YOUR HOME
March 2007
TIPS AND TRENDS TO HELP MAXIMIZE HOME BUYING AND SELLING

## THAT'S ENTERTAINMENT

A well-designed home theater is one of the best features that can increase the resale value of your home. Think it might be a good investment? To get started, you'll need to take a close look at the room in which it will be housed. After all, the room's size will determine the most suitable size and type of video display. You should also consider the following:

- How much ambient light is there?
- Is the room carpeted?
- What type of wall construction does the room have?
- Will you be placing your components in free space, or will you house them in a cabinet or closet and install speakers in the wall or ceiling?
- Where will you sit in relation to the screen image?

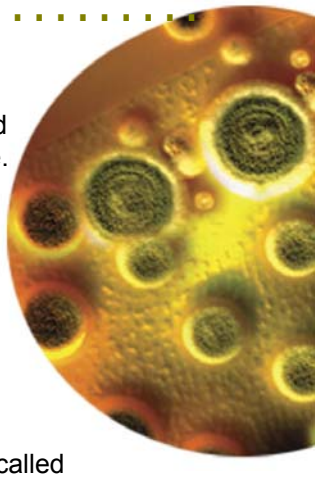
The next step is to figure out what type of video display device to get. Choices include:

- large-screen traditional CRT-based television
- rear-projection TV
- flat-panel LCD or plasma TV
- video projector/screen combination.

Most home-theater experts say the TV needs to be at least 27 inches (diagonal) to be considered home-theater compatible. Also, since HDTV programming is becoming increasingly popular, you'll probably want to consider an HD-compatible TV or projector instead of a traditional analog TV. According to the Consumer Electronics Association, nearly half of all consumers in a recent survey said their next TV "definitely or probably will be an HDTV." HD-compatible televisions and video projectors will deliver the most from new HD sources, but will also work with your older analog components, such as a VCR.

Before embarking on buying home-theater components, especially for a medium-price to high-end system, consider consulting with a home-theater installer who can assess your space, budget and goals. The consultant will help you select the best components for your needs and can answer any questions about all the available options (and there are many!).

## GOT MOLD?



There's no way to sugarcoat it: Mold is an unwelcome guest in any home. And like your unpredictable cousin Harry, it can show up without warning, even in the cleanest abodes. Mold is a type of fungus that grows from tiny spores that float in the air. It can grow almost anywhere there is moisture and a temperature of between 40 and 100 degrees Fahrenheit.

The most common type of mold, called mildew, is easy to spot. It's the black stuff you see in the grout lines in your shower, on damp walls and outdoors on the surface of deck boards and painted siding, especially in damp and shady areas. To test for mildew, dab a few drops of household bleach on the blackened area. If it lightens after one to two minutes, you have mildew. If the area remains dark, it's probably just dirt.

Besides being unsightly, mold can cause health problems, including hay fever-type symptoms such as sneezing, runny nose, red eyes and skin rash. More seriously, mold can cause asthma attacks in people with asthma who are allergic to mold.

To get rid of minor mold and mildew infestations, disinfect the area with a mild bleach and water solution, then seal with several coats of a primer/sealer and repaint with washable paint. Improving the ventilation in damp areas of your home, such as the bathroom, will tend to minimize mold problems. For more extensive mold infestations, contact a professional who can help you determine the best way to deal with it.

## fast fact

Generation Y is about to become a significant part of the homeowner market. Consumers born between 1974 and 1980 owned only 7 percent of U.S. households in 2005, but 26 percent of them plan to buy homes in 2007.

Source: National Association of Home Builders