



Personal interest courses may be just the ticket to rejuvenate your life

SHARON ASCHAIK Special to The Sun

Growing your own urban garden, instantly re-decorating a room in your home and taking stunning photos of the great outdoors are just a few of the skills you can pick up from George Brown College's wide array of personal interest courses.

New on the continuing education calendar this year is One-Day Redecoration, a one-day workshop happening May 27 at the school's Casa Loma Campus that will teach students the popular art of room arrangement.

"The course is a reflection of the incredible interest the public has had in home improvement and decorating over the last few years," says course instructor and design consultant Erik Calhoun. "It has resulted from a trend which, although established in other markets, is just beginning to emerge in Toronto."

Both decoristas and design dummies will benefit from the workshop, which explains how to remove a room's entire contents, and then gradually re-introduce elements to create a new and improved space. Participants use models and photos to re-integrate the different layers of a room — furniture, floor coverings, artwork, lighting and accessories.

The workshop, which costs \$86, is highly interactive and practical, and students are encouraged to bring photos of a particular room they'd like to address.

"The course does not require any special design knowledge," Calhoun says. "In fact, in some (of my) previous courses, those with less experience have been able to grasp the concepts more readily."

Another hot new CE offering is Nature Photography, a seven-week, 21-hour class that immerses intermediate-level shutterbugs in the techniques of capturing Mother Nature's beauty.

"Overall, our photography courses are very popular, and this course was developed in response to student demand," says course instructor Jane McMichael, a seasoned nature photographer.

Taking place Monday evenings from May 8 to June 26 at the school's St. James Campus, the \$325 course teaches students the techniques required to bring artistry to their nature shots through careful attention to lighting, composition, visual style and detail. In-

More Ways to learn for fun



formation is also provided on the ideal photographic equipment they should invest in.

The hands-on course features a mixture of in-class sessions and weekend field trips to unique wild spaces to exercise the skills being learned, such as taking close-ups of wildlife and capturing landscapes. Students visit outdoor destinations such as Peter's Woods nature reserve near Peterborough and East Point Park along the eastern shore of Lake Ontario.

Also fresh among CE offerings is Edible Gardening in the City, a six-week, 18-hour bootcamp in urban horticulture for city dwellers with aspiring green thumbs and hungry palates.

"The course is mainly geared to the novice city dweller, with no prior knowledge or experience needed," says Lynne Kurylo, chair of continuing education liberal studies.

Taking place Wednesday evenings from April 5 to May 10 at the school's St. James campus, the course debunks the myth that the city and gardening just don't mix. It features advice on growing and harvesting fruits, vegetables and herbs anywhere — from tiny condo balconies to community plots.

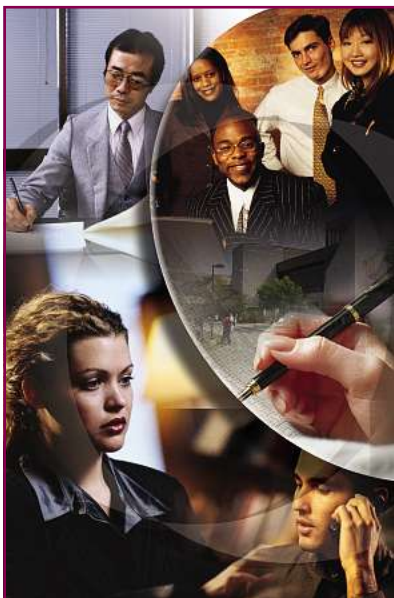
Offered in tandem with Toronto Botanical Garden and led by Marjorie Mason, owner of Uxbridge-based specialty plant nursery Mason Hogue Gardens, the \$227 course teaches how to grow from

seed, and transplant and maintain gardens with proper soil mixes, fertilizers and watering techniques. Organic gardening methods and pest and disease control will also be discussed, as will local and national sources for purchasing seeds and plants.

Students will have the opportunity to create their own garden designs based on their personal garden spaces.

"The emphasis," Kurylo says, "is on helping people get started using containers or garden plots of any size in any location."

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