can help people make a positive difference in their homes."

Chris O'Boyle
Trading Director for Everyday Repair
and Maintenance, Homebase

SMALL STEPS TO A BIGGER IMPACT

Focus on sustainability increased over the last 12 months as customers made small but meaningful steps to reduce the environmental impact of their homes. Sales of our energy efficient long life LED light bulbs increased three-fold (350%) as consumers invested small sums in a bid to bring down their energy bills and reduce their carbon footprint.

During the last 12 months we've also noticed that customers are actively seeking out our 'low VOC' paints. VOCs are solvents that are released into the air as the paint dries and according to Public Health England, can negatively contribute to indoor air pollution. Increased awareness of this issue has resulted in sales of our own brand Homebase Paint range, which has a minimal level of VOCs, increasing by almost nine times*.



BOLD AND BRIGHT HUES

With more time than ever spent in our homes and gardens, it's no surprise that many people have turned to refreshing their interiors to pass the time, and what better way to do so than with a lick of paint? With many people doing just that, Homebase has sold enough paint in the last 12 months to repaint all four sides of Big Ben almost 10,000 times!

Not only have more people been reaching for the paint brush, but they're also going bolder and brighter with their style, as sales of deep, tonal blue hues saw a steep

increase. Homebase Paint in Aegean has seen sales increase by 473% this past year, whilst sales of Dulux Sapphire Salute are up by 66%.

Searches for glitter paint are also up by 28% as customers researched different ways to make their walls sparkle. And it's not just inside – sales of Cuprinol Ducksback fence and shed paint in Forest Green have risen by 141% as consumers optimistically look towards summer and being able to entertain friends and families in their gardens.



We sold enough paint to re-paint Big Ben just under **10,000** times in the last year



"Trends in spring decorating especially this year are all about capturing the optimism of the summer to come, where we'll be free to enjoy the company of friends and family in our homes at last. Fresh petal colours, like Blush Pink and Daffodil White, bring the sunshine in and are perfect for making rooms feel bright."

Marianne Shilingford,
Creative Director,
Dulux



FRESH AIR FOCUS

While wellness as a trend isn't new, the pandemic brought a renewed awareness of its importance. Enter a new trend with a focus on fresh air – respiratory wellness.

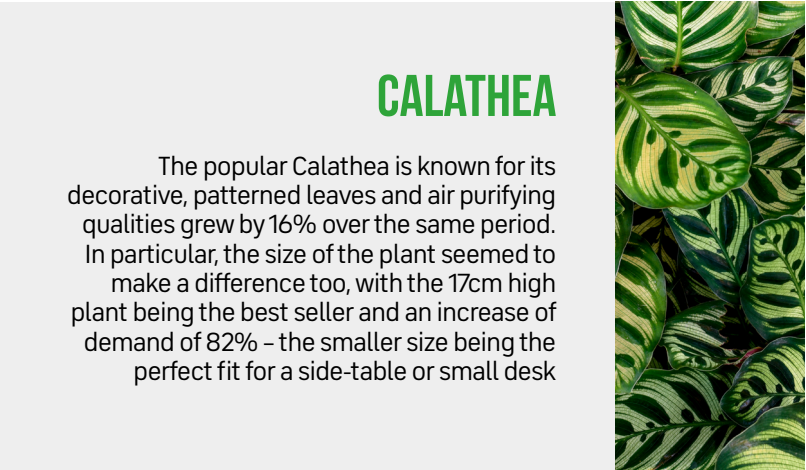
The importance of fresh air has become clear with consumers becoming more conscious of the ways air quality can be improved. And houseplants are one of the best ways to improve air quality indoors. With the added benefit of houseplants also being beautiful home accessories, it's no surprise that searches doubled from 2019 to 2020 across Homebase.co.uk.

Interestingly, the best-selling plants over the course of the year were all plants that are renowned for their air purifying qualities, including the Areca Palm, Calathea and Ficus plants:



ARECA PALM

The Areca Palm, known for its ability to remove toxins as well as improving air quality, was the best-selling houseplant, with sales growing by 77% year-on-year



CALATHEA

The popular Calathea is known for its decorative, patterned leaves and air purifying qualities grew by 16% over the same period. In particular, the size of the plant seemed to make a difference too, with the 17cm high plant being the best seller and an increase of demand of 82% – the smaller size being the perfect fit for a side-table or small desk



FICUS

Sales of Ficus plants grew by 21% year on year with the 21cm being the best seller - sales increased by 38% year on year

The houseplants trend certainly shows no sign of slowing down. We predict air quality will remain a popular topic throughout 2021 as we continue to move out of lockdown.

6,900,000
people visited our
advice pages in
the last 12 months,
more than double
the number of visits
the previous year



HOME IMPROVEMENT BOOM

Homes took on new meaning in 2020 – they were our sole base for our leisure and our work time. Creating a home that is both functional and comfortable became even more important and with more time on their hands, people throughout the UK had a go at home improvement projects big and small.

Homebase.co.uk's 'how to' guides provided plenty of guidance and expert advice to enthusiasts across the country. There were almost seven million unique page views (6.9m) to our advice pages in

2020, more than double the number of visits from the previous year (3.3 million). The view time on the how to guides also increased by 13 seconds to an average of 1 minute 33 seconds on each page, suggesting consumers were more captivated by the content and eager to learn as they rifled through pages of advice.

The most popular project for our online customers? It was of course the enduring popularity of the humble pallet furniture hack with almost 360,000 page visits from February 2020 to February 2021.



"We've loved seeing our customers spend time outside enjoying their gardens and outdoor spaces, particularly given the mental and physical health benefits gardening can have during these challenging times. Our customers aren't only creating beautiful gardens but they're also thinking about the positive impact they can have on the environment, and we predict that having a garden that's home to even more wildlife will continue into 2021 and beyond."

Stephen Pitcher,
Trading Director for
Garden & Seasonal.
Homebase

BIODIVERSE GARDENS

Over this last year, the consumers have embraced their green fingers, planting 322 million more plants in 2020 than in 2019 as they created gorgeous gardens that not only looked beautiful, but encouraged more birds, insects and wildlife.

Bee and insect-friendly plants have soared in popularity with both lavender and hydrangea sales each making up over 10% of all plant sales for the last

year. Other bright and colourful plants, which are great for biodiversity, also flew off the shelves. Campanulas saw a 400% increase in sales whilst Cordyline Red Stars saw a 100% increase and Acer Japanese Maples saw a 90% increase when comparing year on year sales.

Additionally, grow your own vegetables, fruits and herbs were extremely popular, with a 50% increase in strawberry sales.

Sales of
strawberry
seeds grew
50%



LIVING ROOM LEVELS OF COMFORT IN GARDENS

Customers sought to make their gardens more comfortable during the last 12 months with almost all entertaining taking place outside. This saw sales of garden sofas, outdoor chairs and even seat pads and cushions peak, as people across the UK looked to create living room levels of comfort in their gardens.

Among our most popular items was the Rattan Pod Chair, which saw sales increase by 243% and is perfect for whiling away an afternoon with a book or even an afternoon snooze, while sales of our An-

dorra Rocking Chairs increased by almost eight times (780%) in the 12 months to March 2021, compared to the same period the previous year.

With households mixing indoors one of the latter stages of the roadmap out of lockdown, we expect this trend to continue as Britons embrace the spring sunshine and look forward to welcoming friends and families back into their gardens during the months ahead.



243% increase
in Rattan Pod
Chair sales



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